



*Stevens County*

*10-Year Plan  
to End  
Homelessness*

*Revised March 2018*

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# Contact Information

<i>Jurisdiction:</i>	Stevens County
<i>Other Jurisdictions Represented in this Plan:</i>	None
<i>Date of Plan Adoption</i>	March 2018

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# Current Emergency Housing

Stevens County 2017						
Emergency Shelter						
		HMIS				
Provider Name	Facility Name	Number of year round beds		Family units	Seasonal units	Population Served
		Individual	Family			**
Rural Resources Community Action	Stevens County Emergency Shelter		12	4		SF, FC
Rural Resources Community Action	Gold Star Shelter	5	2	1		SM, MC
Colville Community Warming Center			0	0	1	FC, SM, SF, MC
New Family Life Services	Maternity Home		10	4		FC

\*\*FC – females w/children  
 SM – Single Male  
 SF – Single Female  
 MC – Males w/children

# Introduction

The Washington State Legislature passed the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act (Chapter 43.185C RCW) in 2005 which outlined policies to address homelessness. This is an updated plan to Stevens County Homeless Housing Strategic Plan, which includes local vision that directs our efforts and resources to ensure that people have a safe place to live. The plan’s guiding principles and goals support the local homeless state’s homeless housing policies.

The plan includes specific minimum system performance requirements that were incorporated into state contracts with local government and other housing providers beginning in July 2017.

The local homeless response system is prioritizing people living outdoors, in places not meant for human habitation and people fleeing from domestic violence.

Commerce firmly supports that anyone who is living in an emergency shelter or in temporary housing (including couch surfing) needs permanent housing, and we need to ensure people most at risk of dying from violence or exposure to the outdoor elements receive assistance as rapidly as possible.

Maintaining a high functioning and low barrier crisis response to homelessness is possible and we must continue to learn from data, research, and experiential evidence to ensure resources are targeted toward effective and proven strategies. State government agencies alongside local governments, nonprofits, faith based networks, advocates, public housing agencies, and business communities need to work collectively, and with urgency, to support the systems and programs with the best outcomes for people experiencing homelessness

Homeless Housing Task Force		
Name	Title	Representing
Greg Knight	Executive Director	Rural Resources Community Action
Cruze Thompson	Homeless Housing manager	Rural Resources Community Action
Stacy Sim	Victim Advocate Supervisor	Crime Victim Services
Alison Price	Community Engagement	Crime Victim Services
Lisa Meddock	Executive Director	Habitat for Humanity
Barry Bacon	Community Member	Hope Street Project
Judy Bircher	Work First Supervisor	DSHS
Michelle Loftis	Executive Director	Colville Food Bank
John Costigan	Community member	Formerly Homeless
Steve Parker	Stevens County Commissioner	Stevens County
Tresa Hendricks	Community Member	Colville
Lita Phillips	Executive Director	Community Partnerships for MH

# Defining Homeless

In accordance with RCW 43.185C.180

- People who are living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they resided for up to 90 days and were in shelter or a place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entering that institution.
- People who are losing their primary nighttime residence, which may include a motel or hotel or a doubled up situation, in 14 days and lack resources or support networks to remain in housing
- Families with children or unaccompanied youth who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state; families with children and unaccompanied youth who have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 90 or more days, have had three or more moves in the last 90 days, and who are likely to continue to be unstably housed because of disability or multiple barriers to employment.
- People who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

## Our Vision

**No person left living outside**

## Our Mission

**Support homeless crisis response systems that efficiently reduce the number of people living outside.**

## Guiding Principles

- All people deserve a safe place to live.
- Urgent action is the appropriate response to people living outside.
- We will be flexible, action-oriented, and understanding in working with all homeless regardless of their circumstances.
- Interventions must be data driven and evidence base.
- We will work closely in collaborating with all other local agencies providing assistance to homeless.

# System Work

Homeless Crisis response system respond to the immediacy and urgency of homelessness and make sure everyone has a safe and appropriate place to live. The system must also target and prioritize resources for people with the greatest needs so they are quickly screened in for housing assistance. The goal of a high functioning system is to reach the balance between need and capacity, often referred to as functional zero, so that when a person becomes homeless there is an immediate system response that quickly moves that person back into housing.

## **Core elements of a high performing homeless crises response system capable of bringing everyone inside.**

1. People living unsheltered are promptly identified and engaged.
2. Diversion strategies are used first to solve a housing crisis. Family and friends are engaged if the situation is safe and appropriate.
3. People are prioritized based on need, using a transparent and consistently applied coordinated entry process.
4. Access to housing and services is contingent on rules no more restrictive than typical leases.
5. Housing and service goals are client driven.
6. Clients are supported in developing housing stability plans that address client safety, barriers to permanent housing, and self-sufficiency.
7. Programs quickly move most clients into market rate housing, and stay available as requested to maintain housing stability.
8. Programs provide the minimum assistance needed to secure housing and only offer more when it is necessary to prevent a return to homelessness.
9. Programs should intervene with permanent supportive housing when clients have a disability that impacts their ability to live independently, and market-rate housing placements have proven ineffective in resolving their homelessness.
10. Programs share client data between system as allowable to improve coordination of services.

