

Puyallup Strategic Plan for Resolving Homelessness

7/19/11

Introduction

On December 13, 2010, a Puyallup community forum on homelessness requested that the Puyallup Homeless Coalition facilitate a strategic planning committee for emergency housing in the city limits. This committee has met weekly or biweekly beginning January 19, 2011. The following individuals played a role in the strategic plan's creation: Mia Wells (Pierce County Department of Community Connections), Nancy Johnson (First Christian Church), Melanie Robinson (Puyallup City Manager's office), Kent McLaren (BCRA), Christine Wilson (Tacoma Housing Authority), Nancy Eklund (Puyallup City Planning Department), Paula Anderson (Puyallup Homeless Coalition) and Ted Brackman (Puyallup Homeless Coalition). Contributions have come from Barbara Pope (Puyallup School District), Denny Hunthausen (Catholic Community Services), Sister Pat Michalek (St. Francis House), Bev Cascio (Open Hearth), Greta Brackman (Freezing Nights), and Troy Christensen (Pierce County Department of Community Connections). A community forum on June 9 enlisted further contributions from business, legislative, church, city, and social service representatives.

The Strategic Plan For Resolving Homelessness allows for a city-wide conversation and agenda for responding compassionately to the reality of hundreds of unsheltered and homeless people in Puyallup. The goal of this strategic plan, similar to Pierce County's ten year plan, is to end homelessness through a combination of collaborative, preventative, and remedial strategies designed to respond to the causes of homelessness and move all individuals and families experiencing homelessness into safe, affordable, permanent housing. The Puyallup Strategic Plan initiative coincides and integrates with the developing Pierce County Integrated Plan to End Homelessness.

The strategic plan represents a paradigm shift in responding to homelessness in our community, moving towards a pro-active comprehensive and coordinated approach.

The strategic plan affirms four housing values:

1. Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a safe, decent, affordable home.
2. It should be possible for working people to afford housing, and still have enough money for basics such as groceries, gas, and childcare.
3. Children deserve a chance to succeed in school and in life which all begins with their family being able to afford a decent place to live.
4. It's better for society, the environment, and families if people can afford to live close to where they work. Once people are housed, then, in the stability and security of that place to live, services that work can be delivered. ¹

¹ The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, "Messages that Work")

Context

Puyallup, meaning “generous people”, a name given by the Yakima Indians, is a small, geographically gifted city with sweeping views of Mt. Rainier, a wide and prominent river, and rich soil that supported the town’s formation. Like so many other peaceful and relatively prosperous suburbs, Puyallup has nevertheless experienced over time a significant and growing amount of poverty and homelessness. Previous generations have seen and responded to this reality in different ways. For example, a homeless shelter, or “poorhouse”, serving up to 60 individuals at a time, operated in the Puyallup valley from 1890 until the end of World War II.

In 2001, as a result of a growing need and increased awareness of that need, the Puyallup Homeless Coalition was formed to promote community education, coordination of services, and advocacy for shelter and appropriate housing. While an effort to meet the needs of unsheltered individuals and families has been pronounced for over ten years, the tragedy and misery of homelessness continues to grow. Rather than having adequate levels of emergency shelter or low income housing available for those who are involuntarily homeless, more citizens than ever are without shelter, living on the streets, by the river, in the woods, parking lots, city parks, private citizens’ yards or couches, vacant buildings, etc. Service providing groups are underfunded and overloaded.

Recently, the Puyallup City Council, following the Washington State Legislature’s passage of House Bill 1956, adopted an ordinance allowing for up to 40 homeless citizens to temporarily reside on local church properties. Recognizing the existence of homeless people within the city and their need for a secure dwelling place, Puyallup was a forerunner within the State by developing such an ordinance.

Causes of Homelessness

A systemic view allows us to assess the precursors to homelessness from national, local, and personal vantage points. Homelessness is an international and national phenomenon that sets the stage for local and personal decisions. We often focus on who is likely to experience homelessness, but we often miss why homelessness occurs.

Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked. As the poverty rate rises, so does the homeless rate. The poorest 50% of the more than 43.6 million poverty stricken US citizens may fall into homelessness at any given time. Over 1.5 million people have become homeless since the recession of 2009. In the United States economic system, poverty and homelessness are a historical reality reflecting major disparities between rich and poor. Over the last fifty years, 30-50 million people have regularly lived in a state of poverty.²

Poverty may be defined as the lack of basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, education, security, and opportunity. In 2011, a family of four is considered poor, under the United States Census Bureau’s official measure, if the family’s income is below \$22,050/year. Currently, 15 million children, one in five children in the United States, are living in poverty. Almost two in five single mothers are poor.

At the individual level, homelessness is usually the result of multiple factors that converge in a person’s life. The combination of loss of employment, inability to find a job due to economic issues, and the high

²Institute for Policy Studies, “Battered by the Storm”, 12/09

cost of housing, leads to loss of housing for some individuals and families. For others, the loss of housing is due to unexpected medical bills and lack of health insurance, chronic health problems, physical disabilities, mental health disabilities or drug and alcohol addictions, along with the inability to access the services and long term support needed to address these conditions. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, there are two trends responsible for the rise in homelessness: the increase in poverty and the growing shortage of affordable housing.

Poverty and Affordable Housing

“Affordable housing is critically important to the well being and health of children and families. Without decent and affordable housing, families have trouble managing their daily lives and their children’s safety, health and development suffer. Families who pay more than they can afford for housing have too little left over for other necessities such as food, clothing and health care. They may not be able to pay for transportation and child care, making it harder to go to work and school each day. As a result families can end up becoming homeless or living in substandard housing.”³

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition’s *Out of Reach, 2010* report:

In Pierce County, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$968, compared to \$919 in Washington State. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities, without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a household in Pierce County must earn \$3,227 monthly or \$38,720 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into a Housing Wage of \$18.62.

In Washington State, a minimum wage worker earns an hourly wage of \$8.55. In order to afford the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Pierce County, a minimum wage earner must work 87 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Or, a household must include 2.2 minimum wage earner(s) working 40 hours per week year-round in order to make the two-bedroom fair market rent affordable.

In Pierce County, the estimated average wage for a renter is \$ 12.36 an hour, compared to \$14.62 an hour statewide. In order to afford the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment at this wage, a renter must work 60 hours per week (compared to 48 statewide), 52 weeks per year. Or, working 40 hours per week year-round, a household must include 1.5 worker(s) earning the mean renter wage in order to make the two-bedroom fair market rent affordable.

Monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments for an individual are capped at \$674 in Washington. If SSI represents an individual's sole source of income, \$202 in monthly rent is affordable, while the fair market rent for a one-bedroom in Pierce County is \$776.

A unit is considered affordable if it costs no more than 30% of the renter's income.

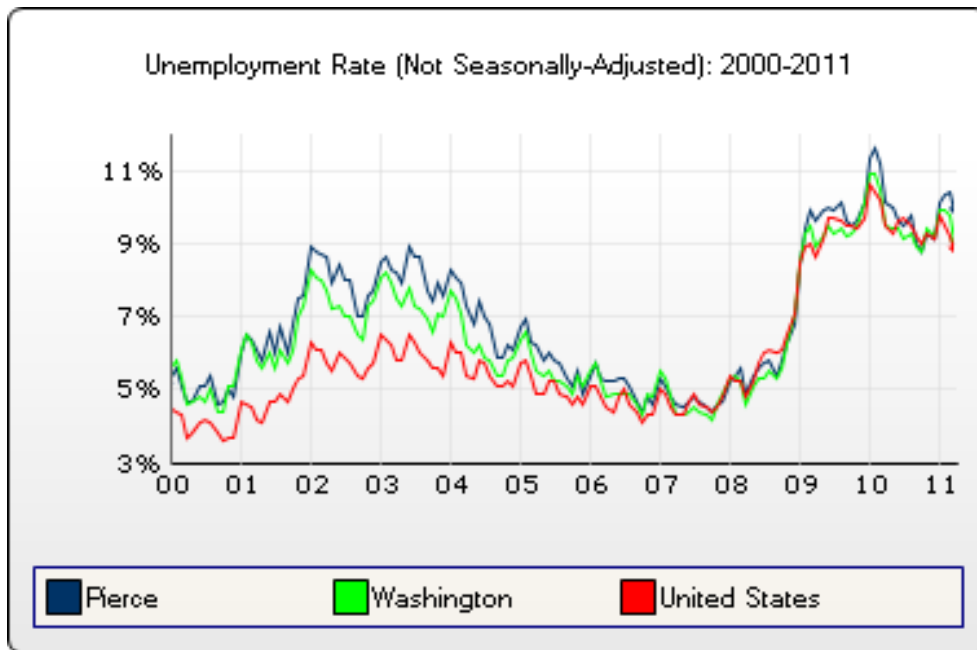
³ *The Importance of Stable Housing for Children and Families*, Greater Minnesota Housing Fund

