PIERCE COUNTY COMMUNITY CHARRETTE FINAL REPORT

Framework to Inform the Pierce County Plan to End Homelessness

July 15, 2016
ABOUT CSH

At CSH, it is our mission to advance housing solutions that deliver three powerful outcomes: 1) improved lives for the most vulnerable people, 2) maximized public resources and 3) strong, healthy communities across the country.

Our work across systems, combined with our housing expertise gives us a unique perspective.

CSH believes access to safe, quality, affordable housing - with the supports necessary to keep vulnerable people housed – is an effective solution to homelessness.

Local Solutions to Homelessness

CSH has supported communities across the nation in addressing specific issues related to homelessness at the local level, through technical assistance, trainings and tailored products like the CSH Charrette.

The CSH Charrette engages local experts and community stakeholders in a condensed planning and stakeholder feedback process on issues experienced in the community related to housing and homelessness. CSH has delivered community Charrettes from coast to coast, in communities large and small, producing stakeholder-informed frameworks for community plans to end homelessness.
CSH is pleased to present this report to Pierce County Community Connections, Pierce County, and its housed and homeless citizens. CSH witnessed incredible community turnout, collaboration and support throughout the Charrette process. We hope that the same authenticity comes through in this document.

CSH appreciates the willingness of Pierce County to undertake the Charrette process as a method of analyzing, discerning, and ultimately making difficult decisions about moving forward on complex issues.

This report is intended to inform the next body of work under the three issue areas identified and examined through this process, to lay a framework for the next level of work under the Community Plan to End Homelessness and to increase the success of the progressive work already happening in Pierce County.
The Rising Number of Unsheltered Homeless Households in Pierce County
The number of unsheltered homeless households is on the rise in Pierce County.

This report focuses on the county’s population of homeless households that are unsheltered, as defined below.

Since 2010, unsheltered homelessness across the county has increased by 192%.

There are now more families and individuals than ever before who are living in places not meant for human habitation. With long lines for emergency shelter and long waits for housing, many households find no alternative to living on the streets, in encampments or in vehicles.

Although Pierce County houses homeless households in permanent supportive housing and provides assistance through rapid-rehousing, the number of unsheltered households has continued to rise since 2013.
COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE WEST COAST ARE ALSO EXPERIENCING LARGER NUMBERS OF UNSHELTERED HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS.

_Pierce County is not alone in experiencing an increase in the number of unsheltered homeless households over the past few years. This phenomenon has been occurring in communities throughout the West Coast._

Communities throughout the West Coast, as well as pockets of communities nationwide, have experienced an increase in the number of unsheltered families and individuals year-over-year for the past 3–5 years, according to annual community Point-in-Time counts.

Although some differences in numbers can be attributed to data collection and counting methods, this would not explain the trend of rising numbers specific to this area of the country. Just over the past year, many communities in this region have experienced significant increases in their unsheltered homeless populations.

Change in Unsheltered Population, 2015-2016

- Seattle/King County, WA: 19%
- Pierce County, WA: 46%
- Napa, CA: 4%
- Los Angeles City, CA: 21%
- Chula Vista, CA: 18%
- Escondido, CA: 101%
- Oceanside, CA: 148%
PIERCÉ COUNTY HELD A COMMUNITY CHARRETTE TO DEVELOP SOLUTIONS TO THIS ISSUE.

Community stakeholders and local experts across sectors convened for two days of dialogue around three key issues related to the rising number of unsheltered homeless households.
Overview of the Pierce County Charrette

+ The CSH Charrette: An Overview
+ Why a CSH Charrette?
+ The Pierce County Charrette Process
The CSH Charrette: An Overview
THE CSH CHARRETTE PROCESS

The CSH Charrette is designed to help communities address key issues in ending homelessness at the local level. CSH Charrettes capitalize on local and external expertise as well as the community organizing principle of engaging stakeholders in a dynamic, solutions-oriented process to inform community plans to end homelessness.

The typical Charrette process is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSH works with a community Steering Committee to identify issue areas and issue experts, plan Charrette Week logistics and gather community data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charrette Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charrette week includes two days of fishbowl-style dialogues with the community, each covering different issue areas, as well as a presentation of CSH draft recommendations on identified issue areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework for Community Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSH presents a final report of recommendations to inform the community’s plan to end homelessness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE FISHBOWL DIALOGUE

The fishbowl dialogue structure provides a unique opportunity to hear from all stakeholder attendees. Community members listen to an expert discussion and then have an opportunity to provide their own input and expertise on each issue area. This structure promotes group discussion over questions and answers to a panel of experts, and all attendees are encouraged to share.

