

# KING COUNTY FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

AUGUST 2020

## **Acknowledgements**

The King County Framework for Regional Action on Homelessness (Framework) is the result of work conducted throughout the community by many stakeholders. Most importantly, the development of this Framework would not have been possible without the participation of people experiencing homelessness and people with lived expertise. We are grateful for their assistance in helping the co-creators understand how this plan should most effectively reflect their experiences and needs. The Youth Action Board and the Lived Experience Coalition created space within their meeting structures to allow us to co-create, ask key questions and get valuable input.

Two other groups provided essential support to this process through their roles as co-creators: a team of public sector staff and a team of homelessness service providers. These teams were identified because of their particular roles within the homelessness services system – they represent implementers of policy and program design within government and non-profits. Their feedback, thought partnership and critical thinking were key in the development of this Framework. A list of participating agencies and individuals is included in Appendix A. Additionally, a small group of funders and executive-level public sector partners served as a steering group and included participation from King County, the City of Seattle, the Raikes Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ballmer Group, and All Home.

We also wish to express our appreciation to the many community partners and leaders who worked to provide the information needed to conduct and vet specific analyses, including: McKinsey, King County and Seattle Housing Authorities, The Third Door Coalition, the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force (RAHTF), and the Sound Cities Association.

We received data and insights from our national partners at the National Innovation Service, Focus Strategies and the national technical assistance providers conducting important work in the region.

The Framework's development was led by Ann Oliva during her time as Senior Policy Fellow with Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH). Building on nearly 30 years of success developing multi and cross-sector partnerships, CSH engages broader systems to fully invest in solutions that drive equity, help people thrive, and harness data to generate concrete and sustainable results. By aligning affordable housing with services and improving systems, CSH helps communities move away from crisis, optimize their public resources, and ensure a better future for everyone.

This Framework and the process to develop it were commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Raikes Foundation and Ballmer Group.

## Process and Methodology

The King County Framework for Regional Action on Homelessness (Framework) was developed through an engagement and quantitative analysis process that relied on the expertise of organizations and individuals across King County who are invested in ending homelessness as we know it. The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), a national mission-driven nonprofit, facilitated the development of the Framework.

### *Co-Creation and Qualitative Engagement*

CSH met regularly with three primary groups of co-creators for this Framework: homeless service providers and advocates, public sector staff, and people most impacted by the recommendations made in this document. The Provider Group included leadership from Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC), Plymouth Housing Group, YWCA, Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA), Chief Seattle Club, the Youth Coalition, Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH), Public Defender Association, Catholic Community Services, Mary's Place, and El Centro de la Raza. The Public Sector Staff Team included representatives from King County, City of Seattle, and All Home. CSH primarily worked through the Youth Action Board and the Lived Experience Coalition to gain input and feedback from people with lived expertise. C4 Innovations led work with providers serving youth and young adults to provide content for the Framework in alignment with the *End Youth Homelessness Now* campaign.

To inform the co-creators' work, CSH met with leaders and representatives of numerous organizations across the region to discuss the goals, priorities and assumptions used in the Framework.<sup>1</sup>

### *Quantitative Data Analysis*

Several forms of data analysis inform this Framework. CSH coordinated with McKinsey and Company on the analysis reflected in its recent article entitled *Why Does Prosperous King County Have a Homelessness Crisis?*<sup>2</sup>, which draws from the same data sources (the U.S. Census and the King County Homeless Management Information System) and reflects similar conclusions as this Framework. In addition, the Framework aligns with data sources and projections included in the report (October 2019 revision) issued by the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force.<sup>3</sup>

The Focus Strategies *System Analysis and Accountability Recommendations (SAAR) Final Report* commissioned by Vulcan Inc. provided analysis of data captured in HMIS and other systems as well as recommendations for next steps that informed the Framework. Specific charts from the SAAR Report contained in this document are noted.