2010 Pierce County Statistics

Number of families 202,765
Median Annual income \$51,399
Cost burdened owners 37%
Cost burdened renters 48%
Below poverty line 9%⁴
Number of Homeless individuals 2,083
Number of Homeless families 348⁵

Economic Factors

Currently, the economy is growing, but not fast enough to add a significant number of jobs. According to the Washington State Employment Security Department, Pierce County reported a net loss of 200 jobs from April 2010 to April 2011, and a 9.8% unemployment rate in April 2011, compared to 8.9% for Washington State and 8.7% nationally.⁶



Washington State Employment Security Department

Foreclosure

According to RealtyTrac, there are currently 966 homes in foreclosure in Puyallup. In May 2011, one in every 445 housing units received a foreclosure filing. Nationally, about 10% of foreclosures lead directly to homelessness. Roughly 40% of families facing eviction due to foreclosure are renters.⁷

⁴ Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2010 Affordable Housing Assessment Report (AHAR)

⁵ Pierce County Point In Time Count-2011

⁶ Washington State Employment Security Department; non-seasonally adjusted unemployment numbers.

⁷ National Coalition for the Homeless, "Foreclosure to Homelessness", 6/09

Access to and Limitations of Healthcare

For households struggling to pay the rent, a serious illness or disability can start a downward spiral into homelessness, beginning with a lost job, depletion of savings to pay for care, and eventual eviction. A third of individuals in poverty have no health insurance of any kind.⁸ The coverage held by many would not carry them through a catastrophic illness.

Individuals experiencing homelessness are more likely to access costly emergency health care services, which often do not lead to lasting solutions to medical problems. Those experiencing homelessness spend an average of 4 days longer per hospital visit than those who are not homeless, costing an extra \$2,414 per hospitalization.⁹

A study of hospital admissions of individuals experiencing homelessness revealed that 1,751 adults were responsible for \$4 million in admission costs. The rate of psychiatric hospitalization was over 100 times that of housed individuals. The researchers conducting the study estimate that the excess cost for treating these individuals was \$3.5 million.¹⁰

Changes to Public Benefits

State assistance to disabled people who are unable to work has been cut by more than two thirds; and increasing numbers of families are reaching the end of their benefit through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program as the Department of Social and Health Services begins enforcing the 60 month limit. Current TANF benefits, when accessed, do not lift families out of poverty.

Homelessness in Puyallup: Defining the Need for Housing Solutions

The need for emergency, transitional, and long-term affordable housing solutions in Puyallup, as in all areas, is difficult to quantify. Some of the factors that make it difficult to assess the number of unsheltered citizens include the transitional nature of the population in need and the reluctance to be identified as "homeless." That noted, the Puyallup Homeless Coalition has engaged in a cooperative effort with several different programs, agencies, and resources to help us understand and define the need as accurately as possible.

According to HUD (Dept. of Housing and Urban Development), the term "homeless" or "homeless individual or homeless person" includes:

1. an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
2. an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is -
 - A. a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
 - B. an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or

⁸ US Census, 2005

⁹ New England Journal of Medicine, 1998

¹⁰ Annals of Internal Medicine 1992. In the last nine years, hospital costs have risen substantially.

- C. a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

2011 Pierce County Point in Time Count

The Homelessness Housing and Assistance Act requires each county to conduct an annual count of homeless persons in Washington State during a 24-hour period. In an effort to make the count comprehensive and as accurate as possible, Pierce County coordinates and mobilizes volunteers throughout the county to assist with the annual Point in Time (PIT) Count. This year, the Puyallup Homeless Coalition organized and conducted the count for the Puyallup and South Hill areas on January 27 and 28.

