



The Road Home

Tacoma / Lakewood / Pierce County Continuum of Care
In Partnership with Pierce County Human Services

Continuum of Care 5-Year Plan

Feedback on Priority Area and Population

Goals and Strategies

[Feedback Integrated as of 10.2.19](#)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #1: HOUSING

Maximize the use of existing housing while advocating for additional housing resources and more affordable housing.

Goal #1:

The percentage of exits to permanent housing increases to at least 60%.

Strategies:

1. Help people coming to Coordinated Entry compile the necessary documentation for any housing scenario, and strongly encourage participation in Renter Readiness program.
2. Train Coordinated Entry providers on the housing and economic resources outside of the formal homeless system so that they can educate people who are homeless but do not qualify for a housing referral and would benefit from these resources.
3. Increase diversion resources by engaging the support of non-government funders.
4. Expand how diversion resources can be used—from eviction costs and other housing debts that can serve as a barrier to staff costs required of service providers to administer the diversion program.
5. Increase coordination between service providers and Tacoma and Pierce County Housing Authorities to ensure that people who exit the system with a housing voucher are supported in using it successfully.
6. Conduct an outreach campaign about the Landlord Liaison Project, educating landlords about the program and the resources available when they accept individuals exiting the homeless system.
7. Promote and increase the use of the Foundational Community Support program across the system for individuals with higher needs or barriers to housing, and advocate for the program's permanent implementation.
8. Conduct an assessment to determine the resources or infrastructure needed to establish a countywide universal housing application to reduce costs for individuals applying for housing.
9. Support and expand existing share housing models and programs within Pierce County.
 - a. *Create a stronger partnership between the formal homeless system and Share Housing Services to expand housing options for homeless households who come to Coordinated Entry.*
 - b. *Increase the number of hosted homes across the county and outside of Tacoma and Lakewood.*

10. Monitor demographics of people coming into the system compared to those leaving the system to ensure that People of Color, including Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Latinx individuals, and LGBTQ people are being served equitably.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #1: HOUSING

Goal #2:

380 additional permanent supportive housing (PSH) units are made available through new construction and other strategies.

Strategies:

1. Advocate for the use of new and potential funding streams be put toward the development of new PSH units.
2. Advocate for resources to be committed to PSH providers for the purpose of delivering supportive services.
3. Free up PSH units by increasing the use of “move-on” vouchers for residents that are stable and ready to move to non-supportive housing.
4. Engage PSH providers based in other counties to increase their units in Pierce County through master leasing and other creative use of existing unused properties.
5. Assess the need for population-specific PSH units and share findings with both PSH developers and program providers to guide decision-making around allocating units.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #1: HOUSING

Goal #3:

450 affordable housing units for homeless households are made available through new construction and other strategies.

Strategies:

1. Advocate for the use of local funding from [new and potential funding streams](#) to be put toward development of new affordable housing units reserved for homeless households.
2. Increase the number of homeless housing set asides in existing affordable housing complexes.
3. Update zoning codes so that affordable housing units, [from apartments to tiny homes](#), can be built within more communities.
4. Advocate for increased multi-family zoning and DADUs/ADUs throughout the county to create more rental units that could be accessed by people exiting homelessness through Section 8 Vouchers, the Landlord Liaison Program, Shared Housing Services, and the Foundational Community Support program.
5. Advocate to expand local governments' developer and landlord incentives (e.g., multifamily tax exemption, low income housing tax credit, etc.) for constructing and providing affordable housing rental and ownership units reserved specifically for homeless families.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #2: STABILITY

Support the stability of individuals experiencing homelessness and those recently housed.

Goal #1:

All people experiencing homelessness can access emergency shelter on demand, with no wait times.

Strategies:

1. Create a unified emergency shelter system in Pierce County that more efficiently connects people seeking shelter with an open bed and more effectively facilitates their transition to permanent housing.
 - a. *Leverage technology to create an online, real-time database of open beds across shelters that is accessible to the public.*
 - b. *Develop stronger connections between emergency shelters and coordinated entry.*
 - c. *Improve collaboration between shelters and stability services.*
2. Assess the demand for emergency shelter in locations across Pierce County and increase capacity countywide by at least 100 beds in the geographic areas with the greatest need.
3. Engage additional and diverse community partners in providing shelter countywide.
4. Advocate for a portion of new and potential funding streams to be put toward increasing shelter capacity.
5. Monitor demographics of people coming to shelters compared to those actually accepted into shelters to ensure that People of Color, including Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Latinx individuals, and LGBTQ people are being served equitably.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #2: STABILITY

Goal #2:

The percentage of households that maintain permanent housing for more than two years after exiting the system increases to 90%.