# System goals

There are four primary goals in supporting the statewide homeless crisis response systems. These goals coincide with the local goals, which include strategies, specific actions, timelines and connect to performance measures.

**Goal 1:** Effective and efficient coordinated access and assessment for services and housing.

**Goal 2:** Effective and efficient crisis response system.

**Goal 3:** Identification of resources necessary to house all people living unsheltered.

**Goal 4:** Quantifying what would reduce the number of new people becoming homeless.

## Goal 1: Effective and efficient coordinated access and assessment for services and housing.

Strategy to fulfill goal		
1.0 Improved implementation of coordinated entry, and outreach		
Actions in Support of Strategy	Timeline	Accountability
1.1 Continue engagement with partner agencies in utilizing the coordinated assessment tool.	Complete Ongoing	Tracking referrals on a quarterly basis.
1.2 Educate the public to increase community awareness of homelessness resources.	Ongoing	Maintain list of informed outreach recipients.
1.3 Maintain and seek provider partnerships to engage mutual homeless client with updated information regarding resources.	Ongoing	Maintain Partnership list.
1.4 Continued engagement and communications with new and existing landlord. Provide easy access to landlords who have questions regarding rental assistance.	Ongoing	Maintain an active landlord list.



## **Goal 1 specifics for promoting the action strategies.**

1.1 Rural Resources is the primary coordinated entry (CE) access point for homeless. We have developed a CE referral tool specific to Stevens County that is accessible to any partner assisting homeless clients. There are various monthly meetings with partner agencies, which after the tool can be changed if needed to better assist clients.

1.2 Community engagement is held on a monthly basis with faith-based organizations with updates in regards to homeless programs. Annually Rural Resources has spoken at the chamber luncheon. We also outreach to local business on an as needed basis where homeless frequently visit including the faith-based lunches.

1.3 Maintaining knowledge of allowable consent forms to be utilized among partner agencies to collaborate with one another to assist homeless clients.

1.4 A list of partnering landlords is kept in the Rural Resources Community Resources Guide. An updated resources guide is available every Thursday at their office or online at [ruralresources.org](http://ruralresources.org). Housing case management contacts existing and new landlords on an as needed basis and gives landlords the option to contact them as needed.

## Goal 2: Effective and efficient crisis response system.

### Strategy to fulfill goal

#### 2.0 Promote evidence-based housing interventions that efficiently move people experiencing homelessness into permanent destinations.

Actions in Support of Strategy	Timeline	Accountability
<b>2.1 Review Homeless System Performance County Report Card with System performance Measure.</b> -People served, exited -Exits to permanent housing destinations -Returns to homelessness -Length of time homeless	Annually	Post to Commerce website.
<b>2.2 Require homeless program providers to have a minimum of one low barrier option to housing assistance for homeless.</b>	Ongoing	Review of program policies.
<b>2.3 Provide long-term supportive housing case management for homeless.</b>	2019	Approval for funding and hire.
<b>2.4 Homeless prevention assistance for individual who would otherwise be living outside within 14 days.</b>	Complete Ongoing	Homeless Management Information System (43.185C.180) reports as requested by funders.
<b>2.5 Homeless prevention assistance that may result from wildfires.</b>	Ongoing	Finalize policies with county commissioners for providing assistance.

## **Goal 2 specifics for promoting the action strategies.**

2.1 The Homeless System Performance County Report Card is available to any one by visiting [www.commerce.wa.gov](http://www.commerce.wa.gov) This report card shows specific data entry statistic from the homeless management information system.

2.2 Low barrier projects have flexible intake schedules and require minimal documentation. At the minimum, people experiencing homelessness are not screened out based on; having too little or no income, poor credit or financial history, poor or lack of rental history, involvement with the criminal justice system, having active or a history of alcohol and/or substance use, history of victimization, lacking ID or proof of U.S. Residence, or other behaviors that are perceived as indicating a lack of housing readiness.

2.3 There is need for a full time housing case manager who is able to provide long-term housing case management, transporting homeless clients to and from doctors, mental health, chemical dependency and other necessary appointments to gain housing stability.

2.4 Homeless prevention is provided to clients who have received a notice to pay or vacate, termination of tenancy or a letter from a family member or friend to vacate their house. This assistance ensure the individuals at risk do not have to resort to living outdoors.

2.5 As of 2017 regular session House bill 2010 was passed. This bill will allow the use of homeless document recording fees to as read from HB2010 “strengthen the local capacity for controlling risk to life and property that may result from wildfires.” This will allow funding for fire protection service providers within the county to provide residential wildfire risk reduction activities, including education and outreach, technical assistance, fuel mitigation and other residential risk reduction measures. For the purposes of this section, fire protection service providers include fire departments, fire districts, emergency management services, and regional fire protection service authorities. Funding must be prioritized to serving higher percentage of low-income residents as defined by RCW 84.36.042.