Puyallup 2011 Point in Time Count:

Sheltered Totals	196
<i>Includes Share & Care House, Helping Hand House, Freezing Nights, and Exodus Housing.</i>	
Unsheltered Totals	24
<i>Includes homeless persons located at volunteer-staffed services, in vehicles, city library, city parks, etc.</i>	
Initial totals	220

Compared to surrounding Pierce County cities, the City of Puyallup’s amount of homelessness is significant:

Municipality	Total Population (2010 US Census estimate)	Number of Homeless	Homeless per capita
Tacoma	198,397	1151*	0.580%
Lakewood	58,163	122*	0.210%
Sumner	9,451	55*	0.582%
Puyallup	37,022	220**	0.590%

* 2010 Point in Time Count

** Preliminary 2011 Point in Time Count

Because of the difficulty in quantifying homelessness, respected methods of extrapolation have been used by other United States cities and counties in order to better understand the need for shelter. Pierce County utilizes the following methodology and recommends its adoption for planning purposes: PIT Count numbers are shown to most accurately represent actual numbers of homeless persons in a year when an industry standard multiplier of 2.2 is applied; the number of persons who are at-risk of becoming homeless can be calculated by applying a multiplier of 3.6.¹¹

¹¹ Extrapolation Methodology for PIT numbers, Pierce County Landscape Assessment, April 2010, page17

Using the Pierce County methodology, we arrive at some sobering numbers:

Initial 2011 Point in Time data: 220

Estimate of total homeless over the course of a year in Puyallup: $220 \times 2.2 = 484$

Estimated total population at significant risk of homelessness: $220 \times 3.6 = 792$

Access Point 4 Housing, Pierce County's centralized intake program for homeless prevention and homeless housing, opened on January 31, 2011. This program was designed, funded and staffed to receive and process 400 requests for assistance per month. Since it opened, it has averaged over 1700 unduplicated requests for assistance per month. In four months, more homeless people have been identified in Pierce County than in the entire 2011 Point in Time Count. This emerging data reminds us that the homeless population is greater than we have been able to measure with the Point in Time methodology.

Puyallup's Homeless Children

The Puyallup School District has reported over 400 homeless students in the 2010-2011 school year. Of this number, approximately **165** are from schools within the city limits of Puyallup. These numbers represent only self-identified students, and no comprehensive count has been done. We know there are students unaccounted for who are too embarrassed to admit they are homeless. Also, this number does not account for siblings in the family who are not yet in school. School District figures are not included in the Point in Time Count results because they use different definitions of homelessness, as dictated by McKinney-Vento Act

The McKinney-Vento Act includes a more comprehensive definition of homelessness. This statute states that the term 'homeless child and youth' means (A) individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence... and (B) includes: (i) children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement; (ii) children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings... (iii) children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings, and (iv) migratory children...who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii). *McKinney-Vento Act sec. 725(2); 42 U.S.C. 11435(2)*.

Across the nation, roughly 39% of the homeless population are children under the age of 18, and 42% of homeless children are under the age of five.¹²

Our community pays a long term price when our children are not appropriately housed. Nationally, about 87% of homeless youth are enrolled in school, and only 77% attend school regularly. According to the Institute for Children and Poverty, homeless children are 9 times more likely to repeat a grade, 4

¹² National Alliance to End Homelessness, "What We Know about Housing and Homelessness", 2009

times more likely to drop out of school, and 3 times more likely to be placed in special education programs. Less than 16% of eligible preschool age homeless children are enrolled in preschool programs. 20% of preschool aged homeless children have emotional problems serious enough to require professional care. 47% of school aged children suffer anxiety, depression and social withdrawal.¹³

Homeless children get sick twice as often as other children do. They have twice as many ear infections, four times as many asthma attacks, five times more stomach problems, six times as many speech problems, and twice as many hospitalizations. Nearly 20% of homeless children lack a regular source of medical care, and 15% rely solely on hospital emergency rooms. Homeless children are twice as likely to experience hunger and 4 times as likely to have delayed development. Roughly 60% of homeless families do not have health insurance needed to adequately care for their children.¹⁴ Can Puyallup afford not to appropriately house its homeless children and families?

