Alaska Common Ground  
Opportunities and Solutions  
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Working as a catalyst to promote a better life for Alaskans.
Many causes of homelessness; these include:

- Educational failure
- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Mental health illness
- Substance abuse disorders
- Ending of personal relationships
- Job loss
- Incarceration
- A high ACE score (adverse childhood events)
- Housing affordability
Coordinated Crisis Response System

(source: Urban Institute, 2015)
Prevention and Diversion

• This component in our continuum of services is underdeveloped and under resourced.
• We expect to complete soon an analysis of the current need and best practices.
• Our aim, as a community, should be to support people before they experience homelessness.
Emergency Shelter

• This is a necessary component to the continuum of services.
• We don’t have enough emergency shelter capacity at present
• Current shelter capacity would decrease if the current Governor’s budget were enacted.
• Current emergency shelters include services for homeless adults (men and women), families, youth, women and children leaving abusive relationships.
• Our community goal should be to decrease the need for emergency shelter.
Rapid Rehousing

- “Housing First” practice has demonstrated the best results for assisting people out of crisis back to independence.
- Several projects are underway here in Anchorage.
- Path to Independence
- Housing for families (United Way and Catholic Social Services are lead agencies)
- More investment is needed and will be needed every year because crises in peoples’ lives continue to happen.
- There is also evidence that substance abuse treatment is more successful when the individual has stable housing and a home.
- Partners for Progress provides transitional housing and job skills support for people coming out of prison. Recidivism is much less and the programs should be expanded.
PERMANENT Supportive Housing: An Evidence-Based Intervention

For:
- People experiencing chronic homelessness
- People exiting prison with chronic health or mental health conditions
- People with disability health or mental health conditions with housing need

Study after study demonstrates:
- 85-90% of participants achieve housing stability and avoid returns to homelessness
- Improved mental health outcomes, addiction recovery
- Improvements in chronic health conditions
- Fewer emergency department visits and inpatient hospitalizations
- Cost offsets in Medicaid and other publicly funded services
- Reductions in recidivism to prison
Pay for Success is a contracting and financing mechanism that helps governments link payment and performance. Funders:
- Provide upfront funding to cover the cost of service delivery
- Includes philanthropies, mission-driven financial institutions, institutional investors, high-net worth individuals
- Opportunity to make community investments with measurable social return
- Range of repayment—from none to principal plus a modest rate of return

Outcomes payors:
- Government and/or private entities that pay for positive outcomes if they are achieved
- Outcomes predetermined in the PFS contract; performance validated by a third party evaluator
- Measurable impact on key priorities
- Better long-term outcomes
- Rigorous data that demonstrates what solutions work best

* Proposed
New Investments & Innovations

- Formation of Anchorage Homelessness Leadership Council
- Enrollment in national Built for Zero movement
- Federal award for AWAIC Rapid Rehousing for domestic violence victims
- Continued progress on federal demonstration projects:
  - Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project
  - Pay for Success Permanent Supportive Housing
- Continued progress on local pilot projects
  - Providence Foundation Rapid ReHousing Project
  - Path to Independence Rapid Rehousing Project
  - Catholic Social Services Medical Respite Project
  - Municipality Mobile Intervention Team
Private philanthropy investments, a partial list

- Rasmuson Foundation
- Providence Foundation
- Wells Fargo Foundation
- Weidner corporation
- Alaska Native corporations
- Many other businesses and corporations
- Private individuals
- Faith communities
If approved, the funds will be dedicated:

- Funding of alcohol and substance misuse treatment program and facilities.
- Funding of public safety programs that deal with alcohol and substance misuse issues, such as an expansion in the Anchorage Safety Patrol (currently limited to Downtown, Midtown, Mountain View, and Fairview areas) and the Anchorage Safety Center.
Alcohol tax proposal, continued

- **Funding of homelessness services:**
  - additional illegal camp abatement staff and resources (currently not enough staff to have robust program year-round);
  - Legally required storage for personal property seized in camp abatements;
  - Cold-weather sheltering or other emergency system needs (currently not enough capacity for the need).

- **Funding for increased models for mental health support,** such as the Mobile Intervention Team or other programs assisting with substance use and mental health services to relieve police and EMS contacts with people who have behavioral health needs.

- **Financing of more supportive housing and/or rapid rehousing**
Conclusions

Homelessness should be rare, brief and one-time
- Alaska can be a community where this is our norm
- This requires partnership of government (federal, state, and local), private funders, local citizens and faith communities
- Everyone should have a home where that person feels safe

With a home:
- Educational success is better
- Growth and development for our kids is better
- Recidivism to prison is less
- Job success is better
- Community well-being is better (safer trails, etc.)
- Lower community costs for police, healthcare, EMS, prisons, etc.
Conclusions continued

Why is reducing homelessness such an important priority?

- We are at crisis level in most Alaska communities.
- Working as separate systems (healthcare, housing, police, corrections, etc.) isn’t working well enough; we need a much more integrated and wholistic approach.
- Because of the many and varied root causes, virtually none of the challenges in our communities are solvable without addressing the homelessness component to that issue.
- Public health and safety is affected adversely by homelessness (trash, environmental degradation, poor sanitation, relationship to crime)
- Loss of sense of community and experience of less safety
Recommendations

- AHFC services and programs are essential and require even more funding than presently exists.

- More housing creation and maintenance is needed all over our state.

- Mental health services and substance abuse disorder treatment are essential and more services and service locations are needed.

- Medicaid is a key structural component for mental health treatment, substance abuse disorder treatment and for some of the support services needed by the most vulnerable people; if we want to keep them housed. Medicaid coverage should not be reduced.
Recommendations continued

- We have an opportunity to test “pay for performance” in the “Pay for Success” pilot in Anchorage. Initial investment is coming; payor commitments are needed.
The experience of homelessness should be “rare, brief and one-time”

Thank you

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