



The Road Home

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

Continuum of Care 5-Year Plan

Strategic Plan Framework

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. Increase diversion resources by engaging the support of non-government funders.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Promote and increase the use of the Foundational Community Support program across the system for individuals with higher needs or barriers to housing.
7. 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.
8. 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.*

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 local funding from HB1406 and 1/10th of 1% to be put toward the development of new PSH units.
2. 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.
3. 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.

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 HB1406 and 1/10th of 1% 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 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.*
 - 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 the county and increase capacity countywide by at least 100 beds in the geographic areas with the greatest need.
3. Engage additional faith-based community partners in providing shelter, especially in areas outside of Tacoma and Lakewood.
4. Advocate for a portion of local funding from HB1406 and 1/10th of 1% to be put toward increasing shelter capacity.

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.

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, including the V.A., 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.

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.*

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 the number of Coordinated Entry points in Key Peninsula and East Pierce County communities.
3. Expand the presence of outreach teams in Key Peninsula and East Pierce County communities.

Goal #4:

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

Strategies:

1. Increase the cultural competency of providers and push organizations to learn about and work from an equity/anti-racist framework by undergoing trainings as detailed in WAC 388-61A-1080.
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, and require all new service-provider staff to participate in it.
5. Recruit organizations operated by Black, Indigenous, or People of Color, 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 timelines, measures, data collection, and definitions of homelessness (where possible), and uniting around a shared commitment to equity.

Goal #2:

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

Strategies:

1. Identify and coordinate with existing efforts in other relevant sectors—e.g., healthcare, criminal justice, foster care, education—that are focused on working with individuals experiencing homelessness or working to address homelessness.
2. Work with healthcare, mental healthcare, criminal 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 the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and the Nisqually Indian Tribe 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.

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 a welcoming place to all people and brand CoC communications to reflect this culture.
2. Develop a membership recruitment strategy that invites participation from a variety of sectors and leads to having diverse representation that reflects those who are served by the homeless system.

POPULATION 1: 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. Prioritize the most severely mentally ill for permanent supportive housing by adjusting the assessment tool to include severity of mental health concerns.
2. Create easier access to economic resources that can support housing stability for chronically homeless individuals.
 - a. Increase the number of SOAR offices located within or adjacent to permanent supportive housing.
 - b. Increase the use of Foundational Community Supports to pay for and maintain services that will help chronically homeless individuals stay housed.
3. 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.

POPULATION 2: 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. 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.

POPULATION 3: 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. Reduce veterans' late payment of rent by incentivizing automated monthly payments to landlords.
5. Work with the Landlord Liaison Program to educate landlords on contacting the HUD-VASH Case Management Program when they have challenges with a veteran renter.
6. Conduct research on the feasibility of creating landlord incentives for taking veteran renters.

POPULATION 4: 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 abusive partners.
 - a. *Engage Family Resource 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 DV survivors overcome the top two barriers to maintaining employment: childcare and transportation.

POPULATION 5: YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

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.

POPULATION 6: 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 groups 1-5.

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 benefits they qualify for and whether they are accessing them; if they aren't, connect them directly to a SOAR office.*
 - 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.*