

THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Pathways to Housing Security in Washington State Implementing Recommendations

In 2021, recognizing the many challenges related to homelessness and housing instability, the Washington State Legislature directed the William D. Ruckelshaus Center to conduct a multi-year process of gathering information and facilitating discussions to inform recommendations for a long-term strategy to create pathways to housing security.

Pathways to Housing Security: Final Report of Facilitated Discussions and Recommendations, released in December 2023, provides a cumulative summary of discussions and recommendations that were developed and informed by the participation of hundreds of individuals with knowledge or experience related to homelessness and housing instability.

Collectively, the recommendations offer a holistic approach to housing security, which is advanced when housing is available and affordable for low- and middle-income individuals and households, when circumstances of precarious housing are stabilized, when homelessness is prevented as much as possible, and when experiences of homelessness are mitigated as quickly as possible.

In developing a statewide, long-term strategy for sustained progress on something as complex as housing security, it will not be possible to identify every situation that exists or that may arise. The recommendations therefore offer options that can be developed into tailored actions for specific contexts. This worksheet offers a tool to explore opportunities to implement the recommendations.

Summary of Report Recommendations

SET THE STRATEGY UP FOR SUCCESS

- 1: Multiple Successes** Recognize multiple, co-existing ways of understanding success.
- 2: Clarity of Total Investment and Benefit** Capture and communicate the comprehensive investments that advance housing security, the benefits they yield, and for whom.
- 3: Experiential Expertise** Amplify the insights and expertise of those affected by homelessness and housing instability by supporting them to participate in making decisions about, implementing, and assessing the performance of laws, policies, programs, and services related to housing insecurity.

RESPOND TO THE CONTINUUM OF HOUSING NEEDS

- 4: Housing Options** Expand the supply, variety, location, and quality of supported options and pathways for shelter, temporary, and longer-term housing, to better match people to their types and level of need and to their preferences.
- 5: Supply of Affordable Housing** Adopt strategies that align homelessness services and housing assistance with increasing the supply of affordable housing for rental and ownership. Allocate more funds to be used for operations and maintenance to preserve the current stock of subsidized and affordable housing.

6: Equitable Access to Housing As policies are implemented to increase the supply of affordable housing, ensure equitable access for those transitioning from homelessness and most at risk of housing instability.

7: Geographic Variability Accommodate the ways in which housing challenges manifest differently in different places.

8: Cooperation Across Jurisdictions Incentivize greater cooperation across geographic and political jurisdictions.

RESPOND HOLISTICALLY TO PEOPLE'S NEEDS

9: Coordinated Pathway Create a coordinated pathway system that cultivates operational connections among entities working on outreach, entry into the homelessness response system, placement in housing, and longer-term housing stability.

10: Holistic Eligibility Reconfigure eligibility criteria using a cross-sector, multifactorial, periodic assessment designed to help people access the supports they need over time to synergistically stabilize their housing, health, behavioral health, and socioeconomic circumstances.

11: Person-Centered Navigation Evolve current case management and care navigation efforts into a cross-sector navigation system that responds to the specific needs of individuals and households and follows them longitudinally as those needs evolve

12: Circumstances of Precarious Housing Expand investments that stabilize individuals or households with circumstances of precarious housing.

BOLSTER SYSTEMS AND WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND STABILITY

13: Diversity in Implementation Increase the diversity of and cooperation among organizations and entities in the public, nonprofit, and private sector with the potential to contribute to the response to housing insecurity.

14: Financial Stability of Implementers Foster the financial stability of those implementing the response to housing insecurity by offering a range of funding models to variety of grantees and partners.

15: Working Conditions Improve working conditions and supports for the frontline workers who directly provide homeless services and housing assistance.

16: Core Competencies Establish universal core competencies in culturally responsive, anti-racist, and trauma-informed practices for providers, administrators, and leaders across sectors, and regularly provide the training needed to put those competencies into practice.

FOSTER ACCOUNTABILITY, MANAGE PERFORMANCE, AND ADAPT OVER TIME

17: Alignment of Policymaking Assess laws and policies in all areas of government for the potential to affect housing security and assess housing laws and policies for their potential to affect interrelated goals in other areas.

18: Knowledge Management Framework Develop a comprehensive framework for the role of knowledge and learning in the State's efforts to advance housing security, including performance monitoring, focused evaluation, a prioritized research agenda, and avenues for knowledge sharing.

Select a recommendation to work on: _____

Part 1: Reflect

What barriers do you experience or observe?

What barriers do you contribute to?

What do you feel hopeful about?

Part 2: Identify Ideas for Action

Core Functions *What changes to your core functions would contribute to implementing this recommendation?*

Internal Operations *What practices or policies within how you work would contribute to implementing this recommendation?*

Relationships *Who are you not currently connected to? What benefit could come from connecting? How could you connect?*

Narratives *What narratives would help this recommendation be successful? How could you foster those narratives?*

Measurement *What would you want to track that you aren't already tracking? How could you measure that?*

Collective Action *Who could you partner with to advocate for change?*

Learning *What practices or models or examples would you like to learn from?*

Part 3: Commit to Actions

KEEP

What is your organization or community doing that you need to continue doing?

START/CHANGE

What does your organization or community need to start doing (a new effort or a change to a current effort)?

STOP

What is your organization or community doing that you can or should stop doing?

Part 4: Develop an Action Commitment

By the next 3 years, our goal would be...

By the next 3 months, we would need to...

In the next 3 weeks, my first step will be to...

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS *To help succeed in taking this action, what people or organizations do you plan to reach out to – for example, to explore a collaboration, exchange information and resources, or just establish a new connection?*