Above: the fishbowl dialogue structure

Left: A fishbowl in action at the Pierce County Charrette
+ Why a CSH Charrette?
A LOCAL PROCESS FOR LOCAL SOLUTIONS IN PIERCE COUNTY

To condense planning time while involving a broad range of local experts and stakeholders, Pierce County Community Connections engaged CSH to facilitate this work using the CSH Charrette process.

The goal of the Charrette was to produce a feasible set of recommendations, based on community input, that provides a framework for the Pierce County Plan to End Homelessness.

An overview of this Charrette and each issue area’s recommendations are provided in the following pages.
The Pierce County Charrette

June 21 – 24, 2016
The first phase of the Pierce County Charrette involved extensive planning between Pierce County Community Connections and CSH. This involved establishing a Steering Committee that developed the most pressing issue areas that need to be addressed for unsheltered homeless households. Throughout May and June the planning group held planning meetings, solidified the issue areas, identified and confirmed community experts and planned logistics. During Charrette Week, community stakeholders and issue experts engaged in intense dialogue sessions where they exchanged views and provided suggestions for the update of the Pierce County Plan to End Homelessness. CSH presented draft recommendations to the community on the final day of the Charrette, and participants were given a final opportunity to provide final feedback for the update. Post Charrette, Pierce County will use this final recommendations report as a framework for developing the update of the Plan.
The Charrette planning process was driven by a cross-sectional and diverse Steering Committee. Together with CSH and Pierce County Community Connections, the Committee provided local context, identified key issue areas, identified local experts and participated as issue experts themselves.

Allie Franklin, Optum Pierce Regional Support Network
Darlene Davies, Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare
Elizabeth Burris, New Tacoma Neighborhood Council
Frank Jackson, Rescue Mission
John Palmer, City of Puyallup
Kathy Ryan, St. Joseph Hospital
Mary Dodsworth, City of Lakewood
Nick Leider, Catholic Community Services
Nick Hausner, Pierce County Sheriff’s Department
Pamela Duncan, City of Tacoma
Patty Jackson-Kidder, Pierce County Sheriff’s Department
Paul Pastor, Pierce County
Sally Kemp, 1416/1419 Apartments
Valeri Knight, MDC
CHARRETTE WEEK

June 21 – 24, 2016

Tuesday, June 21
Bates Technical College

Three expert and stakeholder fishbowl dialogues

• 55 attendees across the health, housing, homeless services, law enforcement and other governmental sectors

Wednesday, June 22
Pierce County Library

Three expert and stakeholder fishbowl dialogues

• 38 attendees across the health, housing, homeless services, law enforcement and other governmental sectors

Friday, June 24
Bates Technical College

Draft Recommendations & Community Feedback
THE THREE KEY ISSUE AREAS

These three issues were identified as the most important to address the rising number of homeless households that are unsheltered across the county. Local issue area experts and stakeholders focused on each of the following issues in separate fishbowl dialogues. Community feedback and recommendations are detailed on the following pages.

1. Temporary and Permanent Housing

2. Services, Outreach and Engagement

3. Resources and Policy
Issue Area 1: Temporary & Permanent Housing

+ Identified Issues and Insights
+ Recommendations
We are resilient because we have resources. We need to find a way to bring more resources to those sleeping in the emergency rooms, who have many complex health challenges, and those who are waiting to get into shelter.
+ Identified Issues and Insights
THERE IS NOT ENOUGH SHELTER IN PIERCE COUNTY.

Despite having low-barrier shelters and efforts to increase shelter throughput, Pierce County experiences long lines and the need for wait lists for emergency shelter, as well as a growing number of encampments.

There are not enough permanent or temporary housing options for people living outside. There are more than 20 encampments county-wide.

Nativity House has a wait list of 80-90 people per night.

Permanent housing is the solution
The community agrees that permanent housing is the solution to homelessness.

A crisis for unsheltered households
The lack of access to shelter for those that need it is a crisis.

Increase shelter beds outside of Tacoma?
Puyallup is exploring the creation of shelter beds and would need community support to create them.

Shifting resources is not the solution
Moving resources from one intervention to another does not expand the capacity of the system.

People are using hospitals as housing when they don’t have choices.
MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE UNSHELTERED HAVE COMPLEX HEALTH AND SERVICE NEEDS.

Issues identified by community stakeholders are as follows:

This population has complex health challenges.

Many people living without shelter have mental health and substance use challenges.

Support services are essential.

Housing First is not enough without the proper support services.

Upstream interventions are needed.