What Resources are Available: Current Shelter Capacity in Puyallup

Access Point for Housing

Associated Ministries, with support from Pierce County and Building Changes recently opened Access Point 4 Housing, the centralized intake for homeless prevention and housing programs in Pierce County. Anyone at risk of or experiencing homelessness can now call one number to be screened for eligibility, assessed for their unique needs, and referred to the most appropriate housing provider. To support the systems change initiative that Access Point for Housing provides, all homeless housing providers, except shelters and domestic violence agencies that have immediate entry, are required to take all their clients from Access Point 4 Housing if receiving funding from Pierce County, City of Tacoma, City of Lakewood, United Way of Pierce County, Greater Tacoma Community Foundation and Building Changes.

An ounce of prevention: Homeless Prevention

Preventing homelessness by helping individuals and families stay housed where they are currently residing is usually the least costly shelter solution. This is most often done through providing one month of rent or utility assistance, but organizations are starting to consider more innovative and flexible ways to utilize this cost effective intervention.

In 2011, Associated Ministries was awarded \$250,000 in homelessness prevention funding to distribute to those in need in Pierce County. Helping Hand House provided \$150,000 in homeless prevention funding to households in need in 2010. While it is not a central part of their programs, St. Francis House provided approximately \$6200 in rent and utility assistance to East Pierce County residents in 2010. Love Inc., a program started in 2002, facilitates the screening and request process for funds earmarked by participating churches for at risk families. They provided \$84,000 in homeless prevention assistance to households in 2010.

Help for neighbors in crisis: Emergency Shelter

¹³ The National Coalition for the Homeless, Sept. 2009, "Education of Homeless Children and Youth"

¹⁴ The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, "Key Data Concerning Homeless Persons in America: July, 2004, National Coalition for the Homeless, Factsheet #12, June, 2008

Emergency shelter is typically defined as any housing or shelter with a stay of up to 90 days. Beyond that, agencies have the flexibility to design a program that is appropriate given the resources available to them and the populations they serve. One primary challenge for these emergency housing programs is that there are often no permanent or transitional housing options available for their clients. This creates a backlog of people in critical states of need.

- Associated Ministries' Open Hearth Ministries offers immediate emergency housing for families who qualify. This local volunteer run organization has sheltered families in hotels for a limited number of days while working to connect them with a longer-term shelter option and other services. Open Hearth Ministries sheltered 142 families in 2010, totaling 428 individuals and 2,068 bed nights (bed nights = individuals x nights of shelter).
- The Freezing Nights program provides shelter for homeless adults during the coldest months of the year. The program operates between November 1st and April 1st at rotating sites currently hosted by nine local churches. It is the only emergency shelter for single adults in Puyallup. In the 2010-2011 season, an average of 25 adults took shelter in program each evening. The program provided 3,645 bed nights last winter (compared to 1,973 bed nights the winter before). Total capacity of the volunteer program varies by host site, with smaller churches at or near capacity for overnight guests. Between April 1st and October 31st, there is no emergency shelter for adults in the City of Puyallup.
- Phoenix Housing Network, of Catholic Community Services, offers emergency shelter for five families at various church sites each week. While this program serves all of East Pierce County, it operates four weeks per year at churches within Puyallup City Limits.
- Helping Hand House offers five units of single family emergency housing and basic needs for families in Puyallup. This program also provides case management, financial literacy and life skills classes.
- Share and Care House, Independence House of Puyallup has two units available at any given time for emergency housing for families with case management services.

Time to get back on their feet: Transitional Housing

Transitional housing is subsidized housing with supportive services for up to 24 months. Households typically pay 30% of their income toward rent, and participate in case management and life skills classes that are aimed at helping the household achieve self-sufficiency.

- Exodus Housing has 12 units of transitional housing with supportive services for families impacted by domestic violence.
- Helping Hand House has 7 units within city limits. They provide single-family housing and intensive case management for up to 24 months with strong emphasis on financial literacy, life-skills, and workforce training.
- The YWCA provides 14 units of housing for victims of domestic violence.

