

CLARK COUNTY  
**HOMELESS  
ACTION  
PLAN**

2019-2022

*Framework  
For Action*

**DRAFT AUGUST 2018**



## Council for the Homeless

2500 Main Street  
Vancouver, WA 98660

**Administrative Office:** (360) 993-9561

**Housing Hotline:** (360) 695-9677

**Email:** [Info@councilforthehomeless.org](mailto:Info@councilforthehomeless.org)

**Website:** [www.councilforthehomeless.org](http://www.councilforthehomeless.org)

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# Executive Summary

Homelessness is a growing challenge in Clark County. **Over 2,593 unduplicated households experienced homelessness in 2017, including 1,401 children under 18<sup>1</sup>.** The need and interest in an updated, targeted and robust community action plan is high. As the collaborative applicant or lead agency for the Clark County/City of Vancouver Continuum of Care (CoC), the Council for the Homeless (“The Council”) was tasked with creating plan focused on the next three to four years to address homelessness in our community. The **2019-2022 Clark County Homeless Action Plan (“Plan”)** focuses on the role of the **Homeless Crisis Response System (HCRS) in Clark County, WA** in ending homelessness. It captures and elaborates on a multi-faceted approach to service analysis, delivery, and response to create lasting impact and change for those experiencing homelessness. Utilizing and executing best practice approaches and extensive community feedback, the Council has identified key strategies to decrease the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in our community over the next three years.

## Method

**The Clark County Homeless Action Plan (Plan) was developed to provide vision, direction and ready to implement solutions for our community’s work to end homelessness.** This plan will be updated every three-four years however progress reports will be released annually. The Plan was created with input and feedback from members of the general community including key leaders and stakeholders, homeless service providers and individuals experiencing homelessness. Feedback was gathered utilizing a series of in-person forums held at various locations throughout the community, soliciting feedback at community meetings and online surveys developed with each specific target population in mind. The Council received an overwhelming response to their request for participation, with 78 people participating in community forums and 806 completing the online-survey. Respondents were asked their thoughts, vision and priorities on a variety of homeless topics that have directly shaped this Plan.

## Results

This Homeless Action Plan represents **Clark County’s shared vision to build a community that helps people who are homeless move into housing.** With the assistance of Clark County Public Health, the Council analyzed results from our public forums and surveys and has listed overarching findings below with more detailed results examined throughout this Plan.

This Plan **works towards a common philosophy that ending homelessness is achievable. In Clark County, when people do end up homeless, it is our vision that through partnerships and ongoing attention we can make sure their experience is rare, brief, positive and one-time.** Aiming to make sure

that when homelessness is experienced, individuals are immediately connected to resources to regain stability, this Plan offers a diverse client-centered approach to meeting the needs of people who are homeless in Clark County. Encompassing more than just overarching strategies, **this Plan sets important population-specific goals based off community feedback for Veterans, people who are chronically homeless, couples and families.**

### **AREAS OF INCREASED FOCUS IN THIS PLAN**

- Increase Mobile Outreach and Engagement
- Strengthen Prevention and Diversion Practices
- Meet the Basic Needs of People who are Unsheltered
- Leverage Community Resources and Investments to Reduce Homelessness and Impact Outcomes
- Increase Housing Options and Transition Support for People Coming out of Systems of Care
- Engage the Expertise of People with Lived Experience
- Continual Community and System Educational Opportunities

## Recommendations

With a focus on continuous improvement, this Plan calls out a need for a re-occurring assessment model that 1) Identifies, 2) Assists, and 3) Resolves homelessness utilizing the HCRS as a fulcrum for action and partners as catalysts for change. Through continued dialogue, community education and persistent pursuit of best practice approaches our community can reduce the number of individuals and families locally experiencing homelessness. To achieve this, the plan sustains and adds promising and best practices in addition to creating a detailed list of goals, timelines, and policy recommendations over the next four years (2019-2022).



### **Core Elements of the Homeless Action Plan:**

- **IDENTIFY:** Create and implement strategies to more effectively and rapidly identify who is without a home, and work to recognize and provide for their basic and housing needs. Key resources such as community partners, the homeless crisis response system, and our mobile street outreach teams will be utilized to develop a laser-like focus on moving households to permanent housing. Utilizing low-barrier interim housing consisting of emergency shelter and transitional housing (for youth and domestic violence survivors) will also be key.
- **ASSIST:** Provide clear and rapid pathways to programs that prevent homelessness. Particularly, this Plan focuses on upstream solutions to serving those most at-risk and placing homeless households in permanent housing, effectively ending their homelessness. Diversion, Prevention, Rapid Re-housing and Supportive Housing programs are all critical permanent housing interventions and resources applied in this Plan. All resources utilize the coordinated entry and assessment to effectively triage households into programs that best meet and fit their needs. This element includes a focus on increasing service delivery to Veterans, people who are chronically homeless, families and youth (ages 12-24). Increasing the capacity of permanent housing programs is necessary in order to effectively reduce homelessness.
- **RESOLVE:** Build, advocate and act on key protective factors for individuals who are at-risk of or are experiencing homelessness. Create a safety net of support, including employment, behavioral health, peer services and Housing First programming.

"Our community is our greatest asset. This plan creates an opportunity for us to move forward together in ways like never before to address homelessness."

~ Kate Budd  
Council for the Homeless

# Introduction & Scope

**Clark County has been working to prevent and end homelessness since the 1980s.** During that time, significant improvements have been made to our homeless crisis response system. Clark County utilizes a continuum of care that spans from outreach and emergency shelter to rental assistance, case management, housing placement and permanent housing. Sophisticated data collection and analysis is built into each of the HCRS programs to track progress toward performance measures and make improvements, as needed.

Creating a cohesive and effective plan to identify, assist and resolve homelessness in our community is critical. Those who go without adequate housing often experience not only the instability of homelessness, but dramatic effects on their health and overall well-being. It's an issue that requires deep rooted partnerships, community involvement, effective planning, continual assessment, significant investment and policy change.

The [2015-2018 Clark County Homeless Action Plan](#) aimed to ensure our local system was as effective, efficient, and as client-centered as possible. The Plan was utilized in several ways. Funders used the Plan to make decisions regarding allocations of resources, while providers of homeless services used it to inform program design and services delivery. In addition, Task-forces used the Plan as a catalyst for change and development. These taskforces consisted of the following; 1) Continuum of Care (CoC) Steering Committee, 2) CoC Coordinated Assessment Workgroup, 3) Coalition of Service Providers, 4) Housing First Cohort, and 5) Severe Weather Task Force. These groups were assigned responsibility for addressing homeless needs in Clark County and recommending policy priorities for our community. For a description of taskforces reference Appendix V.

**Since 2015 noteworthy progress has been made to address homelessness in Clark County including;**

- The addition of 54 permanent supportive housing beds;
- The addition of 18 single female beds;
- An increase of 40 households receiving rapid-rehousing services;
- Over 100 households received diversion services, and;
- The addition of two new street outreach team members to identify and connect homeless populations.

This **2019-2022 Clark County Homeless Action Plan ("Plan")** builds upon the foundation of past plans by gaining valuable insight from the community, service providers and those experiencing the homeless system. By planning for and anticipating system and community changes the local HCRS can better address the needs of individuals and families. With a comprehensive and well-established continuum of care at the core of the Plan, this next iteration targets best practice approaches, systemic opportunities for improvement and tactical stakeholder engagement to establish goals, outline plans, and determine clear deliverables to address homelessness in the years to come.



Over half a million people are homeless in the United States on any given night [according to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#). HUD, the Washington State Department of Commerce and this plan, defines "**Literally Homeless**" as **an individual or household living outside or in a building not meant for human habitation or which they have no legal right to occupy, in an emergency shelter, or in a temporary housing program which may include a transitional and supportive housing program if habitation time limits exist. The definition also includes people/households who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain permanent housing.** The issue and numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness has increased considerably, up and down the West Coast in urban, suburban, rural and frontier communities. **On any given day, approximately 355 people, including 44 families, in Clark County are experiencing unsheltered homelessness, according to the 2018 Point-in-Time Count. Hundreds more are at-risk of losing their homes** due to uncertain financial conditions, loss of employment, chronic and persistent health conditions, release from other systems of care, chemical dependency, and domestic violence situations and more. In addition to this, competitive employment, stagnant wages, rising housing costs, and lack of affordable housing further exacerbates the issue.

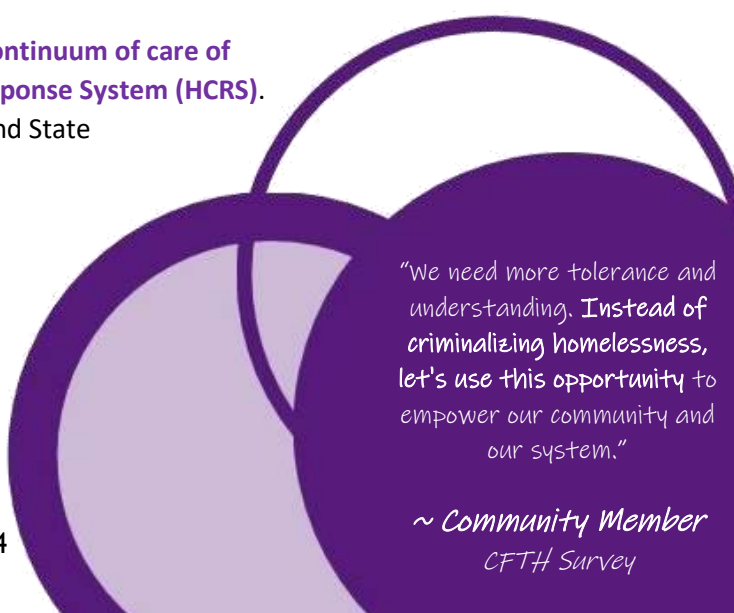
Homelessness does not discriminate in our community. It does not distinguish between races or background. It does not have one type of look, face, lifestyle or persona. It is universal. It affects men, women, families, children, seniors, veterans and many more. It can come in many forms. It can be a process that slowly happens, or it can occur suddenly.

