



Initial Focus Areas

STABLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING What We Learned

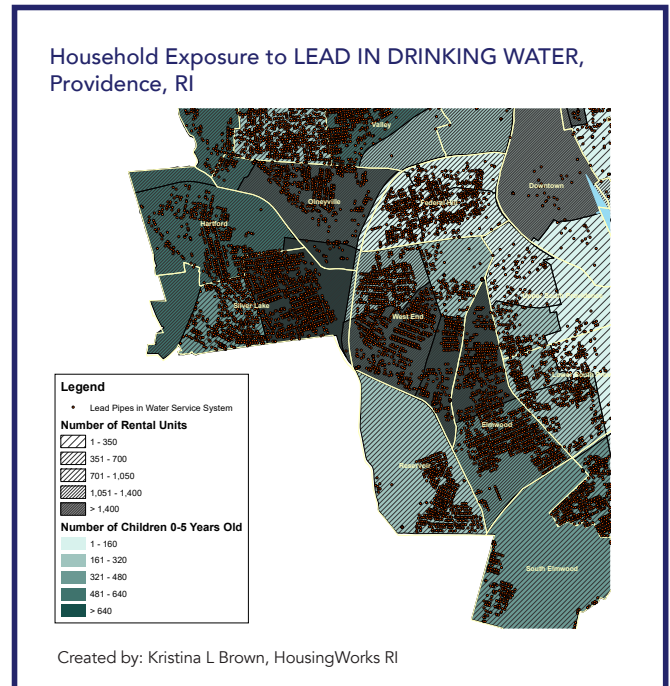
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Housing and health are inextricably linked. Poor quality, unstable housing adversely impacts health. Living in unsafe conditions can lead to illness and injury. For those who are already ill, poor quality housing can exacerbate their conditions. When families spend too much of their income on housing, they have less to spend on other critical needs such as medical care, prescriptions, and food.

The HEZ is home to just over 8,500 households. Of these, 69% are occupied by renters and the remaining 31% are occupied by owners.

Housing QUALITY

- All residents responding to housing questions on the HEZ survey indicated that they were **concerned about lead in their homes, either in the paint, water or soil, harming their children** and 95% indicated that they worried about being able to afford repairs and upkeep.
- At the SpeakOuts, residents expressed **concerns about rodent and insect infestations also creating unhealthy conditions.**
- Renters noted that they cannot demand that landlords maintain their units, **do not understand their rights, and don't know where to turn for help.**
- In March of 2019, the Environmental Protection Agency tested Providence Water and found that **drinking water in the system contained lead levels well over the EPA's recommended amounts at 22 parts per billion (ppb).** This elevated lead level is the highest lead level that Providence Water has had since 2013.



“For me, it was once again the housing situation...I was sleeping in a tent in a friend’s back yard. And that’s what caused me to get high. It’s to escape all my problems...I just want to forget things and then, once I get high to forget my problems, I stop caring about my health, I stop caring about my hygiene...I start seeing my kids less—it affects my mental health, drastically... like I just start giving up on life, basically.” – 02907 Resident

Housing AFFORDABILITY

- One out of every two households (50%) is housing cost burdened, meaning that they pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing related expenses, including utilities. Among owners, 38% are cost burdened and 31% pay more than 35% of their gross income on housing related expenses. **More than half (55%) of renters in the HEZ are cost burdened.**
- As a household’s most significant expense, high housing costs diminish community and family resilience during crises, including recent COVID-19 related physical distancing.

HOMELESSNESS

- Due in part to a **lack of affordable housing options**, the HEZ has a high concentration of homeless service providers and is home to a significant number of homeless individuals and families.
- Based on partner organization estimates in late April, there are **approximately 230 residents staying in homeless shelters across the HEZ with an additional 100–150 going unsheltered on any given evening.**