

# Destination: Home

A COORDINATED APPROACH TO HOUSING AND  
HOUSELESSNESS IN THE MID-COLUMBIA REGION

---

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN, 2022-2027



# Background

To date, there have been multiple, localized efforts to collaborate on work to prevent and end homelessness. However, this work has yet to be thoroughly coordinated across the five-county Mid-Columbia region, resulting in fragmentation across communities.

That's why the Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative was founded.

- Rising rates of housing insecurity and homelessness in Oregon and Washington
- Housing supply has lagged while demand has grown
- Investors have begun buying up more single-family homes
- Rents have sky-rocketed
- Homelessness has become more complex—chronically homeless population has greater needs
- Disproportionate impacts on traditionally underserved communities



# Collaborative Planning Participants

Mid-Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC) and Washington Gorge Action Programs (WAGAP), the lead homeless service providers in the Mid-Columbia region, convened the Collaborative beginning in early 2022.



White Salmon Valley Community Library



White Salmon Valley School District



Youth Empowerment Shelter



City of Bingen



City of Goldendale



City of Hood River and Hood River Homeless Stakeholders Coalition



City of Stevenson



City of The Dalles and The Dalles Unhoused Taskforce



City of White Salmon



Columbia Gorge Education Service District



Columbia Gorge Health Council/Bridges to Health Pathways Program



Father's House



GEM Immigrant Relief Fund



Guided Path Shelter



HAVEN from Domestic and Sexual Violence



Helping Hands Against Violence



Hood River County



Hood River County Library District



Hood River Shelter Services



# Collaborative Planning Participants

Nearly 40 organizations, plus individuals with lived experience with houselessness, helped build the foundation for the Collaborative and create a strategic plan between January – September, 2022.

Beginning July 1, 2022, HB 4123 (Oregon) funds supported launch of Office of Housing Stabilization to help coordinate this effort.



Klickitat County Homeless Housing Council



Mid-Columbia Community Action Council



Mid-Columbia Center for Living



Mid-Columbia Housing Authority



Mid-Columbia Economic Development District



Mid-Columbia Medical Center



Nch'i Wana Housing



One Community Health



Oregon Human Development Corporation



PacificSource / Columbia Gorge Coordination Care Organization



Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital



Wasco County Sheriff's Office



Sherman County Sheriff's Office



Skamania County Homeless Housing Council



St. Paul's Episcopal Church | The Dalles



The Next Door, Inc.



Wasco County



Washington Gorge Action Programs



# Vision

The Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative envisions a region with equitable opportunities and support, where everyone who needs stable housing can find and afford it—especially communities who have faced disproportionate barriers to housing—so everyone can achieve the best quality of life possible.



# Mission

Through collaboration and advocacy, we work to reduce homelessness in the Gorge by expanding housing capacity and ensuring supportive services are provided in culturally affirming ways that uphold human dignity.



# Values

**Compassion and humanity** are at the core of our work. As a collaborative, we recognize the hardships that houseless community members experience and the common humanity we all share, regardless of our housing status.

We value **collaboration and partnership**; working together helps us provide greater support to houseless and unstably housed community members.

**Advocacy** allows us to do more to support the vulnerable populations we serve when we champion strategic investments, projects, and policy changes.

We elevate **diversity, equity, and lived experience**. We cannot do this work without acknowledging the disproportionate barriers the housing crisis has created for communities of color and other traditionally marginalized populations. We cannot effectively advocate for solutions without lifting up the voices of those who are or have been houseless.

We value **tenacity and perseverance**. Houselessness is a complex issue that cannot be solved overnight; we acknowledge that this work requires visionary leadership and resilience.



# Equity Statement

## Owning our History

The Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative is aware that housing inequities are rooted in our country's history. When colonizers displaced the first people of these lands, a base of racial and other inequities was built for future generations who call this place home. Our Collaborative recognizes not every person is born with the same opportunities to succeed, and because we care about people and our human rights, we must adjust our work to help solve these disparities. Further, we know each of us holds onto beliefs about people that are biased, flawed, and need to be challenged in a healthy and just way.

## Committing to Equity

We know our differences in race, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, language, skin color, disability, family or marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, physical or mental ability, traumas, politics, religion, socio-economic status, veteran status, and other identities make each of us unique and valuable members of our community. We believe basic human rights include equitable access to safe and easy to afford housing, and other tools that help people get into and stay in housing: health care, education, living wage jobs, social services, and more. We also believe inclusion is key to helping all people in our community to feel valued and have a sense they belong. As a Collaborative, we commit to equity by working with partners in our region to engage fully in efforts to end poverty and homelessness. To achieve equity in our housing work, we will:

- Find and address root cause(s) of inequity, in our work and our own lives
- Improve housing systems where personal identities predict inequitable outcomes
- Use data to drive decisions and focus resources so equity is not just a concept, but a practice
- Include the voices of people who are or have been houseless, with a focus on communities of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC)





# Strategic Plan

## Four key goal areas:

- Shelter
- Services
- Housing
- Advocacy



# Goal Area 1: Shelter

When someone becomes houseless, having a safe place to go matters. So do services that help people get back into housing quickly. We must make sure shelters in our area have the funding they need to keep their doors open. We can also set shelter guests up for more success if we help cover the costs for them to find housing again. Most importantly, we should give them other tools they need to stay housed.