**The Clark County Homeless Crisis Response System (HCRS) has undergone several transformations over the past several decades.** Between 2005-2014, the number of people identified as unsheltered homeless in the one-day Point-in-Time homeless count decreased by almost half, while the same one-day count in 2017 and 2018 saw a dramatic increase from prior years with more individuals than ever experiencing homelessness in our community.

Clark County's Homeless Action Plan maps out the plan for the HCRS to decrease the number of people who are homeless throughout the county. Many of the goals, strategies, funding streams, and measurement tools are commonly shared between the City of Vancouver, Clark County and other system funders.

**The scope of the 2019-2022 Plan is limited to the continuum of care of homeless services, which is the Homeless Crisis Response System (HCRS).**

The HCRS is designed around very specific Federal and State performance measurement outcomes that seek to meet people's immediate needs when they lose their housing. Then, help them return to a stable housing situation as quickly as possible coupled with the wraparound support they need to not return.



*"We need more tolerance and understanding. Instead of criminalizing homelessness, let's use this opportunity to empower our community and our system."*

*~ Community Member  
CFTH Survey*



Ending homelessness is a multi-tiered approach that requires resources above and beyond the crisis response system, including the leveraging of other systems of care such as healthcare (both physical, behavioral and oral), employment training and placement, and affordable housing.

**This plan, along with the goals and strategies within it, will allow our community and partners to more effectively direct assistance to populations or people who are homeless and services that fill gaps and address needs in the current system of care.** It is written with the guiding philosophy and community goal that no person should experience homelessness in Clark County, but if a person does become homeless, they will be met with a responsive system of care that treats the whole individual while working to address the chronic and persistent causes of homelessness.

This visual illustrates focus areas that are not a part of the HCRS. For example, offering affordable housing coupled with behavioral and physical health services are often integral supports for someone exiting from homelessness and stabilizing in housing. However, these supports are a component of other outside efforts that needs to be closely partnered with the HCRS.



Figure 1: Illustrates the focus areas that are not a part of the Homeless Crisis Response



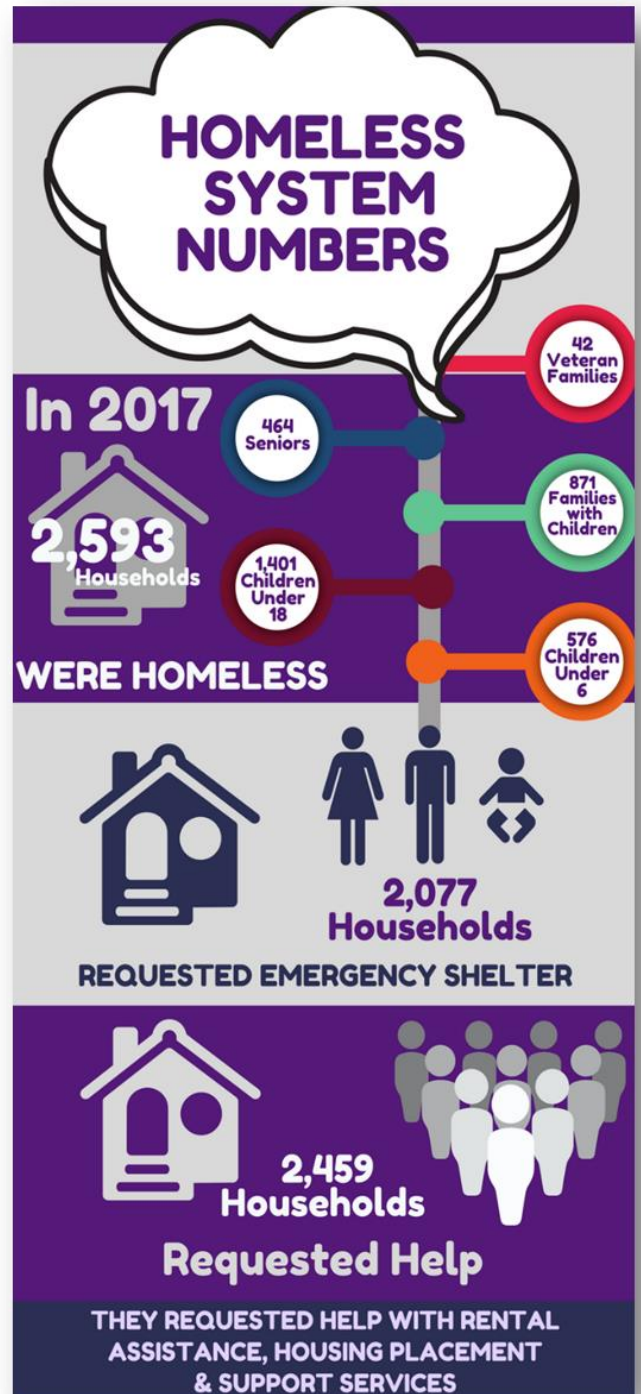
# Extent of Homelessness

## Contributing Factors

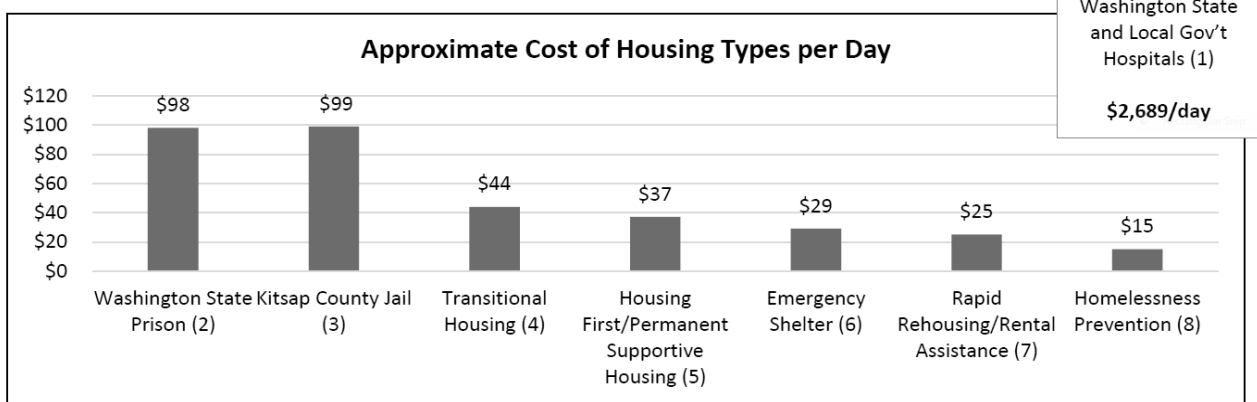
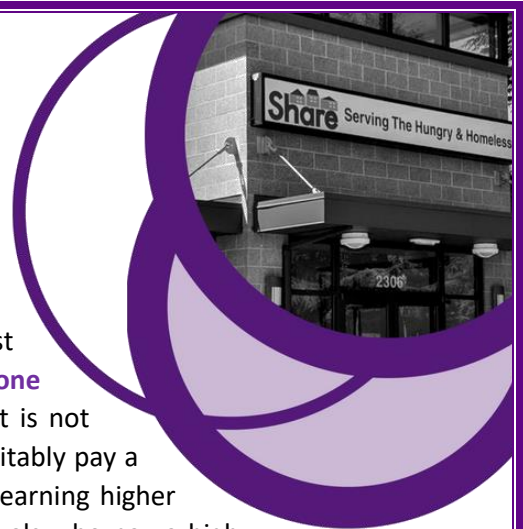
The housing affordability crisis in the United States, particularly up and down the West coast has been a driving factor for a growing homeless population. Homelessness has increased in Washington State due to multiple factors, but overwhelmingly because increasing rents are pushing people living at the margins into homelessness. In 2017 alone, Clark County had 2,593 homeless households seeking assistance through the Housing Solutions Center. Housing stability is essential for people to address challenges and pursue growth opportunities.

According to the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, substantial evidence indicates that when people—both adults and children alike—experience homelessness, their prospects for future educational attainment, employment growth, health stability, and family preservation are significantly reduced<sup>ii</sup>. While local Rapid Re-housing housing programs have an 86 percent success rate, only 10 percent of those who tried to access a housing program in 2017 actually got in.<sup>iii</sup> Local agencies and nonprofits find that it isn't always about having enough housing programs available in the community, but rather having the right type of housing program available that matches with the services, needs and eligibility of the individuals needing to be housed.

