

## Alaska's Plan to End Long Term Homelessness 2017 Progress Report

The Alaska Council on the Homeless adopted *Alaska's Plan to End Long Term Homelessness* (Plan) in October 2015. The Plan is designed as a framework for communities to utilize in their local planning efforts around issues of homelessness. It is organized around five priorities; housing development, supportive services, education, engagement and policy, and data. Within each priority are recommended strategies for communities and state agencies to guide progress in addressing a specific priority.

This progress report covers the second year of the Plan from July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017 with accomplishments reported by communities and state agencies, including the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Department of Corrections (DOC), Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), Department of Public Safety (DPS), Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA).

**Priority 1: Housing Development** *Every Alaskan should have access to an affordable, accommodating, and safe place to call home.*

### Strategy: Expand Housing Options (Construction/Rehab/Rental Assistance)

- AHFC's Greater Opportunities for Affordable Living (GOAL) program provided funding to construct 209 rental units for low-income Alaskans. Of those units, 35% were set-aside for homeless or disabled Alaskans.
- Nome's Local Tribe, Nome Eskimo Community, utilized a portion of their Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) funding to develop a new rental assistance program for tribal members.
- The Fairbanks Rescue Mission, in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, began construction of the Joshua Community Projects, a ten unit supportive housing program.
- Construction in Kodiak by Spruce Cape Homes will result in 20 new units with some units designated for special needs populations and persons experiencing homelessness.
- Anchorage developed a family housing program with the support of private funding that provides 6 months of rental assistance and 12 months of case management. In FY17, 30 families (108 persons) were supported through this new program.
- Valley Residential Services began the planning and financing stages for three new affordable housing projects in the Mat-Su Valley.
- Volunteers of America developed 40 units of affordable housing in Juneau through Phase II of Terraces at Lawson Creek. 14 of those units are dedicated to persons with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness.

- Trillium Landing Seniors Housing was developed in Juneau in FY17 which will provide 9 fair market rentals and 40 reduced income rentals.
- The City and Borough of Juneau awarded 12 grants to homeowners through the Accessory Apartment Grant Program and 6 loans to Alaskans needing down payment assistance through the Mobile Home Down Payment Assistance Program.
- AHFC awarded 32 sponsor-based rental assistance vouchers to the Juneau Housing First Collaborative's Forget Me Not Manor project.

**Strategy: Increase Pool of Operating Support to Preserve Existing Housing Stock**

- Nome Eskimo Community utilizes a portion of their NAHASDA funding to support tribal member home renovations.
- The AMHTA and AHFC provided operating support to assist 277 households in permanent housing across the state through the Special Needs Housing Grant Program.

**Strategy: Increase Number of Units Available to Priority Populations**

- Blood-N-Fire Ministries in the Mat-Su Valley added 23 units for men and 11 units for women experiencing homelessness.
- MY House in the Mat-Su Valley has added two housing projects for youth and young adults that provide assistance for 7 men and 5 women.
- Gastineau Human Services in Juneau expanded their transitional housing program for men.
- 20 new units of permanent supportive housing were made available in Anchorage through RurAL CAP's 325 East Third Avenue property.
- Construction of Juneau Housing First Collaborative's Forget Me Not Manor was mostly completed in FY17 which will result in 32 beds of permanent supportive housing.
- 100 families per month received rental assistance from AHFC, in partnership with DOC, through the Returning Home Program which provides assistance for persons released from Corrections.
- DHSS and AHFC provided rental assistance for 150 families per month who were transitioning into housing from homelessness or institutional settings through the Moving Home Housing Program.
- AHFC and DHSS Office of Children's Services provided rental assistance to 20 youth, aged 18-24, per month who were transitioning out of foster care.

- 185 families per month were served through AHFC's Empowering Choice Housing Program which provides rental assistance to families displaced due to domestic violence and sexual assault.
- AHFC, in partnership with the Veteran's Administration, administered 271 rental assistance vouchers for veterans experiencing homelessness through the Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program.
- The Kenai Peninsula saw the development of a 6-bed detox center, the opening of Indigo House which provides 10 beds for individuals wishing to be clean of addictions, 9 beds for women exiting prison or rehab through Freedom House, and 4 beds through the Nuk'it'un transitional housing for men exiting corrections, rehab, or working on outpatient drug and alcohol problems.

