



A CALL TO ACTION:

Strategic, Scalable Responses to Seattle's Homelessness Crisis

More than two and a half years after our regional government declared a state of emergency for the homelessness crisis we have continued to see the number of people experiencing homelessness increase. Clearly, the crisis of homelessness requires bold and urgent action. Many business leaders are looking for a way forward with greater urgency, and more accountability for results.

At United Way, our vision is to harness that interest and turn it into both short and long term action. We believe our community needs to meet the crisis with a strong and efficient response system and an adequate number of stable housing options that help people exit homelessness. It also requires us to reduce the number of people becoming homeless in the first place. We believe that philanthropy can play a crucial role by leveraging investments across these three areas:

- Prevention: help people stay in stable housing
- Housing: Quickly house people who become homeless
- Support: help people maintain housing through intervention and employment programs

United Way of King County is the right nonprofit to invest with because we have over a decade of experience in working on the issue of homelessness. We bring thought leadership and innovative approaches that can disrupt the status quo. We work alongside government with the ability to plug gaps and advocate for improved systems. Our investments will:

- Make a visible difference in the number of people on the streets
- Prevent more people from entering the streets
- Spark innovation for long-term supply-side housing solutions

In this proposal we identify \$50 million in annual investments from private philanthropy that combined with government support will make a lasting difference on the quality of life in our city, for all of us, for years to come. This proposal will prevent 15,000 people from becoming homeless, provide 2,400 people with shelter, and help more than 8,000 find stable housing in 2019. This proposal is a scalable response. We outline a series of investments, each of which will help our neighbors experiencing homelessness. The effect is intended to be additive, the totality transformative.

Background: How did we get here and what are we doing about it?

Count us in¹, the Point in Time survey conducted each year gives us a snapshot of homelessness in our region. Results showed that 12,112 people experienced homelessness in King County on January 26, 2018. 6,320 people counted were unsheltered- staying in vehicles, tents, and on our streets. Data indicates that homelessness impacts people of color and other historically marginalized populations at a disproportionate rate, the Black or African American disparity for example – 27% in the Point in Time count compared to 6% in the general King County population. This is true because these groups are less

¹ <http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/FINALDRAFT-COUNTUSIN2018REPORT-5.25.18.pdf>

likely to have benefited from multigenerational inherited wealth, they may have experienced displacement due to gentrification and are more likely to experience employment and housing discrimination.

20,000 households became homeless in 2017. That's twice as many as in 2012. Consider the fact that from 2014 to 2017, the number of households accessing homelessness services has grown by an average 11 percent a year: Funding, on the other hand, has grown by an average 2.4 percent a year. Our region currently invests \$200 million annually in homelessness services. (See charts 1 and 2) In 2017 almost 7,000 households were connected to permanent housing, this represents a 100% improvement over 2013 housing connections. It also indicates the efficacy of our Housing First System. However effective, this community has not yet invested at the scale of our problem.

The booming economy that has led to so much prosperity in our region, is making it increasingly difficult for people with low or no income to maintain housing. Over the last decade we've seen a decrease in King County of 36,470 units of housing affordable to low income residents. (See chart 3) This combined with stagnant wages for low skilled people, insufficient access to behavioral health services, and an inadequate supply of emergency shelter beds has led to our current crisis.

Furthermore, the homelessness response system has historically suffered from inefficiencies, structural weaknesses and conflicting priorities. Progress has been made in addressing issues within the homeless response system, the improvement guided by the Focus Strategies ² and Poppe reports ³ commissioned by King County, United Way and the City of Seattle.

Why Partner with United Way of King County

Before we explore the proposed investments in greater detail let's look at why United Way of King County is the right partner. United Way is the largest local philanthropic funder of homelessness in the recent past. We bring demonstrated expertise in strategies that prevent and end homelessness. We are a trusted intermediary that can act as a liaison between government, business, philanthropy, and nonprofit partners.

United Way has a leadership role in [All Home](#), [One Table](#), and other regional efforts to end homelessness. We have a unique ability to raise money from the business community and major donors and maximize the impact of the dollars through our responsive grant making process. Our process is firmly rooted in a culturally competent method that uses a racial equity lens. We effectively vet potential grantees, invest in high performing programs, hold agencies accountable for results, evaluate progress and scale investments to maximize results where there is proven impact.

Additionally, we have the ability to leverage hundreds of AmeriCorps Members and volunteers, the ability to influence public and private partners through convening and advocacy and the brand credibility that can help build public and political will.

