KEY FINDINGS

1. Improve Data Collection and Analysis to Fully Understand System Entries and Exits	Pierce County should seek to fully understand who is and is not accessing the programs in the system. Given the state of the data available from the HMIS and AP4H systems, it is difficult to analyze who is being screened in and who is being screened out and why. Developing a clearer picture of the existing system performance will be key to designing an improved system.
2. Establish Prioritization Criteria and New System Objectives To House Priority Populations	Pierce County should adopt objectives for CI that include specific goals about how many people/households who go on the Placement Roster are housed within a given time frame. It will also be essential to develop prioritization criteria so that the objectives can be framed in terms of how many people *from priority populations* (i.e. high need/high barriers) are housed. These revised system goals should also include a goal for percentage of households that are diverted from the Placement Roster, so that those with lower needs to not enter the homeless system at all.
3. Remove Non-Funder Driven Eligibility Criteria and Develop New Streamlined Assessment Tool	The existing CI system cannot work effectively as long as each program is able to establish its own entry criteria. While each program might have a strong set of reasons for doing so, the collective impact of all these criteria is that the system is inaccessible to large numbers of people who have been homeless the longest and have the greatest need for stable housing. We strongly support the County's ongoing efforts to help providers remove barriers and the planned effort to include new requirements about improving program access in the upcoming round of NOFAs and subsequent contracts.

Once there is a much shorter and simpler array of eligibility criteria for programs, Focus Strategies strongly advises that the existing assessment tool be re-designed and simplified to include only the minimum information needed to determine whether a household meets eligibility criteria (e.g. household type, size, veteran status, etc.) and just enough information on homeless history and disability to assign a need score so that the household can be prioritized. Additionally, there will need to be a more restrictive denial policy in which providers have a more limited range of reasons for refusing to accept a client. |
| 4. Integrate New Assessment Tool and Matching Functions Into HMIS | Focus Strategies highly recommends that the updated assessment tool, prioritization score and process of matching households to vacancies be conducted inside the HMIS system. Integrating all the CI functions together in one system will vastly improve the efficiency of the process and will also ensure that any new system objectives relating to how many people actually become housed can be tracked as people move from intake to diversion/assessment and are then matched to programs. As part of the next phase of work, Focus Strategies will explore integrating these functions into ServicePoint. |
| 5. Continue Long-Term Planning to Right Size the System | Significant additional system capacity can be created by continuing to phase out transitional housing and expanding the inventory of rapid re-housing. However, to ensure there is an intervention for all homeless people, there likely will need to be additional investments in the system to expand the supply of PSH. By pursuing a long-range plan to fully bring both rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing to scale, Pierce County can reach a point where the Centralized Intake system will truly be able to match every homeless person to the correct intervention to end their homelessness. |