**Priority 2: Supportive Services** *Individuals and families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness should have access to all eligible services and supports.*

#### **Strategy: Increase Funding and Sources of Supportive Services in Underserved Areas**

- Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center increased their total number of available beds and can now house 26.
- Juneau Housing First Collaborative, with partners St. Vincent de Paul and Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWARE), applied for supportive services and funding for a pilot scattered site housing first project through the Balance of State Continuum of Care program which is expected to support 6 units to begin operation in FY18.
- Juneau Alliance for Mental Health, Inc. developed a health care clinic for case management, behavioral health, and primary care services in coordination with the Juneau Housing First Collaborative's Forget Me Not Manor to begin providing services in FY18.
- The AMHTA and DOC continue to partner on the Discharge Incentive Grant Program that provides housing placement and services support to individuals re-entering the community.

#### **Strategy: Increase Income and Employment Opportunities for Persons in Transition**

- Love INC of the Kenai Peninsula assists people in restoring their lapsed certification, licenses, and training in order to gain employment.

#### **Strategy: Increase Outreach Services**

- NeighborWorks Alaska employed a part-time mobile outreach assessor to collect Coordinated Entry data for clients who would not typically access services at local service agencies. That data was entered into HMIS and helped clients into housing placements.

- Juneau increased street outreach efforts in preparation for the Forget Me Not Manor opening. This included additional case management and completion of housing assessments and surveys for Juneau's unsheltered homeless population. Activities were partially funded by the Juneau Community Foundation and the AMHTA.

#### **Strategy: Maintain and/or Expand Emergency Lodging Options as Needed**

- Anchorage's Emergency Cold Weather Shelter program continued to provide shelter for up to 24 families per night from October to May through the support of 9 churches and numerous volunteers.
- In FY17, The City and Borough of Juneau's (CBJ) Homeless Taskforce recommended that the CBJ work with emergency shelter operators to set-up a winter warming shelter from November - April on nights when temperatures drop below 32 degrees.
- The DPS continued to provide funding to support emergency shelters across the state that provide assistance for Alaskans fleeing domestic violence and sexual assault through their partnership with the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.
- The AMHTA and AHFC supported 17 emergency shelters statewide through the Basic Homeless Assistance Program.

***Priority 3: Education, Engagement, and Policy Community and statewide education, engagement, and policy efforts among stakeholders and interested parties is central to addressing issues of homelessness.***

#### **Strategy: Landlord Engagement, Education, and Support**

- In Fairbanks, the Salvation Army, Restore Inc., the Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living, and a number of local veteran's services are actively engaging and recruiting landlords to participate in voucher driven housing programs.
- The United Way of Anchorage secured resources in FY17 to fund a landlord liaison program in the community.
- The Mat-Su Coalition on Housing and Homelessness hosted a landlord appreciation luncheon for 24 local, private landlords where they provided information about services available, answered landlord questions and concerns, and discussed ways to partner in efforts to prevent homelessness and rapidly re-house those who become homeless.

#### **Strategy: Encourage Housing Policy at the Local Level**

- At the request of the City of Nome, The Nome Emergency Shelter Team (NEST) is leading a taskforce on the increasing number of homeless Alaskans in their community.

- The City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) hired a Chief Housing Officer in FY17 who staffed the CBJ Homeless Task Force. In collaboration with local providers, the Juneau Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, Juneau Police Department, and Downtown Business Association, the task force provided recommendations to the CBJ on solutions to address street homelessness.
- The AMHTA partnered with the Municipality of Anchorage and City of Fairbanks to create Housing and Homeless Coordinator Positions within the Mayor's office to lead efforts to reduce homelessness.