[Council for the Homeless' Housing Solutions Center](#), which serves as the community's coordinated entry and access for emergency shelter and housing programs, hear frequent stories from people falling behind on rent and wages even though they are holding multiple jobs<sup>iv</sup>. **Those who have fallen into homelessness and/or live paycheck-to-paycheck can't afford move-in costs.** The Great Recession both locally and nationally has had a significant impact on both housing and employment even in 2018. During the Great Recession, building of new rental units, came to a sudden and jarring halt. Half built complexes were abandoned, and the single home foreclosure rate increased sharply. It's only been since 2015-2016 that building has slowly picked up and foreclosure rates have fallen.



Our region continues to experience a significant rise in the cost of living with a limited availability of affordable housing units and shrinking vacancy rates. **With the average Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment increasing from \$900 per month in 2013, to over \$1300 a month in 2018, and vacancy rates dropping to 2.1%.** To make matters worse, wages have remained fairly-stagnant over the past several years with the **average median income reported by HUD for one person being \$28,500 and \$40,700 for a household of four.** When it is not possible to obtain affordable housing, residents with low incomes inevitably pay a larger percentage of their income toward housing costs than people earning higher incomes, or they combine households to share housing costs. Individuals who pay a high proportion of their income for housing costs and those who are living in overcrowded situations are at increased risk for homelessness. **Many individuals and families who are low-income forced to make critical choices when their income is not sufficient to meet their basic living needs.** It may mean fewer meals, no health care, loss of utilities, overcrowded housing, eviction or even homelessness.



(1) 2010 Kaiser State Health Facts  
 (2) Washington State Prison, 2016  
 (3) Kitsap County Sheriff's Office, 2017  
 (4)(6)(7)(8) Washington State Department of Commerce, State Homeless Housing System Overview  
 (5) 1811 East Lake Project, Seattle, DESC.

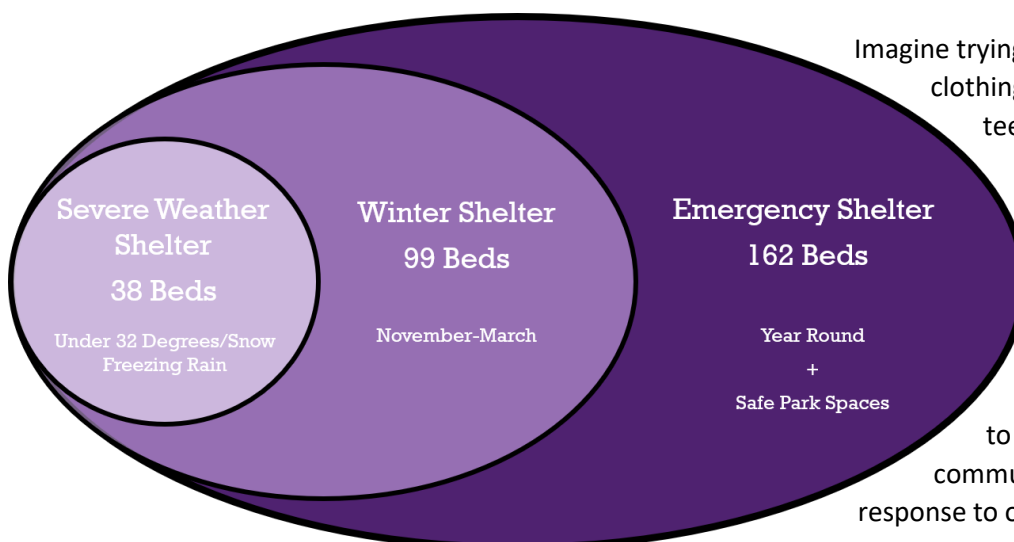
According to the City of Vancouver, our community is experiencing a significant demand for rental units with historically low vacancy rates and rapidly increasing rents. **Approximately half of all renters in our community are considered cost-burdened (meaning that they spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing per month.)**<sup>vi</sup> The challenges and opportunities facing the region point to the need for a more coordinated and aligned approach to understanding and addressing homelessness and the complex systems that surround it. Compacting this issue is the growing concern for when individuals exit from and leave other systems of care (i.e. jail, treatment facilities, etc.) without adequate housing arrangements they often end up in the Crisis Response System. In 2017 alone, the number of individuals that left the jail setting and received assessments for housing was 140 with only 71 of those scoring into permanent supported housing. A **new report** from the **Prison Policy Initiative** titled *Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people* explores the link between homelessness and incarceration in the United States. The research shows that formerly incarcerated people are nearly ten times more likely to be homeless than the general population. In addition, only 24% of individuals without homes who are assessed as needing intensive supports from other systems of care (i.e. mental health facilities, hospitals, treatment facilities, etc.) are placed into permanent housing at exit.<sup>vii</sup>

## Breaking the Cycle

With our local economy improving and fair market rents at an all-time high, it is vital to break the cycle of homelessness by building pathways to opportunity in Clark County. One way people who are homeless remain dehumanized is through myths and stereotypes being accepted as facts. Homelessness is traumatic and people living on the streets are merely trying to meet their basic needs, the best way they know how. **With over 81% of people who are homeless in Clark County identifying their last permanent zip code being from Clark County**, only 5% are from throughout Washington, and only 6% are from Oregon, those who are without homes are former neighbors.<sup>viii</sup> During our county-wide surveys stakeholders were asked about their perceptions on homelessness and responses varied significantly. **Over 60% of individuals identified that they want to live in a community that helps people who are homeless** by a variety of options including increasing programming and housing options, having a more active and present community role, and connecting more individuals to resources and increasing outreach our community is ripe for change. With this said, there is still more work to do regarding assisting our community with understanding homelessness including the causes and the factors that perpetuate and repeat the cycle of homelessness.

With over 16% of individuals sharing in the Action Plan survey that they believed many individuals in our community are choosing to be homeless or are homeless because of drug addiction or mental illness it is imperative that community education and a shared framework of understanding is built within and amongst our community stakeholders. **It is rare that individuals prefer life on the streets. Instead people prefer to live in a place where they can make their own decisions and rules. Finding a housed environment for that person to live by those desires is possible and can be done through the Housing First Supportive Housing model.** Whether it be discharging from other systems of care, behavioral health challenges, physical disabilities, the loss of a loved one that provided financial stability, the inability to gain and sustain stable employment, returning from war or serving our country or other life events, we live in a society and culture that perpetuates stereotypes of homelessness that make it even more difficult for someone to escape the very system they are trying to avoid.

With emergency shelters, transitional housing and affordable housing units at a premium throughout Clark County, there is not one component of the HCRS that has adequate capacity to meet the need. This includes **many households not having access to even the most basic of needs including a dry and safe place to sleep, a shower, storage for their belongings and restrooms. Over 64.3% of Action Plan survey respondents desire an increase in basic needs facilities to help them get back on their feet.**



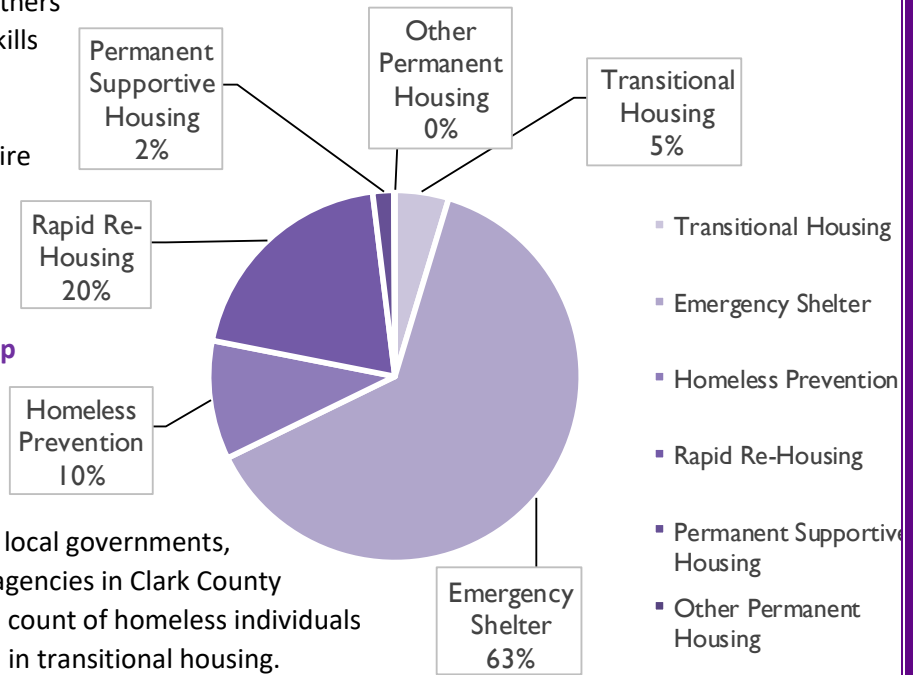
Imagine trying to find a job without clean clothing, being able brushing your teeth or even showering. It would be unfair and unjust to expect the homeless population to be competitive in the growing job market without the basic needs, tools and support they need to be productive in our community. Therefore, our response to outreach, engagement and

connection to our Housing Solutions Center (HSC) and robust list of community partners offering employment, health and life skills support amongst other elements must increase.

People experiencing homelessness desire to receive support. **Over 52% of people experiencing homelessness in our Action Plan survey shared that increasing rent assistance and support for interim housing would help them move out of homelessness. With an additional 48% sharing more move-in costs support and individual coaching could help them move out of homelessness.**

Each year local governments, homeless providers and social service agencies in Clark County participate in a one day “point in time” count of homeless individuals and families— on the street, in shelters, in transitional housing.

