

The chronically homeless are an expensive problem for Grand Forks, but leaving them to destroy themselves is not an option. The city and homeless advocates think they have a better solution.

The **Cost** of compassion

THE PROBLEM

When it comes to visiting the ER, needing emergency psychiatric help and a host of other public services, **a single chronically homeless** person is the equivalent of **nine other sometime homeless** persons.



The difference: The chronically homeless aren't just homeless, they're also afflicted by alcoholism, drug abuse, mental diseases and medical problems.

What if there were ways to stabilize these unstable lives so they don't require as much help?

THE SOLUTION



1) Outreach: The chronically homeless don't always know they need help so help has to come to them.



2) Treatment: Alcoholism and drug abuse are core problems. Treatment capacity has to expand.



3) Rapid access to services: With lives like ticking time bombs, a waiting list doesn't help the situation.



4) Subsidized housing/rent: Having a home reduces the impact of disabling conditions. Sobering up at home is cheaper than in the ER.



5) Prevention: The chronically homeless are not the best tenants and need to learn how to not get evicted.



6) Planning: Homeless advocates need to coordinate to solve this complex problem.

Source: City of Grand Forks

The cost of caring for the chronically homeless

Psychiatric evaluation: \$240-\$360 per visit (1 to 1.5-hour).

Follow-up medication: \$238 per month or more (1 month).

Addiction evaluation: \$161 per visit (1 hour).

Addiction group: \$162.50 per session (5 hours).

Individual therapy: \$92.25 (1 hour).

Counseling to help with independent living: \$92 (1 hour).

Detoxification in ER (facility costs only): \$1,000 (est.) per visit.

Treatment for serious injury in ER (facility costs only): \$5,000 or more (est.) per visit.

Source: Northeast Human Service Center, Altru Health System