There are currently no transitional housing programs *for individual adults* in the City of Puyallup.

An innovative new strategy: Rapid Re-housing

Rapid Re-housing minimizes the impacts of homelessness on families experiencing temporary hardships. Rapid re-housing typically provides move in costs, a graduated rent subsidy and case management to help families re-establish themselves in their own housing as quickly as possible.

- Helping Hand House currently offers 8 units of Rapid Re-housing in Puyallup, which allow families to move into housing leased in their name. The purpose of the Helping Hand House Rapid Re-housing Program is to provide temporary, tailored financial and housing stabilization services that will enable families to quickly become self-sufficient in their own housing. This program is for families with minimal barriers to success, and Helping Hand House targets this program for families where the heads of household are ready to become quickly employed and are able to manage a household.
- Share and Care House's Homeward Bound program, new in 2010, provided a unique rapid re-housing housing program for 11 families in the past year. This program works with landlords to establish families into rental units under their own lease while Share and Care House, Homeward Bound assists with the rent payment. Over time, these families work with a caseworker to gradually live independently

Permanent Supportive Housing

According to the Corporation for Supportive Housing:

Permanent supportive housing offers stable, long-term housing with services that work for individuals and families who are not only homeless, but who also have serious and persistent issues that include: substance use, mental illness, and HIV/AIDS. A limited but growing body of research suggests that stabilizing individuals in supportive housing can reduce their use of expensive public crisis services such as emergency rooms, psychiatric hospitals, jails and substance use treatment programs. Furthermore, these cost decreases may offset a portion of permanent supportive housing expenditures, thus making investment in this housing model attractive to policymakers and others who seek to maximize the value of public resources invested in programs aimed at reducing and eliminating homelessness.¹⁵

Developing supportive housing for un-housed people in Pierce County is most economical and has the best chance of reducing a person's need for emergency services. The cost of maintaining a person in a homeless state is more expensive than solving his/her homelessness. Emergency shelter cost taxpayers \$68 per day in 2008 and it costs \$65 daily to incarcerate people in the Puyallup jail.

Permanent supportive housing for individuals with chronic mental illness or substance abuse costs from \$20-38 per day.¹⁶ Nationally, \$35,000 to \$150,000 is spent per year on emergency rooms, police, fire, public defenders, etc. for a chronically homeless person. In comparison, \$13,000 to \$25,000 per year is spent on supportive housing that creates personal stability and a trajectory toward self sufficiency and recovery.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Supportive Housing and the Positive Impacts on Public Care Systems*, Corporation for Supportive Housing <http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageID=3337>

¹⁶ "The Road Home: Ending Chronic Homelessness – A Ten Year Plan for Pierce County"

¹⁷ "The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, "Key Data Concerning Homeless Persons in America: July, 2004, National Coalition for the Homeless, Factsheet #12, June, 2008

Independence House for Men, a Puyallup program being developed by Share and Care House, will provide ten beds of permanent supportive housing for men who are chronically homeless with disabilities.

Falling Short: How Current Resources Fail to Meet the Need

Using all of these sources – many which are restricted to serving very specific populations and most of which remain full to capacity – we can provide a total number of shelter beds available on any given night in Puyallup:

Program	November - March beds available per night	April - October beds available per night
Freezing Nights	30	0
YWCA*	28	28
Helping Hand House- Emergency**	15	15
Share and Care House-Shelter **	6	6
Open Hearth****	6	6
Phoenix Housing***	3	3
Helping Hand House- Rapid Re-Housing**	24	24
Share and Care House-Rapid-Rehousing**	21	21
Exodus Housing**	36	36
Helping Hand House- Transitional**	21	21
Total Beds available in Puyallup	190	160

* = number of units in city limits x 2 to estimate individuals sheltered per night

** = number of units in city limits x 3 to estimate individuals sheltered per night

*** = attributed 20% of capacity to serving Puyallup as agency serves Pierce County as a whole

**** = average number served per night in 2010

Using the Point in Time Count Data and industry standard multiplier, there are roughly **484** people (including families with children) seeking shelter over the course of a year in the City of Puyallup. In the coldest months of the year, shelter is available for 190 of the people experiencing homelessness which leaves 294 without a place to stay. During the months when Freezing Nights is inactive, 324 individuals can be presumed to be doubled up with another household or without shelter.