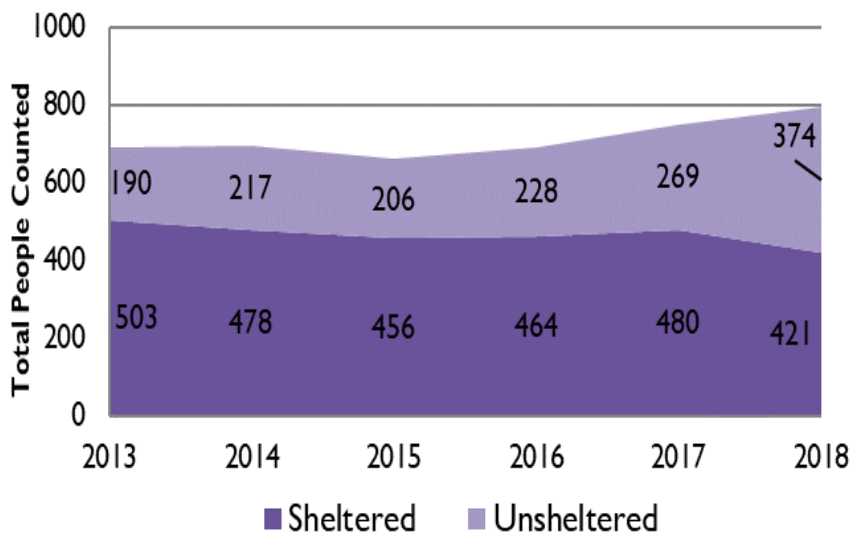
### Individuals Served By Housing Type



The 2018 Point in Time Count (PIT) for Clark County took place on January 25, 2018. **With an increase of people living outside by 39%, staff and volunteers counted 374 people living outside this year compared to 190 people living**

**outside in 2013.** The PIT is generally considered an undercount of the actual number of homeless people living in our community given the difficulty of finding and counting everyone in a single day. It does however, create a baseline and allows trends to be tracked over time. The chart above offers a comparison of homelessness PIT counts over the last five years and notes key patterns and changes we have seen among populations.

### Point in Time Count (2013-2018)



**The highest increase in this year’s numbers was the number of unsheltered individuals (39%) and the number of veterans (21 in 2018 vs. 7 in 2017) entering the homeless system.** Although the PIT gives our community a good snapshot of homelessness the best indicator of future homelessness is past homelessness. With over 16% of homeless individuals in Clark County experiencing homelessness more than once, it is statistically more likely that individuals will need to re-use the Homeless Crisis Response System more than once, if not effectively stabilized.

Figure 1: The number of people identified as homeless on a single day in January.

## Clark County Homeless Demographic Breakdown

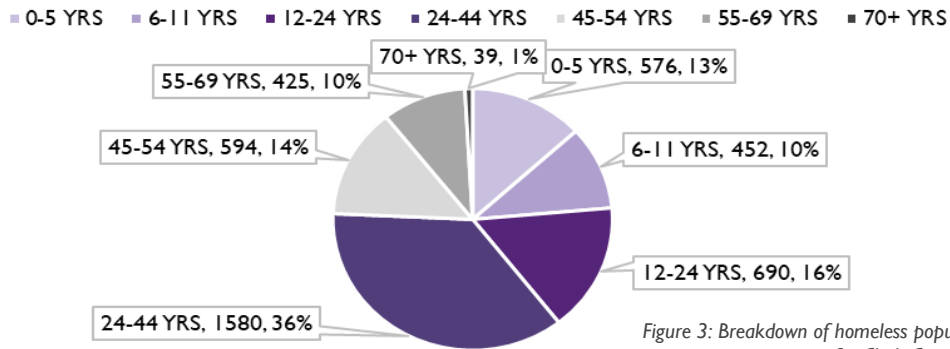
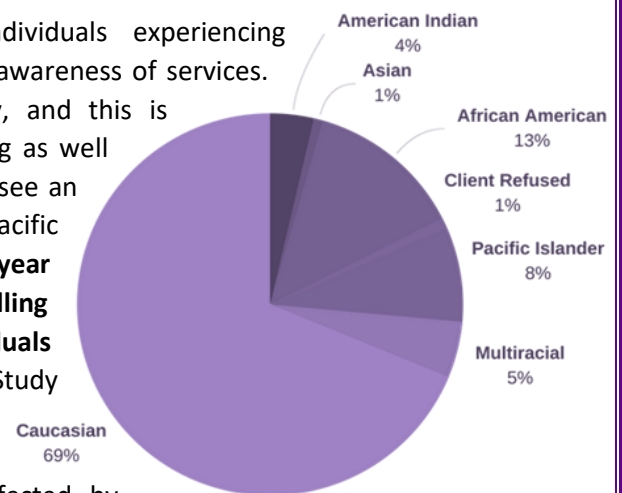


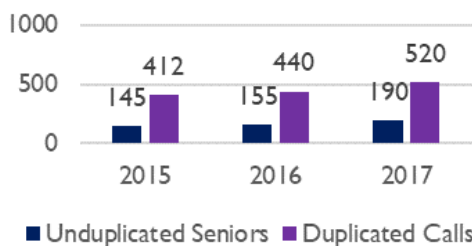
Figure 3: Breakdown of homeless population demographics from HMIS for Clark County, 2017

To create effective services and to utilize our Homeless Crisis Response System and it is important to understand who is experiencing homelessness in Clark County.

**RACE AND ETHNICITY:** The race and ethnicity of individuals experiencing homelessness is valuable information to ensure the cultural awareness of services. Clark County remains relatively limited on racial diversity, and this is reflected in the individuals who are homeless we are serving as well with **69% identifying as Caucasian**. Our area is beginning to see an increase in the number of African American (13%) and Pacific Islander (8%) populations experiencing homelessness. **Every year we see an increase in additional minorities and ethnicities falling into homelessness with over 508 Hispanic or Latino individuals experiencing homelessness in 2017 alone.** The recent SPARC Study through the Center for Social Innovation reinforced previous national findings identifying people who are Black, American Indian and Alaska Natives as being disproportionately affected by homeless. In Clark County, this disproportionality is found among those identifying as African American. The need to provide culturally specific programming and progress equity and diversity among all HCRS agencies is high.



### Seniors Who are Literally Homeless



**GENDER:** The breakdown of homelessness by gender is equally dispersed between men and women. **With slightly more females finding themselves homeless (51.3%) compared to males (48.7%) according to HMIS.** With an additional 13 individuals identifying as a Transgendered-Female and 2 identifying as a Transgendered-Males our population is becoming more diverse. Opportunities exist to build relationships with local providers specializing in women and LGBTQ+ outreach as well as opportunities to design services, shelters and housing with these populations in mind.

**AGE:** With over 690 youth ages 12-24 experiencing homelessness and over 576 children under 6 years old experiencing homelessness in 2017, the relationships with School Districts and their safety net services is vital. If youth find themselves homeless, a comprehensive continuum of services need to be created to address their unique needs and stabilize them in housing rapidly. In 2017, Clark County saw a notable increase in the number of Seniors, age 62 or older seeking housing and repeatedly calling for assistance through the Housing Solutions Center.

# Community Engagement

## Forum & Survey Structure

The Homeless Action Plan was built on the backbone of community engagement, stakeholder input, and current system accomplishments and opportunities. It was comprised of a variety of perspectives and input gathered at in person community and shelter forums, electronic surveys and information from the [Homeless Management Information System \(HMIS\)](#) utilized to track current system and provider progress toward identified performance measurements targeted to ending homelessness. The forums were set up to reflect [World Café](#) facilitation styles in addition to [Community Impact](#) facilitation models to bring people together, encourage lively discussion and input and impart information for our community to implement social and systemic change.

Forums were conducted in a variety of locations throughout the county based on location accessibility and maximizing stakeholder engagement. Each forum followed the same format and was an hour a half in length. Topics included 1) Basic Needs, Access and Prioritization, 2) Crisis and Interim Housing, and 3) Assistance to Return to Housing. Participants were encouraged to discuss what was working well, what was needed and what specific ideas, practices, or models should be considered regarding effecting change within the three topic areas. Participants also had the opportunity to provide forum feedback and addition input or insight on post-in notes before leaving the forum. Forums at shelters and with program participants were geared towards engaging people currently experiencing homeless or were at-risk of homelessness. They were flexible in nature to allow more fluid conversations with participants to get at the heart of homeless needs and issues.

Surveys were designed individually for community members, service providers, and people experiencing homelessness. Questions were developed by referencing a variety of best practice approaches and settings for information gathering from across the nation. Utilizing the partnership of the Clark County Public Health (CCPH) department, questions were developed with the goal of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data to represent the perspectives, priorities, and general input of these three groups on subjects relating to homelessness, its causes, and potential solutions. Surveys were also vetted by CCPH for overall user experience and maximizing stakeholder readability and response. Responses from both the forum and surveys informed the structure and nature of this Plan.

There were 806 responses to the electronic survey, including, 111 Service Providers, 653 Community Members, and 42 Individuals Experiencing Homelessness responding. When asked what individuals wanted in a Homeless Action Plan, there were three overarching themes.