The King County Department of Community and Human Services has been the key partner in the quantitative analysis conducted as part of the RAP. All data used by CSH, McKinsey and Focus Strategies were provided by King County under their administration of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Their analytical capability and expertise formed the base for this work, and it could not have been completed without them.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for a list of organizations

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/why-does-prosperous-king-county-have-a-homelessness-crisis>

<sup>3</sup> <https://kingcounty.gov/initiatives/affordablehousing.aspx>

### **About the King County Framework for Regional Action on Homelessness**

Beginning in January 2018 with the convening of *One Table*, Mayor Jenny Durkan and County Executive Dow Constantine put into motion a series of events and activities aimed at making fundamental changes in the way the region addresses homelessness. The first step in the process was the execution of a May 2018 memorandum of understanding (MOU) that laid out plans for the City of Seattle and King County to work together to address the issues of homelessness and housing instability in the region. As a result of the MOU, leaders brought together a team of local and national experts, people with lived expertise and community stakeholders to identify high-level recommendations on how to proceed based on a community-driven process. The product of that process – designed and executed by the National Innovation Service – was a [report](#) including recommendations that were widely accepted by community stakeholders and that provided a blueprint for next steps. This Framework for Regional Action on Homelessness (Framework), aligns with the recommendations laid out in that report.

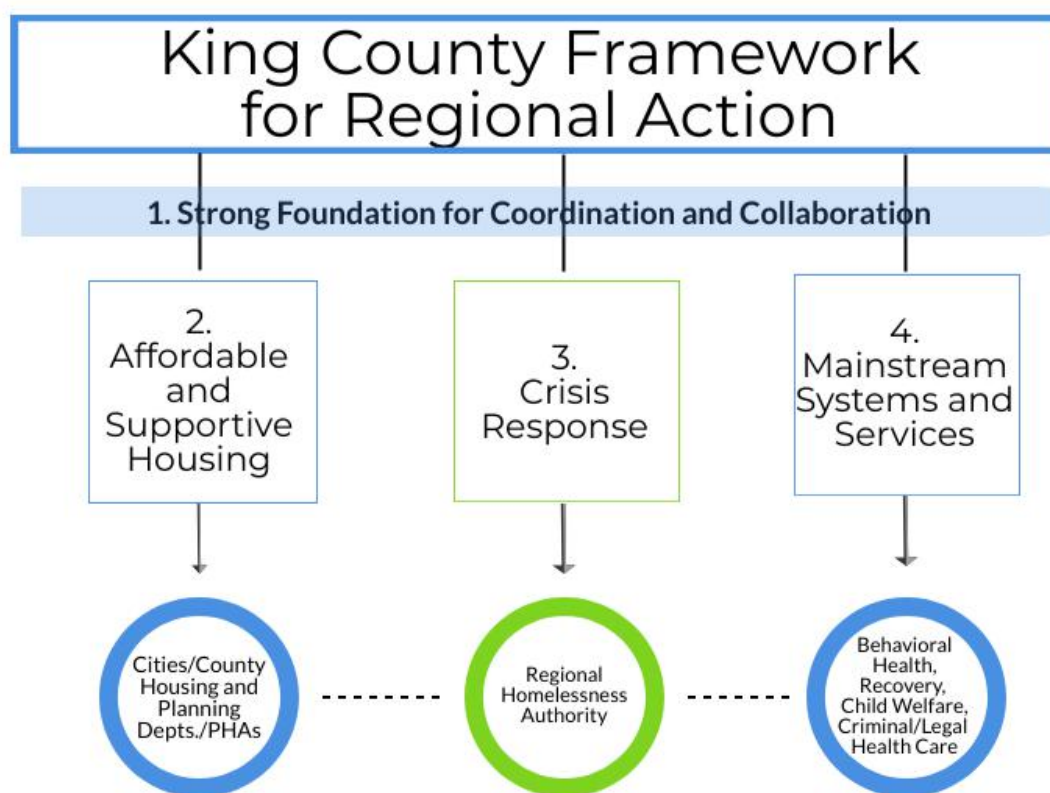
Through activities conducted since January 2018 it is clear that philanthropic, public sector and non-profit partners across King County are poised to take action in unprecedented ways that will increase alignment on funding, policy and program decisions related to homelessness:

