

What are the priorities for city and county collaboration on homelessness right now?

Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 9.22.23

Lines written in the days of growing darkness

Every year we have been
witness to it: how the
world descends

into a rich mash, in order that
it may resume.
And therefore
who would cry out

to the petals on the ground
to stay,
knowing as we must,
how the vivacity of what was is married
to the vitality of what will be?

I don't say
it's easy, but
what else will do

if the love one claims to have for the world
be true?

So let us go on, cheerfully enough,
this and every crisping day,

though the sun be swinging east,
and the ponds be cold and black,
and the sweets of the year be doomed.

— *Mary Oliver*

“The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying, and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum, a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.” —*Antonio Gramsci*

“We need to hospice the dying and midwife the new!” —*Sally Perkins*

“To be clear, it was boring and shitty, but there were some glimmers of progress.” —*Rob Huff*

Priorities to Address

- Read Homelessness Is a Housing Problem!
- Coordinate and collaborate on true data and transparency.
- Accurate daily shelter availability reporting.
- How do the city and county work together to increase resources?
- Need more leadership on grant support from County (King and Sno doing much better).
- Improve the barriers to shelter access by folk w disabilities.
- Need 24/7 coordination for weather response.
- Centralized resource centers that are 24/7.
- Stop the sweeps! Fund permanent supportive housing! Fund outreach!
- Trust building is not just between the councils, also with the community & providers.
- Increase proactive approaches that are about prevention: infrastructure, rent caps, min wage.

- Address structural issues like low-income housing and living wage employment opportunity.
- Policy piece – is there low-income housing being built (yes/no – group had different opinions about income eligibility).
- Need to fund homeless prevention.
- A lot of prevention funded during pandemic going away, such as landlord tenant services.
- Make it legal to live in vehicle homes.
- More spaces for safe parking and camping.
- Understanding of what the camping ban is and is not accomplishing.
- If we cannot actually provide shelter, we need to provide things that make immediate, material improvements in unhoused people’s lives - hot food, hygiene, laundry resources.
- Each municipality could offer a minimum of 1% of its population worth of shelter.
- Programs receiving public funds should provide metrics: quality and impact measure.
- Data needs to be correct, and disaggregated by geography, demographics, etc. and capacity for funding for data capacity should come from sources different than those designated for housing, services, etc.
- Pool resources with a centralized resource closet to streamline getting items out to people.
- Importance of hiring leadership/staff outside of the county who can build trust and bring equity expertise.
- Importance of shelter/place specifically for people who want to get clean while waiting for admission to treatment.
- Coordinated entry needs a serious overhaul; need responses that are both standardized and adaptive to individual circumstances.
- Importance of services being co-located (e.g., community center models, triage, not everyone can network).
- Move ahead with the URA as described, with MOU -> ILA model. “Move quickly.”
- As part of the URA, create advisory committees focused on this issue and include those with lived experience. Need to dispel myths for council members and include the voice of those with experience.
- Build another large encampment like the one at 35th/Pacific, that is sustainable, affordable, and self-managed.
- Note that programs need to include significant follow-up for people in recovery. Important for policy-makers to know that treatment alone is not enough, and money is needed for additional support following treatment.
- Five things: leadership, call to action, break down the damned silos, communicate with the public and develop affordable housing.
- City and County are not building equity for the future. need to better coordinate on better use of land and other public resources.

- When we sell off our public property it is lost forever - the "opportunity costs" of shrinking public (social/workforce/whatever you want to call it) housing don't seem to be considered and they should be.
- Unhoused people are a We issue rather than a Them issue; a reflection of system failure we all have a responsibility for.
- Need city and county on same page pulling in same direction.

Possible Coalition Action Items

- Need specific asks to be effective.
- Need to hold City and County accountable; coming to the table isn't enough.
- It would be helpful to have regular representation at those joint meetings and can report back to the Coalition - such as Rob
- Have to educate about rural homelessness - recognize that unhoused people are everywhere
- Repeal camping ban (county could be pressure point).

Notes and Resources List

New and Notable

Lived Experience Panel + Comedy from Sam Miller

Hey y'all. Come out for this free event if you got the time. We're gonna have food, some presentations, a lived experience panel talk about their expertise in surviving houseless in Pierce County and then close with a Sam Miller show. Sam previously experienced homelessness and then worked in our provider community at shelters and schools before pursuing comedy full time. At 621 Tacoma Ave on Thursday, Sept 28, 5:30-9

Support raising the SSI savings limit to \$10K. This is a long overdue and critical update based on inflation - \$2000 is not a safety net in this economy. This is a homeless prevention measure. <https://ndss.org/news/ssi-savings-penalty-elimination-act-letter-support>

Community meeting on TEMS 4 site extension: NCS is asking city council to extend the contract for the TEMS site a 69th & Proctor (TEMS 4) from Dec 2023 to unknown time. Thursday, Oct 5, 2023 from 6-7pm at Mount Tahoma High School Presentation Rm #108, 4634 S 74th St, Tacoma, WA 98409

"Out of the Box" Conference, Fair Housing Center of Washington. Oct 20 in Tacoma at the Star Center. Info at <https://fhc.washington.org/october-conference/>. If able to provide a ticket (\$35 for community members, contact Rosemary Powers at rpowers@eou.edu

Free covid tests available as of Monday the 25th. <https://www.covid.gov/tests>

Family Resource Center Info

<https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-people/family-support-partnership/family-support-centers>

TPCHD data page: <https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-people/diseases/covid-19/pierce-county-cases>

WA DOH new respiratory illness dashboard: <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/diseases-and-chronic-conditions/communicable-disease-surveillance-data/respiratory-illness-data-dashboard>

Richard Dorsett has a dozen copies of A Place Called Home available. Let him know if you need a copy or know someone. More copies arriving soon.

Free Adult Vaccine flyer, call ahead to ask about FLU:

<https://www.tpchd.org/home/showpublisheddocument/1715/638163732748330000>

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 Tacomaprobono 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>

November 1: Collaboration for a Cause puts resources and services in in one place at one time to help find find stability and quality employment in their own community. 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>

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

Recent Press

2023 Pierce County Racial Equity Analysis avail at
<https://www.affordablehousingconsortium.org/reports>

Employment Opportunity

CCS Safe Parking now has 6 openings. Referents can call 253.719.9333 for a screening.

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>