Barbara Poppe and associates
The collective for impact

Recommendations for the City of Seattle's Homeless Investment Policy: The Path Forward – Act Now, Act Strategically, and Act Decisively

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Barbara Poppe is the founder of Barbara Poppe and Associates and the former executive director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. Ms. Poppe is a nationally recognized expert on homelessness and results-driven public-private partnerships. Barbara Poppe and Associates, established in 2014, is an independent consulting firm that develops the capacity of communities and organizations to tackle complex issues using a collaborative systems approach to achieve results and impact.

Ms. Poppe served as the Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness from November 2009 to March 2014. During her tenure, Poppe oversaw the Federal response to homelessness by working with 19 Federal agencies to create partnerships at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness. In June 2010, Barbara Poppe and four Cabinet Secretaries announced *Opening Doors*, the nation's first-ever comprehensive Federal plan to prevent and end homelessness.

Ms. Poppe served as the executive director of the nationally recognized Community Shelter Board (Columbus, Ohio) from October 1995 to November 2009. She holds a Masters of Science degree in Epidemiology from the University of Cincinnati.

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Executive Summary

In June 2015, Mayor Ed Murray as co-chair of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County, launched the **All Home Strategic Plan** and issued a **call to action for homelessness to be rare, brief, and one-time** in Seattle and King County, noting:

> ***To make homelessness brief and one-time, we need to provide people with what they need to gain housing stability quickly.*** *This is the responsibility of funders of homeless housing and services, and nonprofit providers. Implementing more effective, efficient program models will allow us to serve more people.*

In response to this call to action, Barbara Poppe and Associates was engaged to provide a "Path Forward" for the City of Seattle to develop a Homeless Investment Policy Framework to operationalize the strategies described in the All Home Strategic Plan.

While some may view the problem of growing homelessness in Seattle as one that is unsolvable unless, and until, federal and state policies ensure affordable housing, living wages and public benefits are sufficient to lift all individuals and families out of poverty, others focus on the need to move from a fragmented network of providers to an efficient and effective homeless crisis response system as the only path to solving homelessness. David Wertheimer, Deputy Director of the Pacific Northwest Initiative at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, recently penned a blog that reminds us that making homelessness "rare, brief and one-time" requires working in parallel, not sequentially.

> *Treating the symptom of homelessness through increasing the effectiveness of the crisis response system is, in and of itself, an essential task. Alleviating the symptoms of a serious illness is a critical part of treatment. But we cannot stop there if we want to get to the point at which homelessness is truly rare. That will require that we move upstream from the crisis response system and get to the root issues:*
>
> - *The lack of an adequate supply of affordable housing.*
> - *The absence of a sufficient number of jobs that pay a living wage.*
> - *The inequitable access to educational opportunities and post-secondary degrees and the economic security they can provide.*
> - *The failures of our child welfare system, our behavioral health system, and numerous other key components of our core social infrastructure that are unable to meet the full set of needs of our nation's people.*
> - *The ongoing challenges of structural racism and multi-generational trauma, experienced both by recent refugee populations as well as communities that have already spent centuries as Americans[1].*

The Path Forward report provides recommendations for the City of Seattle to improve the homeless crisis response system. The equally important work to address the "upstream" issues of affordable housing,

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[1] David Wertheimer, *Homelessness: The Symptom of a Much Larger Challenge*, Funders to End Homelessness, Funders Together to End Homelessness, June 28, 2016

[2] Seattle/King County: Homeless System Performance Assessment and Recommendations with Particular Emphasis on Single Adults, Commissioned by United Way of King County, the City of Seattle, and King County, Focus Strategies, August 2016.

[3] [3] On November 2, 2015, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and King County Executive Dow Constantine declared a civil

jobs that pay a living wage, lack of quality public education, gaps in the social infrastructure, and ongoing structural racism are beyond the scope of this analysis. Additionally, many departments across the City of Seattle are impacted by and can contribute to solutions to homelessness, i.e. police practices that reduce criminalization of homelessness. This work, too, is out of scope for this report.

Ideas and concepts that can be used by the City of Seattle to shape the Homeless Investment Policy Framework are presented to move from the current state of growing homelessness to a desired state that enables all members of Seattle to benefit from the advantages of Seattle's thriving economy. The recommendations operationalize the vision that homelessness is rare, brief and one-time through shifting City of Seattle investments and promoting successful service models. Building an integrated system of interventions that provide more rapid response and access to housing is critical to end homelessness. These recommendations incorporate insights from new predictive analytics developed by Focus Strategies[2] , which was commissioned by United Way of King County, the City of Seattle, and King County to use its System Wide Analytics and Projections tools (SWAP) to model program and population changes to inform funding and resource allocations as well as provide suggestions for minimum standards and more optimal targets for a high functioning system for single adult and family systems. The policy and investment recommendations build on the demonstrated success of programs moving people out of homelessness in timely and cost effective ways and consider local and national best practices.

This report describes a robust set of interventions that prioritize these twin priorities:

1) **Reduce unsheltered homelessness**. This is critical since the increasing numbers of people who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness has prompted the Seattle Mayor and King County Executive to issue a state of emergency[3].

2) **Increase the "throughput" from homelessness to stable housing**. Both a humane response and provides greater efficiencies for existing emergency responses through turning over temporary shelter capacity to enable more persons who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness to be served.

The Path Forward recommendations describe reallocation priorities, key strategic policy shifts, opportunities to advocate with local partners for system improvements, and the **need for boldness and urgency** in making these shifts in investment and policy.

[2] Seattle/King County: Homeless System Performance Assessment and Recommendations with Particular Emphasis on Single Adults, Commissioned by United Way of King County, the City of Seattle, and King County, Focus Strategies, August 2016.

[3] [3] On November 2, 2015, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and King County Executive Dow Constantine declared a civil emergency to address homelessness in Seattle and King County, and joined by Seattle City Councilmembers Mike O'Brien, Sally Bagshaw and John Okamoto, outlined new investments to respond to the growing crisis of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Seattle and King County.

Recommendation 1: Create a person-centered crisis response system

To be successful, the City of Seattle must develop and invest in a comprehensive array of interventions that are integrated to provide a person-centered crisis response system that responds to the unique needs of each family and individual (see Appendix 1). Some interventions will be existing program models, some will need to be re-tooled for improved results and greater efficiency, and some will be new approaches. Additionally investment in some program types may need to end or at least not be included as part of Seattle's investment in homelessness. All interventions must contribute to rapidly providing access to stable housing for families and individuals who are at imminent risk of or experiencing literal homelessness, that is, living outside, on the streets, or in a shelter.

Two sides of the same coin: Person-centered and Funder-driven

A person-centered system and a funder-driven system are the same thing, in the sense that the system is organized around the objective of housing each household presenting with a homeless crisis.

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Coordinated Entry

Coordinated entry systems are intended to organize a community's homeless assistance resources to create a person-centered response which "right sizes" the intervention to the individual/family needs (i.e. intensive services and housing are reserved for those with the greatest barriers to housing stability) and provide a rapid return to stable housing. In accordance with USICH guidance on defining an end to homelessness, coordinated entry systems should provide access to shelter or other temporary accommodations immediately to any person experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants it. When there is insufficient emergency shelter capacity, shelter admission should be reserved for the individuals and families who are at greatest risk for severe health and safety consequences if not sheltered.

All Home is housed within King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), and is designed to lead the Continuum of Care (CoC) and homeless system planning more broadly. In 2016, All Home established the Coordinated Entry for All (CEA). CEA is the new coordinated entry system for Seattle and King County. All Home determined that CEA will use vulnerability assessments as the sole consideration for prioritizing access to emergency shelter and housing interventions. Several critical and immediate updates to the current approach are recommended. These include:

1) Require emergency shelters to focus admissions on those families and individuals who are unsheltered or at imminent risk of being unsheltered.

2) Fully utilize existing emergency shelter capacity and closely monitor daily occupancy.

3) **Offer every homeless family and individual diversion assistance** and if it is not feasible to help the family or individual avoid unsheltered homelessness, provide an offer of emergency shelter that same day.

4) Continue to immediately link households who are currently experiencing domestic violence to programs prepared to meet their safety needs as well as effective at dealing with trauma and the consequences of domestic violence.

5) **Prioritize for housing interventions those families and individuals who have the longest histories of homelessness and highest housing barriers** and rapidly connect them to a viable housing option. Wherever possible, a progressive engagement approach is recommended. Scores from the vulnerability assessment should not be the primary basis for prioritization.

6) **If there is insufficient emergency shelter capacity, shelter admission should be reserved for the unsheltered individuals and families who are at greatest risk for severe health and safety consequences if not sheltered.**

   a) All unsheltered families with pregnant women or infants under age one are offered immediate (same day) access to emergency shelter (either program or motel voucher).

   b) Second priority should be to shelter all unsheltered families with children under age four and other families with extraordinary situations that are at severe health and safety risk.

7) Before CEA begins managing access to Youth and Young Adult (YYA) and single adult emergency shelter, it should determine criteria for prioritization in the event there is insufficient capacity to shelter all unsheltered individuals. CEA should consider immediate health and safety factors for prioritization.

Families with Children

There is an unimaginable crisis among families with children who experience homelessness in Seattle and King County. More than 400 families with children are believed to be unsheltered at a single point in time according to recent reports by All Home. According to the 2014 Focus Strategies report[4] families with children were waiting for emergency shelter for an average of 186 days once assessed with Family Housing Connection (the precursor to CEA). All stakeholders view the current approach to meeting the crisis needs of homeless families as fragmented and siloed. Engagement with mainstream providers of services for low income families is limited.

Key Housing Stabilization Interventions for Families

- Diversion
- Family Impact Team
- Comprehensive Emergency Shelter
- Rapid Rehousing
- Permanent Supportive Housing

The City of Seattle should implement the 2016 Focus Strategies recommendations to reallocate resources from under-performing programs and deploy to achieve better results. Seattle/King County has **sufficient emergency shelter capacity to shelter all unsheltered family households within one year by combining three initiatives**: (1) eliminating low and moderately performing Transitional Housing (TH) projects and repurposing those resources to more effective uses; (2) reaching recommended system and program performance targets; and (3) implementing a well functioning coordinated entry and diversion system.

The City of Seattle should advocate with other funders and All Home to **restrict admission to emergency shelter to only those who are unsheltered**. Even if the City is not successful in getting all funders to impose this requirement on family shelters, the City in the near term, should require that CEA and its funded shelters

[4] Focus Strategies, Family Homelessness Coordinated Entry System Analysis and Refinement Project, prepared for the Committee to End Homelessness, 2014.

target all city-funded shelter to unsheltered families residing within the City of Seattle[5]. Seattle should provide on-demand access to motel vouchers for families that would otherwise be unsheltered due to all family shelter beds being fully utilized and invest only in Comprehensive Emergency Shelters for families with children who experience homelessness.

In order to quickly reduce the number of unsheltered families with children who are residing within Seattle, the City of Seattle should stand up a **Family Impact Team (FIT)** to provide seamless and integrated approaches to rapidly engage with families with children who are unsheltered and residing within the City of Seattle. The FIT should be composed of organizations from the homeless crisis response system that serve families with children and mainstream/community organizations that serve low income families including families who experience homelessness. The FIT should focus on providing rapid access to shelter and stable housing using a "By Name List" process[6], enabling multiple providers to participate in case coordination that is organized to achieve housing outcomes and should be headed by an HSD staff member who serves as the Project Lead.

The City of Seattle should support new funding opportunities for **Diversion and Rapid Rehousing** by investing and aligning funding with other funders. Funded providers should be required to implement Diversion and Rapid Rehousing consistent with fidelity to the best practice models. Providers that are unable to meet the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) standards for Rapid Rehousing should not be funded. The City of Seattle should work with other funders to create common program manuals for diversion and rapid rehousing programs to ensure consistency across programs.

Key Housing Stabilization Interventions for Youth and Young Adults

- Diversion
- Street Outreach
- Comprehensive Emergency Shelter
- Solutions Focused Case Management
- Youth Drop In Centers
- Rapid Rehousing
- Transitional Housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing

Youth and Young Adults

Nowhere is innovation more important than in ending homelessness among youth and young adults. Seattle is an important player in the national movement to embrace innovation, build evidence of what works and continually improve our understanding of youth homelessness and how to end it. There is tremendous need to undertake a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of current YYA programs as the scope of the 2016 Focus Strategies analysis was not comprehensive and specific to the YYA programs. Strong evaluation is very important to differentiate between correlative factors and causative factors. HSD, with King County, All Home and other funders should explore how to incorporate YYA feedback into system and program improvements. Creating opportunities to analyze and learn through **continuous improvement processes** will result in improved outcomes.

HSD should closely monitor implementation of CEA to ensure that youth in crisis have 1) quick access to trauma-informed screening and housing assessment, 2) immediate access to emergency shelter if diversion/family reunification is not immediately possible, 3) linkage to age and developmentally appropriate

[5] This is not intended to imply that there is a prior residency requirement (i.e. that the individual was a resident of Seattle before they experienced homelessness). Rather this is a practical consideration that Seattle must address unsheltered homelessness within its city boundaries as a top priority.
[6] See later in this report for a summary of effective By Name List processes.

services and supports, and 4) for those YYA with the greatest needs, access to permanent housing and wrap-around supports.

Progressive engagement should be adopted system wide for Youth and Young Adults. A corollary to this approach is reserving the most intensive housing interventions for the YYA with the highest barriers to stable housing. The availability of family reunification and housing placement are critical to ensuring YYA are able to quickly resolve their homelessness. The City of Seattle should only fund agencies and programs that adopt progressive engagement and are equipped to serve high need YYA. HSD should review staffing patterns and qualifications to ensure programs are sufficiently resourced to serve high need YYA. HSD should assist agencies to increase partnerships to support high need YYA and consider additional funding if community partnerships are not available.

Another idea from providers that bears consideration is implementing a **By Name List process with YYA with long histories of homelessness and/or high vulnerability**. HSD could work with HSD-funded YYA providers and CEA to explore the feasibility of this approach.

Optimize agency flexibility as the agency demonstrates success at achieving performance outcomes and using progressive engagement (see later for description of the Portfolio Pilot). HSD should work closely with agencies to focus on achieving performance outcomes and review program practices to ensure that YYA programs are adhering to fidelity for evidence-based and best practices to provide case management, trauma informed care, culturally competent care, etc. HSD should consider how to best build the capacity of its staff and program providers to provide culturally competent services and housing options.

YYA providers should be encouraged to assist YYA to have access to not only housing, but to jobs, education, social supports, health care, and transportation. HSD should assist agencies to increase partnerships to provide greater access to these community services.

Since not all YYA emergency shelters are 24/7, some youth have to leave during the day and may be at risk for harm due to physical violence, exploitation or engaging in risky behaviors by being on the streets without access to a safe place. HSD should work with providers to make emergency shelters more focused on quick exits to stable housing and to collaborate among providers to ensure seamless, 24/7 access to a safe place.

Single Adults including Couples

Single adults represent the largest number of people who experience homelessness in Seattle and King County. Focus Strategies found that 40% of shelter stayers account for 74% of the shelter bed days used in the system. Furthermore, people who frequently access shelter in King County continue to do so over time.

To significantly reduce unsheltered homelessness among single adults and couples, it will be necessary to create pathways from homelessness to stable housing. Creating this increased "throughput" will also increase capacity to provide shelter to those currently languishing on the streets. A seamless and integrated approach to rapidly engage with unsheltered single adults and better connect them to housing is required.

Seattle should implement the Focus Strategies investment recommendations that demonstrated that Seattle/King County has sufficient emergency shelter capacity to shelter all unsheltered single adult households within one year by combining three initiatives: (1) eliminating homelessness assistance funding for low and moderately performing TH projects and reallocating these savings to more effective approaches; (2) reaching recommended system and program performance targets; and (3) implementing a well functioning coordinated entry and diversion system.

Prioritizing access to housing interventions should **use a progressive engagement approach that focuses on length of time homeless and barriers to housing**. As noted above, the All Home CEA intends to use vulnerability assessments as the primary consideration for prioritizing housing interventions. This approach is not recommended because it will have limited impact on unsheltered homelessness and is not aligned with achieving the goal of increased throughput to stable housing.

Key Housing Stabilization Interventions for Single Adults and Couples

- Diversion
- Outreach Action Team and Street Outreach
- Long Term Shelter Stayers Housing Placement Team
- Comprehensive Emergency Shelter
- Navigation Center
- Rapid Rehousing
- Transitional Housing*
- Rapid Housing with Critical Time Intervention
- Permanent Supportive Housing

*must be at least as effective and cost-efficient as Rapid Rehousing

In order to overcome the current backlog of unsheltered single adults and long term single adult shelter users, the City of Seattle should stand up an **Outreach Action Team and an LTSS Housing Placement Team** (long term shelter stayers) to provide seamless and integrated approaches to rapidly engage with single adults and couples who are either unsheltered or are long term users and residing within the City of Seattle while they are unsheltered[7]. The teams should actively use a "By Name List" process[8].

Seattle should shift some investment from overnight shelters to support **Navigation Centers** or **Comprehensive Emergency Shelters** for single adults who experience homelessness. These 24/7, year round programs have low barrier admission requirements, typically (but not exclusively) aiming for a length of stay of 90 days or less. Navigation Centers use harm reduction and Housing First practices. San Francisco has found this model to be more effective at supporting clients to move to permanent housing than traditional overnight shelters.

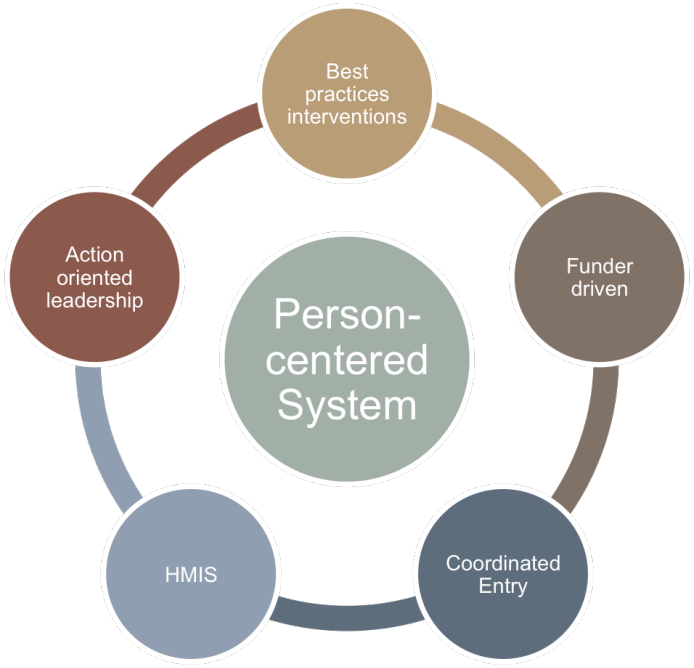
Seattle should stop funding under-performing single adult transitional housing providers and encourage them to determine feasibility to transition to other models. The City of Seattle should support new funding opportunities for Rapid Rehousing (RRH), Rapid Rehousing with Critical Time Intervention, and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) by participating in joint NOFA's with All Home and other funders.