1. The implementation of a King County **Regional Homelessness Authority** (KCRHA) to consolidate funding and policy regarding homeless crisis response activities across King County, and to provide an accountability mechanism for community-wide action and alignment. An Inter-local Agreement passed by City and County Councils in December 2019 established a Governmental Administrative Agency between King County and the City of Seattle, and allows additional parties to sign on later as subscribing agencies.
2. Development of an **External Partners Group** to ensure that key community leaders including philanthropy, business, people with lived experience, and advocates can coordinate and align with the King County Regional Homelessness Authority to cultivate solutions to homelessness that are racially equitable, community driven and data-informed.
3. This **Framework for Regional Action on Homelessness** establishes a data-driven baseline of need and provides direction for the region's coordinated efforts on homelessness by articulating a clear vision and priorities, recommending specific policies, strategies and actions, and establishing measures for success. The Framework is not the implementation plan for the KCRHA, but is a broad-based community approach that will guide the homelessness-related work of the community as a whole.

Implementation of the Framework is dependent upon the successful implementation of the new KCRHA for several reasons. As the only homelessness-dedicated public entity in the County, the KCRHA must not only operate a robust crisis response system but also provide subject matter expertise, be the central point for data collection and reporting regarding metrics outlined in the Framework, and act as the bridge between partners and systems that touch people experiencing homelessness and housing instability. As designed, the KCRHA will provide the structure necessary for true regional collaboration and impact described in this document.

The Framework involves four areas that require public sector participation and accountability: creating a strong cross-system foundation for coordination and collaboration; the KCHRA as the hub for crisis response and tracking/reporting progress; Housing and Planning departments within the regional jurisdictions; and mainstream services (including behavioral health, recovery and primary health care) and systems (such as Child Welfare and Justice). The Executive Director of the KCRHA will need to

quickly establish relationships with these partners to ensure close planning and collaboration aligned with the Framework.



*Figure 1: Scope of Framework for Regional Action on Homelessness*

It is important to note that the Framework attempts to appropriately balance a number of competing interests that are evident in many geographically large, diverse and complex homeless assistance systems. In particular, it attempts to balance the need for long-term solutions and short-term/interim actions to address the homeless crisis in King County, the different needs that present in urban, suburban and rural areas of the County, and aggressive but pragmatic approaches to addressing unmet needs in housing, services and crisis response.

The Framework attempts to balance these competing priorities while also grounding the plan in the following principles for implementation:

1. **Racial equity.** People of color, especially Black and American Indian/Alaska Native communities, are disproportionately impacted by homelessness and housing instability in King County. Framework implementation must be grounded in the principles of racial equity to address and ameliorate this reality.
2. **Valuing voices of lived experience.** People with lived experience must be equal partners in this work, and can provide the expertise required to design a system and programs that reflects their needs.

3. **The need for affordable and supportive housing.** Homelessness in King County is caused by a lack of housing affordable for people who have low and extremely low incomes. While other proximal causes of homelessness may exist in a household (i.e., job loss, health crisis, substance use, mental health crises), the primary solution to homelessness is to ensure that every household has access to a permanent and safe place to live that provides the stability needed to weather crises without losing one's home.

In order to meet the goals articulated in this Framework, leaders in King County must take action for long- and short-term impact on parallel tracks so that progress is made as swiftly as possible:

- Expand and preserve affordable and supportive housing stock to effectively address homelessness in the long term.
- Take aggressive interim measures while stock is being built to improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness and to decrease the number of people living in unsheltered situations.