People need education about contributing factors to complex conditions that affect them, such as those identified in the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (Felliti and Anda).

Systems are over-burdened.

The county jail is the third largest mental health institution in the county.
LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT AND DIVERSION ARE NOT YET FULLY IMPLEMENTED.

*Issues identified by community stakeholders are as follows:*

**More landlord involvement is needed**
Accessing and incentivizing landlords is critical. Many landlords have not been willing to rent to individuals with poor credit, criminal histories or who hold Section 8 vouchers.

**Ad-hoc landlord engagement is not enough**
Multiple providers are connecting with landlords independently of one another. There are promising landlord engagement programs in some cities, but there is no coordinated effort throughout the county.

**Diversion works, but needs more resources**
Diversion efforts are working quite well; however, these programs do not have the resources needed to serve the large number of households that would be successful with this intervention.
Recommendations
1. New resources should be dedicated to permanent housing.

Any new resources dedicated to Pierce County to address homelessness or housing instability should support access to permanent housing rather than temporary solutions like shelter. Although shelter stay is needed, the community agrees that permanent housing is the long-term solution to ending homelessness among both the sheltered and unsheltered populations.

2. Shelter capacity should only be increased using existing resources.

Resources for housing interventions are precious. Although there is not enough shelter throughout the county to meet the demand, it does not mean that newly identified resources need to be allocated for building new shelters. If the community feels strongly about investing in shelter capacity, CSH recommends using existing community resources such as churches and publicly-owned buildings, rather than spend capital dollars on new shelter facilities.

CSH also recommends that existing shelters consider changing shelter rules (where possible) that disallow couples from staying in shelter together, and consider opportunities for sheltering pets (perhaps in partnership with a local animal shelter).
3. Ensure that VA Grant-and-Per-Diem beds are fully utilized.

CSH has found underutilization of VA-Grant-and-Per-Diem beds in many communities across the nation and recommends that Pierce County examine the utilization of these beds to ensure that they are fully utilized.

4. Sweeping encampments is not a solution.

Many community members voiced concerns surrounding encampment sweeps in Pierce County, noting that these sweeps displace the individuals living in them. For outreach teams, this is particularly frustrating, as they often have trouble locating clients after an encampment sweep. **CSH recommends that Pierce County stop these sweeps** and find ways to work with encampment inhabitants through outreach and devise solutions to health and sanitation that do not require the complete dismantling of encampments.

Finally, outreach workers and service providers should collaborate with the faith-based community about the feasibility for providing services and shelter to couples or groups of people who are living in encampments and who are willing to seek services and support together.
5. Increase the capacity to deliver high-quality permanent supportive housing.

CSH recommends a countywide effort to ensure quality in existing permanent supportive housing (PSH) and to increase the capacity for providing additional units of single- or scattered-site PSH. This would involve assessing the inventory and capacity of current PSH providers and determining the needs for enhanced service plans, training, peer learning. The county should also consider opportunities such as bringing additional providers into the county for increased or enhanced provider capacity. Finally, Pierce County should consider a Supportive Housing Institute for supportive housing providers. Providers could use this forum to collaborate, increase skills and knowledge through training, share best practices and advocate for issues that impact supportive housing and special needs populations.

To meet the demand for PSH, the county should determine the number of additional PSH units needed based on the population of homeless households that have special needs and/or are chronically homeless, the current utilization and turnover of existing PSH units, and the funding that would be needed to secure or develop new or additional units. The community can use this information to assist in setting goals and targets for unit production, landlord engagement, ending chronic homelessness and ending homelessness for those who live unsheltered.
RECOMMENDATIONS: TEMPORARY & PERMANENT HOUSING

6. Expand and enhance landlord liaison efforts.

Charrette attendees identified landlord engagement as a top priority to promote the creation of new housing opportunities. There are some successful landlord engagement programs throughout Pierce County, though these efforts are uncoordinated. Landlord liaison and engagement program staff should coordinate efforts and create a shared database or list of landlord providers and housing availability that is managed at the Continuum of Care level and integrated with Coordinated Entry wherever possible.

Pierce County should also launch a landlord engagement campaign to encourage more landlords to rent to those experiencing homelessness. This campaign would focus on the efforts of volunteers from faith-based and civic organizations, landlords who currently rent to those experiencing homelessness and tenants with lived experience.

7. Increase diversion efforts by engaging civic organizations and the faith-based community.

The faith-based community is active in Pierce County, providing a network of shelter beds, food and other support to those experiencing homelessness. Civic organizations, though involved in community service, are not strategically engaged in solutions to homelessness. These communities represent an under-utilized resource for households living unsheltered throughout the county.

