

WALLA WALLA COUNTY

HOMELESS ACTION PLAN

2022 ANNUAL PLAN UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2022

2022 ACTION PLAN UPDATE

This report is meant to serve as an update to the Walla Walla County Homeless Housing 5-Year Action Plan. This update is occurring in November 2022 and will be reviewed by a workgroup beginning in early 2023. The objectives in Walla Walla County remain the same – to quickly identify and engage all people experiencing homelessness, to prioritize housing for people with the greatest need, to operate an effective and efficient Homeless Crisis Response System, to project impact, and to address racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness. Any questions regarding this plan can be directed towards Sam Jackle, the Homeless Housing System Engagement Coordinator at the Walla Walla County Department of community via email sjackle@co.walla-walla.wa.us or phone (509) 524-2666.

CURRENT CONDITION OF HOMELESSNESS

Current and potential homelessness is a growing concern in Walla Walla County. Not only are the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness growing, the social and economic factors feeding into their housing crises are systemic. The overall lack of affordable housing will take years to address, thus, we need to make data driven decisions on how to best serve our community members who are currently, or may, face a housing crisis. To make data driven decisions, we need to prioritize and work towards establishing real-time, quality data. To date, we have relied upon the annual “Point in Time” (PIT) count required by the Washington State Department of Commerce, locally administered by the Walla Walla County Department of Community Health. The PIT count data collection requirements and definitions were updated in 2017, which limits our ability to compare data across the years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the only a sheltered homeless PIT count was completed for 2020, which excludes a large proportion of individuals experiencing homeless. In addition, the PIT count is a static data point with limitations surrounding the timeframe for and methods of data collection.

YEAR	TOTAL COUNT
2017	168
2018	181
2019	163
2020*	140
2021	149
2022	151

Table 1: *2020 PIT count was a sheltered homeless count only, no unsheltered count was completed

Walla Walla County is currently receiving additional support through the Anchor Community Initiative to achieve functional zero by the end of 2022 for youth and young adults (ages 12-24). This has resulted in progress towards achieving quality real-time data with this subpopulation. The lessons learned and efforts will be applied across all populations. Part of the work of achieving quality real-time data involves evaluating and making improvements to how that data is collected in the first place. As a result, there are already several system-related improvements underway.

ACTION PLAN

Utilizing the models from Community Solutions and Built for Zero, Walla Walla County will achieve and sustain real-time, quality data (phase 1) that will inform the actions needed to reduce homelessness (phase 2), so that Walla Walla County can achieve functional zero across populations and sustain (phase 3) these efforts. While the action plan below is outlined by phases of the work, it is important to note portions of these phases will occur simultaneously.

PHASE 1: Achieve real-time quality data

Action Steps	Anticipated Completion	Measure(s) of Success	Completeness Status
1.1 Map out existing coordinated entry process, policies, and procedures	December 2022	Compliance with state and federal guidelines for Coordinated Entry	Completed
1.2 Train and implement coordinated entry policies and procedures	March 2023	Those experiencing homelessness are quickly connected with Coordinated Entry	Delayed; priority to implement new CE guidelines and finalize updated policies and procedures
1.3 Provide ongoing and consistent training for how to coordinate services across all providers	April 2023 once new CE training is implemented Annually beginning in Fall 2023	Compliance with state and federal guidelines for CE Continuous Quality Improvement for the HCR system	In progress; training materials in development
1.4 Expand the strategic use of HMIS to include all agencies in the county who serve the homeless to better understand current population and gaps in services	June 2023	Create system to track provider resource (funding, staff time, etc.) allocation to prevention/diversion services	Not started; priority to implement new CE guidelines and training
1.5 Address racial/LGBTQ+ disparities among people experiencing homelessness	June 2024	Review Commerce equity analysis tool; conduct focus groups to gather input; identify targeted strategies that reduce disproportionality	Not started

PHASE 2: Reduce homelessness through coordination across systems and organizations

Action Steps	Anticipated Completion	Measure(s) of Success	Completeness Status
2.1 Identify hot spots/targeted areas using a county map	March 2022; annual review needed	Navigators making regular contact with Walla Walla County residents that are unsheltered	In progress, coordination across programs needed
2.2 Educate/train on what constitutes outreach	April 2023 (incorporate with 1.3) and ongoing	Shared definition and understanding of outreach	Began in January 2020 with a focus on youth subpopulation; efforts with larger population

Action Steps	Anticipated Completion	Measure(s) of Success	Completeness Status
		across homeless housing providers	stalled due to COVID-19 pandemic
2.3 Create a plan to ensure and monitor that a housing first model is implemented across housing services	November 2023	Create a plan to ensure and monitor that a housing first model is implemented across housing services	Not started
2.4 Establish policies and procedures for maintaining and updating a by-name list (BNL)	June 2022	Policies and procedures are established	Draft completed; review and finalization still needed
2.5 Adopt and establish policies and procedures for case conferencing	June 2022	Policies and procedures are established	Draft completed; review and finalization still needed
2.6 Increase capacity of low-barrier shelter with wraparound supports that use a housing first model	December 2025	Increase low-barrier shelter	Ongoing; capacity increased in 2020 using Commerce Shelter Program Grant; City of Walla Walla investing in further expansion; evaluation needed regarding additional needs

PHASE 3: Maintain functional zero by supporting the development of adequate affordable housing and permanent supportive housing

Action Steps	Anticipated Completion	Measure(s) of Success	Completeness Status
5.1 Increase housing opportunities to families exiting homelessness using a housing first model	December 2025	Create new units based on needs	Not started
5.2 Increase local funding sources for housing	July 2020, ongoing	Adopt local ordinance to implement HB 1406; completed	Completed; need to review other potential opportunities