Recommendation 2: Improve Program and System Performance and Require Accountability

To be successful at reducing homelessness, the homeless crisis response system must be organized and invested in by public and major philanthropic funders. The system leadership must be action-oriented and nimble enough to enable course corrections promptly when needed. Funders must invest only in evidence-based, best and promising practices and providers should be required to effectively implement these practices and meet performance standards as a condition of receiving funding.

[7] This is not intended to apply that there is a prior residency requirement (i.e. that the individual was a resident of Seattle before they experienced homelessness). Rather this is a practical consideration that Seattle must address unsheltered homelessness within its city boundaries as a top priority.
[8] See later in this report for a summary of effective By Name List processes

In keeping with the HEARTH Act[9] and national best practices, Seattle and King County have begun undertaking the shift from a loosely organized network of programs to building a system of care with the intent to quickly rehouse individuals and families. The large number of providers that will need to shift practices makes the challenge of transformation daunting. The current level of public funding investment is strong so the impact of shifting to more effective approaches can be immense if the funders establish a strong infrastructure to support the new system.



HMIS and other data should be used to inform planning, set resource allocation strategies, measure progress and system performance, and evaluate program performance to inform investment decisions. Seattle should invest in and use HMIS as the primary data system. HSD should require providers that receive funding to collect and input quality, timely, and comprehensive data in order to receive city funding.

Coordinated entry forms the backbone of the system by providing a process that ensures system resources are being appropriately targeted and that individuals and families are able to resolve their homelessness. The City should invest in and rely on CEA as the system backbone and ensure all recommendations included in the 2016 Focus Strategies and the Path Forward reports are adopted. HSD should require providers that receive funding to fully participate in CEA in order to receive city funding.

The City of Seattle must shift to a **competitive and performance-based contracting** approach in order to achieve the recommendations contained within this report. HSD should begin implementing updated performance standards (HMIS quality, CEA participation, and program performance) for all 2017 contracts that are

Housing Resource Center (HRC)

The intent is to increase the capacity of all homeless assistance organizations to implement housing first placement practices and engage effectively with property managers and owners of affordable rental housing. The HRC will be a one-stop for housing placement staff to have access to prioritized affordable housing resources as well as a training and technical assistance center.

The HRC should operate independently of CEA:

- Housing is **real estate** not a human services intervention.
- **No need to "match"** homeless residents to affordable housing units. Tenant and owner choice are important.
- RRH and scattered site PSH providers must be accountable to quickly identify housing achieve throughput. **HRC should be an "assist" to this goal not a bottleneck**.

[9] On May 20, 2009, President Obama signed the Hon
(HEARTH) Act of 2009. The HEARTH Act amended a
key change was requiring communities to adopt a pe
homelessness.

at least as strong as the joint standards recommended by Focus Strategies to All Home, King County, City of Seattle, and the United Way. To prepare for these requirements, during the balance of 2016, HSD should work with currently funded providers to routinely review program performance compared to local standards and best practices. Over the 18-month period of July 2016 – December 2017, under-performing programs should be encouraged to improve performance, transition to new models, and/or move forward without funding from the City. HSD should provide or arrange for technical assistance and training for agencies that are working to improve under-performing programs or working to transition to new models. HSD should begin enforcing these performance standards during 2017 with an expectation that programs that do not achieve these requirements will not receive funding in the future.

The City of Seattle should invest, lead, and actively support the creation of more **systematic access to affordable housing resource options** for households that receive rapid rehousing, scattered site transitional housing or permanent supportive housing. The City of Seattle should ensure that to the greatest extent possible, the owners who have received capital development funding from the Office of Housing should actively participate in making apartment units available to families and individuals to exit from homelessness. The City of Seattle must hold providers who are funded as part of the homeless assistance system to meet housing placement performance expectations. Seattle, in coordination with King County and All Home, should establish/expand capacity of an intermediary organization (Housing Resource Center – see sidebar) to increase access to housing.

Recommendation 3: Implement well with urgency

The communities which are making the greatest reductions in homelessness – Houston, Las Vegas, and New Orleans – are **acting boldly and with urgency to rapidly change systems to meet the needs of families and individuals who are facing homelessness.** The findings of this report and the 2016 Focus Strategies report indicate that solutions are within imminent reach.

The City of Seattle will need to act concurrently in six key areas:

1) Translate the investment recommendations from the Focus Strategies modeling and the Path Forward recommendations into City of Seattle specific investments and design a competitive funding process. Develop and implement updated policies, procedures, and protocols to implement the Path Forward recommendations. ***#LeadershipMatters***

2) Implement the performance standards with current providers to prepare for competitive funding. ***#WhatGetsMeasuredGetsDone***

3) Stand up the Family Impact Team, Outreach Action Team, and the Long Term Shelter Stayers Team. ***#NoExcuses***

Meeting needs of families and individuals is essential – it's more important than preserving funding for programs that are not ending homelessness

The whole system has to shift to an orientation in which it is acceptable for some providers to lose funding. Reallocating funds from low performing programs to high performing programs and evidence based models is an important stewardship function for public agencies to ensure that system objectives are prioritized over the needs or concerns of a particular program or agency.

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4) Design and implement community engagement and communications plans to ensure free flow of information across, among, and between stakeholders within the City of Seattle and other stakeholders. ***#HomesEndHomelessness*** ***#ChangeIsGood***

5) Engage with All Home, King County, United Way and other major funders to coordinate and collaborate on execution of the Focus Strategies recommendations. ***#CollectiveImpactSucceeds***

6) Increase Human Services Department staff capacity, expertise, and skills to operate as effective change agents for the new paradigm. ***#BeAnAgentForChange***

Seattle and King County have a tremendous foundation of public investments, quality providers, and dedicated elected officials, staff, volunteers, and community leaders who believe in the vision of Opening Doors[10] that "no one should experience homelessness – no one should be without a safe, stable place to call

[10] *Opening Doors* is the nation's first comprehensive federal strategy to prevent and end homelessness. It was presented by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness to the Office of the President and Congress on June 22, 2010, and updated and amended in 2015 to reflect what we have learned over the past five years.

home." Political will and disciplined action by elected officials and City staff will be required. If the City of Seattle acts boldly and with urgency, reductions in unsheltered homelessness can occur quickly. The impact can be tremendous on the lives of children, youth, men, and women who are struggling with homelessness. Making homelessness rare, brief and one-time is within reach if the recommendations contained within the Path Forward are implemented well and with urgency.

Background

The City of Seattle's Human Services Department (HSD) was directed in 2014 by Mayor Murray to undertake an analysis of City of Seattle investments in programs and services to address homelessness[11]. One recommendation was to create a policy and investment framework to develop a person-centered system to respond to homelessness that uses data to invest in what works, and is aligned with Federal partners. The development of the Homeless Investment Policy (HIP) Framework was undertaken in response to this directive. The report also recommended undertaking the Portfolio Pilot Project (see below).

The HIP development is being led by City of Seattle leadership and staff. The HIP is intended to establish a framework for the City of Seattle to set policy and investment priorities to achieve the vision to make homelessness rare, brief and one-time within the City of Seattle. The HIP addresses the second item of Mayor Murray's three-pronged approach to address homelessness: 1) execute quickly implementable short term approaches to relieve human suffering due to unsheltered homelessness; 2) develop an approach aligned with national best practices to make strategic and long term improvements to the homeless assistance system; and 3) create more permanent affordable housing options across the income spectrum including housing for people who have experienced homelessness.

HSD contracted with Barbara Poppe and Associates, a nationally recognized leader in addressing homelessness through data-driven solutions and community collaboration, to provide systems innovation consultation on the HIP framework process. The Path Forward final report is the culmination of this systems innovation consultation. The consultation included several components that are described in the next section.

In addition to the systems innovation consultation, several inter-related processes were undertaken to inform the HIP framework. In a partnership with All Home, King County, and United Way, the City of Seattle has engaged with Focus Strategies to use its System Wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) tools that model program and population changes to inform funding decisions and allocation of resources. Focus Strategies also provided suggestions for minimum standards and more optimal targets for a high functioning system composed of successful programs for single adults and families (recommendations on youth and young adults were not within the project scope). This just released 2016 report[12] analyzes and predicts the impact of shifting investments on homeless outcomes. There are also concurrent planning efforts to develop population-specific plans through All Home. Focus Strategies 2016 work also included a focus on redesigning the single adult system. To learn more about SWAP, please visit http://focusstrategies.net/swap/.

A Race and Social Justice analysis is also being conducted by HSD throughout the HIP development process with support from staff experienced with the intersections of race and social justice with homelessness, including members of HSD's RSJI Change Team.

HSD is concurrently leading the Portfolio Pilot Project in partnership with five community agencies to explore opportunities to: 1) Shift investments and services provision to a progressive engagement model and support opportunities to streamline services. The service delivery model should be client-focused and utilize the best

[11] Homelessness Investment Analysis, City of Seattle, Human Services Department, March 2015.
[12] Seattle/King County: Homeless System Performance Assessment and Recommendations with Particular Emphasis on Single Adults, Commissioned by United Way of King County, the City of Seattle, and King County, Focus Strategies, August 2016.

practice of progressive engagement to provide housing-focused, strength-based interventions at the front door of service access at key points in the system. 2) Decrease the administrative burden of agencies with multiple service contracts, by creating contract efficiencies that support service delivery, including combining contracts. 3) Improve the results achieved through performance-based contracts that use data to inform programmatic, policy, and funding changes. The pilot focuses on opportunities to align/integrate current services, supported by alignment of contracts. The pilot also explores the technical assistance and/or capacity needs of agencies to implement the Portfolio model.

The state of emergency declared on November 2, 2015, resulted in one-time funding to support services designed to address the immediate needs of unsheltered individuals in Seattle. The primarily short-term measures implemented as a function of the state of emergency were not expected to result in longer term outcomes to reduce homelessness. However, lessons learned by HSD staff involved with implementing the state of emergency are informing the long-term changes to be proposed in the Homeless Investment Policy framework.

In addition to improved emergency response and investment efficiency, the limited supply of affordable housing must also be addressed in order to ensure long-lasting impact on the rates of homelessness. In 2015, Mayor Murray and the City Council convened the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) advisory committee which was tasked with developing a plan that would generate 50,000 housing units, including a net increase of 20,000 new or preserved affordable units. The HALA committee work resulted in a comprehensive package of 65 recommendations. A key recommendation which was approved by voters in August 2016 was to increase the Seattle Housing levy. Through the previous housing levies the City has constructed or preserved over 12,500 rental units designated as affordable housing. Many of these units are required to serve extremely low income households and are paired with project-based rental assistance so that formerly homeless individuals can pay what they can afford. The Housing Levy also funds the city's stock of permanent supportive housing. To learn more about HALA, please visit http://murray.seattle.gov/housing/. Implementing the HALA recommendations is an integral companion to the HIP framework.

The recommendations to the City of Seattle contained in "The Path Forward – Act Now, Act Strategically, and Act Decisively" are intended to inform the City of Seattle as it develops the Homeless Investment Policy.

Methodology

Through onsite and remote consultation, Barbara Poppe facilitated and supported the work of a core team of staff from HSD's Community Support & Assistance (CSA) Division and the Office of Housing (OH), and a larger planning team made up of HSD leadership and staff from other HSD divisions. This consultation was to build the City's response to the Focus Strategies' System Wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) analysis which was to inform funding decisions and allocation of resources by modeling program and population changes. The engagement commenced in early September 2015 with an onsite visit to Seattle that occurred concurrent with the public launch of the SWAP analysis. Close coordination with Focus Strategies continued across the consultation. The Path Forward consultation will conclude with an onsite visit in September 2016.

During three onsite visits (September 2015, February 2016, and June 2016), numerous meetings occurred with key stakeholders from the public, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors. Site visits were conducted with all types of programs (emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing) for all subpopulations (single and coupled adults, youth and young adults, and families with children). Participation in street outreach and visits to three sanctioned encampments also occurred. Local reports, plans, pilot projects, and research and evaluation studies that have been published over the past five years were reviewed. Numerous interviews were conducted with national and local experts on homelessness. Contact was made with national organizations working within Seattle and King County to understand their scope of work and observations about progress and challenges with implementing best practices.

In addition to interim draft reports provided to the City of Seattle, two presentations to Seattle City Council occurred in February and June 2016. During the June onsite visit, HSD hosted several briefings on national best practices and lessons learned for City of Seattle leadership, HSD staff across all divisions, other funders, providers, and media.

A benchmarking analysis was conducted to compare Seattle and three other West Coast cities with four benchmark cities that had succeeded in making significant reductions in homelessness overall and/or for specific subpopulations. Another benchmarking analysis compared governance practices for communities viewed as having effective Continuum of Care governance practices that were contributing to reductions in homelessness.

Another component of the consultation was to organize "best practices" calls with three benchmark communities (Houston/Harris County, Salt Lake County, and Las Vegas/Clark County) to understand the primary strategies they used to achieve progress on reducing homelessness. Two other communities were engaged to explore strategies to address long term shelter stayers (Hennepin County) and landlord engagement (Atlanta). City of Seattle staff across HSD, OH, and the Mayor's Office, members of City Council and their staff, and representatives from All Home, King County, and the United Way were included in all five calls.

Key findings

2016 Focus Strategies Report: King County Homeless System Performance Assessment and Recommendations with Particular Emphasis on Single Adults

As noted earlier, the work of Focus Strategies was an integral part of the Path Forward analysis. Key findings are described below.

- The number of homeless people in Seattle/King County is on the rise. The 2015 annual one night count of homeless people conducted by All Home found 10,122 people living in unsheltered situations (streets, vehicles), shelters and transitional housing. This was a 13% increase from the 2014 count, which found 8,949 homeless people.
- The annual HMIS reports and other data sources have consistently shown that people of color are disproportionally represented among the homeless population. This is particularly the case for African American and Native American households, who are represented in the homeless population at far higher rates than in the general population in the community.
- The leadership of King County and the City of Seattle have established All Home as the entity designed to lead the Continuum of Care (CoC) and oversee homeless system planning efforts more broadly. All Home is housed within the King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) which provides its fiscal and administrative infrastructure. All Home and other King County funders have undertaken a coordinated effort to develop a more systematic approach to homelessness.
- Seattle/King County invests significant resources in interventions to end homelessness, including Federal, State, King County, City of Seattle, and private funds.
- The Seattle/King County community has put in place a broad range of service, shelter, and housing options for homeless people, representing all types of primary interventions typical in most communities. These include 354 programs and projects offering temporary and permanent housing, as well as a variety of services that are offered by 128 provider organizations. These programs served 34,277 people during 2013 and 2014. Of those served, 18% (6,186 people) received permanent supportive housing.
- Though family households comprise just 12% of the total homeless population, 21% of financial investments are allocated to families. A similar disparity is found in the system inventory, where 22% of the bed/unit capacity is designated for just 12% of the total homeless population. On the single adult household side, 79% of investment and 78% of bed capacity is allocated to the remaining 88% of King County's homeless population.

Community Perceptions of Key Strengths and Challenges

Focus Strategies asked key stakeholders to identify main strengths and accomplishments of the current system, with a particular focus on single adults. These findings are consistent with the stakeholder input provided during the Path Forward consultation process.

Strengths and Assets: Strong agreement that the community benefits from strong collaboration and a commitment from governmental and non- profit leadership to work together to end homelessness. The transformation of the King County Committee to End Homelessness into All Home and the process of developing the Strategic Plan are important recent accomplishments. The community has come a long way towards embracing a Housing First approach which has helped to increase their success in housing people with high housing barriers. Local government representatives pointed to the community's array of financial resources as a strength, including the Housing Levy and other levies. However, providers were more inclined to note a lack of resources as a system challenge.

Challenges: The difficult rental market for low income households (high rents, low vacancy rates, lack of affordable units, and slow pace of new affordable rental housing development) was identified as the main obstacle to helping more people exit from homelessness and making progress on reducing homelessness in Seattle/King County. A number of other challenges relating to homeless system design, particularly the lack of overall coordination among programs and clear pathways for people to be matched to the appropriate intervention. There was a pervasive view that what services or housing a person receives depends to a great degree on luck and which case manager they happen to be working with. A related theme was the lack of data coordination and sharing of data across agencies and programs. Funders and providers also noted that many programs continue to have high barriers to entry and people with the greatest needs are typically the most difficult to place into shelter and housing. Disparities in the distribution of resources among subpopulations were noted – with single adults and youth noted as those with the greatest unmet needs. Geographic differences in resource allocation, in particular the lack of system capacity on the east side of the County.

- Average utilization for emergency shelter was 89% for adult households and 69% for families. This suggests that there is unused capacity to house many of the unsheltered families with children in the community with the existing inventory and available beds should be prioritized for this purpose.

- Many families and individuals were not literally homeless, living outside, on the street or in shelter, at the time of admission. For emergency shelters, only 66% of single adults and 64% of families entering were literally homeless. Only 22% of adults and 36% of families enter shelter from an unsheltered location. Significantly improving performance on this measure alone will drive unsheltered homelessness to effectively zero.

- Lengths of stay in transitional housing were shockingly long at 328 days for single adults and 527 days for families – more than 10 times the goal of housing people in 30 days. Long lengths of stay correlate to higher costs and have not been shown to be necessary for successful program exits.

- The system as a whole is not performing well on exits to permanent housing (across all program types and populations) which suggests that programs are not oriented to successfully helping households identify immediate housing solutions.

- Transitional housing is extraordinarily expensive at more than $20,000 for each single adult exit and $32,627 for each family. By contrast, rapid re-housing, even though the exit rate in the analysis is not ideal, only costs $11,507 per household, about a third the cost of transitional. Emergency shelter generally is very low in cost per exit, but this also reflects the fact that very few people are exiting to permanent housing.

- About 30% of all single adult shelter stayers in Seattle/King County had 2 or more stays in 2015, with about half of these having three or more stays. In addition, about 10% of single adults have single but lengthy stays. These 40% of shelter stayers account for 74% of the shelter bed days used in the system. Furthermore, people who frequently access shelter in King County continue to do so over time.