Our two signature efforts today, in addressing homelessness ***Streets to Home*** and ***Jobs Connect***, are proven to be highly effective and they are poised to scale up in the coming year.

Proposed Investments (see chart 4)

² <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/pathwayshome/FS.pdf>

³ <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/pathwayshome/BPA.pdf>

United Way believes that we need to start by making a visible difference in the number of people living on the streets and in unsanctioned encampments. This is the right thing to do and seeing progress will help re-build public trust and lead to sustained action to address the homelessness crisis at the scale of the problem.

➤ **Invest \$4 million to house 4,000 people through Streets To Home⁴**

Streets to Home is an individual approach; outreach workers assess each individual's situation and have discretionary dollars to help people get back on their feet, by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and providing flexible financial assistance to help them move to permanent housing. By leveraging outreach workers at 25 agencies and 10 AmeriCorps members, we are able to quickly house single adults, families, and youth at an average cost of about \$1,000 per person. We have successfully housed over 1500 people this year.

Our Community Resource Exchange and Family Resource Exchange events provide immediate access to Streets to Home resources. We utilize the Homeless Management Information System to monitor the effectiveness of each grantee and to ensure that families who are helped through Streets to Home don't return to homelessness.

➤ **Invest \$4 million to connect 4,000 people to stable income through Jobs Connect⁵**

It is a simple fact that people cannot easily acquire housing nor can they maintain it without a steady income. Our Jobs Connect program connects people who are homeless and able to work with employers ready to put them to work. Investments in this program have helped more than 2,000 people access jobs this year and the demand continues to grow for this program. Forty-five percent of Count Us In, the Point in Time count, respondents reported they were looking for work. As the largest funder for Homeless Employment in the region, we partner with eleven high performing agencies and dozens of employers. Jobs Connect can scale to meet this demand and ensure that every person entering the homelessness system is offered a robust set of employment and training options.

➤ **Invest \$5 Million to secure 600 spaces of temporary housing by Leveraging community resources**

Our region has more people living unsheltered than in our emergency shelter system. There are 2,032 *shelter* spaces in Seattle, which are 93 *percent* full each night. We do not have enough shelter space to meet the current demand. In order to bring more people indoors, the City of Seattle recently signed legislation creating 500 new shelter spaces – a 25% increase and King County is adding 100 more shelter beds outside of Seattle. We applaud these efforts and are committed to mobilizing efforts and resources to match it. We will challenge local hotels, faith based organizations, Red Cross, Airbnb providers, and local communities to identify or create 600 more spaces of temporary housing by November 2018. With an average length of stay of 90 days, those beds could help an additional 2,400 people over the course of a year.

⁴ <https://www.uwkc.org/ending-homelessness/streets-to-home/>

⁵ <https://www.uwkc.org/ending-homelessness/jobs-connect/>

To make lasting progress we must invest in interventions that will stem the tide of people experiencing homelessness for the first time. This is why we believe prevention is such a smart investment.

➤ **Invest \$21 Million in Data-Driven Homelessness Prevention System to help 15,000 people**

Help United Way bring a coordinated, data-driven prevention program to single adults before they lose their housing. Providing targeted rental assistance and support services for people on the verge of losing their homes is the most effective way to prevent homelessness. This comprehensive model for enrolling people in public benefits, providing emergency financial assistance and access to crucial legal services as needed would be a game changer for our region.

Success of homeless prevention strategies requires targeting of resources to those most likely to become homeless. We can learn from other communities: In Chicago, \$1,000 in emergency cash assistance was targeted to individuals on the brink of homelessness; those who received the assistance were 76% less likely to become homeless after six months than those who did not receive the assistance, and the estimated potential economic benefits are \$20,548 per homeless spell avoided, compared to the \$10,300 per-person program cost of averting homelessness through financial assistance (Evans, Sullivan, & Wallskog, 2016). Best Starts for Kids, a King County initiative to improve outcomes for youth & children, has developed a strong model for helping prevent families from becoming homeless and we propose bringing that to Single Adults.

United Way has a comprehensive model for enrolling people in public benefits that can help increase income and access to civil legal aid in situation where legal advocacy will prevent homelessness. Furthermore, dozens of churches, food banks, and community based organizations offer an array of rental assistance and eviction prevention programs. A recent inventory of these services showed a complex mix of eligibility requirements, service offerings, and access points. This makes it incredibly challenging for families on the brink of homelessness. United Way will take the lead in coordinating these resources – providing equitable access to people in need and an ability to maximize the effectiveness of public and private resources. This combination of **coordination, access to public benefits and legal services** and disciplined **data driven assistance** will result in a major reduction in inflow into the homelessness emergency system.