## Strategic Priorities:

- ❑ Build better systems to coordinate shelter placements and services that help end houselessness
- ❑ Make sure our region has enough funding to provide shelter, treat shelter staff well, and help shelter guests find housing quickly



## Goal Area 2: Services

Tools that enhance people's overall way of life make them more likely to find housing, and to avoid being houseless again. Those resources could relate to housing—like help paying rent. Or they could address other needs—like job training, affordable childcare, a reliable way to travel to work, mental health services, or paperwork in a language someone knows. To help houseless people get and stay housed, we should expand services in our area. Service providers can also be the most helpful if we respect people's cultures and their experience being houseless.

### Strategic Priorities:

- ❑ Improve access to resources houseless people need by asking them what would be helpful, and by valuing their culture
- ❑ Add more services in our area that help people who need behavioral health care, support after leaving jail or prison, housing that makes it easier to recover after a health event, and resource navigation
- ❑ Make it simpler for service providers to coordinate care



# Goal Area 3: Housing

For too many people in our region, especially people of color and other underserved communities, paying for housing has become very tough. Housing supply does not match demand, investors are buying more homes, and prices are high. Rent is going up. The idea of becoming houseless is getting more familiar for our friends, families, and neighbors. We cannot address houselessness if we do not protect and expand accessible housing that people can afford.

## Strategic Priorities:

- Make it easier to build housing that low-income households can afford— and construct at least 262 affordable, accessible housing units in the five-county Mid-Columbia region by 2027
- Preserve the region’s existing supply of affordable housing
- Help people of color and other underserved populations access housing
- Help leaders and the public understand the need for more affordable, accessible housing



# Goal Area 4: Advocacy

We need support at all levels to do this work. Growing homelessness is not an individual problem. It affects us all. It also costs our economy resources that we could save by working together. We need to address this issue with the help of the public, non-profits, small businesses, community leaders, governments, tribes, landlords, programs that do culturally responsive work, private donors, and people with first-hand experience being homeless.

## Strategic Priorities:

- Explain the need for our work to build community support
- Use data to challenge myths about homelessness and teach people about the impact our region's housing shortage has on all of us
- Advocate for funding and policies that help us make real progress on these issues



# Implementation

We will continue to convene regularly to execute detailed work plans in each of our strategic goal areas, evaluate our progress, and make updates to the plan as new challenges and opportunities arise.

- Support workgroups to act on specific goal areas and strategic priorities
- Fully staff the Mid-Columbia Office of Housing Stabilization and develop/execute workplans
- Coordinate work with relevant partner organizations/governments
- Provide Collaborative members, including lived experience workgroup and House Bill 4123 Advisory Board members, with quarterly reports linked to the goals outlined in strategic plan
- Conduct annual listening sessions to get feedback about headway made on the Collaborative's strategic plan and equity commitments



# Other Key Projects that will Promote Housing Stabilization in our Region

## **Navigation Center**

(Timeline: open by late 2023)

### MCCAC's SERVICE PARTNERS:

Oregon Human Development Corporation

Columbia Gorge Health Council/Bridges to  
Health Pathways Program

Oregon Department of Human Services

Nch'i Wana Housing

Mid-Columbia Center for Living

One Community Health







# Other Key Projects that will Promote Housing Stabilization in our Region

## **Project Turnkey 2.0 Site**

(Timeline: open by early 2023)

Transitional housing units (24-50)

Set-aside units for houseless clients enrolled in partner organizations' programs

Drop-in office/meeting space for Navigation Center and other partners to provide on-site casework



# Questions?

---

# Contact us!

[www.midcolumbiahouselesscollaborative.org](http://www.midcolumbiahouselesscollaborative.org)

---

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF HOUSING STABILIZATION: KELLI HORVATH: [KHORVATH@MCCAC.COM](mailto:KHORVATH@MCCAC.COM)

MCCAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: KENNY LAPOINT: [KLAPOINT@MCCAC.COM](mailto:KLAPOINT@MCCAC.COM)

WAGAP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: LESLIE NARAMORE: [LESLIE@WAGAP.ORG](mailto:LESLIE@WAGAP.ORG)