**COMMUNITY FORUMS**

COUNTY	LOCATION	DATE & TIME
NORTH CLARK COUNTY	Battle Ground Community Center 912 E Main St., Battle Ground, WA, 98604	(Wednesday, May 16th, 6:00-7:30pm)
EAST CLARK COUNTY	St. Thomas Aquinas Church-Camas 324 NE Oak St., Camas, WA, 98607	(Tuesday, June 5th, 3:00-4:30pm)
EAST VANCOUVER	Beautiful Savior Church 12513 SE Mill Plain Blvd, Vancouver, WA, 98684	Thursday, May 24th, 1:30-3:00pm
WEST VANCOUVER	Vancouver Housing Authority 2500 Main St., Vancouver, WA, 98660	(Thursday, June 7th, 6:00-7:30pm)
WEST VANCOUVER	YWCA Clark County 3609 Main Street, Vancouver, WA, 98665	(Tuesday, May 29th, 1:00-2:30pm)
CENTRAL VANCOUVER	Partners In Careers 3210 NE 52nd St., Vancouver, WA, 98665	Monday, June 11th, 1:00-2:30pm
CENTRAL VANCOUVER	Bud Van Cleve Community Room-Luke Jensen Field 4000 NE 78th St., Vancouver, WA, 98665	(Thursday, May 31st, 9:30-11:00am)

**SHELTER FORUMS**

SHelter	DATE & TIME
SHARE--HOMESTEAD	May 9th, 7:00-8:00pm
SHARE HOUSE	May 29th, 7:00pm-8:00pm
WHAT--ST. LUKE'S	May 16th, 8:20-9:00pm
OPEN HOUSE MINISTRIES	June 11th, 6:00-6:30pm
DAY CENTER	May 20th, 2:00-3:00pm
SAFE CHOICE	June 18th, 6:30pm-7:10pm
SHARE--ORCHARDS INN	May 30th, 7:00-7:30pm
FRIENDS OF THE CARPENTER	June 20th, 1:00-2:00pm

People desired to see:

- 1) Best practice approaches and how Clark County measures up,
- 2) Clear outcomes for the work determined by the forum and stakeholder engagement,
- 3) Clear next steps for the plan and addressing homelessness in our community.

One of the most important question our survey’s, outreach and forums sought to answer was whether our community is allocating resources towards the right populations to truly get at the heart of homelessness. We asked community members, service providers and individuals living on the street all the same question, **“What type of assistance would you prioritize to help households experiencing homelessness move into and remain in stable housing?”**. Although the number one priority for all three populations was different, there was common consensus that prioritizing affordable housing and rent assistance to move individuals out of homelessness is required and necessary.

**“What type of assistance would you prioritize to help households experiencing homelessness move into and remain in stable housing”.**

<b>Community Members</b>	44.1%--Domestic Violence Support 42.4%--Affordable Housing Prioritized for Households Moving Out of Homelessness. 35.4%--Homelessness Prevention Rent Assistance and Support
<b>People Experiencing Homelessness</b>	52.4%--Rent Assistance and Support for Up to Two Years (Rapid-Rehousing) 47.6%--Move-In Cost Assistance and Coaching 42.9%--Affordable Housing Prioritized for Households Moving Out of Homelessness.
<b>Service Provider</b>	55.9%--Long Term Supportive Housing Programs (Housing First) 49.5%--Affordable Housing Prioritized for Households Moving Out of Homelessness 37.8%--Rent Assistance and Support for up to Two Years (Rapid Re-Housing)

Priority Populations:

- Families
- Veterans
- Youth (Ages 12-24)
- Individuals who are Chronically Homeless

Basic Need Priority:

- Emergency Shelter Beds
- Severe weather Shelter

During survey’s stakeholders were asked to identify **populations they believed needed additional resources to address homelessness**. No additional investments and additional resources for priority populations will come at the expense of all others who are homeless.

Based on the forum and survey feedback the Homeless Crisis Response System was directed to prioritize the following populations in order of priority: 1) Families, 2) Veterans, 3) Youth (Ages 12-24), and 4) Individuals who are Chronically Homeless. When asked **“What type of assistance would you prioritize to meet the basic needs of those living on the streets?”**, an alignment occurred between all survey

respondents in requesting an increase in **Emergency shelter beds (particularly for some of our most populations such as Domestic Violence Survivors, Couples and Single Women), 2) Severe weather shelter, 3) Shower, laundry and restrooms.**

# Guiding Principles: Research & Best Practices

## A Framework For Change

For years the Clark County area has been utilizing and adapting to best practice and leading approaches in the housing and homelessness field. This includes utilizing interventions, methods and techniques that have been consistently proven to be effective with homeless and at-risk of homelessness populations. **In an era of growing interest in developing solutions to homelessness, it is critical to know what works, why it works and for whom it works.** While there is a growing body of academic research on the causes and conditions of homelessness, the best practice approaches can most often be gleaned from other communities that are achieving identified outcomes.

### COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE HOUSING CRISIS Response System



## The Homeless Crisis Response System (HCRS)

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, **“an effective crisis response system is able to identify and quickly connect people who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing homelessness to housing assistance and other services. The system works because it aligns a community, its programs and services around one common goal—to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.** “To best understand how a system should work, we must first understand what an HCRS is and the role it plays in the larger homeless system of care. A crisis response system (HCRS) helps people exit homeless quickly. **The role of any HCRS is to identify those experiencing homelessness, prevent**

**homelessness when possible, connect people with housing quickly and provide services when needed.**

### HCRS Guiding Principles:

- All people deserve a decent & safe place to live
- Everyone is ready for housing.
- Our community has a responsibility to take care of one another
- All interventions must be data driven, outcomes based and effective

HCRS are mandated by HUD and the WA Department of Commerce, to have specific programming requirements. Service components include outreach, coordinated entry, diversion and targeted prevention, interim housing (emergency shelters and transitional housing) and supportive housing. A HCRS is made up of multiple partners, programs, and service levels. Often, it requires deep partnerships to create a fluid and streamlined referral network and web to move individuals between agencies and get them back into housing or place in housing options.

“Housing is a fundamental basic need. By committing as a community to serve our vulnerable homeless families, we affirm the humanitarian value that everyone deserves a safe and secure place to call home.”

~RJ Stangland  
Impact NW





To fund these programs, Clark County housing and service providers rely on a variety of federal, state, local and private funding sources including the Department of Commerce, HUD, Vancouver Housing Authority, City of Vancouver, Clark County Community Service, and Veteran Affairs to name a few. Specific overarching grants and funding streams are critical and ongoing to the system. In March 2018, the Washington State legislature increased to the amount of funding available for homeless programs through local and state grants utilizing additional income from deed recording fees ([House Bill 1570](#)). These funds will enter the system and be available for use starting July 2019.

Funding throughout community programs is invested utilizing the overarching philosophy that making homelessness rare, brief and one-time, is possible. In fact, communities across the country are already proving that they can end homelessness. **With 64 communities across the nation ending homelessness amongst Veterans and three ending homelessness among those who are chronically homeless<sup>ix</sup>**, a targeted approach that identifies those most in need can make a significant impact. Priority populations identified in this plan, do not come at the expense of other populations. But rather, targeted strategies will be identified to leverage additional resources, funding and programming to decrease the occurrences and growth of homelessness within populations deemed at significant risk by our community and data in this plan. Targeted services will be provided above and beyond current services when resources are available. **The priority of this Plan will be to target all individuals who are Unsheltered and under that umbrella focus on engaging 1) Families, 2) Veterans, 3) Youth (Ages 12-24) and 4) People who are Chronically Homeless.**

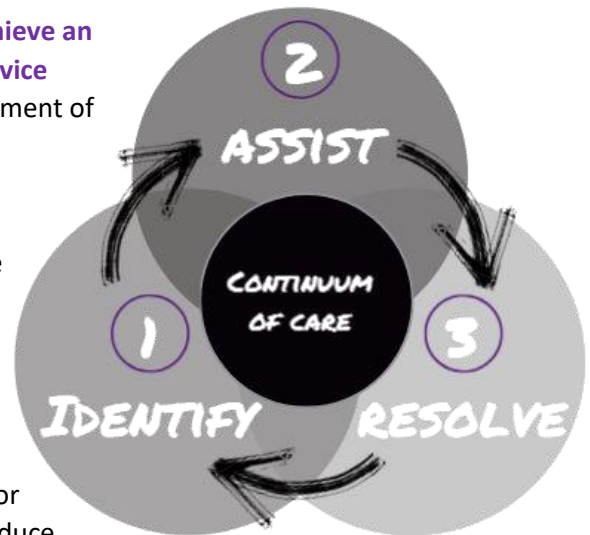
#### **Core Elements and Overarching Goals of a High Performing Homeless Crisis Response System:<sup>x</sup>**

- People living unsheltered are promptly identified and engaged for services.
- Everyone is housing ready.
- Diversion strategies are used first to solve a housing crisis.
- Households should not be in interim housing for longer than necessary because homelessness is traumatizing.
- Utilize the least costly and most effective intervention for each household to stabilize in housing. Emergency Shelters and transitional housing are extremely costly interventions.
- People are prioritized based on need using a transparent and consistent coordinated entry process.
- Access to housing and services is contingent on rules no more restrictive than necessary
- Housing and service goals are client driven and voluntary
- Clients are supported in developing housing stability plans that address client safety, barriers to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.
- Programs quickly move clients into affordable housing and support them to housing stability
- Programs provide the minimum assistance needed to secure housing and only offer more when it is necessary to prevent a return to homelessness.
- Interim Housing (Emergency and Transitional Shelter) is closely tied to permanent housing options at a rate of *one interim housing bed to five permanent housing options* to ensure households can exit homelessness effectively.
- Programs intervene with supportive housing when clients have a disability that impacts their ability to live independently and affordable housing placements have proven ineffective