- Men, people with disabilities, African-American, and Native Americans are disproportionally represented in the shelter population compared to the broader population. White, Asian and Hispanic people are under- represented in the shelter population. Disparities in the characteristics of shelter stays are evident based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, or disability.

- Seattle/King County has sufficient emergency shelter capacity to shelter all unsheltered single adult and family households within one year by combining three initiatives: (1) eliminating low and moderately performing TH projects and repurposing funding to more effective uses; (2) reaching recommended system and program performance targets; and (3) implementing a well functioning coordinated entry and diversion system.

- The efforts to help unsheltered households enter shelter must be coupled with a bold effort to secure permanent housing for those who already have frequent or lengthy shelter stays.

- Available funding is sufficient to rapidly re-house all family households currently using emergency shelter.[13] This suggests that upon implementing all the recommendations that in a single year, Seattle/King County could reduce the inventory of family emergency shelter beds and move money elsewhere. This also suggests that some of the existing funding could shift to help house the large number of single adults using shelter.

- Available, existing funding is sufficient to rapidly re-house all long-term shelter stayers using a combination of permanent supportive housing (PSH) and rapid rehousing (RRH) plus critical time intervention (CTI) over a period of four years. Reallocating funds from existing, low performing projects can produce additional funding needed for rapid re-housing for one-time shelter stayers.

Best Practices Calls

A component of the Path Forward consultation was to organize "best practices" calls to compare the City of Seattle's current investments and policies to promising and best practices to identify opportunities and gaps

[13] Focus Strategies recommends a "moving on" initiative to help families currently in PSH who are stable could be to transition to mainstream permanent housing whenever possible. There are a variety of ways this can be accomplished, most of which will require partnership with the two –Public Housing Authorities to maximize use of available HCV (Housing Choice Vouchers) and MTW (Moving To Work) voucher authority to help tenants transition out of PSH.

that could improve system and program implementation. The driving vision for these calls was to identify replicable strategies that could make homelessness should be rare, brief and one time in Seattle.

Benchmark Communities

To understand what strategies and practices contribute to the ability of other major metropolitan communities to reduce homelessness, four communities were selected as benchmark cities that had made significant reductions in homelessness overall and/or for specific subpopulations. The selected cities were Houston/Harris County, TX (overall, family, chronic and Veteran homelessness), Las Vegas/Clark County, NV (overall, Veteran homelessness), New Orleans/Orleans Parish, LA (overall, chronic and Veteran homelessness), and Salt Lake City/County (chronic and Veteran homelessness). The West Coast peers to Seattle were Los Angeles, CA, Portland/Multnomah, OR, and San Francisco, CA. See below for key comparative data points.

	2014 County Population Estimate	2015 Homeless PIT Count by CoC	Change # Homeless 2010-2015	County FMR - $2BR	30% of Area Median income (County)	2015 Rental Vacancy Rate by MSA
Benchmark City						
Houston/Harris	4,441,370	4,609	-28%	$890	$20,790	11.0%
Salt Lake City/County	1,091,742	2,176	11%	$901	$21,660	5.8%
Las Vegas/Clark	2,069,681	7,509	-25%	$969	$17,760	7.4%
New Orleans/Orleans	384,320	1,703	-80%	$950	$18,000	9.3%
West Coast Peers						
Portland/Multnomah	776,712	3,801	-10%	$944	$22,170	2.4%
Seattle/King	**2,079,967**	**10,122**	**12%**	**$1,415**	**$26,880**	**3.9%**
Los Angeles	10,226,705	41,174	24%	$1,424	$18,900	2.7%
San Francisco	852,469	6,775	16%	$1,386	$21,699	3.5%
	US Census, 2014 Population Estimates	US Dept. of HUD, 2015 AHAR Part 1	Calculated using US Dept. of HUD, 2010 and 2015 AHAR Part 1	National Low Income Housing Coalition, Out of Reach 2015		U.S. Census Bureau CPS/HVS, 2015 Q4

The benchmark cities are making progress despite difficult local rental housing markets that price housing out of reach for low income households as measured by the cost of housing compared to their income. However, the housing costs were lower and the vacancy rates were not as tight as the West Coast peers. Seattle/King County had the highest income across all communities, the second highest number of people who experience homelessness, and an increasing rate of overall homelessness.

Best practices calls with benchmark communities were conducted during March-April 2016 with Houston/Harris County, Las Vegas/Clark County, and Salt Lake County. Several themes emerged across the calls.

Keys to success from community best practices calls

- Funder-driven systems approach that is client-centered
- Relentless focus on housing placement
- Require Housing First practices
- Disciplined use of "By Name Lists"
- Use data for planning and funding – drive for results
- Break down silos – reduce fragmentation
- Aligned funding and actions (collaborative, cross-sector)
- Leverage mainstream resources and funding

OTHER INITIATIVES SHOWING PROMISE IN REDUCING HOMELESSNESS

In addition to community system best practices, there are interventions which can be implemented as additional interventions within the homeless crisis response system.

To better understand how communities are improving access to affordable rental units, a best practices call was conducted with Open Doors Atlanta - a partnership to house homeless individuals and families in the Atlanta Metropolitan Area, including the City of Atlanta, and surrounding counties by increasing access to the private, low cost rental market. The partners were the Atlanta Real Estate Collaborative, Enterprise Community Partners, and Project Community Connections, Inc. Ideas which arose during the call and follow up with Open Doors Atlanta have been incorporated into the concept for the proposed Housing Resource Center.

During Focus Strategies' analysis of best practices for single adults, they identified three projects which had successfully addressed long term shelter stayers. After review of the three efforts, the Hennepin County's Top 51 project was selected for further study. A best practices call with Hennepin County was implemented. A summary of this project is included later in this report.

Focus Strategies also reported on these additional promising practices for single adults: targeted outreach with priority for interim or permanent housing beds, targeted rapid rehousing, single adult shelter diversion, uses of and variations on Critical Time Intervention (CTI) in different permanent housing models. For more about these findings, see the 2016 Focus Strategies Report.

Implementing an active "By-Name List" practice

Communities that have achieved significant reductions in Veteran homelessness generally have a few things in common: a sense of urgency, strong leadership and key stakeholders who meet on a very regular basis. One practice that supports this work is actively using a "By-Name List" and meeting weekly with key partners to ensure that decisions and list updates can be made on a timely and regular basis. This practice, recommended by HUD, VA, and USICH, has also been shown to be effective to address unsheltered homelessness, chronic homelessness, and long term shelter stayers.

A By-Name List is a real-time, up-to-date list of all people experiencing homelessness which can be sorted or filtered by categories, and shared across agencies. The By-Name list is generated with data from the HMIS and other community agencies working to end homelessness. Creating this shareable master list, and continuously updating it, ensures that all providers and partners are on the same page and have a clear identified group of people who need housing. This tool allows communities to know every person experiencing homelessness by name, in real time without having to wait for a PIT count. A By-Name list also facilitates community decisions on how to identify the needs of each person, target those who may be eligible for various programs and prioritize people who are most in need of housing and services.

There are four building blocks to a By-Name list:

1. **Targeted Outreach:** Having an organized and intentional outreach plan prevents duplication of outreach workers and ensures full geographic coverage.
2. **Standardized Assessment Tool:** Establishing a By-Name list requires a common assessment tool for the purpose of making informed referrals to the most appropriate housing and services as soon as possible.
3. **Release of Information (ROI)**: An ROI allows coordinating agencies to add to and access the By-Name list.
4. **Data Platform:** A proficient and comprehensive data platform makes a By-Name list more effective and efficient. The data platform is not a waiting list for those needing housing, as no person is ever removed from the database; rather, his/her status changes (e.g. inactive, housed, refusing services, etc.). It is critical that the list be updated frequently to remain a useful tool.

Continuous Quality Improvement is an important practice to evaluate the process and ensure timely adjustments are made.

Excerpted from Vets@Home Toolkit: Identifying and Engaging Veterans Experiencing Homelessness, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, September 2015.

Recommendations

One of the initial pieces of work during the Path Forward consultation was to develop goals and intended outcomes of the HIP. The statements have guided the work and inform the specific recommendations that follow.

- 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.
- Outline an investment strategy based on an analysis of system and program performance for each sub-population of people experiencing homelessness. This will include system and program benchmarks, as well as incorporate best practices, and lessons learned from recent pilot projects.
- Identify housing-focused solutions to create a positive impact on access to housing.
- Improve investment alignment within the City of Seattle funding areas, as well as with other funders that support the shared goals in addressing homelessness.
- Identify opportunities to improve HSD procedures resulting in routine, competitive funding processes that focus on the development of outcomes-driven and performance-based contracts, as well as decreasing the administrative burden on HSD and agency staff by maximizing contract efficiencies for agencies with multiple funded services.
- Invest in the data and evaluation capacity that is necessary to support systemic transformation, including more efficiently utilizing data available through HMIS to support sound policy decisions.

The Path Forward recommendations flow from the 2016 Focus Strategies analysis and report, and are based on an analysis of best practices, input from local stakeholders, and review of prior reports. The recommendations are organized into three categories:

Recommendation 1.	Create a person-centered crisis response system
Recommendation 2.	Improve program/system performance and accountability
Recommendation 3.	Implement well, with urgency

Recommendation 1: Create a person-centered crisis response system

The City of Seattle began supporting emergency shelter programs in 1978 and over time has funded a myriad of programs. By 2014, the Homeless Investment Analysis report found that HSD allocated nearly $40.84 million across 183 contracts and 60 agencies through a network of investments in homeless prevention, homeless intervention, and permanent housing programs. A summary of the history of the City of Seattle's funding for homeless programs is described later in this report.

Focus Strategies found that stakeholders held, "a pervasive view that what services or housing a person receives depends to a great degree on luck and which case manager they happen to be working with." Stakeholders interviewed for the Path Forward report believed that Seattle and King County had not been able to shift to a systems approach in part due to the extensive number of programs and varying missions of the 60 agencies. Consequently, many programs were funded to provide narrow scopes of services for a limited sub-population. This tendency to create "boutique" programs when coupled with a tendency to provide legacy funding on a non-competitive basis has made it more difficult for Seattle to shift to a systems approach. The consequence of this nearly three decade approach to homelessness is that individuals and families must fit within the program requirements and program openings rather than have programs meet their unique needs. The result is that homelessness has been increasing despite increasing investment in programs. This trend is expected to continue unless a new approach is adopted.

To be successful, the City of Seattle should develop and invest in a comprehensive array of interventions that are integrated to provide a person-centered crisis response system that responds to the unique needs of each family and individual. Some interventions will be existing program models, some will need to be re-tooled for improved results and greater efficiency, and some will be new approaches. Additionally, investment in some program types may need to end or at least not be included as part of Seattle's investment in homelessness. All interventions must contribute to rapidly providing access to stable housing for families and individuals who are at imminent risk of or experiencing literal homelessness.

All investments must be directed to interventions that will significantly contribute to achieving these twin priorities:

1) **Reduce unsheltered homelessness**. This is critical since the increasing numbers of people who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness has prompted the Seattle Mayor and King County Executive to issue a state of emergency[14].

2) **Increase the throughput from homelessness to stable housing**. Both a humane response and provides greater efficiencies for existing emergency responses through turning over temporary shelter capacity to enable more persons who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness to be served.

[14] On November 2, 2015, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and King County Executive Dow Constantine declared a civil emergency to address homelessness in Seattle and King County, and joined by Seattle City Councilmembers Mike O'Brien, Sally Bagshaw and John Okamoto, outlined new investments to respond to the growing crisis of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Seattle and King County.

A summary of recommended interventions is included in **Appendix 1.**The table includes a description of the intervention, key characteristics, next steps, intended impact, and population.

Shift to System Model

As noted above, there is not a true "system of care" that responds to the needs of people who experience homelessness in Seattle and King County. The following excerpts from the 2016 Focus Strategies report describe the rationale for shifting from Homeless Programs to a System that Ends Homelessness.

In recent years, federal homelessness policy has shifted increasingly towards a data-driven approach that seeks to hold communities accountable for measureable reductions in the numbers of people experiencing homelessness.

Progressive Engagement refers to a strategy of starting with a small amount of assistance for a large group of people and then adding more assistance as needed. Progressive Engagement is a nationally recognized best practice in addressing homelessness, which provides customized levels of assistance to families and preserves the most expensive interventions for households with the most severe barriers to housing success. Progressive Engagement is a strategy to enable service delivery systems to effectively target resources. The National Alliance to End Homelessness has featured Progressive Engagement as an important strategy in the national implementation of the HEARTH Act.

The USICH's Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, *Opening Doors*,[15] articulates a definition of what it means to end homelessness: "An end to homelessness means that every community will have a systematic response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience. Specifically, every community will have the capacity to:

- Quickly identify and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness.
- Intervene to prevent the loss of housing and divert people from entering the homeless services system.
- When homelessness does occur, provide immediate access to shelter and crisis services, without barriers to entry, while permanent stable housing and appropriate supports are being secured, and quickly connect people to housing assistance and services—tailored to their unique needs and strengths—to help them achieve and maintain stable housing."

Homeless crisis resolution systems respond to the urgency of homelessness – the focus is on people who are living outside or who have been cycling in and out of shelter, helping them secure housing as rapidly as possible and not return to homelessness. While the system helps link people to services and resources they need to address other issues, its primary focus is on ensuring everyone has a safe and stable place to live. To be effective, the Housing Crisis Resolution System must provide an appropriate response to *everyone* who needs it, especially those with the greatest needs. It must not screen out from assistance anyone experiencing

[15] Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, 2010, page 49, cited in Seattle/King County: Homeless System Performance Assessment and Recommendations with Particular Emphasis on Single Adults, Commissioned by United Way of King County, the City of Seattle, and King County, Focus Strategies, August 2016.

literal homelessness – that is, living outside, on the streets, or in shelter. This also means limited system resources must not be used to serve people who would be more appropriately served elsewhere. In other words, the system must target and prioritize.

Underlying the idea of a Housing Crisis Resolution System is the philosophy of Housing First. A Housing First orientation means that the system is organized around helping people secure a place to live, without preconditions, which they can use as the foundation to address other needs. While gaining income, self- sufficiency, and improved health are all desirable goals, they are not prerequisites to people being housed. In a system organized around Housing First principles, shelter and housing programs have minimal entry barriers and do not require clients to participate in services or gain skills/income as a condition of receiving housing assistance. Services in the system are focused on doing what it takes to rapidly secure housing for each client, with linkages and connections to mainstream systems in order to address other service needs (e.g. employment, health, behavioral health). Housing First "is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Housing First is supported by evidence that most people experiencing homelessness do not return to homelessness after they have been housed, even if they have not addressed other life challenges.[16]

In a Homeless Crisis Response System, all of the parts of the system work together toward a common goal. Every actor in the system, regardless of the role they play, views each person who is literally homeless as someone with a housing need that can be addressed within 30 days. There are no people who are not "housing ready." When a person becomes homeless, a system is in place to figure out where they can live and provide the appropriate amount of assistance to help them re-enter housing. Data systems are used to continuously collect and analyze information regarding who remains housed and who does not. The system does not make assumptions about what services people need in order to sustain housing, but uses data to understand who is returning to homelessness and why. If patterns emerge, these are analyzed and adjustments are made accordingly.

Coordinated Entry for All (CEA)

Established by All Home in 2016, the Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) is the new coordinated entry system for Seattle and King County. Development of coordinated entry systems is required in order to receive funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. A coordinated entry system should make assistance more easily accessible to people who experience homelessness and allocate and prioritize resources more effectively[17]. CEA will manage access to the full range of homeless assistance from diversion to emergency shelter to housing interventions (rapid rehousing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing). CEA will use standardized tools and practices, incorporate a system-wide housing first approach, and coordinate assistance so that those with the most severe service needs are prioritized. The CEA

[16] NAEH Fact Sheet: Housing First. Updated April 2016 cited in Seattle/King County: Homeless System Performance Assessment and Recommendations with Particular Emphasis on Single Adults, Commissioned by United Way of King County, the City of Seattle, and King County, Focus Strategies, August 2016.
[17] Coordinated Entry Policy Brief, HUD Exchange, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, February 2015.

is managed by King County Department of Community and Human Services and will include Regional Access Points (RAP) that will serve as hubs for access into the homeless response system. CEA is intended to serve all families and individuals who are literally homeless as well as those fleeing domestic violence and young adults who are at imminent risk of homelessness. All Home has opted for a phased implementation of coordinated entry. Initially, CEA will manage access for families to diversion, emergency shelter, and housing interventions. For single adults and youth, CEA will initially only manage access to housing interventions and diversion.

All Home determined that CEA will use vulnerability assessments as the sole consideration for prioritizing access to emergency shelter and housing interventions. The VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) has been selected as the common assessment and triage tool for CEA with the use of tailored versions for single adults, families, and young adults. All Home notes that the VI-SPDAT score will be used for initial access, but they need to develop methods to ensure individuals with very high needs yet scoring low on this tool could still be prioritized for the most service intensive housing resources. System-wide implementation for access to housing interventions is occurring through a 'Banding Priority' approach. Housing resources are associated with a range of assessment scores and within each range, the families and individuals with the highest score within each of the three bands will be prioritized for the next available housing resource.

All Home is also using the VI-SPDAT assessment to prioritize access to emergency shelter for families. Admission to shelter is based on the overall CEA assessment tool score; the banding priority is not used for emergency shelter. In other words, those families scoring highest on the VI-SPDAT assessment will have priority access to emergency shelter over those who score lower.

Coordinated Entry and Emergency Shelter Access

Coordinated entry systems are intended to organize a community's homeless assistance resources to create a person-centered response which "right sizes" the intervention to the individual/family needs (i.e. intensive services and housing are reserved for those with the greatest barriers to housing stability) and provide a rapid return to stable housing. In accordance with USICH guidance on defining an end to homelessness, coordinated entry systems should provide access to shelter or other temporary accommodations immediately to any person experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants it.

When there is insufficient emergency shelter capacity, shelter admission should be reserved for the individuals and families who are at greatest risk for severe health and safety consequences if not sheltered. This is a different approach than should be taken to match families to a housing intervention based on barriers to housing stability. For example, a mother with a newborn is at high risk of a severe health outcome but may have few barriers to housing and be able to be re-housed with one-time assistance with initial move-in costs.

Conversations with national experts on child and family homelessness found strong agreement that all families with children should be sheltered and that no children should ever be unsheltered. In Seattle and King County, CEA currently reports that shelter capacity is not sufficient to shelter all families with children who are unsheltered; therefore, Seattle and King County are currently "rationing" access to emergency shelter based on the CEA assessment tool score. The developer of the VI-SPDAT, OrgCode Consulting, describes the VI-SPDAT as a triage tool that helps "to inform the type of support and housing intervention that may be most beneficial to improve long term housing outcomes." It does not appear that this tool was intended to be used to prioritize access to emergency shelter as it does not assess risk of severe health and safety consequences. National experts on homelessness agreed that this tool was not appropriate for this purpose.