## Goal 3: Identification of resources necessary to house all people living unsheltered.

### Strategy to fulfill goal

#### 3.0 Suitable housing needs and requirements

Actions in Support of Strategy	Timeline	Accountability
<b>3.1 Preserve existing housing facilities to help insure unit habitability.</b>	Ongoing	Communications with landlords.
<b>3.2 Rentals need to meet the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) as set forth by HUD, or the Housing Habitability Standards (HHS) as set by the Department of Commerce.</b>	2019	Listing of landlords who are willing to participate.
<b>3.3 Develop new housing opportunities specific to homeless clients.</b>	Ongoing	Engagement with groups, agencies and landlords.
3.4 Needs for permanent housing stability		
<b>3.5 It is necessary to have a full time housing case manager whose primary focus is assisting chronic homeless individuals.</b>	2019	Approval for funding and hire.
<b>3.6 Consistent mental health and chemical dependency services for homeless clients.</b>	Ongoing	Communication with mental health providers.
<b>3.7 Increase employment opportunities for homeless clients.</b>	2019	Communication with work source options.
<b>3.8 Increase transportation opportunities.</b>	Ongoing	Track local resources for transportation.
<b>3.9 Rental assistance prioritized to homeless clients.</b>	Complete Ongoing	Maintain information for programs with partners.

## **Goal 3 specifics for promoting the action strategies.**

3.1 There is a stereotype that homeless individuals will damage units. As an incentive for landlords to help ensure preserving existing housing we need to be able to provide a double deposit on an as needed basis.

3.2 Housing habitability is required for the safety of homeless clients who have been placed into permanent housing. Some landlords are unable or unwilling to make the necessary improvements. Additional funding is need to insure we are able to provide such necessities to units to help ensure housing for homeless clients.

3.3 There is limited affordable options for housing in Stevens County for Homeless clients. We must be open to explore new affordable and legal housing options to get homeless into housing. The homeless population targeted is to include elderly, veterans, victims of domestic violence, families with children, single men and women, those who have lost homes to foreclosure, those with disabilities and mental illness, individuals exiting systems of care such as treatment centers/jails, and youth.

3.5 There is not currently a full time homeless housing case manager, whose sole purpose is to assist clients with their daily needs for housing stability. A person in this position would be able to provide housing advocacy and supportive services to those with the largest barriers to housing.

3.6 Mental health is a large barrier for many homeless individuals. Peer counselling services and mental health counselling can give clients the ability to become stabilized and follow through with program requirements.

3.7 Navigation of work related resources could be difficult for clients to follow through. Many chronically homeless individuals are unfamiliar with how to apply for employment or create resumes. Providing a full time housing case manager could assist these clients with correctly following through when applying for employment.

3.8 Without transportation options, our homeless populations have fewer choices and limited access to programs, medical services, schools, and resources in the area. Stevens County currently offers limited transportation between main cities; however, families in outlying areas require increased options.

3.9 We currently provide HUD/Section 8, which is a lifetime subsidy program for low-income households including those experiencing homelessness. There are also temporary emergency rental assistance programs for homeless that provides financial assistance and provides clients with time to help ensure permanent housing stability.

**Goal 4: Quantifying what would reduce the number of new people becoming homeless.**

<b>Strategy to fulfill goal</b>		
<b>4.0 Identification of policy and resources changes that would reduce the number of new people becoming homeless.</b>		
<b>Actions in Support of Strategy</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Accountability</b>
<b>4.1 Engage local service providers to solicit ideas on interventions and policy changes that would reduce the number of people becoming homeless.</b>	Ongoing	Record meetings with service providers.
<b>4.2 Maintain a framework of awareness that will prevent future homelessness.</b>	Ongoing	Staying in compliance with Commerce requirements.

**Goal 4 specifics for promoting the action strategies.**

4.1 Monthly, quarterly, annually and on an as needed basis meetings with local providers can help provide new ideas in how to provide supportive services to clients who are at-risk of becoming homeless.

4.2 It is important to understand the causes of homelessness in order to focus awareness on situations that may play a role. Rural Resources runs the county wide coordinated entry system that helps identify at-risk households, such as those with income loss, attempting to flee from domestic violence, foreclosure/eviction notices, and medical needs. If we can focus on proactive involvement, we can provide at-risk households with options and choices that may prevent future homelessness. Rural Resources supportive services during a crisis can help guide and lessen the impact of negative circumstances.

# Conclusion

Stevens County recognizes that assisting our homeless population is an ongoing necessity. We acknowledge that circumstances, programs, and needs will vary as we progress through the continuum of moving those populations toward self-sufficiency. Therefore, it is anticipated that there may be a need to alter and revise this plan. In order to accommodate such revisions, an update may be submitted for approval at any time, based on input from the community partners. The plan will be updated a minimum of every 10 years.

Rural Resources is the designated entity for application and coordination of the Stevens County Homeless Plan. Rural Resources as the designated entity will schedule a minimum of two meetings annually to review progress on the homeless plan. The BoCC retains complete authority to fund projects that meet the goals and strategies of this plan, whether referred by Rural Resources or some other entity. The BoCC and Rural Resources will work together to secure necessary state funding to implement this program.

Page reserved for:

**County resolution**