

# Whatcom County 5-year Homeless Housing Plan Implementation Plan for 2026 through 2030



WHATCOM COUNTY  
**HEALTH AND  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES**



# Introduction



# Introduction to the Plan

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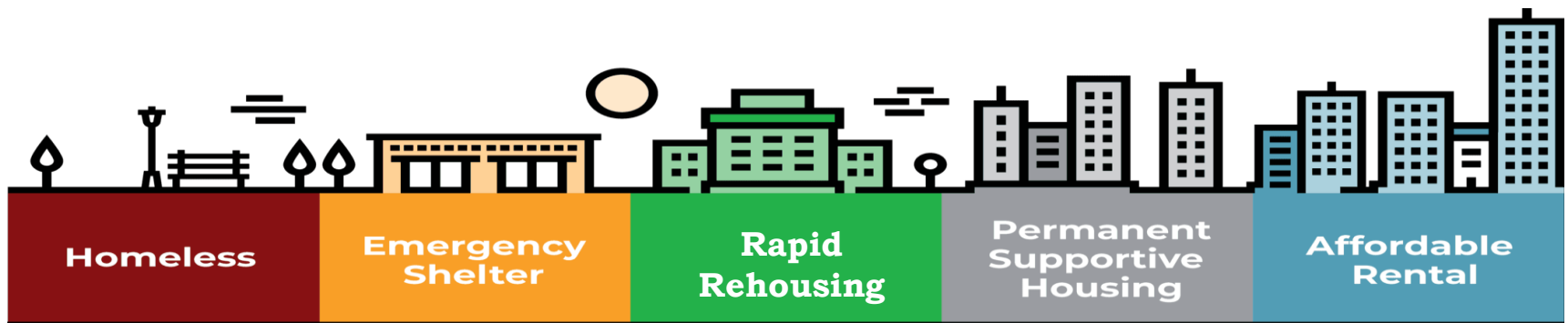
## What is the Homeless Housing Plan?

- Plan that guides goals aimed at reducing homelessness and the harms associated with homelessness
- Determines the strategies and where we focus resources
- Developed by the Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee with support from Health and Community Services
- Required by Washington State Department of Commerce

# Continuum of Care

## Primary Interventions

- Street Outreach
- Emergency Shelter
- Rapid Rehousing & Transitional Housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Affordable Housing
- Prevention



# What the Plan Impacts

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## How we focus our resources by intervention type

*Examples:*

- Should we put more funding into emergency shelters, or affordable housing?
- Should we focus more on Permanent Supportive Housing, or Rapid Rehousing?

## How we focus resources by household conditions

*Examples:*

- People with severe mental illnesses
- People with severe medical illnesses
- Families with children
- Unaccompanied youth
- Older adults

# Framework and Process



**Assumptions:** Phenomena that exist outside of the control of our local housing system that impacts how it functions and performs.



**Guiding principles:** Value statements that impact the strategies we select and the way those strategies are performed and measured.

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**Objective:** Big sub-goals that help us achieve a reduction in homelessness and the associated harms of homelessness.

**Strategy:** Activities that Whatcom County and its partners will complete in order to achieve the objectives.

Performance Measure 1

Performance Measure 1

Performance Measure 1

**Strategy 2**

50

Performance Measure 1

Performance Measure 1

Performance Measure 1

92

**Objective 2**

**Strategy 1**

Performance Measure 1

Performance Measure 1

Performance Measure 1

**Strategy 2**

Performance Measure 1

Performance Measure 1

Performance Measure 1

# Guiding Principles and Objectives





# Guiding Principles

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**Value statements that impact the strategies we select and the way those strategies are performed and measured.**

1. Housing services should build on existing evidence and best practices.
2. Every person has the right to make their own decisions and to be treated with dignity.
3. Everyone can be housed with the right support.
4. Working together as a community creates stronger outcomes for everyone we serve.
5. Stable housing is the foundation for good health, positive educational outcomes, financial security, and community engagement.

# Objectives

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**Objectives help us achieve a reduction in homelessness and the associated harms of homelessness.**

1. Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible.
2. Create and preserve more affordable housing.
3. Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs.
4. Reduce unsheltered homelessness by expanding shelter capacity.
5. Prioritize assistance based on the greatest barriers to housing stability and the greatest risk of harm.
6. Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce.
7. Promote an equitable, accountable and transparent homeless crisis response system.

# Looking Ahead to Plan Implementation



# Quality Improvement

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## Administrative Efficiencies and Greater Public Engagement

- Collect better information for ongoing analysis, improve reporting and engagement with stakeholders
- Identify challenge areas and work with experts/consultants to learn from other communities
- Engage directly with people with lived experience and encourage providers to engage with this population
- Strengthen support for community workforce

# Planning for Stability

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## Proactive Planning for Local Success

- More transparency and scheduling around budget, especially for development projects
  - Specific amounts will be set aside for capital projects
  - Ongoing coordination with partners to describe how we will jointly fund affordable housing developments
- Emphasis on quality over quantity
- Working more closely with community partners in related fields

# WCHAC & Prioritization Update

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There are concerns about prioritization policies; more work is necessary before changes are made.

- **5.4 Update Prioritization Policy and Processes**
  - Prioritization policies will transparently reflect community values and availability of services.

Coordinated Entry Governing Body and WCHAC will work on this in 2026 with subcommittee of WCHAC and engaged community stakeholders to improve assessments and gather input to clarify importance of various criteria involved in making referrals

# WCHAC & Prevention Update

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There are concerns about homelessness prevention

- **Objective 1: Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible (includes 6 strategies)**
  - Questions remain about long-term impact of prevention programs on housing stability generally
  - Relationship between homelessness and Adverse Childhood Experiences is complicated
  - Prevention programs make up about 20% of budget

WCHAC to further study impact of homelessness prevention programs and recommend additional strategies and/or targets for adjustments to program funding

WCHCS to explore departmental partnerships to reduce ACEs

# WCHAC & Families w/ Children Update

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There are concerns about how families with children are counted and a request for data that is inclusive of entire households rather than just the head of the household.

Updated intakes and assessments should emphasize entire households.

Data should incorporate number of individuals as well as number of households.

Where applicable, system should reduce reliance on categorical preferences and move towards household-level information.



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# Questions?