**Strategy: Support Local Housing Organizations to Coordinate Planning Services and Reporting**

- The Seward Peninsula Housing Coalition is a newly developing housing coalition that brings together local non-profits, the regional housing authority, and local tribes to collaboratively address housing issues in the region.
- The Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness is the lead orchestrator for the community's Coordinated Entry System which coordinates housing and supportive services for clients prioritized on one of the Coordinated Entry lists. Since implementation in January 2017, 99 single adults, 183 families, and 34 transition-age-youth have been housed.
- The Juneau Housing and Homeless Coalition submitted their first collaborative application for funding to the City and Borough of Juneau Social Services Block Grants and the Juneau Community Foundation with funding awarded at nearly requested levels.
- The AMHTA and AHFC continue to support the Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness executive director position to provide statewide education, engagement, and policy efforts on issues of housing and homelessness.

**Strategy: Expand Outreach on Use of Alaska Housing Locator**

- The Mat-Su Valley's coordinated group of housing and service programs provide staff training on the use of the Alaska Housing Locator and find it to be an effective tool in guiding clients to resources.

**Priority 4: Prevention** *Prevention support is essential to mitigating episodes of homelessness.*

**Strategy: Eliminate Discharge to Homeless Shelters and the Streets from State Institutions**

- The Brother Francis Shelter in Anchorage implemented a respite care program for clients newly discharged from medical treatment which provides space for clients to recuperate from acute physical ailments or injury on a short-term basis.

### **Strategy: Improve Outreach and Linkages to Housing Resources and Services**

- Anchorage hired a part-time mobile outreach assessor that regularly went to shelters not using HMIS, homeless camps, and the public library to identify clients not connected to HMIS or supportive services.
- The Mat-Su Health Foundation, in partnership with the Mat-Su Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, has hired a full time case manager who provides outreach into correctional facilities and helps returning citizens navigate the reentry process.
- Communities throughout the state hosted a Project Homeless Connect event in January to connect persons experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness with service providers and housing assistance.
- DOC is updating their inmate database to include a homeless screen which will help identify and track individuals in need of housing and will increase the coordination of care services prior to release into the community.
- The Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness in partnership with stakeholders and service providers designed and launched the Anchorage Coordinated Entry System.
- The Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, in coordination with AHFC and housing and homeless leadership throughout Alaska, began the design phase of the Balance of State Coordinated Entry System with implementation expected in FY18.

### **Strategy: Maintain Centralized Pool of Prevention Resources**

- Brother Francis Shelter in Kodiak serves as the centralized location for prevention resources for their community with approximately 96% of Kodiak's prevention resources administered through that organization.
- The Juneau Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, in coordination with partner agencies, maintains a centralized pool of prevention resources from state and local funding sources.
- Over 1,800 households were provided prevention assistance by 24 organizations statewide through AHFC's Basic Homeless Assistance Program in partnership with the AMHTA.

**Priority 5: Data** *Timely and accurate data is essential to making housing and homeless policy decisions.*

### **Strategy: Expand Homeless Service Provider HMIS Coverage**

- The Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, and AHFC have partnered with the Institute for Community Alliances,

HMIS System Administrator, to expand HMIS utilization. The implementation of coordinated entry, data sharing, and increased outreach efforts resulted in 7 new organizations reporting data in HMIS in FY17.

**Strategy: Develop Strategies for Gathering Homeless Data from Organizations Not Connected to HMIS**

- The Nome Emergency Shelter Team (NEST) and Seward Peninsula Housing Coalition are working towards engaging other rural hubs and regions in the annual Point-in-Time Count (PIT) and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- To encourage robust data collection and reporting efforts, Love INC of the Kenai Peninsula provides staffing support to partner agencies that are limited in capacity and resources to fully participate in the HMIS.
- The DEED gathers information from school districts throughout the state to generate an annual report on homeless children and youth.
- The Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, and AHFC continue to gather homeless data from organizations not connected to the system through the annual Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Chart.

**Strategy: Coordinate Community Prevention Services**

- Community prevention services are coordinated in some communities through AHFC's Basic Homeless Assistance Program.