CSH recommends engaging the faith-based and civic organizations in permanent housing solutions such as diversion and eviction prevention. The county could increase diversion capacity by training these organizations how to support households that seek help by diverting them from shelter and homelessness using organizational resources or the household’s own support network.

To the degree possible, these encounters should be captured in HMIS.
Issue Area 2: Services, Outreach and Engagement

+ Identified Issues and Insights
+ Recommendations
There are so many places people have to go to get services. It's a hassle. These are our brothers and sisters. We can do better.
Identified Issues and Insights
SERVICES COORDINATION IS AD HOC AND THERE IS A COMPLEX WEB OF SERVICES TO NAVIGATE.

It is challenging to merely locate, assess and build trust with those households that are unsheltered, living on the streets and in encampments. Once the trust has been established, it is difficult for outreach teams and clients to navigate a complex web of uncoordinated resources.

Direct services staff are not completely aware of one another’s services.

Outreach workers feel they often have little to offer their clients.

“The systems work only as well as the linkages work.”
PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN POLICE AND MENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH WORKERS ARE SUCCESSFUL.

Successful programs in Lakewood, Puyallup and Tacoma have integrated efforts for better crisis response and services integration.

“People say, ‘You’re not a social worker, you’re a police officer.’ Actually, I am both.”
PEOPLE NEED A PATHWAY TO MORE INCOME.

*Peer support programs are very successful for building trust and engaging with those who live on the streets and in encampments.*

Community members identified employment as a crucial component to increasing income opportunities for those that need to secure or remain in their housing.

The existing peer outreach programs are a best practice for engaging those that are unsheltered.
+ Recommendations
RECOMMENDATIONS: SERVICES, OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

8. Integrate health and human services navigation into Coordinated Entry.

CSH recommends that Pierce County create a system for navigating services across the county. So as to not create parallel systems of coordination, this system should be integrated with Coordinated Entry.

Building a system for services navigation would start with partners coming together, as a Services Navigation Collaborative, across sectors (clinics, hospitals, outreach, housing, etc.) to brainstorm and plan the implementation of services navigation.

The oversight of the development of services navigation would be strong as a partnership between health and human services. For example, an organization like Optum could partner with Pierce County Community Connections to oversee and provide resources to this process.

9. Use technology to engage unsheltered households in services.

Outreach workers in the county are already using technology like IPads for inputting data into HMIS and conducting assessments for Coordinated Entry. The county can take this one step further by working with service providers and piloting the delivery of services intake virtually through technology (Skype, Google Hangouts, etc.).

Many communities have started to engage in virtual “tele-health” meetings for clients who cannot make in-person appointments. It is possible to deliver certain aspects of services virtually.

Outreach workers could provide the means for people in encampments and on the street to virtually meet with housing and services staff across a spectrum of providers, eliminating the barrier of transportation with their belongings.
RECOMMENDATIONS: SERVICES, OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

10. Replicate successful existing programs that embed staff from the health sector.

Pierce County has seen great success with community partnership programs such as Positive Interactions and the collaboration between the police departments and mental health professionals in Lakewood, Puyallup and Tacoma.

CSH recommends these programs to be replicated countywide in outreach and crisis response efforts.

11. Launch an employment program that employs peer outreach workers.

Employ individuals with lived experience as outreach workers (follow PATH team model).

Deploy outreach workers to encampments, emergency departments and to libraries.

Photo credit: City of Lakewood
Issue Area 3: Resources & Policy

+ Identified Issues and Insights
+ Recommendations
We have to do things in a different way. We continue to pour resources into the same places and we still experience these issues. We can be smarter about how our dollars are invested and how our resources are leveraged.
Identified Issues and Insights
WE HAVE TO EDUCATE AND ENGAGE WITH THE BROADER COMMUNITY.

Issues identified by community stakeholders are as follows:

There are concerns and complaints about those living unsheltered.

People don’t really understand the problem.

Stigmatization contributes to the divide.
WE NEED TO LOOK BEYOND JUST ASKING FOR MORE RESOURCES.

Although it is true that there are not enough permanent housing resources, simply seeking more funding from traditional sources is not a viable solution for addressing the short- and long-term needs of those living unsheltered.

Opportunities:

**Potential Partnerships:** Community stakeholders noted the potential for partnerships between capital funders of housing, providers such as the public housing authorities, and physical and the healthcare system (Optum, behavioral health, providers).

