

**LIVE UNITED**



United Way of King County

**UNITED WAY OF KING COUNTY ANNOUNCES \$551,000 IN NEW INVESTMENTS TO HELP GROWING  
NUMBER OF PEOPLE FALLING INTO HOMELESSNESS**

*Grant will fund programs that increase the capacity and shorten the time people depend on emergency  
homeless shelter*

SEATTLE, WA – February 13, 2014 -- Concerned by the increasing number of people found taking refuge on the streets of King County, United Way is committing \$551,000 in Crisis Response resources and broadening the scope of its investments to more rapidly move people off the street.

The 2014 census of King County's homeless population, the One Night Count, found 3,117 people sleeping on the streets or in vehicles, compared to 2,736 the previous year, a 14% increase. This percentage, and the 5% increase tallied in 2013 has created a renewed urgency among United Way and its partners to reverse the trend and reduce the number of people in King County who are unsheltered.

"We want everyone to have access to safe and affordable housing," said Jon Fine, president and CEO of United Way of King County. "And we've been able to provide that for thousands of people who have experienced homelessness in King County. Unfortunately, it isn't enough and a tight economy coupled with low rental vacancy in King County has left many people struggling to find housing near services and near jobs. That's why United Way of King County and our partners are looking to make new investments that will start fixing the problem immediately. It's all about helping in a way that really helps."

Homelessness is a complex problem facing communities across the country and requires a range of varied strategies to really make a difference. What works for one individual or family may not work for another family, individual or youth. That is why United Way is making investments in more than one strategy.

Working with its partners on the Committee to End Homelessness, these investments will more quickly get people off of the street and on the path to stabilize their lives. These funds will be directed into the following strategies:

**Use shelter better:** For many people who become homeless, it is a one time, short term crisis and for them emergency shelter works. Some however find themselves repeatedly utilizing emergency shelter and clearly need more help than a bed to find permanent housing. New investments will help connect these people with the resources and services they need to find housing and free up shelter beds.

**Increase the amount of shelter:** Investments will be made to increase the number of available shelter beds, especially in the underserved areas of King County.

**Achieve rapid rehousing:** Some individuals and families find themselves homeless not because they don't have money or a job, but because they are unable to find housing. Whether that's a single mom fleeing abuse or a family who has bad credit, rapidly rehousing will get them off the street quickly and

reduce the chance that they experience sustained homelessness. Increased funding to strategies like the Landlord Liaison Project will help more people connect to housing in a tight rental market.

**Help harness the energy of our faith-based communities:** United Way is actively working with groups such as the Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry, Catholic Community Services and the Church Council of Greater Seattle to, on a grassroots level, connect helping individuals and congregations to individuals and families who need shelter.

“These grants are just the latest example of United Way’s leadership, and partnership, in our community’s efforts to end homelessness. “ said Mark Putnam director of the Committee to End Homelessness. “People who are homeless are experiencing a real crisis, and these funds will provide opportunities for people in crisis throughout King County to rebound and thrive.”

\$377,000 of the overall investment has been committed to Congregations for the Homeless, Auburn Youth Resources, and the Landlord Liaison Project at the YWCA. The remaining \$174,000 is open for Request for Proposals (RFP) in the coming weeks.

“There are new people becoming homeless all the time,” said Vince Matulionis, director of ending homelessness at United Way of King County. “That is the reality we are struggling with. What we want to create, is a community where if someone does happen to become homeless that they can quickly and easily find a way out. That’s what it means to United Way of King County to end homelessness.”

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