Strategies:

1. Implement a “care coordination” model for the homeless system, similar to the one in healthcare, that provides wraparound services starting when a household first enters the system up through the initial period following a move to permanent housing.
 - a. *Expand CTI systemwide and to all populations after the current pilot with homeless families ends in 2020.*
 - b. *Establish a system to support individuals participating in diversion and who refuse CTI, following up with them at 30 and 90 days and offering connections to services that could help them maintain housing long-term.*
2. Coordinate with private funders to create an emergency fund with small grants for previously homeless households facing minor crises that could lead to a return to homelessness.
3. Ensure all providers are fully informed about the variety of services and benefits available (e.g., mental health care, transportation, workforce programs, Foundational Community Supports, etc.) so that they can better support the stability of the people they serve.
4. Promote the use of protective payee services for individuals who need this kind of financial management assistance to maintain their housing.
5. Increase on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities, supported employment, and other strategies that offer access to employment and career pathways.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #3: SYSTEM AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Create a more responsive, accessible crisis response system.

Goal #1:

The percent of people engaged through street outreach who move to a more positive outcome than their current situation increases to 15%.

Strategies:

1. Engage street outreach providers in a learning collaborative to coordinate data, improve street outreach practices, and ensure the entire county is being covered.
2. Create standard operating procedures for street outreach teams across the county.
3. Advocate for a reduction in the documentation required to access services.
4. Establish a flexible fund for use by street outreach staff to support the basic needs of the people they serve, which is often the first step to getting them to move to a more positive outcome.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #3: SYSTEM AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Goal #2:

Reduce the wait time for a housing solutions conversation to one day or less.

Strategies:

1. Create and sustain a system where all people coming to coordinated entry can participate in a housing solutions conversation on demand.
 - a. *Appropriately staff coordinated entry sites so that all people can be served the same day.*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #3: SYSTEM AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Goal #3:

There is equitable distribution of and access to homeless services throughout Pierce County.

Strategies:

1. Conduct a needs assessment to determine where the greatest unmet needs exist in the county, and develop a plan to expand distribution of homeless services accordingly.
2. Increase access to Coordinated Entry throughout the county, including by expanding the presence of outreach teams countywide.
3. Ensure organizations expert in serving populations who face the greatest racial disparities are funded.
4. When evaluating funding proposals, consider organizations' work to address racial equity in order to ensure that providers around the county will be able to serve all populations effectively.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #3: SYSTEM AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Goal #4:

The homeless system reflects our communities and is responsive, equitable and well-trained in cultural awareness and humility and best practices.

Strategies:

1. Increase the cultural awareness and humility of providers and require organizations to learn about and work from an equity/anti-racist framework.
2. Ensure translation services are available to people accessing Coordinated Entry.
3. Maintain resources for Provider Academy after 2020 to continue building capacity of providers.
4. Develop a “homeless system 101” training in which all new service-provider staff are required to participate and make it available to prospective providers.
 - a. Include training as detailed in WAC 388-61A-1080.
5. Recruit organizations operated by People of Color, including Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Latinx individuals, and LGBTQ people to apply for funding to be CE organizations or service providers within the homeless system.
6. Require all organizations that receive CoC funding to have an equity plan in place.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #4: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Optimize and leverage internal and external partnerships to better prevent and address homelessness.

Goal #1:

Homelessness funding throughout the county is aligned towards a shared set of goals, measures, and overall strategies and centered around a commitment to equity.

Strategies:

1. Convene homeless-funder leadership from cities, the County, and philanthropic organizations to work toward increasing alignment and explore solutions where alignment is not possible.
 - a. *Focus on aligning funding priorities, measures, data collection, and definitions of homelessness (where possible)*
 - b. *Unite funders around a shared commitment to equity.*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #4: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Goal #2:

Intersecting systems, coalitions, and organizations are collaborating effectively to prevent and address homelessness.

Strategies:

1. Identify, coordinate, and align with existing efforts in other relevant sectors—e.g., healthcare, criminal justice, foster care, workforce development, transportation, education, etc.—that are focused on working with individuals experiencing homelessness or working to address homelessness.
2. Collaborate with healthcare, mental healthcare, justice, and foster care system leaders in Pierce County to develop a discharge planning strategy to prevent people from being released into homelessness.
3. Begin dialogue with local Sovereign Nations to identify their goals, points of collaboration, and opportunities to work together.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #5: THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

Grow awareness of the CoC's purpose and 5-year plan, and serve as a central advocacy and coordinating body for addressing homelessness in Pierce County.

Goal #1:

The CoC's 5-year plan is broadly supported by those who could further the plan's successful implementation.

Strategies:

1. Develop and implement a communications strategy to increase awareness of Pierce County homelessness, the CoC, and the goals and activities of the 5-year plan.
2. Maintain ongoing communication with elected leaders at local, county, and state levels about Pierce County homelessness and the 5-year plan.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA #5: THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

Goal #2:

CoC membership reflects the sectors needed to solve homelessness and the demographics of the people served by the homeless system.

