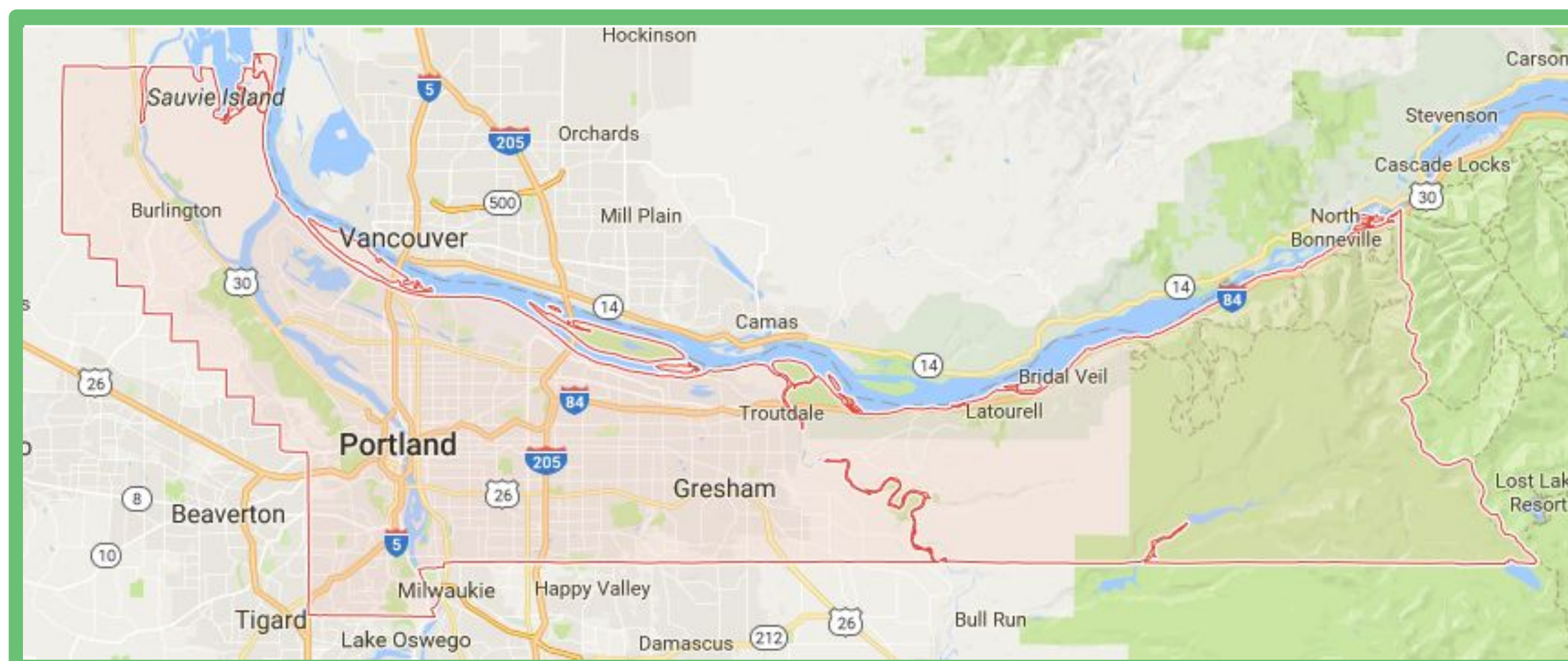


# No Address, No Problem: Recommending Policy Changes to Improve Access for Patrons Without Residential Addresses

## The Problem

Multnomah County Library serves a large population of people experiencing homelessness. This project's aim is to reduce barriers for members of our community who lack a residential address.



## The Process

- Researching the practices used by innovative public library systems across the US
- Working alongside employee groups and staff members at MCL to discuss what the system is already doing to improve equity of access
- Contacting other library systems to discuss their practices, policies and trajectories
- Working with MCL's data analysts to find out the biggest needs for our patrons

## The Results

- Many library systems have much stricter requirements (proof of address, government ID, etc.) than MCL.
- Several library systems are putting a lot of effort into eliminating barriers, whether that's through the language the staff uses, making policies more flexible, or allowing for patrons to use the library in ways that work best for them.
- A few systems are far above average, and have come up with creative ways to encourage more equitable access for all the members of their community.