Shelter and housing capacity in Puyallup

Need	Capacity	Gap
484	190	294

Current Municipal Funding Level comparison

Jurisdiction	Population (2010 US Census estimate)	Number Homeless	Homeless per Capita	General Fund Allocation to Homelessness	Amount Spent per Homeless Person	Total General Fund	Homeless Spending as % of General Fund	
Tacoma	198,397	1151*	0.580%	500,333	435	199,286,182	0.251%	2011
Lakewood***	58,163	122*	0.210%	52,100	427	35,600,000	0.146%	2009
Sumner	9,451	55*	0.582%	30,000	545	8,146,805	0.368%	2011
Puyallup	37,022	220**	0.590%	32,500	147	36,293,610	0.090%	2011

* 2010 Point in Time Count

** Preliminary 2011 Point in Time Count

***The City of Lakewood sets aside 1% of their general fund for human/social service programs. \$52,100 of that allocation went to homeless programs in 2009.

Looking long term: Affordable Housing in Puyallup

In order to end homelessness, there must be enough housing that is affordable to people at all income levels.

Affordable housing means a homeowner pays no more than 30% of income on monthly mortgage payments, insurance, taxes, and utilities; and a renter pays no more than 30% of income on rent and utilities.¹⁸

A limited amount of subsidized housing for those who cannot afford to pay market rate rent is available in Puyallup. A total of 409 units for senior citizens are offered by SHAG, Salvation Army, Argus Manor, and Rainier View Apartments. Pioneer Court offers 17 units for disabled citizens, and Mi Casa offers 9 units for families. In addition, the Pierce County Housing Authority administers a total of 379 HUD Housing Choice Vouchers in Puyallup, 15% of their total allocation for all of Pierce County.

¹⁸ Definition of Affordable Housing – 2010 Affordable Housing Report

Proposals: A Multi-Faceted Response

Puyallup recognizes that a humanitarian crisis requires a reordering of budgetary and policy priorities. Aside from its function as a financial and policy statement, the city budget is a moral document affecting the lives of city residents. As a moral document, the city budget portrays the community's priorities, values, and social vision. Fiscal responsibility should not preclude our homeless neighbors' right to dwell in appropriate shelter. Perhaps our civic strength can be measured in part by our capacity to care for our weakest members.

All of us, homeless and housed, share Puyallup together. Solutions involve all of us working together. The issues of homelessness facing our community can only be solved when government, civic groups, non-profit providers, and religious organizations collaborate. With additional city funding commensurate with our current need and our surrounding communities' levels of support, partnerships with local non-profit service providers can begin to meet the objective of ending homelessness in our community.

The proposals in this plan will succeed if the Puyallup City Council enacts the following:

- In addition to the \$55,000 currently allocated toward "Community Request" funding for human/social services, increase the annual social service funding allocation over a four-year period to an amount equal to 1% of the general fund, and maintain that level of funding on an annual basis thereafter.
- Creates a Citizen Advisory Board to develop recommended funding allocations from these set-aside monies for homelessness/social services (including funds for grant-writing) for consideration by the City Council.
- Prioritizes cooperation with the regional Pierce County Plan to End Homelessness.
- Increases collaboration with local schools, faith based communities, and non-profit service providers within Puyallup to promote best practices for ending homelessness.

Our work is guided by federal legislation (the Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transitional to Housing or HEARTH Act) that directs local continuums of care to make prevention and rapid re-housing the primary tools for ending homelessness rather than emergency shelter and transitional housing which have been the cornerstone of our homeless system for decades. The legislation sets a system-wide goal of limiting interim housing stays to 30 days before placement in permanent housing. Essentially, we are working to shift our primary focus away from time-limited transitional housing with supportive services to permanent housing with tailored, transitional services.