Further, the consensus of national experts was that due to the serious health consequences associated with being unsheltered, all pregnant women and children under age one must be assured same-day access to shelter (shelter program or temporary motel voucher). Infants who are unsheltered are at significantly increased risk of poor health and infections due to close quarters, lack of access to proper hygiene facilities, poor nutrition and lack of access to safe food storage and preparation, and exposure to temperature extremes (heat or cold). The most severe consequence, infant mortality, is often linked to unsafe sleeping arrangements which can result in suffocation. Families with unsheltered infants – sleeping in a car, tent or other unsafe environments – will likely not have access to a crib and other safe sleeping practices. Pregnant women and their unborn children are also likely to be impacted by not having basic needs met. Children under age four are also at risk of serious health and safety consequences. Research on brain development is clear that toxic stress during early brain development and maturation can have lifelong impacts. Many children in this age group will be using diapers so the lack of access to hygiene facilities is also of concern as are the concerns described above for infants. Experts also noted that there may be other extraordinary health and safety concerns of families that could be addressed on a case by case basis, e.g. teenager with juvenile diabetes, parent with severe depression, etc.

The Timing and Duration Effects of Homelessness on Children's Health

Recent research by Children's HealthWatch found that there is **no safe level of child homelessness**. The report notes, "the timing (pre-natal, post-natal) and duration of homelessness (more or less than six months) compounds the risk of harmful child health outcomes. The younger and longer a child experiences homelessness, the greater the cumulative toll of negative health outcomes, which can have lifelong effects on the child, the family, and the community." The authors conclude rapid response to the needs of pregnant women at-risk of homelessness has the potential to reduce the likelihood of negative health outcomes, help support a child's trajectory towards lifelong healthy development, and reduce public health expenditures.

Compounding Stress: The Timing and Duration Effects of Homelessness on Children's Health
By Megan Sandel, MD MPH, Richard Sheward, MPP, and Lisa Sturtevant, PhD
Insights from Housing Policy Research, June 2015
Center for Housing Policy and Children's HealthWatch

Coordinated Entry and Assignment to Housing Interventions

Communities have taken different approaches to how they assign housing interventions through coordinated entry. Some communities, like King County, prioritize housing interventions primarily on vulnerability as determined by using an assessment tool. Others use progressive engagement as a strategy in lieu of extensive assessments or in combination with assessments. A recent HUD and NAEH convening[18] found that there was not a strong evidence base for either approach.

> *The invited experts generally agreed that existing assessment tools do not have a strong evidence base and are limited in their ability to select the best interventions for families and individuals or to predict which families would be the most successful in different interventions. There appears to be some research practitioners can use to target prevention assistance. In addition, considerable research supports targeting permanent supportive housing to those who experience chronic homelessness. Beyond that, however, little evidence exists to support targeting interventions to specific families or individuals.*
>
> *A sizable group supported a second alternative, progressive engagement, through which everyone would receive the "lightest touch" to help as many clients as possible. More intensive and expensive interventions would be provided only if the lightest touch proved insufficient to resolve the household's homelessness. The experts acknowledged that at this point, the evidence base for progressive engagement is not strong either.*

Furthermore, HUD recently (April 2016) reiterated through the Continuum of Care NOFA[19] that length of homelessness should be a primary basis for housing and service prioritization.

Some communities match individuals/families to a type of housing intervention based on eligibility and then prioritize access to this intervention based on length of time the individual/family is homeless. Matching someone to a housing intervention is based on HUD's specific guidance to prioritize permanent supportive housing for persons with "high service needs," defined as high crisis service utilization and/or significant health or behavioral health challenges or functional impairments which require a significant level of support in order to maintain permanent housing. For example, if someone is chronically homeless, they are eligible for PSH and RRH, if they are not chronically homeless, they are eligible for RRH. Access to the housing intervention by eligible individuals/families is then prioritized based on the length of time someone has been homeless.

In Seattle, there is tremendous need to prioritize access to housing resources based on length of homelessness – both for those who are unsheltered and those who are long term shelter stayers (see Focus Strategies findings). **Long lengths of homelessness is a very strong indicator that the individual or family has significant barriers to housing and is likely to continue to be homeless without assistance from the homeless assistance system.** Providing a home to a long term homelessness person who is living unsheltered in a business district or neighborhood is not only a humane response, it will have a visible impact

[18] PD&R Expert Convening. Assessment Tools for Allocating Homelessness Assistance: State of the Evidence. February 2015. http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/a7cabcea91f5c8efbd_yam6b1ad6.pdf

[19] HUD: Notice of Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Opportunity to Register and Other Important Information for Electronic Application Submission for the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Competition. April 20, 2016. http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=2016cocregnofa.pdf

on that area. The impact of housing a long term shelter stayer is also not only a humane response, it will free up a precious resource that will reduce the number of unsheltered persons within Seattle. The CEA prioritization approach adopted by All Home is unlikely to impact unsheltered homelessness and achieve the goal of increased throughput.

Overall recommendations on CEA management of emergency shelter and housing intervention access:

1) To reduce unsheltered homelessness, Seattle and King County must require emergency shelters to focus admissions on those families and individuals who are unsheltered or at imminent risk of being unsheltered. CEA should immediately facilitate this access for families and over time as admission to adult and youth shelter is managed by CEA.

2) Fully utilize existing emergency shelter capacity and closely monitor daily occupancy. Seattle and King County should promptly follow up with shelters with occupancy below 90% to determine reasons for less than full occupancy.

3) **Offer every homeless family and individual diversion assistance** and if it is not feasible to help the family or individual avoid unsheltered homelessness, provide an offer of emergency shelter that same day.

4) Continue to immediately link households who are currently experiencing domestic violence to programs prepared to meet their safety needs as well as effective at dealing with trauma and the consequences of domestic violence.

5) **Prioritize for housing interventions those families and individuals who have the longest histories of homelessness and highest housing barriers** and rapidly connect them to a viable housing option. Wherever possible, a progressive engagement approach is recommended.

6) **If there is insufficient emergency shelter capacity, shelter admission should be reserved for the unsheltered individuals and families who are at greatest risk for severe health and safety consequences if not sheltered.** Managing access to shelter based on health and safety consequences is a different assessment than would be used to match to housing intervention based on barriers to housing stability. For example, a mother with a newborn is at high risk of a severe health outcome but may have few barriers to housing and be able to be re-housed with one-time assistance with initial move-in costs.

    a) Do not use the score from the VI-SPDAT as primary criteria to determine access priority rankings for emergency shelter. The VI-SPDAT score was not intended to be used for this purpose and was developed to make recommendations for rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing.

    b) If there is insufficient capacity to shelter all unsheltered families, CEA should manage emergency shelter access to ensure that immediate health and safety factors are the primary basis for prioritization.

        i) All unsheltered families with pregnant women or infants under age one are offered immediate (same day) access to emergency shelter (either program or motel voucher).

        ii) Second priority should be to shelter all unsheltered families with children under age four and other families with extraordinary situations that are at severe health and safety risk. The VI-SPDAT score could be used as an additional factor for consideration.

c) Before CEA begins managing access to YYA and single adult emergency shelter, it should determine criteria for prioritization in the event there is insufficient capacity to shelter all unsheltered individuals. CEA should consider immediate health and safety factors for prioritization.

Families with Children

There is a previously unimaginable crisis among families with children who experience homelessness in Seattle and King County. More than 400 families with children are believed to be unsheltered at a single point in time according to recent reports by All Home. According to the 2014 Focus Strategies report[20] families with children were waiting for emergency shelter for an average of 186 days once assessed with Family Housing Connection (the precursor to CEA). All stakeholders view the current approach to meeting the crisis needs of homeless families as fragmented and siloed. Engagement with mainstream providers of services for low income families is limited. While most family shelters provide individual units for families and operate 24/7, some family shelter facilities are congregate settings and do not offer round-the-clock access to the facility. This is a significant burden for families with children who need all day access to sleeping quarters for napping or sick children, locked storage for family belongings, proper storage for food and medication, and access to resources to help parents locate housing and employment.

Key Housing Stabilization Interventions for Families

- Diversion
- Family Impact Team
- Comprehensive Emergency Shelter
- Rapid Rehousing
- Permanent Supportive Housing

Recommendations for the City of Seattle policy and investment:

All recommendations included in this section are intended to enhance, not replace, the recommendations described in the USICH Family Connection report and the 2014 Focus Strategies report. The City of Seattle is strongly encouraged to incorporate recommendations from these reports into their investment decisions and as part of their advocacy with other funders and systems. All Home is currently managing implementation of the 2014 Focus Strategies report.

Re-design the City's approach to families with children – rapidly eliminate unsheltered homelessness

A seamless and integrated approach to rapidly engage with unsheltered families with children and connect them to safe shelter is required. The 2016 Focus Strategies report identified many opportunities to reallocate resources from under-performing programs and deploy to achieve better results. Through modeling, they conclude that Seattle/King County has sufficient emergency shelter capacity to shelter all unsheltered family households within one year by combining three initiatives: (1) eliminating low and moderately performing TH projects and repurposing those resources to more effective uses; (2) reaching recommended system and program performance targets; and (3) implementing a well functioning coordinated entry and diversion system. As noted above, the All Home CEA intends to use vulnerability assessments as the primary

[20] Focus Strategies, Family Homelessness Coordinated Entry System Analysis and Refinement Project, prepared for the Committee to End Homelessness, 2014.

consideration for prioritizing housing interventions and provision of emergency shelter. This approach is not recommended.

Access to Comprehensive Emergency Shelter

The 2016 Focus Strategies SWAP analysis found that there is significant unused emergency shelter capacity to serve all of the unsheltered families with children with the existing inventory if coupled with significant performance improvements. Only admitting families who are unsheltered or will be unsheltered without emergency shelter is one of the recommendations. By significantly improving performance on providing shelter only to families who are literally homeless, the 2016 Focus Strategies report demonstrates the ability to drive unsheltered homelessness to effectively zero.

The City of Seattle should advocate with other funders and All Home to restrict admission to emergency shelter to only those who are unsheltered and ensure all shelter capacity is fully utilized. Average utilization for family emergency shelter was just 69% per the 2016 Focus Strategies analysis which is troubling given the high number of families with children who were unsheltered during that same analysis period. Even if Seattle is not successful in getting all funders to impose this requirement on family shelters, Seattle in the near term, should require that CEA and its funded shelters target all city-funded shelters to unsheltered families residing within the City of Seattle. This process can be phased out once there are no longer any unsheltered families.

Seattle should invest only in Comprehensive Emergency Shelters for families with children who experience homelessness. Unlike overnight shelter, these programs operate 24/7, year round, have low barrier admission requirements, and typically (but not exclusively) aim for a length of stay of 90 days or less. Comprehensive Emergency Shelter should ensure basic needs are met for personal safety, sufficient and safe sleep, hygiene, adequate nutrition, and secure storage. Housing First assistance with rapid access to housing must be provided and integrated into the design of the emergency shelter program. To achieve this recommendation, Seattle may need to support congregate family shelters to transition to Comprehensive Emergency Shelters programs. If needed, use funding to incentivize and support these transitions. Note that this does not preclude continuing to provide on-demand access to motel vouchers for families that would otherwise be unsheltered due to all family shelter beds being fully utilized.

Family Impact Team

In order to quickly reduce the number of unsheltered families with children who are residing within Seattle, the City of Seattle should stand up a **Family Impact Team (FIT)** to provide seamless and integrated approaches to rapidly engage with families with children who are unsheltered and residing within the City of Seattle. This team should invite participation by all family shelters (HSD-funded shelters are required),Late Night at the YMCA, Kids Plus and other outreach providers, Children's Administration (Department of Social and Health Services), liaisons from public schools, providers of RRH, TH, and PSH, and other community resources for low income families with children. CEA and HMIS staff should support these teams and participate in meetings. The FIT should focus on providing rapid access to shelter and stable housing. The FIT team should be headed by an HSD staff member who serves as the Project Lead.

The Project Lead should convene bi-weekly case coordination meetings using the By Name List (BNL) of all unsheltered families with children. The Lead should solve problems on the spot, enforce accountability, and

act with great urgency to get throughput moving to make space so unsheltered families can be admitted to shelter.

Using BNL practices, the purpose of the FIT team meetings should be to: 1) Review progress on engaging and housing the unsheltered families with children and update the BNL. 2) Review CEA community queue for families and progress to connect unsheltered families with a housing intervention.3) Review dashboard from CEA that shows all HSD-funded shelter utilization and key performance metrics.

FIT team members should be able to coordinate and provide mobile stabilization services within existing provider agency staffing capacity (homeless and mainstream). This should include availability for 10-12 hours/7 days a week to help unsheltered families to receive quick access to safe shelter. These FIT team "field staff" should use the diversion suite of tools, assist families to complete the CEA admission requirements and support the family to access emergency shelter as well as stable housing. Services could be provided until family is placed in permanent housing if needed. If the existing provider capacity is not sufficient to provide full coverage, HSD may need to contract with a provider to provide the portion of this coverage that is not available through existing providers.

HSD should consider an interim investment, if needed, in FIT mobile services. After the CEA Regional Access Points are fully operational and unsheltered family homelessness is rare, the City can assess whether there is an ongoing need for mobile services to ensure no families are unsheltered. If the FIT demonstrates success, other funders may want to replicate this approach in other parts of King County.

Invest in bringing Diversion and Rapid Rehousing to scale

The 2016 Focus Strategies report found that "many of the people currently entering shelter are experiencing an immediate housing crisis that can be resolved without shelter entry if the system were oriented towards shelter diversion and shelter is viewed only as an option of last resort. This also requires staff trained in diversion who are strong problem solvers and understand their goal is to figure out safe and feasible housing alternatives for people seeking shelter." Further, Focus Strategies recommends, "to maximize the use of homeless system resources for people who are unsheltered, robust shelter diversion needs to be integrated into the work of CEA and diversion attempted for all households seeking shelter (regardless of circumstances)."

Rapid Rehousing is a more effective and cost-efficient investment than long stays in shelter and transitional housing. Focus Strategies found that transitional housing is extraordinarily expensive at more than $32,627 for each family and lengths of stay in transitional housing are shockingly long at 527 days for families – more than 10 times the goal of housing people in 30 days. By contrast, rapid re-housing, even though the exit rate is not ideal, only costs $11,507 per household, about a third the cost of transitional. Emergency shelter generally is very low in cost per exit, but this also reflects the fact that very few people are exiting to permanent housing. Consequently, Focus Strategies identified resources that are currently invested in low- and medium performing transitional housing which can be reallocated to rapid re-housing.

HSD should support new funding opportunities for Diversion and Rapid Rehousing by investing in joint NOFA's with All Home and other funders. Funded providers should be required to implement Diversion and Rapid Rehousing consistent with fidelity to the best practice models. The need for Rapid Rehousing system and program improvement is under-scored by the exit rates to permanent housing that are well below what is common in high-performing RRH programs, (i.e. just over half, 52%, of families exit to permanent housing

for Seattle/King County per the 2016 Focus Strategies report). Providers that are unable to meet the NAEH standards for Rapid Rehousing and updated Seattle/King County performance standards should not be funded.

Proposed City of Seattle advocacy with local partners:

- **Create updated partnership with schools to identify and support children who experience homelessness.** The City of Seattle through the State of Emergency has most recently engaged in a new partnership with Seattle Public Schools. Creating a strong and effective partnership with all youth and family programs that receive HSD funding is critical to the long term educational success of children and youth who experience homelessness. As noted above, school liaisons should be invited to participate in the FIT.

- **Engage and advocate with Children's Administration to provide additional supports to families who are struggling with or at imminent risk of unsheltered homelessness.** Families facing homelessness could benefit from services and supports available through the Children's Administration within the Department of Social and Health Services whose mission includes "supporting families and communities in keeping children safe in their own homes." As noted earlier, the staff from the Children's Administration should be invited to participate in the Family Impact Team. The National Alliance to End Homelessness[21] recommends that child welfare agencies can play an important role in stabilizing families through these complementary strategies: (1) assess families for housing need; (2) develop housing stability plans; (3) create housing stabilization units or develop capacity by leveraging partnerships; (4) provide rapid re- housing to families who need immediate and short-term assistance; and (5) provide permanent housing assistance to families who need long-term subsidies to help them maintain their housing.

[21] The Role of Child Welfare Agencies in Improving Housing Stability for Families, National Alliance to End Homelessness, Solutions Brief, September 2013.

Youth and Young Adults (YYA)

Seattle and King County are respected nationally for community wide efforts to address homelessness among youth and young adults (YYA). King County was an early innovator to develop improved methods to count youth and is currently participating in the University of Chicago Chapin Hall's Voices of Youth Count. The philanthropic community has been an active thought partner and investor in supporting the work in progress to transform the system of care for YYA. Seattle YYA providers are also active nationally and frequently called upon as experts to provide input to the Federal government and national organizations.

Key Housing Stabilization Interventions for Youth and Young Adults

- Diversion
- Comprehensive Emergency Shelter
- Street Outreach
- Solutions Focused Case Management
- Youth Drop In Centers
- Rapid Rehousing
- Transitional Housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing

Seattle and King County are also respected leaders in national advocacy that there be developmentally appropriate services for young adults as distinct from other adults. This priority has resulted in increased local investment in programs for young adults. Seattle and King County are also at the forefront of the national movement to emphasize the importance of supporting LGBTQ YYA and YYA of color. All Home has developed an updated YYA Comprehensive Plan[22]. This Plan notes "LGBTQ young people and young people of color are overrepresented among homeless YYA; these populations face unique and critical challenges. We believe that if we improve our ability to meet the needs of these young people, services for all young people experiencing homelessness will improve." The YYA Comprehensive Plan reported that findings from recent analysis "create opportunities for better targeting our programs based on the differing needs of individual YYAs."

King County has been implementing coordinated entry for young adults since 2013 through the Youth Housing Connection (YHC). Youth Housing Connection (YHC) coordinated applications for housing, applied a common strengths-based assessment, and prioritized the most vulnerable young people for housing and placed them in programs for which they were eligible. Several reasons have been cited for the change from the YHC to the CEA including, long referral timelines and significant system delays between assessment and moving into housing. The new CEA approach will use the scores from the TAY-VI-SPDAT (Transition Age Youth – Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Prescreen Tool) to target housing interventions for young adults age 18-25. CEA will serve all YYA who are literally homeless as well as those fleeing domestic violence and young adults who are at imminent risk of homelessness within 14 days (broader definition than the literal homeless targeting being used with other adults or families with children but narrower than the YHC approach).