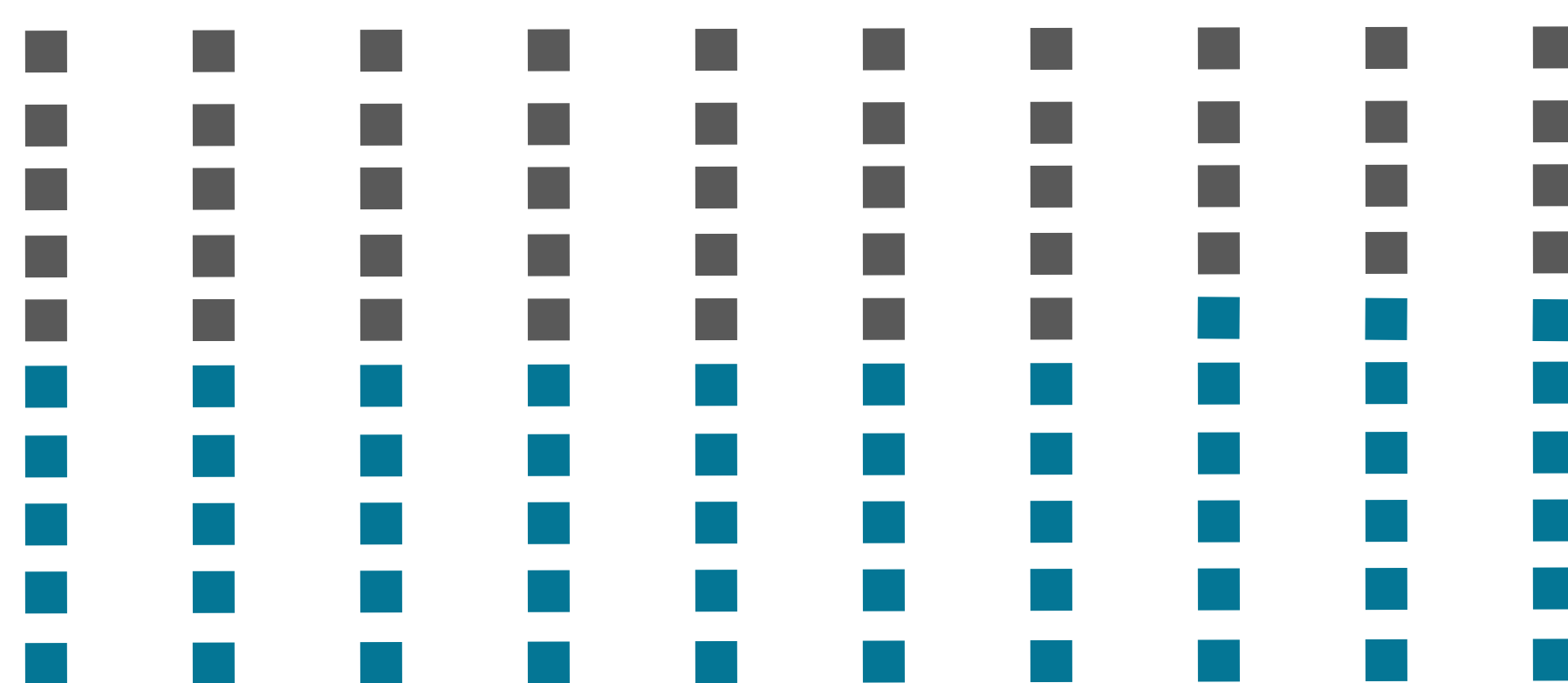
## The Future

The main final recommendations, based on the research:

- Allow staff to make exceptions if patrons cannot provide a residential address within the free service area, and prevent this exception from restricting access
- Add a new account type that allows patrons to use computers and check out a limited number of items without providing an address

