

Strategic Plan Summary



To build the best community possible for everyone who calls this area home, the Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative works together to address houselessness. From January—September 2022, we wrote a five-year plan on the best ways to do that. Entitled *Destination: Home—A Coordinated Approach to Housing and Houselessness in the Mid-Columbia Region*, the plan serves as a roadmap for action on four key goal areas: shelter, services, housing, and advocacy.

What is the Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative?



Background

Over the years, there have been several, local efforts to work together to prevent and end houselessness. But this work has never been coordinated across all five counties in Oregon and Washington in the Mid-Columbia area. So, in 2022 the region's leading houselessness assistance providers, Mid-Columbia Community Action Council and Washington Gorge Action Programs, founded the Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative. They brought together nearly 40 organizations, local governments, and individuals from Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties to write a five-year strategic plan to improve our response to houselessness. Now, the Collaborative is partnering to make it a reality.

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 houselessness in the Mid-Columbia region by expanding housing capacity and ensuring supportive services are provided in culturally affirming ways that uphold human dignity.

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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.

To do that, we will:

- 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.

To do that, we will:

- 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.

To do that, we will:

- 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 houselessness 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 houseless.

To do that, we will:

- Explain the need for our work to build community support
- Use data to challenge myths about houselessness 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

Questions?

Want to get involved?

Fill out the contact form on our website at:
www.midcolumbiahouselesscollaborative.org

Or email our Director of the Office of Housing
Stabilization at:
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