While we are aware that best practices are moving away from temporary housing options for people experiencing homelessness, we are also aware that having no true emergency shelter options in Puyallup has created an acute housing issue that we would also like to address with our plan. In order to ensure that the vast majority of funding is set aside for permanent solutions for people coming out of homelessness, it is our intention to look for a very low cost option for emergency beds for a limited amount of time while the main work of this plan is implemented. The intent is to use no more than 15% of the budget to assist with emergency housing, ensuring the vast majority is invested in permanent solutions supported by national research, and then convert either that space, or the funding to more permanent options once it is no longer needed. As part of our strategy proposal, we would partner with

Pierce County and their providers to assure the addition of emergency shelter beds within Puyallup would not create a net increase in the amount of emergency shelter beds in Pierce County as a whole.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Objective: Reduce number of individuals and/or families at risk of becoming homeless.

Strategies:

1. Increase funding support for existing or newly developed prevention programs: Access Point 4 Housing Prevention Fund dollars targeted to Puyallup; Helping Hand House; Love Inc. and St. Francis House.
2. Increase supportive case management through existing providers: Associated Ministries' Open Hearth; Good Samaritan Mental Health Services; Greater Lakes Mental Health Services; Homeward Bound; and Share & Care House
3. Track the efficacy of the prevention strategies

EMERGENCY SHELTER AND TIME LIMITED HOUSING

Objective: Strengthen capacity where practicable through existing organizations currently providing emergency shelter in Puyallup for individuals and families.

Strategies:

1. Potential existing partner providers include: Associated Ministries' Open Hearth Family Emergency Shelter Program, Catholic Community Services' Phoenix Housing; Freezing Nights, and Helping Hand House.
2. Explore partnerships for developing flexible shelter options that are compatible with the Pierce County Integrated Plan to End Homelessness within the city limits through acquisition of property or the development of new facilities.
3. Explore partnerships with the city or private partners to establish a centralized location for the Freezing Nights Program as a temporary, emergency shelter location compatible with the Pierce County Integrated Plan to End Homelessness.
4. Increase supportive case management through existing providers. (See #2 under Homelessness Prevention.)

RAPID RE-HOUSING

Objective: Increase capacity to move individuals and/or families from homelessness to permanent housing,

Strategies:

1. Partner with existing providers to increase capacity to assist with rapid re-housing: Associated Ministries' Open Hearth, Exodus Housing; Helping Hand House; Share and Care House.
2. Set a community goal to reduce average time housed in emergency shelter to no more than 30 days.
3. Increase supportive case management through existing providers (See #2 under Homelessness Prevention.)

ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Objective: Engage Systems Designed to Increase Economic and Educational Opportunities

Strategies:

1. Support Helping Hand House in establishing a Work Source site that would serve programs in East Pierce County, including Puyallup.
2. Create/enhance partnerships with the Puyallup School District and community and technical colleges to improve educational opportunities for adults and children experiencing homelessness.

SUPPORTIVE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Objective: Increase supply of affordable housing and permanent supportive housing options.

Strategies:

1. Develop a partnership between the Puyallup School District and Helping Hand House to provide homeless families with children a permanent supportive housing option.
2. The City Council directs the City Planning Commission to review and recommend zoning and/or land use incentives to encourage development of affordable housing stock within the city per HB 2984. Possible options include:
 - i. Density Bonus: Allow housing developers to develop housing at a greater density (units per acre) than current zoning allows
 - ii. Height and Bulk Bonus: Allow housing developers to develop housing at a greater height, and greater coverage of property area
 - iii. Parking Reductions: Allow housing developers to develop housing with less parking than required by current code, if located in proximity to public transportation

- iv. Fee Waivers or Exemptions: Waive specific connection charges or impact fees where practical. For example, affordable housing targeted to seniors may be allowed to waive school impact fees.
 - v. Expedited Permitting: Projects which include affordable housing, and meet other prescriptive standards for development are allowed to be processed and approved much faster than typical permit applications
3. The City Council enacts an Affordable Housing Ordinance in line with the Pierce County Regional Council affordable housing goals, requiring 25% of housing stock should be affordable housing.
 4. Increase permanent supportive housing options through existing partners such as Share and Care House and Mi Casa, as well as new partners with experience providing permanent supportive housing for people with disabilities.

For questions, please contact us:

Puyallup Homeless Coalition email - puyalluphomelesscoalition@gmail.com

Puyallup Homeless Coalition Phone Number - 253-845-2897 x. 777