**Medicaid:** The state is launching a demonstration waiver to pay for pre-tenancy and tenancy-support services in supportive housing.
+ **Recommendations**

05
RECOMMENDATIONS: RESOURCES AND POLICY

12. Bring in expertise to create a public education campaign that focuses on explaining why the situation exists, anti-stigma, solutions, current outcomes, and ways to advocate.

13. Encourage community members to engage in advocacy for the one-tenth of one percent sales tax for Pierce County, as well as the state-wide initiatives championed by the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance (e.g. decriminalizing homelessness).

14. Prepare a dashboard report to the community. (Examples: water treatment reports, Columbus, OH, Alameda County, CA)

15. Implement a Speak-Up program to empower people with lived experiences to gain skills, advocate for policy changes, and help break-down stigma. (Examples: Los Angeles and Chicago)
16. Align capital, operating, and service resources from the county, cities, housing authorities, and health care system to issue a joint RFP for supportive housing. (Examples: Washington D.C., King County, LA flexible housing subsidy pool.)

17. Explore a Pay-for-Success initiative in collaboration with Optum, primary care managed care organizations and hospitals.

18. Implement a “Move-On” program that provides people in supportive housing who no longer need intensive services with housing choice vouchers to make room from those with greater needs.

19. Ensure providers have training to leverage Medicaid under the proposed supportive housing services benefit. This includes ensuring providers are able to bill Medicaid and that Medicaid-eligible clients are enrolled in these benefits.
Definitions of Housing Interventions

Conclusion & Acknowledgments

+ Definitions of housing interventions and terms commonly used throughout this report
+ Conclusion and Acknowledgements
+ **Definitions**
DEFINITIONS

In response to the community’s request to include definitions in the Pierce County Plan to End Homelessness, CSH is providing the HUD definitions of the terms used throughout this report:

Housing Interventions & Approaches

Supportive Housing: an evidence-based housing intervention that combines non-time-limited affordable housing assistance with wrap-around supportive services for people experiencing homelessness, as well as other people with disabilities (USICH definition).

Permanent Supportive Housing: a combination of housing and services designed for people with serious mental illnesses or other disabilities who need support to live stably in their communities. It is a proven solution for people who have experienced chronic homelessness as well as people with disabilities (USICH definition).

Rapid Re-Housing: an intervention that rapidly connects families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services.

Housing First: an approach to housing that is centered on the belief that everyone can achieve stability in permanent housing directly from homelessness and that stable housing is the foundation for pursuing other health and social services goals.

Prevention: an intervention that provides housing assistance to households that are at risk for becoming homeless, who would become homeless but for this assistance, which can include rental assistance and/or relocation and stabilization services such as utility payments, mediation and case management.

Diversion: an intervention that provides assistance or support to divert a household from the shelter system. This approach encourages households to find alternative and safe living situations, such as staying with friends and family.

Transitional Housing: A project that has as its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 months). Transitional housing includes housing primarily designed to serve deinstitutionalized homeless individuals and other homeless individuals with mental or physical disabilities and homeless families with children.

Emergency Shelter: any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless.
Population-Based Definitions

**Homeless**: an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence – this can be shelter, transitional housing, an institution or a place not meant for human habitation.

**Chronically Homeless**: an individual (or head of household) with a disabling condition who has experienced homelessness for longer than one year, or has experienced four or more episodes of homelessness in the past three years (those episodes totaling at least 12 months).

**Unsheltered Homeless**: An individual living in a place not meant for human habitation (the street, in encampments, in a vehicle, in an abandoned building, etc.).

*HUD definitions are available here:*
[www.huduser.gov/portal/glossary/glossary.html](http://www.huduser.gov/portal/glossary/glossary.html)
NEXT STEPS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Pierce County Continuum of Care will review this report at their upcoming Board meeting on July 20 and make decisions about the update to the community’s plan to end homelessness.

CSH would like to acknowledge all of the community partners and stakeholders that attended and participated in the Charrette. We would like to give a special shout out to the Charrette Steering Committee, Tess Colby and the staff of Pierce County Community Connections, who worked tirelessly on Charrette design, planning and logistics, expert identification and engagement, participating as experts and providing Charrette week support (room set-up, refreshments, A/V support and note taking). The Charrette was truly a collaborative effort and it was a pleasure to work with such an engaged and passionate group of people. Thank you!
CONTACT INFORMATION

Pierce County Community Connections

Tess Colby
Manager
Housing, Homelessness and Community Development
Phone: 253.798.6139
Email: tcolby@co.pierce.wa.us

CSH

Debbie Thiele
Director
National Consulting Services
Phone: 206.234.2518
Email: debbie.thiele@csh.org