

How should our community respond to ensure that those who are homeless with disabilities have equitable access to shelter and resources? **Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 9.15.23**

Si Se Puede Juntos!

We must use our lives to make the world a better place to live, not just to acquire things. That is what we are put on the earth for . . . Every moment is an organizing opportunity, every person a potential activist, every minute a chance to change the world.”

— *Delores Huerta*

Issues/Questions to Consider

- How are TACID and other organizations approaching needs of racial/ethnic communities and individuals who may feel distrust because of racial bias and cultural differences. This may apply to members of tribal communities and other groups -- given the history of racism, displacement, medical bias, etc.
- Noted unique challenges of people with disability such as difficulty setting up a tent -- and that this is common.
- What about people considered "too well off" to get certain services, but need too much care to get into a shelter or use other services. This midrange group may have particular challenges getting access to services. This relates to people refused access to shelters because they are told there is nobody to help a person with these needs.
- Overall, lots of new people added to HMIS who exceed the number of shelter beds. Concerned that they are moving outward -- where they may feel safe to set up a tent and not be mishandled.
- Would Adult Family Homes (AFH) be a good place to serve folks w/ disabilities who are living on the street but want shelter?
- Is there anyone doing street outreach that can help folks with disabilities to understand their benefits, help them connect w/ DSHS if needed?
- What are the laws/policies around who a shelter has to let in? Is there a way to support shelters to build capacity so they can accept folks with more challenges?
- We're not dealing well with the individual; challenges that people on the streets face. One size does not fit all.
- Seems to be a disproportionate of people on street that have wheelchairs and other mobility devices.
- People develop disability from stresses of street.
- Discussed importance of trying to have medical staff at congregate shelters to address and assess the needs of those served by the shelter.
- Discussed potential conflicts, overlap, of determining the roll of the shelter staff to address disability.

Solutions Offered

- Even though TACID's mission isn't directly related to homelessness, their voice in advocacy will be helpful.

- Intentionality in language & rhetoric to wider community.
- Consciousness raising campaigns because the wider community is unaware of the barriers & lack of resources if it doesn't touch them directly
- Could we have someone from DSHS or one of the insurers (e.g. Molina) who understands this system, come speak to our group?
- There is a critical need for Case managers to be readily available with a reasonable case load to determine needs surrounding their disability(s).
- We need to march in the streets. A lot of frustration with elected and their failure to pay attention. They are not dealing with reality.
- We need more mobile outreach and New Hopes.
- We need to put up candidates to challenge our elected. They don't pay attention to anything that's not on fire. We need to light this issue on fire for them.
- Need resource providers under one roof on a permanent basis especially for those with disabilities so that they are not forced to travel from one location to another to avail themselves of the service.

Notes and Resources List

New and Notable

Finding a Home in Tacoma: A community conversation about homelessness. In conjunction with the Tacoma Reads book *A Place Called Home: a memoir* by David Ambroz, Building Bridges will facilitate a panel and community conversation about homelessness in Tacoma. The panel will feature local advocates Richard Dorsett, Theresa Power-Drutis and Jay Worley who will share their experiences working with Tacoma's unhoused community. Following the panel, the speakers will take questions from the audience. Join us at **Parable** and be part of the conversation! Sept. 16, 2 – 4:30 pm. 3502 McKinley Ave, 98404. More info: adult-services@tacomalibrary.org

A memorial service for all the people who died in homelessness over the last three months Sunday at Shiloh Baptist Church, 1211 S I St, Tacoma 98405, 5 PM, All are welcome.

Get Engaged in Planning for your Community. Interactive workshop to consider housing and other land use futures in Pierce County. Sept 16, 9 am – 12 noon, First United Methodist Church, 621 Tacoma Ave South. Fellowship Hall (basement level back entry). Sponsored by Tacoma Pierce County League of Women Voters. No fee

TEMS 4 Community Meeting, 6pm on October 5th at Mt. Tahoma High School.

