

IRENE WINIFRED ENO GRANT

RESEARCH PROJECT

Title: Design Resources for Homelessness

Researcher:

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Architecture and Design, designresourcesforhomelessness.org

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
INTERIOR
DESIGNERS



FOUNDATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABSTRACT

Design Resources for Homelessness is an online knowledge source that brings research-informed, curated information and guidance regarding the design and construction of facilities for persons experiencing homelessness to design professionals and others. Its four objectives are to:

- Provide resources on designing effective facilities to advocacy organizations, design practitioners, design researchers, and students
- Promote and make transparent the advantages effective environmental design can have in serving residents, staff, sponsoring organizations, and the public
- Connect homelessness stakeholders (designers, organizations, and homeless persons themselves) together and promote a community that shares its ideas on shelter environments for the general betterment of the disadvantaged, and by extension, society at large
- Provide a platform from which data can be collected and analyzed for further research

The *Design Resources for Homelessness* content includes:

- A review of research with literature anthology that summarizes over 125 empirical studies identifying findings that impact design choices.
- Four case studies of housing first/supportive housing and homeless shelters from across the United States. Through photos, commentary, and interviews, the case studies share best practices and lessons learned.

- Two spotlight reports discussing research-informed information on the needs and perceptions of subgroups within the larger homeless population including victims of domestic violence and families.
- “Great Ideas,” a collection of small, practical inclusions within these environments that can bring comfort and assistance to residents.
- Databases of designers and projects for persons experiencing homelessness so that organizations can visit positive precedent projects to help inform their future decision-making.
- Database of government and NGO organizations for designers that offer information and training on the issue of homelessness.
- A bibliography of research studies that can assist designers in forming and defending their design choices.

SIGNIFICANCE

A review of current literature and information suggests there is currently a lack of available information on quality design concepts that can lead to built environment solutions for serving the currently and recently homeless. Potential benefits include ideas that provide better space usage, less perceived crowding, and more support for residents’ self esteem. It is often the case that designers and architects are new to designing for these populations, and may need easily accessed, curated background information to help them make effective choices.

The psychological impact of housing spaces and their potential for healing for the disadvantaged are not yet fully understood, much less anticipated and planned for in their architectural design. However, a growing

body of research and related information now exists that could be assistive to those organizations and the professional designers they hire to construct new housing, or renovate existing facilities. Environmental psychology, sociology, architecture, and interior design research have practical information to offer, for example, on the psychological impact of color, the effects of crowding, and other qualities of interior space that can either assist or negatively impact occupants, often at no extra construction cost. Design Resources for Homelessness acts as a translator of research ideas, offered in a practical form for architects and designers who are often pressed for time in their design projects.

Other organizations have endorsed the need and mission for Design Resources for Homelessness including the National Coalition for the Homeless and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, an entity of the Florida legislature that distributes over 100 million dollars of low-income loans to developers of low-income housing per year.

RESEARCHER BIO

Jill Pable is a professor in the Interior Architecture and Design Department at Florida State University and a fellow and past national president of the Interior Design Educators Council. She holds B.S. and M.F.A. degrees in Interior Design and a Ph.D. degree in Instructional Technology with specialization in architecture. Her research focuses on the design of environments for the disadvantaged and she is the originator of the Design Resources for Homelessness initiative, a research-informed non-profit online information source for architectural designers and organizations creating environments for people's recovery from the trauma of homelessness. She is the author and co-author respectively of *Sketching Interiors at the Speed of Thought* and *Interior Design: Strategies for Teaching and Learning* and was included in the list of 30 Most Admired Design Educators in the United States in the 2015 annual DesignIntelligence rankings. She believes that design can make life more interesting, fulfilling, and humane.



Community room of the New Genesis Apartments, Los Angeles.

Skid Row Housing Trust.
Architecture: Killefer Flammang.
Interior Design: Collaborative House. Photography by Mary E. Nichols. New Genesis Apartments is the subject of a case study published on the *Design Resources for Homelessness* website.

DISSEMINATION

- Pable, J. (2016, January). *Architectural ramifications for U.S. public-private homeless shelter funding*. Presentation at the Housed by Choice, Housed by Force- Homes, Conflict and Conflicting Interests meeting of Architecture: Media, Politics and Society, Nicosia, Cyprus.
- Pable, J. (2016, September 8). *Through the lens of lived human experience: United States case studies of supportive housing and shelters*. Presentation at the Government and Housing in a Time of Crisis: Policy, Planning, Design and Delivery conference by Architecture: Media, Politics and Society, Liverpool, England.
- Pable, J. (2016, October 20). *Student workshop: Tiny Houses for Empowerment and Dignity*. Invited event at the Caine College of the Arts, Utah State University.
- Pable, J. (2016, October 20). Designing for trauma relief: *How research can shape designed environments for the homeless*. Invited lecture: Caine College of the Arts, Utah State University.

PRESS

- College of Fine Arts, Department of Interior Architecture and Design blog:
- June 27, 2016: <http://interiordesign.fsu.edu/iad-faculty-jill-pable-presents-design-resources-for-homelessness/>
- Anderton, F. (Executive Producer). (2016, July 25). Design for Skid Row. [Audio podcast]. DnA: Design and Architecture, a radio show of KCRW National Public Radio, Los Angeles, CA. Retrieved from <http://www.kcrw.com/news-culture/shows/design-and-architecture/design-for-skid-row-politics-aspectacle-sewing-machine-ravel>
- Erickson, D. (2016, July 13). *TBA title*. Wisconsin State Journal. [audio interview provided on why it's important for homeless shelters to be designed well and what good design looks like].
- ASID ICON blog: August 5, 2016: Make Space for Rehab and Recovery. Retrieved from <http://icon.asid.org/index.php/2016/08/05/make-space-for-rehab-and-recovery/>