➤ **Invest \$10 million to house 1,600 Jobs Connect Clients who are unsheltered or in emergency shelter.**

Pilot a program to provide a rental subsidy from \$300-\$750 per month for up to a year for people enrolled in an employment program. Providing a housing subsidy to these people while they work to increase their income will help people transition from shelter, vehicles, and tents into stable housing. This will free up shelter space and provide greater stability. There is strong evidence that employment services increase the success of Rapid re-housing programs. Currently our region has not prioritized Rapid re-housing services for the population targeted in Jobs Connect, i.e. those with fewer barriers to achieving success through employment programs. Assisting this target population with housing would free up shelter space and result in fewer people living in vehicles and tents.

➤ **Invest \$5 million in A Housing Innovation Fund**

➤ Our current model of building housing for people experiencing homelessness is often too slow and too expensive. We need to remove barriers to creating new housing solutions – including modular housing, shared housing resources, and innovative uses of existing land. United Way will partner with regional housing leaders to identify and fund new housing solutions. United Way will invest in

promising and replicable ideas that reduce the timeline or cost of developing housing for people experiencing homelessness. We will seek projects that cost less than \$100,000 per unit and can be brought on line in 18 months or less through innovative development, shared housing, rehabilitation, or financial models

➤ **Invest \$500 thousand to expedite the successful launch of The Housing Resource Center**

The Housing Resource Center is slated to open in 2019. It will be a critical link between landlords, property owners and people experiencing homelessness. It is designed to eliminate barriers that prevent formerly homeless folks from renting in our communities. The program will create a risk mitigation fund to incentivize landlords to rent to people exiting homelessness. United Way will work to influence the design and implementation of this strategy and support a comprehensive marketing campaign to engage landlords and property owners in the effort.

Beyond The Investments: Thought Leadership

In addition to the investments outlined above United Way believes there are structural changes that can improve our communities success in addressing homelessness.

At the top of our list are the following:

➤ **Disrupt the governance structure of regional homeless response**

United Way believes we need one entity governing our homelessness response. We have called for the creation of combined city-county department focused solely on homelessness that has the authority to make funding and strategy decisions. This will speed up a system currently weighed down by bureaucracy and prevent funding priorities from being undermined by conflicting agendas. By design this department should partner with business and philanthropy to create a unified and comprehensive response. Recent developments in Los Angeles provide an interesting model for this community's consideration⁶.

➤ **Build the public and political will to create a sufficient amount of housing for very low income people.**

The McKinsey&Company report indicated a need to invest \$400 million annually in affordable housing in King County. Over the next year we need to refine those numbers and develop a community-wide effort to identify funding sources. We can look to our peers in Los Angeles for a successful model of public engagement.

To be successful, we need to make visible progress on the current crisis, communicate the results of getting people off the streets and into housing, and reshape the public narrative about our collective role in addressing the crisis of homelessness.

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https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/journal_of_affordable_housing/volume_25_no_3/ah-25-3-04-streim.authcheckdam.pdf