Strategies:

1. Become an accessible place informed by cultural humility and driven by racial equity and brand CoC communications to reflect this culture.
2. Develop a membership recruitment strategy that invites participation from a variety of sectors and prioritizes representation that reflects those served by the homeless system.

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

Individuals with a disabling condition who have either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or who have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

Goal:

90% of formerly chronically homeless individuals remain housed two years after securing permanent housing.

Strategies:

1. Create easier access to economic resources that can support housing stability for chronically homeless individuals.
 - a. Ensure that case managers are connecting chronically homeless individuals who are entering housing with all mainstream benefits available to them.
 - b. Increase the number of individuals within the County who are SOAR certified and actively connecting chronically homeless individuals entering permanent supportive housing with federal benefits.
 - c. Increase the use of Foundational Community Supports to pay for services that will help chronically homeless individuals stay housed.
2. Invest in rapid rehousing providers so that they are prepared to effectively support chronically homeless individuals.
 - a. *Encourage participation in Provider Academy trainings by rapid rehousing providers to increase their effectiveness in working with the most vulnerable and highest-need populations.*
 - b. *Integrate behavioral and mental health resources into rapid rehousing services through partnerships with mental health agencies, hiring of trained staff, and other approaches identified by service providers.*

FAMILIES (HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN)

Households with at least one minor child and one adult, including single or partnered pregnant females.

Goal:

90% of formerly homeless families remain housed two years after securing permanent housing.

Strategies:

1. Focus on helping families access and use existing childcare resources and programs.
2. Establish a committee to explore and recommend innovative approaches to creating affordable, accessible childcare that could be implemented in Pierce County.
3. Coordinate with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department to create a process for seamlessly connecting families who come to Coordinated Entry with the nearest Family Support Center.

VETERANS

Individuals who have served in some capacity, for at least 1 day, with the armed forces or reserve.

Goal:

90% of formerly homeless veterans remain housed two years after securing permanent housing.

Strategies:

1. Have the HUD-VASH program implement graduation contact protocols, as outlined within VHA Directive 1162.05, in which Veterans who have graduated from HUD-VASH case management are contacted at least yearly for assessment as to whether or not re-enrollment in case management and/or increased service provision is indicated in order to sustain housing.
2. Strategically expand delivery of the Renter Readiness program to reach more veterans.
 - a. *Engage and support VA community partners in the fields of education, employment, and financial services to deliver the program.*
3. Increase Veterans' access to transportation services to ensure they can obtain and sustain employment and continue to access services once they are housed.
 - a. *Collaborate with efforts currently being undertaken by Pierce County Veterans Assistance Fund.*
 - b. *Work with local governments and community partners to identify transportation resources, maximize veterans' access, and develop new transportation resources if needed.*
4. Support a collaboration between HUD-VASH, the Landlord Liaison Program, housing authorities or others to help with landlord engagement around veteran renters.
5. Conduct research on the feasibility of creating landlord incentives for taking veteran renters.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Individuals who are self-identified survivors of domestic violence, whether fleeing, attempting to flee or neither.

Goal:

90% of formerly homeless DV survivors remain housed two year(s) after securing permanent housing.

Strategies:

1. Launch and sustain up to 10 new support groups for DV survivors across the county, as a means of helping them remain independently housed and not return to abuser(s).

a. Engage Family Support Centers and other community partners to host the groups.

2. Educate human services and housing organizations on the urgency of mental health services for DV survivors, as well as the resources available, and encourage organization staff to connect DV survivors they engage with to these services.

3. Create a DV survivors fund dedicated to helping them leave their abuser(s) and stabilize.

YOUTH (Ages 12-24)

Individuals under the age of 25, who are unaccompanied.

Goal:

90% of formerly homeless youth and young adults remain housed two year(s) after securing permanent housing.

Strategies:

1. Create a "housing coach" program to mentor youth and young adults in the basics of maintaining a home, from buying groceries and furniture to budgeting and paying rent and utilities on time.
2. Facilitate housing support groups to help youth and young adults maintain existing social connections and develop new ones with peers who've been recently housed.
3. Identify financial resources that can be used to support youth and young adults who qualify as homeless under McKinney Vento and are not literally homeless.
4. Identify and/or develop safe housing options for youth under 18 who cannot sign their own leases.

HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT CHILDREN

Households that include at least one adult and no minor children, youth, or young adults—and are not already listed in another population.

Goal:

90% of households without children—that are not part of another priority population—remain housed two year(s) after securing permanent housing.

Strategies:

1. Increase access to employment, education, and training programs by creating stronger partnerships with Valeo Vocation, Goodwill, Workforce Central, Skookum and Vadis to support successful employment.
2. Create easier access to economic resources that can support housing stability for households without children.
 - a. *During the coordinated entry intake assessment, engage households without children in a conversation to determine what mainstream benefits they qualify for and whether they are accessing them, and connect them.*
 - b. *Continuously promote the opportunity to apply for a Section 8 voucher to households without children who are not a part of any other priority population.*