Many youth providers expressed serious reservations and concerns about whether this new approach will be successful. Believing that CEA should ensure that all youth in crisis should have immediate access to trauma-informed screening and housing assessment and emergency shelter, they expressed concerns that the current model will only prioritize YYA with the highest vulnerability scores. Many expressed concern that existing

[22] Comprehensive Plan to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Homelessness in King County by 2020, 2015 Comprehensive Plan Refresh, Committee to End Homelessness in King County, May 2015

housing programs are not equipped to safely accept and support high needs YYA. Further, they noted **that there is a disconnect in purpose and practice between a crisis response system and a system intended to help disadvantaged youth achieve their fullest potential and self-sufficiency**. The former is required by HUD while the latter is consistent with HHS requirements. A few national leaders noted that the needs of under-age youth are distinctly different than older YYA so it may make sense to design a separate response system for runaway youth and minors.

To understand local and national perspectives on the evidence about what interventions work best for homeless youth and young adults (ages 12-24 years), interviews were conducted with local leaders and national experts. Local stakeholders consistently noted that while the services, housing, and shelter were improving, there are many YYA who were not served adequately and some YYA programs had restrictive admission barriers that precluded serving high need YYA. There was tremendous hope that programs could be better equipped to meet the critical needs of YYA. Several stakeholders noted that Seattle had many excellent programs for YYA but a systems approach was not under-developed.

While there was no consensus among local and national experts nor solid evidence as to which YYA program models achieve the best results and for which YYA subpopulation, there was generally agreement with the Federal Framework to End Youth Homelessness[23]:

> *An effective strategy must account for the specific needs of adolescents and youth transitioning to adulthood and the role families can play in both the reasons for becoming homeless and the potential solutions. These considerations make an approach to ending homelessness for unaccompanied youth distinct from an approach to ending homelessness for adults.*

Further, the Federal Framework recommended that youth receive age and developmentally appropriate services and supports that address four core outcomes: stable housing, permanent connections, education and/or employment and social/emotional well-being. These **outcomes are distinct from the recommendations for single adults and families**. Local and national leaders emphasized that YYA need to have access to not only housing, but jobs, education, social supports, health care, and transportation. The homeless assistance system is not equipped, nor should it be, to meet all of the needs. Rather **the community should evaluate all resources and weave together mainstream and targeted funding streams to serve youth experiencing homelessness**.

Focus Strategies provided recommendations on performance metrics for single adult and families with children but did not offer recommendations for youth and young adults. Therefore, a set of comprehensive and measurable outcomes for use in Seattle and King County was produced as a companion to the Path Forward report. These recommendations, like the Focus Strategies single adult and family recommendations, provided suggestions for minimum standards and more optimal targets for a high functioning system composed of successful programs. The standards and targets were based on input from Focus Strategies along with local and national experts and in consideration of the goals of reducing unsheltered homelessness and increasing throughput.

There was agreement among local stakeholders and national experts that case management (from light touch to intensive) is a critical service that supports diversion, family reunification, housing stability and cross

[23] Federal Framework to End Youth Homelessness, 2012 Amendment to Opening Doors, US Interagency Council on Homelessness, September 2012;

system/program coordination for youth and young adults. Generally there was support for using progressive engagement as a core practice.

A review of the local program inventory and local stakeholders indicates that there is likely a significant gap in the YYA system response for youth <18 years. Local experts suggested that the major systems that impact youth homelessness or serve homeless youth – juvenile justice, schools, and child welfare -- are not engaged effectively in solutions to YYA homelessness.

Some but not all YYA programs were included in the 2016 Focus Strategies analysis and report within the programs for single adults and families with children. Consequently, separate data on program and system performance for YYA programs was not published.

Recommendations for the City of Seattle policy and investment:

HSD currently funds some youth employment and education programs that are targeted to YYA who experience homelessness. These programs are not considered to be part of the HIP which is focused on crisis resolution and housing stabilization but should be included as part of the City of Seattle's programs for Opportunity Youth.

SUPPORT INNOVATION WITH STRONG EVALUATION TO BUILD THE EVIDENCE OF WHAT WORKS FOR WHOM

Nowhere is innovation more important than in ending homelessness among youth and young adults. Seattle is an important player in the national movement to embrace innovation, build evidence of what works and continually improve our understanding of youth homelessness and how to end it. There is tremendous need to undertake a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of current YYA programs as the scope of the 2016 Focus Strategies analysis was not comprehensive and specific to the YYA programs. Strong evaluation is very important to differentiate between correlative factors and causative factors. Additionally, HSD should **invest in evaluation each time it invests in a pilot program**. Further, HSD should consider how to build evidence of about "what works for whom" in YYA programs by advancing the use of administrative data research and undertaking low-cost randomized controlled trials[24].

USE PROGRESSIVE ENGAGEMENT TO ENSURE PATHWAYS OUT OF HOMELESSNESS TO STABLE HOUSING AND ENSURE HIGH NEED YYA HAVE ACCESS TO HOUSING RESOURCES

Some youth can be quickly reunified with family/friends using conflict resolution with light touch supports and connection to community services. Other youth who have longer histories of homelessness, trauma, mental illness, and substance use may not be able to be reunified with family and may require more intensive services. Importantly, youth must receive age and developmentally appropriate services and supports. This includes young parents with children whose needs are different than older parents due to their age and maturity. A range of options must include early interventions that help YYA avoid long term homelessness to those that are appropriate for YYA with long histories of homelessness.

Progressive engagement should be adopted system wide for youth and young adults. A corollary to this approach is **reserving the most intensive housing interventions for the youth and young adults with the highest barriers to stable housing**. All YYA housing programs should reduce barriers to admissions that screen out youth with the longest histories of homelessness and adopt progressive engagement practices.

[24] For more about low-cost RCT's, see Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy.

HSD should only fund agencies and programs that adopt progressive engagement (a core practice in the Portfolio Pilot) and are equipped to serve high need YYA. HSD should review staffing patterns and qualifications to ensure programs are sufficiently resourced to serve high need YYA. HSD should assist agencies to increase partnerships to support high need YYA and consider additional funding if community partnerships are not available.

City of Seattle should support new funding opportunities for **Diversion and Rapid Rehousing** by investing and aligning funding with other funders. Funded providers should be required to implement Diversion and Rapid Rehousing consistent with fidelity to the best practice models. Providers that are unable to meet the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) standards for Rapid Rehousing should not be funded. The City of Seattle should work with other funders to create common program manuals for diversion and rapid rehousing programs to ensure consistency across programs.

IDENTIFY WAYS TO MAKE EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAMS MORE COMPREHENSIVE

Since YYA emergency shelters do not operate 24/7 and may not offer access to day services, some youth have to leave during the day and may be at risk for harm due to physical violence, exploitation or engaging in risky behaviors by being on the streets without access to a safe place. It may be possible to make programs more comprehensive by pairing youth service providers to ensure seamless access to a safe place 24/7.The availability of family reunification and housing placement are critical to ensuring YYA are able to quickly resolve their homelessness. Emergency shelters and associated day services must actively engage and assist youth to exit to stable housing; further, this should be a key performance measure to receive funding. HSD should assist agencies to increase partnerships to provide greater access to community services.

HOLD AGENCIES ACCOUNTABLE FOR PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES AND IMPLEMENTING HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT HELP YYA ACHIEVE STABILITY

HSD should work closely with agencies to focus on achieving performance outcomes and only fund programs that are successful at meeting performance standards. As noted above, a supplementary report from Barbara Poppe and Associates was provided under separate cover with recommendations for minimum and target performance metrics as Focus Strategies scope was only focused on single adults and families with children.

HSD should also review program practices to ensure that YYA programs are adhering to fidelity for evidence-based and best practices to provide case management, trauma informed care, culturally competent care, etc. HSD, with King County, All Home and other funders should explore how to incorporate YYA feedback into system and program improvements. Creating opportunities to analyze and learn through continuous improvement processes will result in improve outcomes.

USE LESSONS LEARNED FROM PORTFOLIO PILOT TO OPTIMIZE AGENCY FLEXIBILITY AS THE AGENCY DEMONSTRATES SUCCESS AT ACHIEVING PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES AND USING PROGRESSIVE ENGAGEMENT

Two youth-serving agencies are participating in the Portfolio Pilot so there is tremendous opportunity to understand the impact of this model on YYA. Measuring performance for the agency, not just the program components, makes sense as youth may benefit from access to a range of services/programs within the agency and the impact should be measured comprehensively. Agencies should be encouraged to provide person-centered care and may require some administrative flexibility to make that possible (e.g. flexible financial assistance to meet emerging needs). YYA providers should be encouraged to assist YYA to have access to not only housing, but to jobs, education, social supports, health care, and transportation. HSD should assist agencies to increase partnerships to provide greater access to these community services.

PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT TO HSD STAFF AND PROGRAM PROVIDERS TO SHIFT CULTURE TO IMPLEMENT EVIDENCE-BASED, BEST, AND PROMISING PRACTICES AND TO SERVE HIGH NEEDS YYA

In order to be successful at supporting a systems approach to YYA, all providers and all HSD staff need to be prepared to shift from the status quo approaches. This will require that staff be engaged and effective at adopting evidence-based, best, and promising practices and comfortable modifying approaches as new evidence builds. HSD will need to work closely with providers to improve their capacity to effectively serve high needs YYA. Using data to understand performance and impact them to apply this knowledge to inform program design will be critical. Building capacity and ensuring all agencies provide culturally competent services and housing options is of utmost importance. HSD should consider how to best build the capacity of its staff and program providers to achieve these purposes and engage in continuous learning.

CLOSELY MONITOR CEA EFFECTIVENESS IN MEETING NEEDS OF YYA

Providers have expressed concerns about whether CEA will be able to appropriately match YYA to meet the young person's self-identified needs and ensure safety. CEA should ensure that youth in crisis have 1) quick access to trauma-informed screening and housing assessment, 2) immediate access to emergency shelter if diversion/family reunification is not immediately possible, 3) linkage to age and developmentally appropriate services and supports, and 4) for those YYA with the greatest needs, access to permanent housing and wrap-around supports. HSD should review outcomes data by program and characteristics of YYA subpopulations (YYA of color, LGBTQ YYA, YYA with mental health needs, etc.) to ensure youth are successfully exiting programs to stable housing.

Another idea from providers that bears consideration is implementing a **By Name List process with YYA with long histories of homelessness and/or high vulnerability** (see sidebar). HSD could work with HSD-funded YYA providers and CEA to explore the feasibility of this approach.

Proposed City of Seattle advocacy with local partners:

- **Create a partnership to access enhanced health care services, especially mental health services, to support YYA who experience homelessness.** The importance of meeting the health care needs of YYA who experience homelessness have been well documented. YYA providers expressed serious concerns about the lack of comprehensive mental health services to support YYA. Increased onsite services will improve YYA outcomes and ensure a safe and healthy environment within all programs. One strategy to consider is a mobile response team that can provide onsite services on scheduled and as needed basis across the region to increase access in an efficient and flexible manner. Improved and expedited access to outpatient and when needed, inpatient, mental health and substance use treatment is needed.

- **Create updated partnership with schools to identify and support YYA who experience homelessness.** The City of Seattle through the State of Emergency has most recently engaged in a new partnership with Seattle Public Schools. Creating a strong and effective partnership with all youth and family programs that receive HSD funding is critical to the long term educational success of children and youth who experience homelessness.

- **Actively engage juvenile justice and child welfare to stop exits to homelessness.** Too frequently, a cause of youth homelessness is inadequate discharge planning from juvenile justice and child welfare. The All Home Plan includes a key strategy to prevent institutional and system discharges to homelessness as part of making homelessness "rare". The City of Seattle can help elevate this strategy and be a strong partner with All Home and other leaders to advocate for juvenile justice and child welfare to invest in new approaches to stabilize youth in the community to prepare for exit from institutional care and provide support post-exit to ensure a smooth glide path to self-sufficiency. The opportunity to conduct administrative data research should be explored to identify YYA served by all three systems. Homeless YYA providers have expertise in working with this population so should be included in this advocacy for new solutions.
- **With other public and private funders, undertake a gaps analysis to compare needs and resources for under age youth.** As noted above, there is a need to re-visit this topic. Raikes Foundation can be an ally to Seattle in this advocacy. Investigate the need for the State of Washington to de-criminalize homelessness for under age youth.

Test the Effectiveness of By-Name List process through 100-day challenge

Communities that have achieved significant reductions in Veteran homelessness generally have a few things in common: a sense of urgency, strong leadership and key stakeholders who meet on a very regular basis. One practice that supports this work is actively using a "By-Name List" and meeting weekly with key partners ensure that decisions and list updates can be made on a timely and regular basis. Seattle is well-positioned to test this model with youth and young adults. (see elsewhere in this report for more about this process). HSD could facilitate a weekly BNL meeting of HSD-funded YYA providers with staff from CEA and HMIS to match youth and young adults with the highest barriers to stable housing to housing interventions (rapid rehousing, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing or other residential programs). Ideally, mainstream youth services providers, especially mental health and substance abuse treatment providers would participate as well.

Recently, A Way Home America (new national movement to end youth homelessness) and the Rapid Results Institute (RRI) announced the launch of 100-day challenges to accelerate efforts to end youth homelessness in three communities. RRI's past challenges around veteran homelessness have shown that the limited timeframe provides the urgency needed to identify, innovate and fuel effective approaches for communities. Seattle could partner with local philanthropy to underwrite the costs of partnering with A Way Home America and the Rapid Results Institute to test a BNL process with youth and young adults.

Single Adults including Couples

Single adults represent the largest number of people who experience homelessness in Seattle and King County. Stakeholders acknowledge that the current approach to meeting the crisis needs of single adults is fragmented and generally unable to meet the needs of those who experience unsheltered homelessness. All stakeholders reported that the current configuration of emergency shelters with varying requirements, inadequate facilities, and limited operating hours, was ineffective in the face of current demand. All stakeholders expressed a very positive view that permanent supportive housing is being deployed effectively to address the needs of the most vulnerable single adults. Providers generally believed that there was a severe shortage of permanent supportive housing. All stakeholders expressed the need for more affordable housing options including SRO units and shared living. A frequent theme was also the lack of comprehensive data due to the high number of single adults that don't "opt in" to the HMIS.

Key Housing Stabilization Interventions for Single Adults and Couples

- Diversion
- Outreach Action Team and Street Outreach
- Long Term Shelter Stayers Housing Placement Team
- Comprehensive Emergency Shelter
- Navigation Center
- Rapid Rehousing
- Transitional Housing*
- Rapid Housing with Critical Time Intervention
- Permanent Supportive Housing

*must be at least as effective and cost-efficient as Rapid Rehousing

Focus Strategies found that about 30% of all single adult shelter stayers in Seattle/King County had two or more stays in 2015, with about half of these having three or more stays. In addition, about 10% of single adults have single but lengthy stays. These 40% of shelter stayers account for 74% of the shelter bed days used in the system. Furthermore, people who frequently access shelter in King County continue to do so over time. Equally troubling is that despite the vast number of single adults living unsheltered on Seattle's streets, only 22% of adults enter shelter from an unsheltered location. Stakeholders reported some success with addressing needs of long term shelter stayers; however, numerous challenges were noted.

Re-design the City's approach to single adults and couples – eliminate unsheltered homelessness

To significantly reduce unsheltered homelessness among single adults and couples, it will be necessary to create pathways from homelessness to stable housing. Creating this increased "throughput" will also increase capacity to provider shelter to those currently languishing on the streets. A seamless and integrated approach to rapidly engage with unsheltered single adults and better connect them to housing is required. In communities which are achieving success at reducing single adult homelessness, greater collaboration among outreach providers and the active, disciplined use of "By Name List" processes are showing greater promise as ways to better connect single adults to housing interventions than are passive, decentralized approaches.

The 2016 Focus Strategies report identified many opportunities to reallocate resources from under-performing single adult programs and redeploy them to achieve better results. As noted earlier, transitional housing is extraordinarily expensive at more than $20,000 for each single adult exit and is more costly than rapid rehousing which achieves better results. Through modeling, Focus Strategies conclude that Seattle/King County has sufficient emergency shelter capacity to shelter all unsheltered single adult

households within one year by combining three initiatives: (1) eliminating homelessness assistance funding for low and moderately performing TH projects and reallocating these savings to more effective approaches; (2) reaching recommended system and program performance targets; and (3) implementing a well functioning coordinated entry and diversion system.

Access to Emergency Shelter

The City of Seattle should advocate with other funders and All Home to restrict admission to emergency shelter to only those who are unsheltered. This process can be phased out once there are no unsheltered single adults.

Seattle should shift some investment in overnight shelters to support Navigation Centers or Comprehensive Emergency Shelters for single adults who experience homelessness. These 24/7, year round programs have low barrier admission requirements, typically (but not exclusively) aiming for a length of stay of 90 days or less. Navigation Centers use harm reduction and Housing First practices. San Francisco has found this model to be more effective at supporting clients to move to permanent housing than traditional overnight shelters.

Navigation Center

This low-barrier 24-hour shelter program model was developed in San Francisco, California. The Navigation Center model is designed specifically to respond to challenges including but not limited to unsheltered people living as couples, with pets, with large amounts of possessions, and with active drug and alcohol use by providing viable housing alternatives for people who have been living in encampments and may otherwise not use existing shelter services. The primary goal is assisting people who are unsheltered to move into housing as rapidly as possible by providing tailored services utilizing an intensive service model based on flexible, housing first practices. Seattle's first Navigation Center is slated to open by the end of 2016.

These programs should ensure basic needs are met for personal safety, sufficient and safe sleep, hygiene, adequate nutrition, and secure storage. Housing First assistance with rapid access to housing must be provided and integrated into the design of the emergency shelter program. To achieve this recommendation, Seattle may need to support congregate shelters to transition to Navigation Centers or Comprehensive Emergency Shelters programs. If needed, use funding to incentivize and support these transitions.

Some cities have effectively deployed long term shelter stayers or high shelter user interventions. Using a focused "By Name List" process that enables multiple providers to participate in case coordination that is organized to achieve housing outcomes is at the core of these communities' success. Hennepin County, MN, has developed some promising practices to engage men and women with long histories of shelter use through its Project 51.

Access to Housing Interventions

Prioritizing access to housing interventions should use a progressive engagement approach (see sidebar) that focuses on length of time homeless and barriers to housing. As noted above, the All Home CEA intends to use vulnerability assessments as the primary consideration for prioritizing housing interventions. This approach is not recommended because it will have limited impact on unsheltered homelessness and is not aligned with achieving the goal of increased throughput to stable housing.