# Clark County Homeless Strategy

The Homeless Crisis Response System (HCRS) aspires to achieve an optimized level of system performance for each type of service offered and for each population receiving services. Achievement of

these goals is directly connected to the availability of local resources, use of evidence-based practices, and high-quality service delivery and effective management of our current system. By aligning existing HCRS effective strategies to date with additional opportunities for improvement we have learned from others, we will create viable sustainable homeless solutions. Over the next three years, we will work with our community to develop and increasingly realize a shared vision in which homelessness is rare, brief and one time. This framework for change is a call to action for our community, listing our collective goals to significantly reduce homelessness Clark County, WA. The framework outlines ambitious yet achievable goals. This document is not meant to be a step by step guide for how to proceed. Rather, it provides a roadmap for launching funding efforts, additional community conversations, programming changes and policy adjustments. There is no single solution that solves homelessness. **It is a multi-tiered and multi-system issue that requires us to analyze data, listen to stakeholders, learn from those impacted by homelessness and continually adapt our continuum of care and system of services.** It requires flexibility, thoughtfulness and persistence. Goals and strategies targeted below are based on a combination of best practices approaches, enhancements to moving our current work forward, and direct feedback and input from providers, the community and those experiencing homelessness.



There is no single solution that solves homelessness. **It is a multi-tiered and multi-system issue that requires us to analyze data, listen to stakeholders, learn from those impacted by homelessness and continually adapt our continuum of care and system of services.** It requires flexibility, thoughtfulness and persistence. Goals and strategies targeted below are based on a combination of best practices approaches, enhancements to moving our current work forward, and direct feedback and input from providers, the community and those experiencing homelessness.



Seek to identify and intentionally engage with those without homes in the community to understand their barriers and goals.

- Increase the number of skilled and well-trained mobile outreach staff available to engage with those who are unsheltered.
- Increase the number of outreach staff trained to conduct the community's objective housing assessment.
- Identify dedicated outreach staff to serve as liaisons with law enforcement and other key entities that interact with people experiencing homelessness throughout the County.
- Increase the number of emergency shelter beds available in Clark County.
- Increase the skills and scope of outreach staff to allow them to work in tandem with Supportive Housing programs, to stabilize households.
- Leverage the capacity of staff for outreach identification and engagement from other systems of care.
- Learn from the expertise of people with lived homeless experience.
- Activate and collaborate with community volunteers to participate in identifying and engaging the homeless
- Increase the outreach effort related to the annual Point in Time Count.
- Prioritize staff training and lived experience expertise to strengthen outreach.

- Continue to work with partners to streamline data collection and data sharing efforts
- Continue progressing the Veterans by Name List and surrounding efforts to identify all Veterans who are sheltered and unsheltered.
- Create and sustain a Youth by Name List to begin addressing Youth. Do this in collaboration with a yet to be determined group of Youth.
- Invest in additional basic need options providing access to shower, laundry, storage and restrooms



Once a household has been identified, their homelessness or housing instability is resolved in an efficient manner with the least intensive supports. Focus on those who are most vulnerable.

- Increase the number of households served in all permanent housing types.
- Increase permanent housing options for Veterans, domestic violence survivors and people who are chronically homeless.
- Increase supported employment programs for those who are engaged in permanent supportive housing programs.
- Conduct a Veteran Challenge to increase resources and housing options available for Veterans in Clark County.
- Increase Rapid Re-housing capacity for all populations.
- Increase Diversion assistance capacity for those who are experiencing homelessness and those at targeted risk of homelessness
- Increase Housing First Supportive Housing capacity for families.
- Formally and intensively partner with safety net services to make sure households stabilize in permanent housing.



Once a household is stabilized in housing, they remain stable and do not re-enter the Homeless Crisis Response System.

- Adopt a systemic community response by gaining the commitment of homelessness funders to following a systemic approach to assistance and services.
- Provide Homeless Crisis Response System-wide trainings on Assertive Engagement, Trauma Informed Care, Equity, Motivational Interviewing, Positive Youth Engagement and other best practice approaches.
- Work with partners to streamline approvals and incentivize development of affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness.
- Encourage trauma informed and community centered housing design and development
- Utilize predictive prevention strategies to identify those who are at the highest risk of recidivism
- Progress equity and diversion throughout the HCRS.
- Provide resources, tools and education to prepare households to remain stable in their housing.
- Create opportunities for landlord education, conversation and partnership.
- Connect people experiencing homelessness with Medicaid Supportive Housing Options, if qualified.
- Progress Policy action items

## 2019-2022 ACTION PLAN OUTCOMES

### GOAL I: IDENTIFY:

Seek to identify and intentionally engage with those without homes in the community to understand their barriers and goals.

TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	ACCOUNTABILITY	TIMELINE
<i>System Alignment</i>	Examine opportunities with local funding to expand flexibility in paying for services that respond to community, stakeholder and population input listed in this survey.	Flexible Funding household support is incorporated into housing program reimbursement/guidelines.	County/COV	End 2019 & Annual
<i>System Alignment</i>	Increase the outreach effort related to the annual Point in Time Count.	Provide a formal volunteer engagement and training series to increase community involvement with the Point in Time Count.	CFTH	Annual
<i>System Alignment</i>	Continue to work with partners to streamline data collection and data sharing efforts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Create a data sharing agreement with at least one system of care partner.</li> <li>2) Identify common people who are high utilizers of services to collaboratively address housing needs.</li> </ol>	CFTH/Data Partners	End 2019
<i>System Alignment</i>	All funders of HCRS program require programs to follow a coordinated and systemic approach.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Funders require: HMIS data entry, use of coordinated entry (Housing Solutions Center) Engagement in the Continuum of Care and annual Point in Time Count.</li> <li>2) HCRS funded programs addresses and positively effects system-level performance measures identified in the Clark County Homeless Action Plan.</li> </ol>	COV/County/Other funders	Annually
<i>System Alignment</i>	Prioritize people who are unsheltered for HCRS programs.	Increase the percent of people who are unsheltered and entering HCRS interim and permanent housing programs by 10%. (2017 Baseline: 70%)	Outreach Teams/CFTH/County	Annual
<i>Outreach &amp; Engagement</i>	Increase the number of skilled and well-trained mobile outreach staff available to engage with those who are unsheltered.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Number of HCRC Outreach staff increases to 14. (2017 Baseline: Six)</li> <li>2) Develop collaborative outreach approaches to effectively track, target and ensure engagement with people who are chronically homeless and/or most vulnerable. The Outreach Collaborative meeting absorbs new staff/teams and meets regularly.</li> <li>3) Develop a baseline and increase the number of households housed by Outreach teams by 10% each year.</li> <li>4) Increase the number of peers providing outreach in the community to at least one per agency.</li> <li>5) Diversify the skills sets of outreach teams, by creating additional PACT-like or FACT-like teams dedicated to serving people who are unsheltered and unengaged with behavioral health.</li> </ol>	CoC/CFTH/County/COV/Other Funders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) End 2022</li> <li>2) Annual</li> <li>3) Annual</li> <li>4) End 2020</li> </ol>
<i>Outreach &amp; Engagement</i>	Increase the number of outreach staff trained to conduct the community's objective housing assessment.	80% of outreach staff are trained and conducting housing assessments each year. (2017 Baseline: 40%)	CFTH/Outreach Agencies	Annual
<i>Outreach &amp; Engagement</i>	Align outreach staff more closely with community partners to address their needs related to homelessness.	One outreach staff member is identified as a liaison for specific law enforcement entities, the library and other engaged entities.	Outreach Agencies/Partner Agencies/CoC	End 2019
<i>Outreach &amp; Engagement</i>	Increase the scope of outreach staff to allow them to work in tandem with Supportive Housing programs, to stabilize households.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Funders adjust contracting/grants and fund accordingly to effectively allow outreach staff to help transition supportive housing households from the street to home.</li> <li>2) Outreach teams funded by the HCRS have a primary focus on targeted outcomes related to reducing housing barriers and housing those who are most vulnerable.</li> </ol>	County/COV/CoC	All Annually
<i>Outreach &amp;</i>	Utilize by Names Lists to more effectively identify the community needs and identify housing for those with the highest needs.	Formalize the Veterans By Name List process and surrounding efforts to identify all Veterans who are sheltered and unsheltered.	CFTH/Partner Agencies/CoC/Funders	Annual

<i>Engagement</i>				
<b><i>Outreach &amp; Engagement</i></b>	Create additional basic need options providing access to shower, storage, laundry, restrooms, vaccines to all.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Provide ongoing operational funding to the Grand Blvd. Day Center.</li> <li>2) Sustain food options available to people experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>3) Explore, provide technical assistance support and fund strategies to address the identified basic needs of those who are unsheltered.</li> <li>4) Increase the number of sanctioned parking options available at night for people living in their cars to 60. (2018 Baseline: 36)</li> </ol>	COV/County/Other Funders/CFTH	All Annually
<b><i>Emergency Shelter</i></b>	Provide safe, interim housing for households to move out of crisis and reduce barrier to housing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Increase the number of emergency shelter beds available throughout the community by 50. Prioritize single women, couples, families and/or DV survivors. (Baseline: 194 beds)</li> <li>2) All publicly funded shelters are low-barrier, focus on alleviating housing barriers for households and flexible in the populations they serve.</li> <li>3) Provide basic needs for those residing in the facility, including food, showers, laundry and storage.</li> </ol>	County/City	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 2022</li> <li>2) Annual</li> <li>3) Annual</li> </ol>

**GOAL 2: ASSIST:**

Once a household has been identified, their homelessness or housing instability is resolved in an efficient manner with the least intensive supports.  
Focus on those who are most vulnerable.

TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	ACCOUNTABILITY	TIMELINE
<p><b>People who are Chronically Homeless</b></p>	<p>Reduce the number people and families who are chronically homeless in the community.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Convene a Housing First workgroup to strengthen the system efforts to serve those who are most vulnerable and provide programs to fidelity.</li> <li>2) Prioritize interim housing beds for people who are chronically homeless and entered in a housing program.</li> <li>3) Work collaboratively with other systems of care to create additional supportive housing beds that prioritize people with high needs.</li> <li>4) Number of people who are chronically homeless decreases by 25% (2017 Baseline: 115 Individuals &amp; 8 Families)</li> <li>5) Increase in Housing First Supportive Housing capacity in the community by 30% (2018 Baseline: 152 program spots)</li> <li>6) Decrease the number of negative exits from Supportive Housing to non-permanent housing by 3%. (2017 Baseline: 8%)</li> <li>7) Explore a by name list for people who are chronically homeless, ensuring cross-system partnerships, data and engagement.</li> <li>8) Increase the number of site based supportive housing units available to people who are chronically homeless by 50. (2018 Baseline: 30 units)</li> </ol>	<p>County/CFTH/VHA/Systems of Care</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) End 2019</li> <li>2) End 2019</li> <li>3) End 2021</li> <li>4) End 2021</li> <li>5) End 2022</li> <li>6) Annual</li> <li>7) End 2022</li> <li>8) End 2022</li> </ol>
<p><b>Veterans</b></p>	<p>End Veteran Homelessness in Clark County.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Conduct a 100-day Veteran Challenge utilizing community and provider ideas and input and make other system efficacy improvements to end homelessness for veterans</li> <li>2) Increase number of VASH vouchers available in the community. (2018 Baseline: 44)</li> <li>3) Develop targeted homeless prevention approaches for veterans in collaboration with community partners</li> <li>4) Create 25 targeted Diversion and Rapid Re-housing program for Veterans to move eligible households from the Veteran By Name List to stable housing. (Baseline: 25 SSVF Placements)</li> <li>5) Reduce the number of Veteran households on the VBNL by 50% (2018 Baseline: 300 households)</li> </ol>	<p>County/ COV/CFTH/VA/VHA Veteran serving agencies</p>	<p>All End of 2020</p>
<p><b>Youth (12-24)</b></p>	<p>Create a comprehensive continuum of youth (ages 18-24) services to reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Create five dedicated youth (ages 18-24) low-barrier shelter or transitional housing beds to meet the immediate needs of youth without homes. (2018 Baseline: 0 beds)</li> <li>2) Increase HCRS access points that are tailored for youth as a part of the coordinated entry and assessment. (Baseline: HSC and outreach only)</li> <li>3) Develop 20 additional supportive and/or transitional housing options appropriate for youth. (2018 Baseline: 58 program spots)</li> <li>4) Develop and support a youth action board to move forward system development and oversight of youth priorities.</li> <li>5) Create and sustain a Youth by Name List to begin addressing Youth Homelessness among those who are sheltered and unsheltered.</li> </ol>	<p>County/Youth serving agencies/CFTH</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) End 2021</li> <li>2) End 2019</li> <li>3) End 2020</li> <li>4) End 2020</li> <li>5) End 2021</li> <li>6) Annual</li> <li>7) End 2019</li> <li>8) End 2021</li> </ol>

		<p>6) Create or identify a youth advisory group to create and provide feedback regarding the Youth by Name List.</p> <p>7) Reduce number of unaccompanied youth 18-24) experiencing homelessness in Clark County. (2018 Baseline: 98 (OSPI Homeless School Liaison Data) or 11 (PIT Count) )</p> <p>8) Explore a Host Homes program to serve unaccompanied youth under age 18.</p>		
<b>Families</b>	Work with partner entities to more effectively identify families who are literally homeless and assess for best fit program assistance.	Create formal partnership with Department of Social and Health Services, WorkSource and other entities that serve families at risk-of homelessness to establish a formalized referral agreement.	CFTH	Annual
<b>Targeted Prevention</b>	Provide Targeted Prevention using a systemic approach to focus on households most likely to become homeless	<p>1) Prevention funders require an evidence-based targeted prevention and systemic approach to effect the HCRS. Prevention funding be as flexible as possible, allowing full move-in costs and utilities in order to effectively stabilize households.</p> <p>2) Develop a baseline and reduce the number of households served through Prevention that enter the HCRS within two years.</p> <p>3) The number of households who are newly homeless (last 2 years) within the HCRS decreases by 10%. (2017 Baseline: 2117 Individuals)</p>	CFTH/CoC/County/COV	<p>1) End 2019</p> <p>2) End 2019</p> <p>3) Annual</p>
<b>Diversion</b>	Increase the HCRS ability to provide a Diversion First approach with all household types who are willing to engage in order to reduce household engage with the HCRS and length of time homeless.	<p>1) Increase number and types of households supported with Diversion by 100 (2017 Baseline: 94 households, for Families, Seniors and people with disabilities.)</p> <p>2) Increase the capacity to provide Diversion coaching in the community through funding and training.</p>	CFTH/County	<p>1) Annual</p> <p>2) End 2020</p>
<b>Rapid Re-Housing</b>	Continue to support and expand low-barrier best practice Rapid Re-housing in Clark county for all populations	<p>1) Increase number of program spots in low-barrier Rapid Re-housing program spots by 80 (2018 Baseline: 141 program spots)</p> <p>2) Increase the number of Rapid Re-housing households that exit to a permanent housing destination. (2017 Baseline: 80%)</p> <p>3) Reduce the number of households exiting Rapid Re-housing to a permanent destination who return to homelessness within two years (2017 Baseline: 10% )</p>	County/COV/Other Funders	<p>1) Annual-End by 2022</p> <p>2) Annual</p> <p>3) Annual</p>
<b>Supported Housing</b>	Increase evidence-based supportive housing interventions that efficiently move people experiencing homelessness into permanent homes	<p>1) Increase Housing First supportive housing options for families and individuals who are not chronically homeless by 100%. (2018 Baseline: 22 units Families &amp; 11 Individuals)</p> <p>2) Reduce the number of days supportive housing programs take to housing a household. (2017 Baseline: 95 days)</p> <p>3) Increase the number of supportive housing programs utilizing HMIS to collect holistic data (2018 Baseline: 105 users)</p> <p>4) Work collaboratively with Agencies providing 1115 Medicaid Waiver Supportive Housing to connect people utilizing the HCRS with housing options.</p>	CFTH and all partners using HMIS	<p>1) 2022</p> <p>2) 2022</p> <p>3) 2022</p> <p>4) Annual</p>

**GOAL 3: RESOLVE**

Once a household is stabilized in housing, they remain stable and do not re-enter the Homeless Crisis Response System.

TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	ACCOUNTABILITY	TIMELINE
<b>Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-housing, Diversion</b>	Provide resources, tools and education to prepare households to remain stable in their housing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Increase the number of Rent Well classes offered in the community. Create and offer a single class to share pieces of the Rent Well curriculum with housing programs.</li> <li>2) Provide training and curriculum to housing program staff on debt negotiation, budgeting and other life skills in order to offer to program clients.</li> </ol>	County/CFTH	All Annual
<b>System Alignment</b>	Advocate for greater resources and collaborative opportunities within the HCRS and in other systems of care that intersect with people exiting homelessness, who are low-income or simply are struggling.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Engage local governments and service providers to solicit ideas on interventions and policy changes that would reduce the number of people becoming homeless</li> <li>2) CoC adopts an annual policy agenda based on the policy recommendations of this document and current realities.</li> <li>3) Actively support efforts to increase the availability of and greater access to safe and affordable rental unit</li> <li>4) Facilitate a voter registration drive in partnership with advocates, affordable housing projects and housing programs.</li> </ol>	CFTH	All Annual
<b>System Alignment</b>	Create opportunities for landlord education, conversation and partnership.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Develop and implement system-wide landlord recruitment and retention initiative, in tandem with system providers, partners, including staffing, marketing and outreach activities</li> <li>2) Create a marketing campaign to share information about the statewide Landlord Mitigation Program.</li> </ol>	CFTH/CoC/County/COV	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) End 2020</li> <li>2) End 2020</li> </ol>
<b>System Alignment</b>	Work with local government, county officials, mayors and tribal organization to maintain a policy focus on alleviating homelessness locally.	Council for the Homeless policy agenda is created to target HCRS components and affordable housing.	CFTH	Annual
<b>System Alignment</b>	Learn from the expertise of people with lived homeless experience.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Increase the number of people and scope of individuals/entities involved in the CoC Leadership, Steering Committee and associated groups, workgroups and task groups.</li> <li>2) Formally seek feedback from people with lived experience when seeking to make CoC changes.</li> <li>3) Create peer/community health worker positions within the HCRS and among the various programs. (2018 Baseline: Zero)</li> </ol>	CFTH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) End 2019</li> <li>2) Annual</li> <li>3) End 2022</li> </ol>
<b>System Alignment</b>	Develop and provide ongoing community trainings and education series regarding the causes of homelessness, resources available and opportunities for active involvement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Create an ongoing community educational series focused on topics related to homelessness, policy and advocacy.</li> <li>2) Implement trauma-informed and equity principles and other emerging practice approaches into staff trainings and the focus on the HCRS.</li> <li>3) Progress policy action items identified in the plan and beyond.</li> </ol>	CFTH/County	All Annual
<b>System Alignment</b>	Create a HCRS that is engaging and moving all people experiencing homelessness to safe, stable housing in partnership with systems of care and community resources.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Institute standardized HCRS cultural competency trainings (equity).</li> <li>2) Create and sustain culturally conscientious expectations of programs and their environments to ensure those disproportionately affected by homelessness, including people who are LGBTQ+, People of Color and People with disabilities are entering safe and aware environment.</li> <li>3) Create HCRS affirmative hiring and retention practices to further diversify system staff,</li> </ol>	CFTH/County	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Annual</li> <li>2) Annual</li> <li>3) End 2020</li> <li>4) Annual</li> <li>5) End 2019</li> <li>6) End 2021</li> </ol>