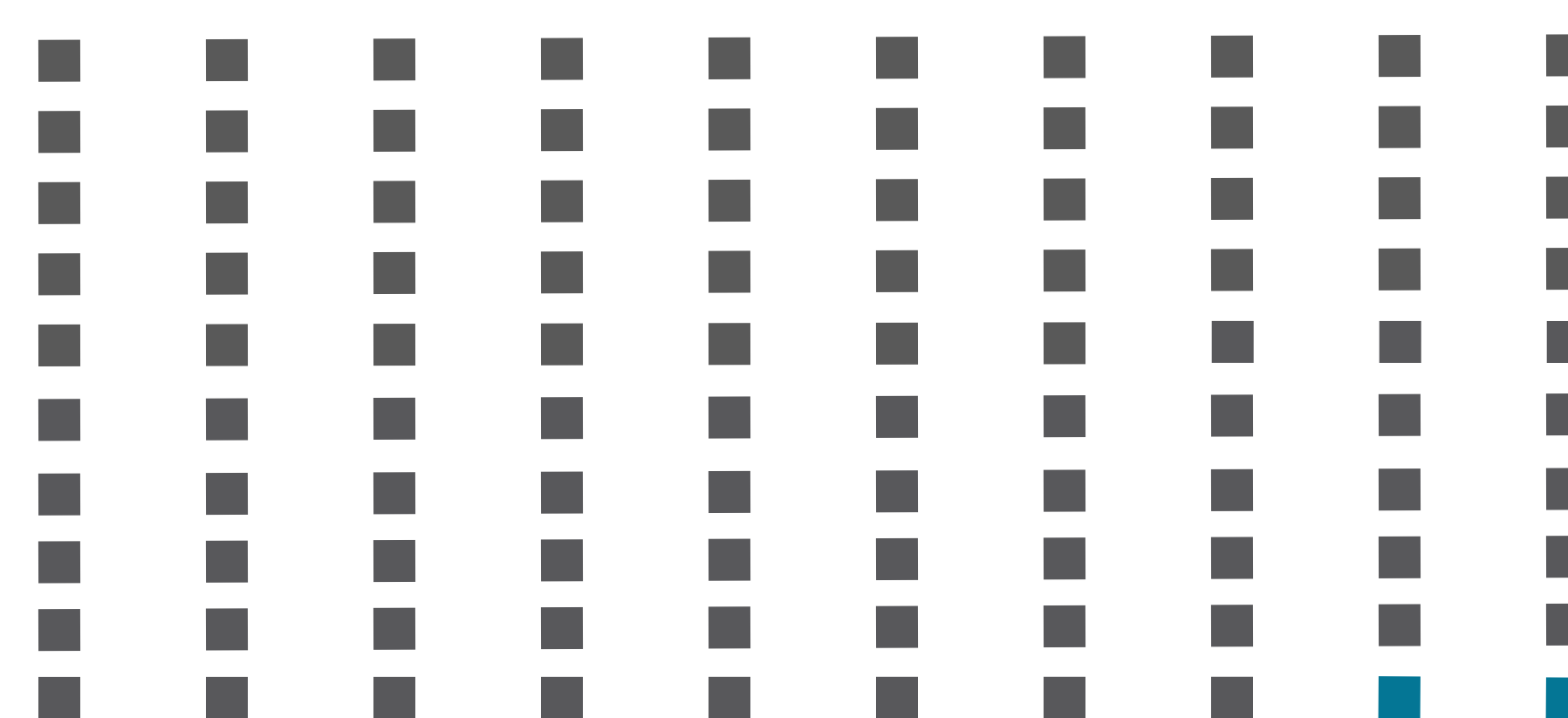
Special thanks to: Jennifer Steward, Multnomah County Library, and many other public libraries across the US.

If this is the total population of Multnomah County...



...the blue dots are the people with Multnomah County Library cards.

If this is the total population of Multnomah County...



...the blue dots are the people experiencing homelessness.



Information School  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



Multnomah County  
**Library**