

SAMPLE DISCUSSION POST:

UNIT 4

*Please note that this is a **sample** Discussion post to help inspire and guide your own original writing of the assignment. Your assignment does not need to look exactly like the sample, as this sample is just a possible response to the assignment prompt. Be sure to review the reading and grading rubric, complete each task in the instructions, and contact the instructor with any questions.*

DISCUSSION POST:

Greetings everyone,

After doing some reading on my topic in the last week and getting feedback from the instructor and from some classmates (a big thank you to Haley, by the way), I have changed the direction of my topic a bit. Before, I was focused on rent control as a means to combat homelessness caused by rising rents. However, it seems like that idea is a non-starter, as it would anger a lot of people and not have much of an effect when it comes to getting people off of the street.

Instead, I am focused on incentivizing the building of more multi-family units (duplexes, etc.) through tax credits at the City of Portland level. Some of the key stakeholders related to this topic are members of the Portland City Council, developers, and advocates for the homeless. One aspect of the argument that I think these three will all agree on is that it is bad all around to have a homeless population: those on the street don't want to be there, citizens don't want to see them there, and business development is hurt by the presence of the homeless.

After reviewing the Learning Activity "Choosing & Using Keywords," three search terms that I plan to use are "homeless," "tax credits," and "housing." I think that these are broad enough to give me a wide net but not so broad as to catch things that are off-topic. For example, I searched "development" and "housing" at the PG library and found a lot of articles but not much about homelessness or affordable housing.

In my search, I found an article entitled, "Do Increases in Subsidized Housing Reduce the Incidence of Homelessness? Evidence from the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit," which was written by Osborne Jackson and Laura Kawano and published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. I selected this source because of how authoritative it is (produced by the Federal Reserve) and because while it is not 100% on topic, I am focused on only one city (Portland), and I have not found anything yet focused just on my hometown.

One main idea in the article that stands out is the impact on surrounding neighborhoods when subsidized housing is constructed. The article states that low income housing being constructed can actually lead to an area losing population, as people struggling to pay their rent will move to the more affordable subsidized (and new) housing nearby.

However, people leaving one older form of housing for a newer one still leads to vacancies that the homeless could potentially afford. I think that this will make for some good evidence for my paper, although I will have to explain my point quite a bit and not just rely on the evidence. I think that all three stakeholders would be pleased with this, as vacancies in housing will lead to a decrease in homelessness, since the lack of affordable housing in general is the issue. Building more affordable housing will lead to more people indoors.

My question for everyone is this: are there any other sources of information that you think that I should look into? I am especially interested in any other cities with similar problems; does anyone in this class live in a city with a homeless problem caused by a lack of affordable housing? If so, please let me know – I am trying to compile a list of cities to look more into.

If anyone wants to read the article, here is the information:

Jackson, O., & Kawano, L. (2015). Do increases in subsidized housing reduce the incidence of homelessness? Evidence from the low-income housing tax credit. *Working Paper Series (Federal Reserve Bank Of Boston)*, 15(10/11), 1-45.

Eric

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RESPONSE POST:

Hi Eric,

I am glad that the article from *Forbes* that I gave you last week was helpful – I found it by chance while looking on Google News for your topic. I agree that the Portland City Council, developers, and advocates for the homeless would be stakeholders, and I have another one: Chamber of Commerce sort of folks-- e.g., those interested in business development. After all, it will take a huge amount of people to get that housing built (which will lead to job creation), as well as the potential economic boost from simply getting people off of the street in general.

To answer your question, I think that people are an excellent resource and calling some of the cities with this problem (such as Houston) and asking to interview people is a great method for finding evidence. After all, not all information is published and people know what is going on in real time. I had an instructor in CM107 who pushed us to interview people and I did – it took a lot of calls, but the people who agreed were really helpful. If you want more ideas on how to do this (like what I did), let me know.

Haley