In addition to rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing, Bridge Housing can help increase "throughput" from emergency shelters. Bridge Housing is a type of transitional housing used as a short-term stay (typically 30-60 days) when a family/individual has been offered and accepted a permanent housing intervention, but access to the permanent housing is still begin arranged. HSD and OH should work with current single adult transitional housing providers and determine feasibility to convert to Bridge Housing. This housing intervention can free up emergency shelter space when a shelter resident has been accepted into permanent housing but hasn't yet moved in.

Use By Name Lists to Decrease Unsheltered Homelessness and Eliminate Long Term Shelter Stayers

In order to overcome the current backlog of unsheltered single adults and long term single adult shelter users, the City should stand up an **Outreach Action Team and an LTSS Action Team** (long term shelter stayers) to provide seamless and integrated approaches to rapidly engage with single adults and couples who are either unsheltered or are long term users and residing within the City of Seattle while they are unsheltered[25]. The teams should actively use a "By Name List" (BNL) process. These teams similar to the Family Impact Team (FIT) should invite participation by all single adult shelters (HSD-funded shelters are required),the Navigation Center (Outreach Action Team only), outreach providers including the public health outreach and the medical van, providers of RRH, TH, and PSH, and other community resources for single adults. CEA and HMIS staff should support these teams and participate in meetings. The LTSS Action Team should be modeled after the Top51 Pilot in Hennepin County (see sidebar) and focus on housing the Top 50 LTSS and the Top LTSS BNL for each city funded shelter. The teams should be headed by an HSD staff member who serves as the Project Lead for all the FIT in addition to the Outreach Action Team and the LTSS Action Team.

The Project Lead should convene a bi-weekly case coordination meeting using the BNL of all unsheltered adults or long term single adult shelter users. The Lead should solve problems on the spot, enforce accountability, and act with great urgency to get throughput moving to make space so unsheltered single adults can be admitted to shelter or served by the Navigation Center. There should be a city-wide Top 75 Unsheltered BNL, a Top 50 LTSS that captures the longest term shelter stayers across HSD-funded single adult shelters, and a Top LTSS BNL for each city-funded shelter.

The purpose of the Outreach Action Team meetings should be to: 1) Using BNL practices, review progress on engaging and housing the Top 75 Unsheltered BNL from CEA that is only re-populated when one of the original top 75 is removed from the BNL. 2) Review dashboard from HMIS of each outreach provider's progress in housing its client caseload from the Top 75 Unsheltered BNL.

The purpose of the LTSS Action Team meetings should be to: 1) Using BNL practices, review progress on engaging and housing the system wide Top 50 of the longest stayers. 2) Review dashboard from HMIS of each shelter's progress in housing its respective Top LTSS BNL. 3) Review progress of placing long term shelter stayers into a PSH program.

[25] This is not intended to imply that there is a prior residency requirement (i.e. that the individual was a resident of Seattle before they experienced homelessness). Rather this is a practical consideration that Seattle must address unsheltered homelessness within its city boundaries as a top priority.

HSD should require that PSH providers actively engage and accept Top50 LTSS clients referred by the LTSS Action team and other Top LTSS BNL clients from shelters if there is not a Top50 referral. All referrals must be chronically homeless.

Each HSD-funded shelter should be required to use a **Top LTSS BNL** and actively engage with these clients to connect them to CEA for housing placement. The number of clients on the list should be set for each shelter based on an analysis of shelter utilization. This list may be constructed using shelter data, HMIS data, as well as interviews with clients to assess length of homelessness[26].

HSD should create dashboards from HMIS that show progress for the Top LTSS list for each shelter and the Top 50 system-wide long stayers list.

To launch the LTSS effort, HSD should consider bringing in Hennepin's Project51 staff to provide training on their engagement strategies and to help design the elements of this new approach to LTSS.

Top 51 Pilot for Highest Users of Single Adult Shelter, Hennepin County, Minnesota

The Top 51 pilot was funded by Hennepin County's Human Services and Public Health Department in 2012 as a two and a half year effort to test strategies to house the longest term shelter users. The pilot included contracts with Catholic Charities and Salvation Army to provide dedicated and mobile case management to engage the top 51 clients with the longest shelter stays. There were eventually 79 people enrolled in the pilot. These 79 people represented almost 280 years-worth of shelter nights. Sixty-eight percent (68%) are housed (54 of 79). Multiple types of housing options were used. The average time to housing is about eight months. For 42 clients housed at least one year, emergency room visits declined by 76 percent and ambulance runs declined by 41 percent. Specialty care also declined. Overall, there was a 27 percent decline in health care encounters. The types of care that increased were primary care, dental, and pharmacy. There was a forty-three percent (43%) decline in arrest activity compared to the year prior to the pilot.

The Top 51 Pilot developed a new approach to engage the longest term shelter users. There were four phases: 1) pre-engagement – the case manager does research on the client to obtain information from various sources to develop a plan on how to approach the client; 2) early engagement – the client becomes aware of that he/she has been selected for the project; the case manager begins to establish trust and build a relationship; 3) advocacy – the case manager approaches client to discuss client needs, offer resources and support, then develop plan to address client needs; 4) partnership – case manager and client have trusting relationship, the client shows up for meetings and is actively working on his/her plan.

The Top 51 Pilot is now an ongoing program funded by Hennepin County that continues to engage with the longest term shelter users.

To improve the quality and comprehensiveness of information about unsheltered single adults and couples, HSD should require all city-funded outreach providers to input data into HMIS and encourage all other outreach funders to also make HMIS mandatory wherever feasible.

[26] Length of homelessness can be assessed through HMIS, a third party (e.g. outreach program) and if no third party or HMIS data is available then through client interviews.

HSD should consider an interim investment, if needed, in Outreach Action Team and LTSS Action Team mobile services. After the CEA Regional Access Points are fully operational and unsheltered single adult homelessness is rare, the City can assess whether there is an ongoing need for mobile services to ensure no singles or couples are unsheltered. If the Outreach Action Team and the LTSS Action Team demonstrates success, other funders may want to replicate this approach in other parts of King County.

STOP INVESTING IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING THAT IS NOT EFFECTIVE AND COST-EFFICIENT

HSD should assist under-performing single adult transitional housing providers to determine feasibility to transition to other models. This could include Permanent Supportive Housing (part of the CEA), Bridge Housing (part of the CEA), Rooming Houses/Shared Living (part of the Housing Resource Center – see later in this report) or Preferred Affordable Housing (part of the HRC). HSD should consider providing one-time funding to incentivize and support these transitions. No additional funding beyond this transition should be necessary for conversions except on a competitive basis for transitions to PSH. See **Appendix 2** for suggestions for re-purposing transitional housing.

INVEST IN BRINGING RAPID REHOUSING (RRH) AND PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (PSH) TO SCALE

HSD should support new funding opportunities for Rapid Rehousing, Rapid Rehousing with Critical Time Intervention (as recommended by Focus Strategies) and Permanent Supportive Housing by participating in joint NOFA's with All Home and other funders. Additional interventions may be necessary to scale the local response sufficient to make homelessness rare, brief and one time among single adults and couples. HSD should consider requiring all funded providers to implement Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing consistent with best practices. RRH providers which do not conform to the NAEH standards on RRH should not be funded. PSH providers which do not conform to best practices should not be funded.

Proposed City of Seattle advocacy with local partners:

- **Create a partnership to access enhanced health care services, especially mental health services, to support single adults who experience chronic homelessness.** The importance of meeting the health care needs of single adults who experience chronic homelessness have been well documented. Single adult providers expressed serious concerns about the lack of comprehensive mental health services to support vulnerable single adults. Increased onsite services will improve outcomes and ensure a safe and healthy environment within all programs.

- **With other funders, explore opportunities to "move on" households who have stabilized in permanent supportive housing** and no longer require the intensive supportive services embedded in PSH (as recommended by Focus Strategies). PSH providers should be encouraged to explore partnerships to implement evidence based practices for employment and income in order to assist PSH tenants achieve a greater level of economic stability. The Corporation for Supportive Housing has recently published a "moving on" tool kit which may be a resource.

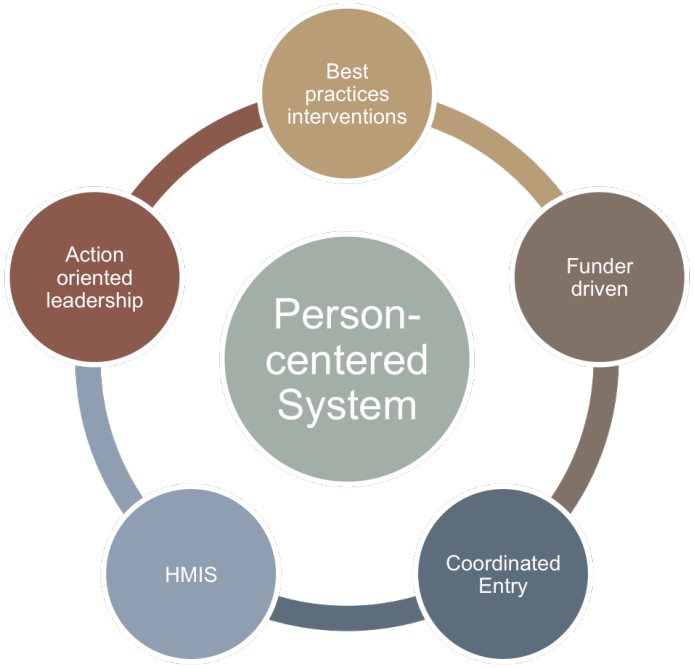
- **Advocate and engage the criminal justice system to stop exits to homelessness.** Too frequently, a cause of adult homelessness is inadequate discharge planning from jails and prison. The All Home Plan includes a key strategy to prevent institutional and system discharges to homelessness as part of making homelessness "rare". The City of Seattle can help elevate this strategy and be a strong partner with All Home and other leaders to advocate for the criminal justice system to invest in new

discharge planning strategies to prepare for exit from institutional care and provide support post-exit to ensure a smooth glide path to self-sufficiency.

- **Advocate with other funders of other permanent housing** (designated as "OPH" in the SWAP and the HUD Housing Inventory Count) to target these to households with greater barriers to housing stability and re-classify as permanent supportive housing. If the units are OH-funded, OH will need to be involved in planning.
- **Advocate with other funders of transitional housing** to work with providers to improve performance or pursue conversion to a more effective housing model. If the units are homeless regulated, OH will need to be involved in planning for the conversion.

Recommendation #2: Improve program and system performance and require accountability

To be successful at reducing homelessness, the homeless crisis response system must be organized by and invested in by public and major philanthropic funders. The system leadership must be action-oriented and nimble enough to enable course corrections promptly when needed. Funders must invest only in evidence based, best and promising practices and providers should be required to effectively implement these practices and meet performance standards as a condition of receiving funding. HMIS and other data should be used to inform planning, set resource allocation strategies, measure progress and system performance, and evaluate program performance to inform investment decisions. Coordinated entry forms the backbone of the system by providing a process that ensures system resources are being appropriately targeted and that individuals and families are able to resolve their homelessness. Seattle and King County have begun undertaking the shift from a loosely organized network of programs to building a system of care with the intent to quickly rehouse individuals and families. The large number of providers that will need to shift practices makes the challenge of transformation daunting. The current level of public funding investment is strong so the impact of shifting to more effective approaches can be immense if the funders can establish a strong infrastructure to support the new system.



Overview of historical funding approaches

HSD funds programs that serve single adults, youth and young adults, and families with children who are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness. A combination of local and federal sources make up these investments. City of Seattle investments are often paired with funding provided through All Home, the federally designated "Continuum of Care" responsible for organizing the local response to homelessness that aligns with Federal goals and objectives. Despite concurrence on a set of data collection requirements and performance standards to receive funding, All Home and other funders, including the City of Seattle, continue to fund programs even though they don't meet the agreed upon requirements and standards.

This community's collective response to homelessness has largely been built over time, beginning with City of Seattle funding for emergency shelter programs in 1978. The initial focus in Seattle and other communities across the country was on ensuring the "survival" of people experiencing homelessness. During the late 1980's, the national movement turned its focus to adding transitional housing programs and creating a linear

continuum of care where homeless families and individuals were prepared to become "housing ready" by moving from shelter to transitional housing, staying up to 24 months, with the intent of "graduating" to permanent housing. In 2000, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation launched the Sound Families Initiative, an eight-year, $40 million program aimed at tripling the amount of available transitional housing—and pairing it with support services in the state's three most populous counties: King, Pierce, and Snohomish. By its close in 2008, the initiative had spurred the creation of more than 1,400 transitional homes for families emerging from homelessness. The City of Seattle was a significant funding partner in the Sound Families Initiative investing in capital development, rent and operating subsidies and supportive services.

In 2002, with the availability of research that provided an increased understanding of the complexities of homelessness, there was a shift from a linear, program-based continuum that "managed homelessness" to a client-centered housing and services system that was organized to "end homelessness". While advocates have always called for affordable housing development to address homelessness, national funding began to focus on permanent supportive housing, centered on the belief that greater success was achieved by addressing housing stability first. Seattle was an early adopter of this approach. The Seattle/King County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness was launched in 2005, calling for increased investment and production of permanent housing units with the goal of reducing homelessness and expenditures on crisis services. Per All Home's strategic plan[27], 6,314 units of permanent housing with supports were funded during those ten years, for a total of 8,337 units of permanent housing with supports countywide. King County's Continuum of Care (CoC) housing stock ranks third in the nation. . HSD also increased investments in emergency services, including meal programs, shelter, and day centers.

With regard to decisions about what programs and agencies should receive funding and the level of investment, the City of Seattle adopted something akin to a "let a thousand flowers bloom" approach. The March 2015 HIA report that evaluated HSD's investments in programs to address homelessness made these observations:

> The City has not approached investments in homelessness based on a reasonable objective evaluation of all services, comparison of outcomes, and alignment with longer term goals. Competitive funding processes have been inconsistently conducted, and are generally limited in scope. Many key elements of the 2012 Investment Plan for homeless services, Communities Supporting Safe and Stable Housing, have not been implemented, including a failure to shift even a modest 2% goal of "base-funding" from intervention services to other strategies and best practices. City funding is allocated and evaluated at the incremental programmatic level and not systemically and objectively as part of a "seamless system of services". Funding decisions (primarily new funding adds), with some recent exceptions, have been earmarked for specific populations, agencies, or activities and are driven by advocacy, coalitions, and program advocates rather than guided by a policy framework designed by the City. Research shows that many cities, nearing the end of their Ten Year Plans, have focused resources and efforts to increase support for prevention, rapid rehousing and diversion efforts. These shifts align with federally mandated HEARTH measures, which impact federal funding allocation. While Seattle has "added" funding in some program areas to support these national evidence-based best practices, funds have not been "shifted" from base-funding away from existing programs.

[27] All Home Strategic Plan 2015-2019, page 12.

The shift to greater impact

All leaders need to act with urgency and boldness to put in place an effective systems approach. This is echoed by Focus Strategies' recommendations. Without decisive action, the number of people who experience unsheltered homelessness will continue to grow. Bold action to implement only what has been proven to work can set Seattle on the road to stemming the tide of families, youth and adults falling into homelessness and help those who are unsheltered access stable housing.

As part of the Path Forward consultation, the governance structures and practices used by benchmark communities[28] that are achieving progress on ending homelessness were reviewed and compared to the structures that govern All Home and the practices currently being deployed in Seattle and King County. The findings of this analysis were consistent with recommendations developed by Focus Strategies. Specifically, benchmark communities attributed their success to these factors:

- Funder-driven systems approach that is client-centered
- Relentless focus on housing placement
- Require Housing First practices
- Disciplined use of "By Name Lists"
- Use data for planning and funding – drive for results
- Break down silos – reduce fragmentation
- Aligned funding and actions (collaborative, cross-sector)
- Leverage mainstream resources and funding

The current All Home governance structure is organized to solicit input and provide a forum for discussion. It is not organized to act decisively and boldly to execute strategies rapidly. Implementing the Focus Strategies governance recommendations is strongly encouraged. Without foundational change, Seattle will continue to be frustrated by the lack of meaningful progress.

Another aspect of the Focus Strategies work was to recommend program and system performance standards for family and adult programs. Companion recommendations for youth and young adult programs were developed as part of the Path Forward consultation since they were not within the scope of Focus Strategies. These recommendations were then considered by the City of Seattle, King County, United Way, and All Home to develop a set of joint program and system performance standards that covered programs for families with children, youth and young adults, and single adults.

The 2016 Focus Strategies report also noted the need to separate actions to end homelessness as distinct from efforts to alleviate poverty:

Disentangling the homelessness crisis from the housing affordability crisis in King County is critical

[28] The benchmark communities were Houston/Harris County, TX; Las Vegas/Clark County, NV; New Orleans City/Parish, LA; and Salt Lake City/County, UT. Additionally, the Metro Denver continuum of care was reviewed as it had recently undergone transformation from a provider driven to a funder driven system.

> *if the community is to make progress on ending homelessness. Many tens of thousands of people in the community are precariously housed and living in poverty. Few of them will ever become unsheltered or enter shelter. Strategies to stabilize households burdened by high rents and prevent gentrification and displacement are important to ensuring a healthy and vibrant community. But these efforts are separate and distinct from homeless crisis response*[29].

The All Home strategic plan calls for a shift to a systems approach for all populations, more strategic resources investments, and implementation of best practices with a vision to make homelessness rare, brief and one time. During 2016, All Home is overseeing the implementation of an updated HMIS whose operation shifted from the City of Seattle to King County as of April 2016, a new united coordinated entry system also managed by King County, and other new activities to implement the strategic plan. The City of Seattle should work closely with King County, All Home, and other funders to accelerate progress on the implementation of the All Home strategic plan. To be successful, there must be a shift from the current consensus model of governance to a funder-driven system (which is informed by providers and people with lived experience of homelessness), redefining the governance structure to be more action oriented, using performance based contracting, and improving data analytics.

Toward greater impact through City of Seattle policy and investment

The shift from a network of loosely organized programs and services providing homeless assistance to a seamless, high functioning Housing Crisis Resolution System that can provide a person-centered response must be led by the principal funders of the system. Expecting the providers to organize themselves into a system is unrealistic. The City of Seattle, in partnership with All Home, King County, and other funders must invest in the system infrastructure necessary to support the new system and establish a set of policies and priorities that contribute to the success of the system in making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.