Mark Askins at Miracle Messages assists individuals to reconnect with loved ones be they family or friends. 650-421-5804

Blue Star Families, Rachel Carpenter has new office serving PC active / veteran military with community resources, community transitions/resources. www.bluestarfam.org

Collaboration for a Cause offers an easy way for individuals and families to access resources and employment opportunities right in their own community. Employers, education providers, and organizations throughout Pierce County will connect with our community in one place at one time to connect people to resources and services to find stability and quality employment. Attendees can connect to a variety of services including basic needs, employment, education & training, health, youth, LGBTQ+, veterans, and disability services. We expect over 1,000 people in attendance for this one day event, coming to the Tacoma Dome on Wednesday, November 1st from 10am-4pm! Registration for a vendor space and sponsorship ends on September 14, with standard vendor registration ending on October 1. Register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/collaboration-for-a-cause-vendor-registration-registration-685886865077>

Community Spotlight Opportunity: Tell the coalition about your organization's good work. Contact tpdrutis@nctacoma.org to schedule a brief presentation. 🙏

Other Upcoming Dates

September 21,28,29: Housing Washington 2023 Pre -conference Virtual lunches. Free access when registered for the Housing Washington annual conference (see Oct 3-5 entry)

October 3-5: Housing Washington annual affordable housing conference. Tacoma Convention Center, 1500 Commerce Street . Cost \$0-\$300. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/housing-washington-2023-tickets-690168120427?aff=oddtcreator>

October 5: Elevate Health is hosting a 4-hour workshop, "Navigating Overwhelm" This is geared toward community health workers (includes those who bridge the gap between folks in need and those who can access resources, especially healthcare). The topic is to show how we can build resiliency to deflect the risk of burnout. Register at [BIT.LY/3Q8WFOF](https://bit.ly/3Q8WFOF)

October 5-6: Annual Conference on Ending Homelessness. Virtual conference by Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. Full conference cost \$250 non-members, \$170 for members. Scholarships for 2023 have been awarded but ask to be notified of 2024 scholarship availability. Register at <https://www.wliha.org/conference>

Oct 10: World Homeless Day. Observed internationally to bring awareness and action in support of the 100 million+ persons worldwide who do not have safe and secure shelter. Multiple actions possible.

Oct 11-Nov.14: One year anniversary of City Council vote and implementation of the Tacoma camping buffer zone ban and intensified sweeps in affected zones. Various activities TBA.

October 19: Zoom Webinar: Tenant Protections in Tacoma – Update on Tacoma's New Rental Housing Code and Proposed Changes on the Ballot. 6-7 pm : (presentation by

Wyatt Fisher, Housing Justice Project Staff Attorney with Tacoma Pro Bono Community Lawyers. Sponsored by Coalition to End Homelessness, Tacoma/Pierce Co. League of Women voters, Tacoma Pro Bono). No fee.

October 20: Out of the Box Conference on Housing. 10 am-3 pm. Sponsored by Fair Housing Center of Washington held at The STAR Center 3873 S 66th St Tacoma. \$35 registration through Eventbrite.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/out-of-the-box-conference-on-housing-registration-661508177767?aff=oddtcreator>

Early 2024: Un-conference on Housing Options for 0-30% AMI Residents. Organized by Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness.

Recent Press

New Bipartisan Bill would Advance Economic Security for Disabled Americans

<https://thearc.org/blog/new-bipartisan-bill-would-advance-economic-security-for-disabled-americans/#:~:text=The%20SSI%20Savings%20Penalty%20Elimination%20Act%20would%20raise%20the%20SSI,correct%20a%20harmful%20marriage%20penalty.>

The Daily podcast from the New York Times on Covid Vaccine

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/podcasts/the-daily/covid-vaccine-uptick.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap>

Your Local Epidemiologist on Substack: <https://yourlocalepidemiologist.substack.com/>

Ongoing Resources and Needs

Covid is still here.

<https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-people/provider-resources/homelessness-providers-toolkit>

Outreach Supply Need and Share form: <https://forms.gle/2zfK8Y5JvC1K5eXLA>

Safe Sites

<https://ss4a.pchomeless.org>

How to sign up for Coalition listserv:

You can sign up for the email lists here: <http://pchomeless.org/Home/Listserv>

Pierce County Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness can be found here:

<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/7309/Comprehensive-Plan-to-End-Homelessness>

Please sign up to the inclement weather listserv at

<https://www.pchomeless.org/Home/Listserv>