Appendix

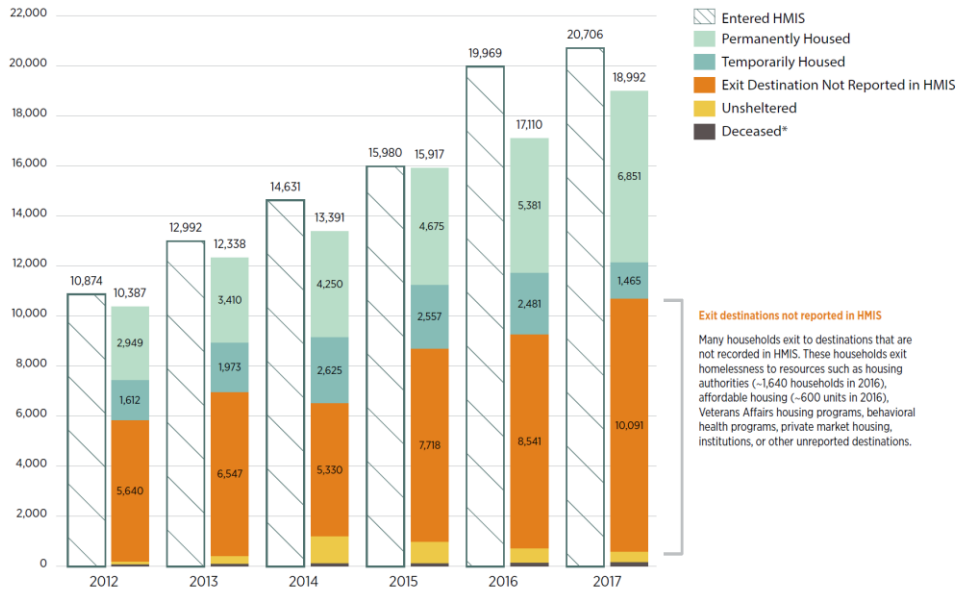
Charts 1 and 2



King County

Number of Households Entering and Exiting HMIS in King County, 2012-2017

Note: HMIS tracks only agencies funded with homeless fund sources. Other systems such as housing authorities help people exit from homelessness but do not record those exits in HMIS.



Notes

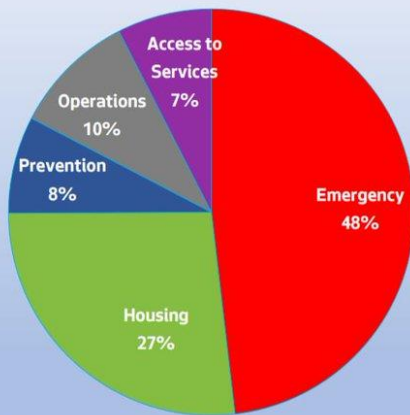
About 30% of clients do not consent to share their identifying information in HMIS. As these clients cannot be de-duplicated, these inflow estimates might be slightly higher than the actual inflow to the homeless system.

*"Deceased" indicates that the head of household was deceased.

** Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) launched in April 2016 and resulted in a large influx of households requesting homeless services (approximately 7,500 each in 2016 and in 2017 YTD).

City of Seattle Homelessness Response Budget*

\$84 Million Total Investment;
including \$76.9M in HSD Homeless Services Budget



- Emergency \$40.4M****
Shelters, Villages, Hygiene, Outreach, Navigation Team
- Housing \$22.5M**
Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing, Diversion
- Prevention \$6.5M**
Homelessness prevention
- Access to Services \$6.3M**
211 Referral Service, Healthcare for the Homeless
- Operations \$8.3M**
Staffing, Administration, Clean up Costs

* 2018 Amended Budget as of June 18, 2018

** Investment descriptions do not include all funded programs

Chart 3

LOSS OF AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

2007-2016

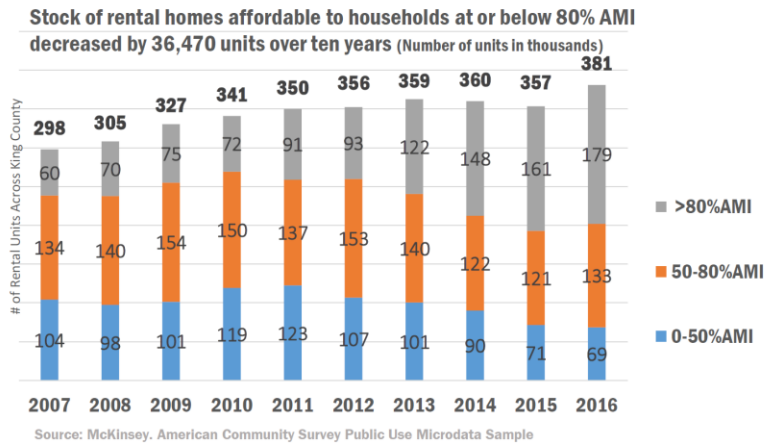


Chart 4

Strategy	Program / Intervention	Average Cost Per Unit	Investment	Number of People Helped
Prevent People From Becoming Homeless	Homelessness Prevention is a range of types of assistance that is aimed at helping households avoid eviction or homelessness.			
	Eviction Prevention Funding	\$1,500	\$15,000,000	10000
	Legal Aid	\$1,500	\$5,000,000	3000
	Benefits Access	\$500	\$1,000,000	2000
Quickly House People Who Become Homeless				
	Streets To Home / Diversion	\$1,000	\$4,000,000	4,000
	600 additional units of temporary housing	\$2,200	\$5,280,000	2400
	Housing Innovation	\$5,000	\$5,000,000	100
Increase Housing and Income Stability	Housing Resource Center	\$500	\$500,000	1,000
	Jobs Connect	\$1,000	\$4,000,000	4000
	Housing Stability for Jobs Connect Clients	\$6,000	\$10,000,000	1,600
Totals			\$49,780,000	28,100