Deploy HMIS to Assess Impact and Improve Program and System Performance

HSD should invest in the new King County administered HMIS system and communicate its needs for quality data for administration, reporting, and analysis of City of Seattle funded programs. A contract or memorandum of agreement should be in place that provides data quality assurance requirements; timelines and specifications for the types of reports and analysis to be provided; access, training and support for HSD staff to generate routine reports; and data sharing agreements for HSD staff and consultants to use data for evaluations and research. HSD should advocate for the new HMIS to increase ease of client participation and reduce data collection burdens through the use of scan cards. HSD should incentivize agencies to increase the level of client participation in HMIS. HSD should invest in its own staff capacity to use data to evaluate program effectiveness and implement continuous quality improvement.

[29] Focus Strategies, 2016, King County Homeless System Performance Assessment and Recommendations With Particular Emphasis on Single Adults, page 42.

Invest in and Use CEA as System Backbone

HSD should invest in the new Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) system and communicate its needs for quality data for administration, reporting, and analysis of City of Seattle funded programs. A contract should specify process benchmarks and outcome measures that measure the effectiveness of CEA in targeting shelter and housing appropriately and decreasing length of time homelessness, increasing housing exits, how quickly people are housed, including those with barriers, why people are denied program entry and their characteristics, how many people do not receive a referral and/or are skipped in the order, etc. CEA should provide at least quarterly reports on its progress in achieving these metrics. CEA should provide daily reports on shelter utilization and flag for follow up HSD funded programs that are lagging with regard to admissions. A contract should also describe CEA staff participation and development of reports necessary to support the Family Impact Team, the LTSS Action Team, and the Outreach Action Team (described above). HSD staff will need to ensure that all funded programs have reduced admission barriers appropriately, are rapidly accepting new admissions from CEA, and are fully utilized. HSD staff should be able to use all CEA progress and evaluation reports to monitor funded program performance and reach out to under-performing programs to adjust practices to achieve greater impact.

Shift to a Competitive and Performance-based Contracting Approach

HSD should begin implementing updated performance standards (HMIS quality, CEA participation, and program performance) for all 2017 contracts that are at least as strong as the joint standards recommended by Focus Strategies to All Home, King County, City of Seattle, and United Way. To prepare for these requirements, during the balance of 2016, HSD should work with currently funded providers to routinely review program performance compared to local standards and best practices. Over the 18-month period of July 2016 – December 2017, under-performing programs should be encouraged to improve performance, transition to new models, and/or move forward without funding from HSD. HSD should provide or arrange for technical assistance and training for agencies that are working to improve under-performing programs or working to transition to new models. HSD should begin enforcing these performance standards during 2017 with an expectation that programs that do not achieve these requirements will not receive funding in the future.

By fall 2016, HSD should set a pathway to award funding competitively based on community needs, best practices, and performance. These competitive funding processes should be designed to incorporate lessons learned from the Portfolio Pilot and system redesign. In 2016, HSD should issue an RFI for targeted homelessness prevention (a form of diversion per national models)[30]. In 2017, HSD should issue RFI's for family housing stabilization, YYA housing stabilization, and single adult housing stabilization. Housing stabilization services are intended to help individuals and families rapidly achieve stable housing. While these services may also meet basic needs, the primary focus must be on providing access to permanent housing. These services may include any of these interventions: emergency shelter (Navigation Center, comprehensive, and overnight), outreach and housing placement teams (Outreach Action Team, Family Impact Team, Long Shelter Stayers Housing Placement Team), rapid rehousing, bridge housing, transitional

[30] Within the 2015 Homelessness Investment Analysis, there was City investment described as "homelessness prevention" that more accurately was "eviction prevention". These programs will not be considered as part of HIP going forward since there is limited impact of eviction prevention on overall homelessness. A portion of "homelessness prevention" investment will be part of the HIP and will be reclassified as rapid rehousing and diversion.

housing, youth case management, youth drop in centers, and youth host homes (pending outcomes of the current pilot). HSD should align new and renewal funding for PSH and RRH with the CoC 2016 and future ongoing processes. HSD should align funding for targeted homelessness prevention/diversion with other funders to create a joint NOFA.

INCREASE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

The primary reason that has been raised about why Seattle is not making progress on addressing homelessness is the lack of access to affordable rental housing in a strong economy and escalating rental market. This is cited as a reason for increased demand and a rationale for why homeless programs are under-performing. As documented in the 2016 Focus Strategies report, programs are generally not placing families and individuals in permanent housing at rates comparable to other communities.

Based on a review of best practices, there are three inter-related ways that communities report that families and individuals exit homelessness to stable permanent housing. First, **clients identify apartments** available in the community to low income households. Second, **homeless assistance providers provide leads and referrals** to landlords with whom they have established working relationships. In some cases these relationships are formalized through memorandums of agreement; generally these are informal working relationships. Third, an **intermediary organization provides listings** and/or referrals to landlords and/or vacancy listings.

In Seattle, the Landlord Liaison Project is viewed as a national model for communities across the country to emulate. The *OneHome* campaign, launched by All Home and Zillow, is a local effort to develop new partnerships with landlords to expand housing options for formerly homeless individuals and families that has also received national attention. In addition, Seattle is considered a national leader in providing low-income housing that addresses the continuum of housing needs, and a pioneer in permanent supportive housing, through its local Housing Levy funding, deployment of federal block grant funding (HOME and CDBG), and significant partnership with the Seattle Housing Authority. More strategic use of these affordable housing resources that the City of Seattle has invested in over the past decade is another way to increase access. Within All Home structure, conversations are under way to determine how to take these efforts to the next level.

Within All Home's new Coordinated Entry for All, many households will need to locate apartments available in the community to low income households in order to use the housing assistance provided through rapid rehousing or scattered site transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. The current time from being accepted into one of these programs and being able to move into an apartment can be very protracted. Expediting this transition is a priority as it will not only stabilize the family/individual, it will free up precious emergency shelter space for another family/individual who is unsheltered.

The City of Seattle should invest, lead, and actively support the creation of more systematic access to affordable housing resource options for households that receive rapid rehousing or scattered site transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. The City of Seattle should ensure that to the greatest extent possible, the owners who have received capital development funding from the Office of Housing should actively participate in making apartment units available to families and individuals to exit from homelessness. The City of Seattle must hold accountable providers who are funded as part of the homeless assistance system to meet housing placement performance expectations.

Seattle, in coordination with King County and All Home, should establish/expand capacity of an intermediary organization to increase access to housing. This Housing Resource Center (placeholder name) is intended to *enhance* the work of homeless assistance providers by being a one-stop for housing placement staff to have access to prioritized affordable housing resources as well as a training and technical assistance center. Building the capacity of all homeless assistance organizations to implement Housing First placement practices and engage effectively with property managers and owners of affordable rental housing should result in more successful placements. A mitigation fund could also be provided by the HRC to provide financial incentives to serve very high barrier households. A companion report on the HRC recommendations is available.

Housing Resource Center (HRC)

The intent is to increase the capacity of all homeless assistance organizations to implement Housing First placement practices and engage effectively with property managers and owners of affordable rental housing. The HRC will be a one-stop for housing placement staff to have access to prioritized affordable housing resources as well as a training and technical assistance center.

The HRC should operate independently of CEA:

- Housing is **real estate** not a human services intervention.
- **No need to "match"** homeless residents to affordable housing units. Tenant and owner choice are important.
- RRH and scattered site PSH providers must be accountable to quickly identify housing achieve throughput. **HRC should be an "assist" to this goal not a bottleneck**.

The HRC should not provide training to people who are seeking housing but could develop curriculum and tools for homeless assistance providers to use with their clients as part of the housing placement process. The HRC should operate under a business to business model (B2B) not a business to customer model (B2C) in order to be more efficient and to make clear that it is homeless providers' responsibility to assist help clients achieve housing outcomes. HRC must have real estate expertise in order to attract, engage, and gain the confidence of property owners. Since the focus will be on providing access to rapid rehousing and scattered site permanent housing programs, property owners should be more willing to reduce screening criteria since all tenants will receive supportive services and be backed up by a reputable social service agency.

While programs receiving targeted homeless assistance funding should be required to participate in Coordinated Entry for All (CEA), housing organizations that receive mainstream funding or that are not subsidized should be invited to participate in the Housing Resource Center (HRC) since one-to-one matching to specific apartment vacancies is not advised since prospective tenants and propriety owners both expect to have choices in units and tenants respectively. For purposes of these recommendations, targeted homeless assistance funding is funding from Federal, state, and local government sources that is provided to programs targeted to specifically assist homeless individuals, family and youth. Targeted homeless assistance funding is used for a range of costs including services, operations, rent assistance, administration, etc. Examples of targeted Federal homeless assistance funding include HUD CoC, HUD ESG, and HHS PATH. Mainstream funding is funding from Federal, state, and local government sources that is provided to programs that serve low income populations. Examples of mainstream housing assistance include HOME, CDBG, Housing Choice Vouchers and Public Housing.

HRC staff should systematically engage owners to participate in the HRC and work closely to encourage reduced screening criteria by demonstrating the benefits of serving tenants who receive support through rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing providers. The Office of Housing should be a strong and active partner in this effort through outreach and engagement with property owners who have received capital development funding to encourage, incentivize, and/or require participation in the HRC.

Affordable rental housing serves a range of needs from seniors to disabled to working families. Many people who experience homelessness fall into these same categories and would benefit from having access to these units but are currently unable to access these units due to lack of awareness about vacancies and/or admission criteria that exclude people who experience homelessness. The Housing Resource Center (HRC) should organize and provide listings for five types of property owners:

OH Homeless units are affordable units in housing projects that have received OH capital investment and are voluntarily designated by the owner as homeless units or are regulated as homeless units in the funding agreement with OH but are not designated as PSH and TH. These units currently serve residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness as required, but do not receive funding from the homeless assistance system to pay for operating or services. Those units should be required (whenever possible) to admit homeless clients via the HRC who are receiving RRH assistance or scattered site PSH. Ideally, the owners should reduce screening criteria as referred clients will be receiving services from the RRH or PSH provider. In some cases due to the underlying OH agreements, it may not be possible to compel the owners, however OH can strongly encourage them to participate in HRC and/or establish MOU's or informal relationships with homeless services providers. The primary intent is to preserve these regulated and voluntarily designated units as part of the strategy to end homelessness not to relieve owners of this mission.

Preferred Affordable Housing (non-homeless housing) is a designation for nonprofit and private rental housing that has received capital development funding and/or tax credits that are administered locally or by the state (e.g. housing levy, LIHTC, HOME, etc.). Preferred affordable housing providers would establish a mechanism (preference, protocol or set aside) to serve homeless households and exempt these households from some screening criteria. Locally, some owners are already designating a portion of units for homeless households and/or have in place preferred admission practices. This concept would be broadened such that owners voluntarily list vacancies via the HRC and/or establish MOU's or informal relationships with homeless services providers.

Private owners who have been engaged through the OneHome campaign, participated in the Landlord Liaison Project and additional owners who are engaged by the HRC staff should be encouraged to list vacancies via the HRC and/or establish MOU's or informal relationships with homeless services providers. These owners will agree to admit homeless clients who are receiving RRH assistance or scattered site PSH but may elect to use the owner's typical screening criteria or offer reduced screening criteria. Mitigation funds may be particularly useful at engaging private landlords to participate in the HRC.

Prioritized Access to Federally Subsidized Housing (non-homeless housing) is a type of housing designation for private and nonprofit affordable rental housing with project based rental subsidies that creates voluntary homeless preferences using 2013 HUD guidance. These owners establish an admission preference to serve homeless households and may also exempt these households from

some eligibility criteria. These owners list vacancies via the HRC and/or establish MOU's or informal relationships with homeless services providers.

Rooming Houses/Shared Housing. Some transitional housing programs operate in apartments while others are congregate, small units, or shared living within a single family home. Some single adult transitional housing programs could convert to permanent housing reserved for homeless single adults in a congregate setting to provide rooming house/shared housing. Rents would be affordable to low wage workers or SSI recipients. Depending on whether there is a mainstream funding resource as an operating or rent subsidy, rents are fixed at 30% AMI or sliding scale based on income. This model of low cost congregate housing is an important part of Houston's response to homelessness.

As noted elsewhere, single adult transitional housing providers should determine feasibility of conversion in consultation with their respective funders. Rooming Houses/Shared Housing should not receive funding from the homeless assistance system to pay for operating or services. But if the units are homeless-regulated, OH should require the project to admit homeless clients through the HRC who are receiving RRH assistance or scattered site PSH. Owners may reject prospective applicants based on the owner's screening criteria; however, OH should strongly encourage owners to lower screening barriers as a condition of approving the conversion. New developments using Shared Housing could be considered only upon evaluation of the effectiveness of the stock created by transitional housing conversion.

Proposed City of Seattle advocacy with local partners:

- In response to the 2016 Focus Strategies report, advocate with other funders to fully implement recommendations. In particular, advocate to cease funding under-performing single adult transitional housing programs and reallocate those resources for more effective programs. OH should work with other capital funders to reduce barriers to adapting this transitional housing.

- HSD should actively engage in HMIS implementation by King County. Support alignment with HUD guidance and best practices. Request transparent, public reporting of program and system results on a quarterly basis.

- HSD should actively engage in CEA implementation by King County. Support CEA to conform with all aspects of HUD's Coordinated Entry Brief and Focus Strategies' 2014 report on the Family Homelessness Coordinated Entry System Analysis and Refinement Project.

- HSD should actively participate in All Home and advocate for implementation of 2016 Focus Strategies recommendations for greater accountability and alignment with best practices on program and system performance.

- The City of Seattle should press for changes in state law to align with the Federal HMIS regulations, providing an "opt out" rather than "opt in" policy for HMIS participation and data collection.

Recommendation #3: Implement well with urgency

The communities which are making the greatest reductions in homelessness – Houston, Las Vegas, and New Orleans – are acting boldly and with urgency to rapidly change systems to meet the needs of families and individuals who are facing homelessness. The findings of this report and the 2016 Focus Strategies report indicate that Solutions are within imminent reach. **If the City of Seattle acts boldly and with urgency, reductions in unsheltered homelessness can occur quickly.** Political will and disciplined action by elected officials and City staff will be required.

Equipped with the modeling by Focus Strategies and the recommendations provided by this report and Focus Strategies, the City of Seattle can shift its investments away from a broken response to homelessness to an improved homeless crisis response system. With a laser focus on **results for homeless people**, every decision must be grounded in rapidly achieving a person-centered system. To accomplish this, City of Seattle staff will need to shift from consultative to action-oriented leadership and be more focused on results than on dialogue, deliberations, and consensus. Being willing to lead, act and move forward based on available course corrections will be needed.

The quote from General George S. Patton, "a good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next week" could be a guide for HSD as it undertakes this critically important work. HSD leadership and staff will need to see themselves as change agents and reward action not endless consultation. HSD will need to see itself as more than funders and planners; it will be necessary for HSD to become part of the implementation. Leadership will need to be very focused with clear accountability and delegation of projects to staff. HSD staff and leadership must be continuous learners – using data for continuous feedback and to make course corrections quickly. HSD staff will need to become effective as task-oriented project managers, including developing capacity to implement "By Name List" processes.

The City of Seattle will need to act concurrently in six key areas: 1) Translate the investment recommendations from the Focus Strategies modeling and the Path Forward recommendations into City of Seattle specific investments and design a competitive funding process. Develop and implement updated policies, procedures, and protocols to implement the Path Forward recommendations. 2) Implement the performance standards with current providers to prepare for competitive funding. 3) Stand up the Family Impact Team, Outreach Action Team, and the Long Term Shelter Stayers Team. 4) Design and implement community engagement and communications plans to ensure free flow of information across, among, and between stakeholders within the City of Seattle and other stakeholders. 5) Engage with All Home, King County, United Way and other major funders to coordinate and collaborate on execution of the Focus Strategies recommendations. 6) Increase HSD staff capacity, expertise, and skills to operate as effective change agents for the new paradigm.

TRANSLATE INVESTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS IN TO ACTION *#LeadershipMatters*

HSD will need to translate the investment recommendations from the Focus Strategies modeling and the Path Forward recommendations into City of Seattle specific investments and design a competitive funding process. In order to effectively implement performance-based and competitive investments, it will be necessary to streamline practices. Lessons learned from the Portfolio Pilot Project will be critically important. The new competitive funding process must be designed to focus on housing stabilization – must contribute to housing outcome regardless of type of intervention.

To ensure effective implementation, HSD will need to quickly develop and implement updated policies, procedures, and protocols to implement the Path Forward recommendations.

IMPLEMENT THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS WITH CURRENT PROVIDERS TO PREPARE FOR COMPETITIVE FUNDING *#WhatGetsMeasuredGetsDone*

HSD staff will need to be able to use data and evaluation reports from CEA and HMIS to assess current status, measure progress and course correct. Program level as well as agency level data reports should be shared to enable the providers to compare current program performance to the new performance standards.

HSD staff will need to assist under-performing programs and agencies to consider their options including program performance improvements, transitioning to more effective models, and preparing for loss of funding if neither is an option.

As HSD shifts to a performance-based culture, it will also need to transform relationships with funded agencies to be partners in *implementation*. Providers have tremendous expertise and direct contact with people who experience homelessness and also need to be partners to inform policy and practice.

STAND UP THE FAMILY IMPACT TEAM, OUTREACH ACTION TEAM, AND THE LONG TERM SHELTER STAYERS HOUSING PLACEMENT TEAM *#NoExcuses*

HSD staff should quickly begin work to stand up the "By Name List" teams. Identify the project lead (even if temporary) and begin working with All Home, CEA and HMIS to gain their input into how to quickly stand up each team. Explore current practices for the Veterans team to understand lessons learned from that All Home work.

The Family Impact Team should be launched first due to the severity of needs and the tremendous opportunity to make a difference quickly. Review the CEA queue and characteristics of families who are unsheltered. Extend the invitation to all stakeholders and begin convening BNL-case coordination meetings.

Once FIT is up and running, establish the timeline to stand up the Outreach Action Team within one month of the FIT implementation. Consider how this effort could align with plans for the new Navigation Center. Reach out to New Orleans, Houston, and Las Vegas to learn more about how they are implementing outreach collaborations.

Review current efforts to address LTSS and invite Hennepin County's Project51 to provide consultation and training to design an updated LTSS Housing Placement Team.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLANS *#HomesEndHomelessness #ChangeIsGood*

The City of Seattle should implement a comprehensive communications and public engagement plan to inform providers, partners, and the public about these changes occurring as a result of the HIP. This work should also ensure free flow of information across, among, and between stakeholders within the City and other stakeholders.

Engage early with Seattle City Council to ensure they fully understand the Focus Strategies and Path Forward recommendations as well as implications for future funding needs.