		including language skills, at all levels and in all programming types to better reflect populations served. <b>4)</b> Utilize HMIS data to examine current HCRS programs to ensure equitable access and use is occurring <b>5)</b> Create or include HCRS representation on a Discharge planning workgroup to formally establish discharge routes to housing for people exiting to homelessness and strengthen partnerships with systems of care. <b>6)</b> Funders create a dedicated fund to support match needed to leverage additional significant HCRS funds new to the community. <b>7)</b> Provide training and technical assistance to progress the HCRS toward Federal and State performance measurements.		<b>7)</b> Annual
<b>System Alignment</b>	Increase knowledge of landlords and tenants regarding landlord-tenant laws and available resources to support tenancy.	<b>1)</b> Increase tenant access to legal advocates, conflict mediators and self-help support. <b>2)</b> Create a marketing campaign to share information about the Landlord Mitigation Fund, housing program strengths and resources to help pay rent.	County	<b>1)</b> County/CFTH <b>2)</b> CFTH
<b>System Alignment</b>	Support and promote shared housing options focused on serving people who are without homes.	<b>1)</b> Explore how to create shared housing options for people experiencing homelessness.	CFTH	<b>1)</b> End 2020
<b>System Alignment</b>	Increase HCRS transparency and information sharing.	<b>1)</b> Create an annual report specifying the strategic progress toward outcomes in the Plan.	County/CFTH	Annual
<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	Prevent individuals from being discharged from systems of care to homelessness.	Increase the number of medical respite beds available in the community by ten. (2018 Baseline: Three)	County, Discharge Partners	End 2023

# Policy Insights: Recommendations

In recent years, advocacy organizations and government bodies have increasingly worked to decriminalize homelessness and to promote programs that provide multidisciplinary services, affordable housing, affordable healthcare, and other resources that can support homeless populations. One of our greatest opportunities to impact the homeless crisis response system is at the local, state and federal policy level. **This Plan calls for continued effort to advocate for additional resources targeted at programming and robust safety net services for individuals throughout Clark County. This ranges from prevention/resilience building services, affordable housing, behavioral health, physical health, oral health, peer supports and integration among all providers.**



## RECOMMENDED POLICY ACTION:

- **Reduce or cap application and move-in fees associated with housing rentals and change policy to allow the consideration of rent controlled units.** This includes supporting policy work that mitigates gentrification, de-incentivizing developers from replacing low income housing with high rent units and increasing the number of low barrier and housing units.
- **Change the WA Residential Landlord Tenant regarding no cause notices, to require a just cause.**
- **Support funding increases and reform for key public programs supporting individuals and seniors with disabilities and families.** Increase funding for the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN), Aged, Blind, Disabled (ABD) and TANF programs.
- **Expand efforts to continue to build and support effective discharge planning for individuals being released from systems of care** (i.e. jail, hospitals, treatment facilities, foster care, etc.) outside of the HCRS. Increase the access, capacity and integration of inpatient and outpatient behavioral and physical health services.
- **Identify resources to provide legal representation and/or professional mediation to all households being evicted from housing units.** Evictions are often an insurmountable barrier for households, leaving them homeless. Many evictions could be avoided or even stopped if a professional were supporting the households.
- **Convene a County-wide focused multi-sector, county-wide affordable housing task force to focus on policy changes that lead to increased affordable housing units for households earning 0%-80% of Area Median Income (AMI).** Policy exploration should include utilizing and leveraging tax incentive programs for builders and landlords along with other innovative partnerships. In addition, the building/creating of alternative housing structures such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs), tiny homes, condominiums multi-family homes, shared housing, manufactured homes, and unused buildings as viable options through code, regulation and zoning changes.
- **Support businesses that are offering a higher minimum wage/living wage and “second chance” employment.** Employment/housing partnerships that include job training, job connection services, and education with housing.
- **Increase efforts that incentivize and gain traction with landlords or agencies to participate and utilize their spaces to house people who are homeless in permanent housing.** This could include efforts to make evictions less prevalent and providing relocation assistance options or even assist with removal of non-violent crimes from records that prevent people from getting housing.
- **Create opportunities for people experiencing homelessness or recovering from homelessness to give back through paid employment.** Ideas include expanding the Talk’in Trash program, landscaping/lawn care, rental unit turnover, local community ambassador program and peer/recovery support opportunities.
- **Increase opportunities and access for people who are low-income to access alternative health sustaining activities.** This may include yoga, meditation/mindfulness, anger management, stress relief, health relationships.
- **Increase Housing Trust Fund dollars available across the state and focused on serving high need people experiencing homelessness.**

# Looking Ahead: Our Future



**Making homelessness rare, brief and one-time must be one of our community's top priorities.** Over the next four years, the Council for the Homeless, Clark County, City of Vancouver and Vancouver Housing Authority, amongst many other partners will use this plan to inform key decisions and investment opportunities to ensure that there is continued alignment with the communities' goals for homelessness throughout Clark County. This goals and timeline in this plan are live documents that will be updated annually noting community progress and continued areas of need to decrease homelessness.

**Our approach to the homeless crisis response system is multi-pronged, and requires us to:**

- Provide engagement opportunities to build clear understandings of the needs and responses to homelessness.
- Engage those who have experienced homelessness and have lived experience in all parts of the HCRS.
- Own the role our community plays in removing or creating barriers and opportunities surrounding homelessness.
- Collectively review data, information and derive knowledge about the nature and extent of homelessness.
- Utilize data to inform our decisions on how to move forward and build an effective HCRS.
- Hone in on and utilize best practice models to scale and develop homeless and housing crisis response programs.
- Continue to integrate services and partnerships into the Housing Solutions Center and overarching CoC.
- Welcome ideas and insights from everyone on how homelessness can be rare, brief and one-time.
- Increase outreach and engagement opportunities to more individuals and families in the homeless system.
- Actively participate and drive homeless advocacy and policy efforts both locally and statewide.

As we look ahead, we are optimistic that with the community support and partnerships our community goals set for in this plan and can prevent homelessness for all. Our local experience is one that customized approaches that demonstrate a comprehensive, effective and efficient response to issues we are facing. This framework articulates our shared vision and establishes a clear direction and to action to move our future forward and live in a community that is understanding and responsive.



# Contributors & Partnerships

**This is plan was made possible** by the funding support of Clark County Community Services and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In addition, this plan was created with the dedication, partnership and participation of several community agencies, governmental bodies, public agency staff, business leaders, homeless and housing service providers, community members at large and homeless families and individuals throughout Clark County who shared their views, needs and ideas on addressing homelessness in our community. The success of this plan rests on the commitment and collaboration of our community. Council for the Homeless, Clark County Community Services, the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Housing Authority will provide stewardship and oversight for the next phase of the plan. The Council for the Homeless will provide leadership to achieve the goals and strategies for the plan. Provider agencies and the community at large form the backbone of our work to end homelessness and will be called upon to meet the challenges posed in this plan.

## Exceptional Contribution to the Plan

**Clark County Public Health** (*Data Synthesis of Public Forum and Survey Data*)

**Clark County Community Services** (*Funder*)

**Dynamic Funding Solutions** (*Plan Consultant*)

**Outsiders Inn** (*Homeless Action Plan Photography*)

## Additional Partners

**Battle Ground Community Center**

**Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church**

**City of Vancouver**

**Community Health Access Resource Group (CHARG)**

**Community Services NW**

**Consumer Voices Are Born (CVAB)—REACH Center**

**Developmental Disability Advisory Group**

**Latino Community Resource Group (LCRG)**

**League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)**

**Luke Jensen Sports Complex**

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

**Partners in Careers**

**SHARE**

**St. Thomas Aquinas Church**

**Vancouver Housing Authority**

**YWCA**

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