



PATHWAYS HOME

Seattle's Person-Centered Plan to
Support People Experiencing Homelessness

The vision of the City of Seattle is that all members of our community are able to benefit from the advantages of our thriving economy. We must always strive for our success to be equitable and are therefore measured by the how we care for our most vulnerable residents, including people who are experiencing homelessness. Homelessness should be rare, brief and a one-time occurrence.

The 2016 One Night Count found 2,813 individuals were living unsheltered in Seattle

Pathways Home: Key Principles and Goals: Our plan will increase accountability, expand performance-based contracting, shift the focus of City investments to achieve exits from homelessness and expand enhanced service models to better meet the individualized needs of people who are living unsheltered. The work is based in three principles:

1. Meet people experiencing homeless where they are when offering housing and providing services
2. Invest in services with demonstrated success
3. Address racial disparities

While these system-level changes will take time and will require collaboration with existing service providers to accomplish, the City is committed to taking immediate action to accomplish the following goals by 2017:

- Move 500 unsheltered families from homelessness indoors by the end of 2017.
- Expand low-barrier, 24-hour shelter by opening the Navigation Center.
- Institute performance-based contracts to ensure government is investing in what works.
- Actively work to house people on the waiting list, problem solving to address individual circumstances.
- Improve access to affordable and private market housing units by working with partners to institute a centralized list.

Homelessness disproportionately impacts people of color

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders:

3x more likely 

African Americans:

5x more likely 

Native Americans/Alaskan Native

7x more likely 



As a result of this plan, the City of Seattle will create a person-centered system that responds to the unique needs of each family and individual. This system will strive to make homelessness rare, brief, and one time through rapid connection to the appropriate intervention. Providers will be expected to utilize flexible progressive engagement strategies to respond to the needs of the client and center interventions in culturally competent practices.

In 2016, the Seattle Human Services Department invested \$50 Million in homelessness programs

The Pathways Home plan is a critical component of Mayor Murray's three-pronged strategy to address homelessness:

1. **Address immediate needs of people living on our streets:** In November 2015, Mayor Murray declared a civil state of emergency which resulted in \$7.3 million in one-time funding to address the immediate needs of unsheltered people in our community. In August of 2016, Mayor Murray also called for the creation of a task force to improve the City's response to unauthorized encampments.
2. **Increase affordable housing:** The Mayor and City Council are working to implement the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA), with the goal of adding 50,000 housing units, including 20,000 new or preserved affordable units in the next 10 years.
3. **Homeless System Improvements:** Considering the City's high spending levels on homelessness services, yet increasing numbers people who are living unsheltered, Mayor Murray recognized the need for system level reform. He asked the Human Services Department to conduct Homeless Investment Analysis, evaluating the City's investments. This work led to the development of the *Pathways Home* plan which is informed by two national consulting firms with expertise in homeless system evaluation and reform.

Evidence-based System Changes

The Pathways Home Initiative was developed by the Seattle Human Services Department in response to the findings and recommendations from two national consulting firms: 1) Focus Strategies and 2) Barbara Poppe and Associates. The City of Seattle, alongside its partners United Way of King, King County, and All Home, engaged Focus Strategies to assess the performance of the existing homeless system and the community's efforts to reduce homelessness, with a particular focus on the single adult homeless population. Barbara Poppe and Associates was engaged by the Seattle Human Services Department to develop recommendations for a robust set of interventions that will reduce unsheltered homelessness and increase the "throughput" from homelessness to stable housing.

Together, these two analyses provide the most comprehensive understanding of our homelessness system, using client data, point-in-time count, and program budgets. They lay a framework that the City must implement to better house people experiencing homelessness by:

1. Expanding funding for program approaches that are most effective such as rapid-rehousing and diversion.
2. Prioritizing housing for those who are unsheltered and have been homeless the longest.
3. Divert and rapidly rehouse those who are recently homeless and typically have fewer barriers to housing.
4. Working together to urgently and decisively to house as many people as possible.

Each of these pieces represents Seattle's shift toward the ultimate goal of housing as many people experiencing homelessness as quickly as is possible.