ENGAGE WITH ALL HOME, KING COUNTY, UNITED WAY AND OTHER MAJOR FUNDERS *#CollectiveImpactSucceeds*

Strong leadership from the City of Seattle will be necessary to act with urgency to implement a person-centered system with key partners at All Home, King County, United Way and other major funders. Immediate tasks at hand will be to update the All Home governance, leadership, and roles to define responsibility, authority and accountability. A fundamental shift will be required to build the All Home governance structure to **ACT** not primarily seek input. The City of Seattle should exercise greater authority and leadership for decisions and action.

In particular, the City of Seattle should seek to revise the All Home Executive Committee to be controlled by funders and remove all conflicted providers, strengthen the Funder Alignment Group, add new stronger conflict of interest requirements, clarify All Home staff roles for All Home structure as well as for County role in implementing CEA and HMIS, and clarify embedded authority and decision making within County structure. The City of Seattle should bring the importance of a laser focus on **results for homeless people as the guiding light for All Home.**

The City of Seattle should work to ensure that the recommendations for CEA and HMIS are fully implemented by All Home and King County.

The City of Seattle will need to provide strong leadership to implement the recommendations for the Housing Resource Center. The Office of Housing in particular has key roles to play in implementation.

INCREASE HSD STAFF CAPACITY, EXPERTISE, AND SKILLS TO OPERATE AS EFFECTIVE CHANGE AGENTS FOR THE NEW PARADIGM. *#BeAnAgentForChange*

HSD staff will have new roles in engaging and acting to support accountability for results. These recommendations call for all HSD staff to be leaders in the work to make homelessness rare, brief and one-time in Seattle.

To be successful, HSD staff will need to increase their expertise to become subject matter experts on homelessness and a systems approach. There are many possible ways to build staff capacity but a few are described below:

- Participate in webinars provided by national organizations and Federal partners.
- Attend state and national conferences on homelessness and related topics.

- Create brown bag series and have providers present on best practice topics that they are using in their agencies, i.e. critical time intervention, motivational interviewing, etc.
- Access HUD funded technical assistance on issues like how to implement “By Name Lists”.
- Create an expert speaker series for city staff and providers by bringing in national experts on coordinated entry, rapid rehousing, etc.
- Engage with consultants and technical assistance on specific topics and projects.

Closing

The Path Forward report ends where it began – with the call to action from the **All Home Strategic Plan:**

> ***To make homelessness brief and one-time, we need to provide people with what they need to gain housing stability quickly.*** *This is the responsibility of funders of homeless housing and services, and nonprofit providers. Implementing more effective, efficient program models will allow us to serve more people.*
>
> ***Homelessness is solvable****. While crises that impact housing stability will never be fully prevented, we can end that person's homelessness very quickly. Other cities and states are making significant progress, and we must continue to learn and adapt to new data and ideas.*
>
> *To make greater strides locally, we must address the symptoms while also working with others at the local, state, and federal levels to address the causes. We must commit fully to using the most effective, proven approaches to support people experiencing homelessness to quickly gain housing stability and employment, prioritizing those who are most vulnerable.* ***We will need the support and commitment of local, state, and federal elected officials to ensure housing affordability and the availability of safety net services.*** *We save money and have a stronger community when people have a place to call home.*
>
> *Finally, we must energize and activate residents, business, and the faith community.* ***This plan outlines strategies for a re-imagined continuum of services for people experiencing homelessness in King County and acknowledges that energized engagement needs to take place in both the board room and between neighbors for homelessness to be rare, brief, and one-time in our community.***

The Path Forward report provides a road map for the City of Seattle to act to provide meaningful solutions to homelessness. The children, youth, men and women who daily confront homelessness are looking for action. As reported at Just Say Hello. Facing Homelessness. Facebook It. Noah (the young man on the left) says it best: **"I believe we should stop talking about it and just get on it!"** [31]

[31] Noah, who is 12 years old, and his mom Annabelle came to give boots, toiletries and a tent. At that moment Rob also came to the window to ask if there were any tents available; in a beautiful blink Noah handed him the one he'd brought and said, "Here, you can have this one." Noah later said he doesn't like homelessness, he said, "I believe we should stop talking about it and just get on it!"

Appendix 1

Housing Stabilization Interventions	decrease unsheltered homelessness	increase throughput to housing	Families with children	Single Adults	YYA
Diversion	X	X	X	X	X
Description: Generally aimed at helping families/individuals stay safely in current housing or, if that is not possible, move to other housing without requiring a shelter stay first. Priority is given to families/individuals who are unsheltered or who are living in shared housing (with family/friends) and are most likely to be admitted to shelters or be unsheltered if not for this assistance. Assistance is typically 30 days or less. Can provide access to motel for persons who are unsheltered and vulnerable if emergency shelter space is not available (by definition all households with children are vulnerable). Diversion is available on decentralized basis for families and centralized through the CEA Regional Access Points for YYA and single adults.					
Key characteristics: Flexible funding to meet family needs, including homeward bound when appropriate. For families and YYA, preventing unsheltered homelessness should be the highest priority but able to serve doubled up families at imminent risk of unsheltered homelessness should also be priority. For single adults, diversion resources should be reserved for unsheltered and most vulnerable adults.					
Next steps: Immediate priority for family system expansion based on system reallocation from other program types. Standardize flexible funding tools for all populations. Establish protocols to prioritize differently for families, YYA and single adults. For YYA, implement Raikes pilot. On quarterly basis review diversion impact via different approaches. Conduct full evaluation by July 2017. Course correct as needed based on evaluation.					
Family Impact Team	X	X	X		
Description: Mobile stabilization services aimed at helping unsheltered families to receive immediate access to safe shelter. Uses "By Name List" process and the diversion suite of tools. City of Seattle leads a Family Impact Team to provide a seamless and integrated approach to rapidly engage with unsheltered families with children. Kids Plus and other outreach providers; family shelters (HSD funded shelters are required); DCFS; local homeless liaisons from the Seattle Public Schools are invited to participate. CEA and HMIS staff should support the process and meetings.					
Key characteristics: Active management of BNL. Use CEA BNL of Seattle families who are unsheltered and awaiting shelter and housing placement. Harm reduction, Trauma Informed, and Housing First practices. Staff are equipped to provide developmentally appropriate programming for young parents.					
Next steps: HSD begins coordination of BNL. Create prioritized and quick access to Comprehensive Emergency Shelter and Rapid Rehousing. Determine if additional services staff support is needed.					

Housing Stabilization Interventions	decrease unsheltered homelessness	increase throughput to housing	Families with children	Single Adults	YYA
Outreach Action Team and street outreach	X	X		X	X
Description: HSD Outreach Lead convenes all community outreach providers (HSD funded outreach providers are required). CEA and HMIS staff should support these meetings. Intent is to manage a "By Name List" and re-house unsheltered single adults and youth. Street outreach providers must demonstrate capacity to provide housing placement directly or through partnerships.					
Key characteristics: Active management of BNL. Harm reduction and Housing First practices. Problem solve barriers to housing placement. Staff provide document readiness assistance (i.e. help secure identification, birth certificates, evidence of income, documentation of disability, etc.).					
Next steps: Pilot in 2016. Standardize outreach and rehousing program requirements and require HMIS participation for outreach funding through Single Adult and Youth housing stabilization RFI.					
Long Shelter Stayers Housing Placement Team	X	X		X	
Description: Housing placement team that targets longest stayers in Comprehensive Emergency Shelter and Overnight Shelters with goal of having no shelter stays > 6 months. Team works it way from cohort of longest stayers (e.g. MN and ME model). HSD leads the BNL process. CEA and HMIS staff should support the process and meetings.					
Key characteristics: Active management of BNL. Identification, engagement, and Housing First practices; access Bridge Housing when needed; housing placement via RRH, RRH with CTI, and PSH; benefits from new HRC options.					
Next steps: HSD begins coordination of LTSS BNL. Create prioritized and quick access to Comprehensive Emergency Shelter and Rapid Rehousing. Determine if additional services staff support is needed. Implement RRH with CTI for LTSS who do not desire and/or not require PSH.					
Youth solutions focused case management		X			X
Description: Provide solutions focused case management to homeless youth 12-25 years old to provide the following functions: divert youth from homeless shelter, TH and Transitional Living Program (TLP) to stable housing whenever possible and place them in market rate or family/friends housing; connect youth to homeless shelter and housing if needed; connect youth to needed services including mainstream benefits, mental health, health, and chemical dependency services; connect to education and employment; and once permanently housed continue to provide support for up to six months. Generally, youth case management should not be tied to specific shelter or housing programs and should provide for more seamless continuity across programs. Implement active management of BNL for youth with long histories of homelessness or multi-system involvement.					
Key characteristics: Case managers have been trained in best practices, have access to wide range of community resources and can deliver culturally competent services to all youth , especially youth of color and LGBTQ youth. Low case manager to youth ratios. Housing first placement practices that are developmentally appropriate.					
Next steps: Program redesign and evaluation plan. Evaluate outcomes and characteristics of youth served.					

Housing Stabilization Interventions	decrease unsheltered homelessness	increase throughput to housing	Families with children	Single Adults	YYA
Youth Drop In Centers		X			X
Description: Drop-in centers assist youth in meeting their most basic needs including eating, staying clean and staying healthy by providing food, showers, washing machines, clean clothes, and some access to health care. Importantly, drop in centers create a safe space where youth can be engaged by supportive staff to develop a pathway out of homelessness. Must demonstrate capacity to provide housing placement directly or through partnerships.					
Key characteristics: On site staff including case managers have been trained in best practices, have access to wide range of community resources and can deliver culturally competent services to all youth , especially youth of color and LGBTQ youth. Housing first placement practices that are developmentally appropriate.					
Next steps: Program redesign and evaluation plan. Evaluate outcomes and characteristics of youth served.					
Overnight Emergency Shelter		X		X	X
Description: Provides temporary overnight shelter for people who experience homelessness, typically (but not exclusively) for a period of 90 days or less. Supportive services are provided via partnerships. May be year round or seasonal. Meets basic needs for hygiene. May also provide 1-2 meals/day and secure storage. Assistance with rapid access to housing must be provided for long stayers in addition to the provision of shelter.					
Key characteristics: Low barrier admission and Housing First practices. Some programs may practice harm reduction.					
Next steps: Re-tool and scale up Long Stayers Housing Placement Team. Phase-out overnight only emergency shelter for families with children.					
Comprehensive Emergency Shelter		X	X	X	X
Description: Provides 24 hour, year round temporary shelter for people who experience homelessness, typically (but not exclusively) for a period of 90 days or less. Assistance with rapid access to housing must be provided for long stayers in addition to the provision of shelter. Meets basic needs for hygiene, 3 meals/day, and secure storage.					
Key characteristics: Low barrier admission and Housing First practices. Some programs may practice harm reduction.					
Next steps: Re-tool existing programs on voluntary basis during 2017 then award competitively in future. Assist providers re-tool. Work with current congregate overnight shelter program to transition to this model by the end of 2018.					

Housing Stabilization Interventions	decrease unsheltered homelessness	increase throughput to housing	Families with children	Single Adults	YYA
Navigation Center	X	X		X	
Description: One-stop, very low barrier, 24-hour facility/program targeted to unsheltered individuals. Meets basic needs for hygiene, 3 meals/day, and secure storage. Services are organized to route participants into housing, rehabilitation, employment and other services crucial to keeping people off the streets. Modeled after San Francisco program.					
Key characteristics: Very low barrier admission, harm reduction and Housing First practices. Able to accommodate pets. Very effective at supporting clients to move to permanent housing.					
Next steps: Implement Mayor Murray's executive order for Navigation Center to be operational by end of 2016. Re-tool existing emergency shelters on voluntary basis during 2017 then award competitively in 2018. CEA will need to establish additional priority for Navigation Center referrals to housing interventions.					
Rapid Rehousing		X	X	X	X
Description: Places a priority on moving a family or individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 days of a client becoming homeless and entering a program. Time-limited services include housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management.					
Key characteristics: Fidelity to RRH model and demonstrate fidelity to best practices (NAEH standards)					
Next steps: Priority for expansion based on system reallocation from other programs types. Transitional housing conversion may be appropriate if TH was operating as scattered site model. Create program manual for implementation; training and technical assistance for providers; competitive funding awards to scale. For youth, design and implement new RSH model if funded by HUD.					
Rapid Rehousing with CTI		X		X	
Description: Critical Time Intervention (CTI) is a focused, time-limited approach to case management that is designed to connect people with community supports as they transition into housing from homelessness or institutional settings such as prisons and hospitals. CTI is an evidence-based practice that has been adopted internationally and across the United States. RRH with CTI is an alternative to PSH placement for individuals who are experiencing chronic homelessness but may not desire nor need all the onsite services provided by PSH. As with RRH, the program places a priority on moving an individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 days of a client becoming homeless and entering a program. Time-limited services may be longer than typical RRH but similarly include housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management.					
Key characteristics: Fidelity to RRH model and use best practices (NAEH standards). Fidelity to Critical Time Intervention.					
Next steps: Priority for expansion based on system reallocation from other programs types. Transitional housing conversion may be appropriate if TH was operating as scattered site model. Create program manual for implementation; training and technical assistance for providers; competitive funding awards to scale. Provide CTI training.					

Housing Stabilization Interventions	decrease unsheltered homelessness	increase throughput to housing	Families with children	Single Adults	YYA
Bridge Housing	X	X		X	
Description: Transitional housing used as a short-term stay (typically 30-60 days) when a family/individual has been offered and accepted a permanent housing intervention, but access to the permanent housing is still begin arranged.					
Key characteristics: Program waives participation requirements (e.g. attendance at classes, etc.) Harm reduction and Housing First practices.					
Next steps: Work with existing transitional housing providers to explore incorporation of some units for bridge housing within existing program or conversion of entire program to bridge housing. Update performance standards to include outcomes and incorporate into CEA.					
Transitional Housing				X	X
Description: Temporary housing and appropriate support services to facilitate movement to independent living within 3-24 months. HUD encourages that this be a limited portion of the community inventory and reserved for specific sub-populations (e.g. youth, substance users, or domestic violence victims) or for purposes like short-term interim housing. For youth and young adults, program designed for when family reunification is not appropriate and designed to help YYA build independent living skills, increase overall well-being and identify stable housing.					
Key characteristics: For single adults, the program must be less expensive per successful housing outcome than RRH. For youth and young adults, program is comprehensive, transitional housing may be appropriate for highly vulnerable youth who may benefit from a structured environment and program.					
Next steps: Determine ongoing need and review programs for potential to adapt to other models; no new providers for single adults or families; funding for ongoing quality programs that fill clear need. Transitional housing conversion for single adults should result in reduced stock of TH as funds are shifted to more effective program models; apply lessons learned from family TH conversion.					
Host Homes	X	X			X
Description: Provide up to 18 months of housing with a trained community member. Be available to youth and young adults aged 16-24. Allow young people to choose their host based on compatibility and an in-person meeting prior to placement. Allow the young person and host to mutually agree on house rules. Pay hosts a modest stipend to offset costs. Integrate youth voice throughout program implementation and delivery.					
Key characteristics: Safe and stable housing with caring adults who have received training.					
Next steps: Raikes pilot is underway. If successful, consider including in YYA Housing Stabilization RFI in future.					
Permanent Supportive Housing	X		X	X	X
Description: Decent, safe, affordable, community-based housing that provides disabled tenants with the rights of tenancy and links to voluntary and flexible supports and services for people with disabilities who are experiencing chronic homelessness.					
Key characteristics: Harm reduction and Housing First practices.					
Next steps: Competitive funding awards to scale; Transitional housing conversion for single adults.					

Appendix 2. Suggestions for re-purposing or re-tooling transitional housing

Recommendation: Transitional housing (TH) that performs as well or better than Rapid Rehousing (RRH) should be preserved. These programs serves literally homeless households and have high exit rates to permanent housing and reasonable cost per housing outcome. All other family or single adult TH should be re-tooled or re-purposed. Youth transitional housing needs to be updated to achieve better outcomes.

Findings via SWAP:

- Transitional housing programs are too often not serving literally homeless households, not getting good results (exits to PH, short LOS), and are more expensive (compared to RRH).
- Many TH programs are very small.

Assumptions:

1. Current homeless system funding that is being invested in TH operations and services should be reallocated to get improved results, serve more people, and support more cost efficient interventions.
2. Seattle has severe shortage of affordable housing options. Real estate is very precious. Protecting the capital investments and the land use approvals that have already been made in TH units should be considered as a strategy to protect real estate for homeless and economically vulnerable populations.
3. Seattle has a very high number of unsheltered homeless people and families – getting them inside is as high a priority as is getting them quickly to permanent stable housing.
4. RRH programs and scattered site PSH have a long time from admission to housing placement (4-6 months) due to very tight and expensive rental market. Greater access to all types of affordable rental housing will enable the homeless system to be more efficient.
5. The type of TH units are varied. Some existing TH is shared living in multi-bedroom homes. Some are apartments in single site buildings. Some are scattered site apartments. Some TH programs operate in buildings with rental assistance that mandates a year lease.

Description of options

1) Re-tool to **Bridge Housing** (a TH option within the CoC that is accessed via CES)
   a) Must fill gap in system for specific sub-population
   b) BH provider is focused on providing safe space and coordinating with service provider.
   c) Operating costs are reasonable.

d) Housing Placement and Stabilization Services are provided by the RRH provider, Scattered Site PSH provider, or Outreach provider (if client is awaiting admission to single site PSH).

2) Re-purpose to single site or scattered site **Permanent Supportive Housing** (a PSH option within the CoC that accessed via CES)

   a) Must fill gap in system for specific sub-population

   b) PSH provider manages operations and services.

   c) Operating and services costs are reasonable.

3) Re-purpose to **Rooming House/Shared Living Community** (an affordable housing option that is accessed via All Home landlord bank not CEA)

   a) Low cost rooms that have fixed rents set at half the SSI payment.

   b) RH Provider receives Operating & Maintenance subsidy to cover gap between rent and operating costs. This is a levy resource not a homeless system investment.

   c) RRH provider provides time limited services and interim rent assistance.

4) Re-purpose to **Preferred Affordable Housing** (accessed via All Home landlord bank not CEA)

   a) Low cost apartments that have fixed rents (affordable at 40% AMI) or fully subsidized rents (tenants pay 30 percent of household income (after certain deductions are taken out) for rent and utilities).

   b) PAH Provider may receive O&M subsidy to cover gap between fixed rent and operating costs OR voucher. This is a mainstream resource not a homeless investment.

   c) RRH provider provides time limited services and interim rent assistance OR Scattered Site PSH provider provides ongoing services and rental assistance.

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