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### A Qualitative Analysis of the Impact of Internet Access on the Experience of the Houseless

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**Abstract:** *As the Internet has radically changed economic activity and personal connection, much attention has been paid to the outcomes produced by the diffusion of online access. The literature indicates that in the modern economy, reliable Internet access is a crucial tool offering better access to information and opportunities, increasing work efficiency, and facilitating personal connection, and those without it are often left with a significant disadvantage. This project seeks to investigate the impacts Internet access - or lack of it - has on the experience of the unhoused. I conducted interviews with local case managers and shelter staff and focus groups with their clientele - which includes both the local unhoused population and those in transitional and permanent, supportive housing - to gather their experiences. This project is very exploratory and focuses mostly on the stories of a small sample of local participants, but the results have been in line with the literature in reflecting the importance of Internet access. Accessing social services, housing and job opportunities, education, personal connections and community, and fun activities can all be done with the aid of reliable Internet access, and all participants stressed that it has been an important resource in their journeys (especially during the Covid-19 pandemic). These findings suggest that empowering access to the Internet would be a useful resource in aiding the unhoused, with impacts on their economic situation, morale, and personal well-being. This access also gives them an avenue to pursue personal interests and empowers them to be part of bettering their situation, which has the added benefit of letting the unhoused feel like normal, capable people, when often they are made to feel less than others.*