*The Framework should not be seen as a static document. While it is a critical milestone on this community's journey towards ending its homeless crisis, to be successful the community must be diligent and disciplined in its process to be dynamic in its planning and equally rigorous in its efforts to measure progress. The community must be able to determine when mid-course corrections are needed and nimble enough to execute those corrections.*

This Framework was developed in partnership with local stakeholders including those in the public sector, people with lived experience and expertise (through the Lived Experience Coalition, the Youth Action Board and the Consumer Advisory Council), the Continuum of Care as funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, homeless service providers and advocates, philanthropy and businesses. The vision, goals, strategies and metrics reflect the priorities articulated by these stakeholders<sup>4</sup>.

This Region can harness the power of its stakeholders and citizens to make positive change, and can be a model for other communities struggling with disparities, antiquated housing policy, difficult housing markets, and a large unsheltered population. With these challenges and assets in mind, the community has developed a vision for its desired end state:

*By working together and intentionally focusing on communities of color most impacted by homelessness, the King County Region will build an equitable system that quickly moves people who experience homelessness into appropriate, safe and sustainable housing, and prevents people from becoming homeless whenever possible.*

The purpose of this Framework is to create a roadmap leading to that desired end state.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix A for a list of stakeholders involved in the process.

## I. Homelessness in Seattle-King County: Context for the Framework for Regional Action

Homelessness is a complex issue that impacts and is impacted by many conditions and institutions in a given community. In order to fully understand and create solutions to homelessness in King County, we must examine the history of the issue as well as the current data on who experiences homelessness and what interventions are successful.

### Homelessness and Racial Inequity in Seattle-King County

The history of homelessness in the Seattle-King County Region is long and complex - and like the history of homelessness nationally it is tied to discrimination (housing and other forms), poverty and institutional racism. While the human services field addresses homelessness in its modern form based on the federal definitions and policies included in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act first

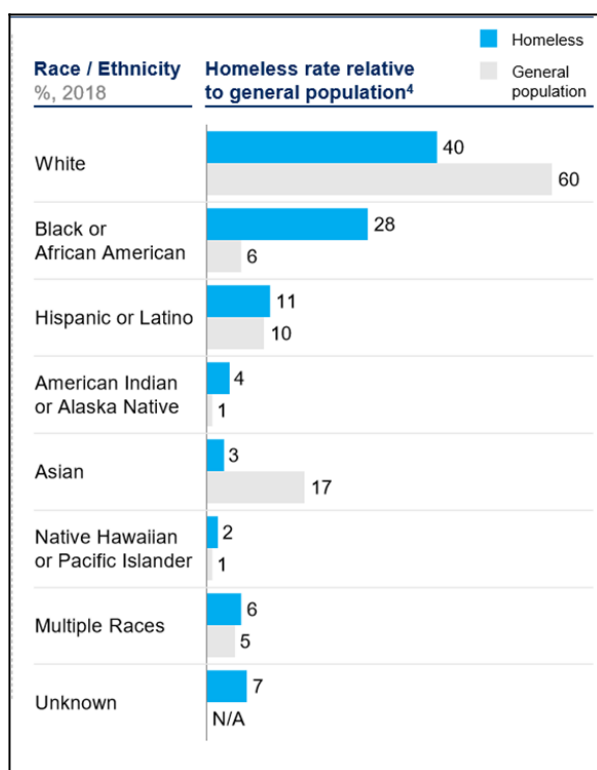


Figure 2: Race and Ethnicity for People Experiencing Homelessness

that “Homelessness does not affect all racial and ethnic groups equally—Black and Native Americans in particular are dramatically more likely to become homeless than their White counterparts, and they face unique barriers to exiting homelessness. Although Black people comprise 13% of the general population in the United States and 26% of those living in poverty, they account for more than

passed in 1987<sup>5</sup>, locally the Seattle Times began to reference “shacktowns” as early as 1904.<sup>6</sup> These encampments of mostly single men were established, torn or burned down, and established again over decades. World War II, a booming economy and the implementation of safety net programs and the Seattle and King County Housing Authorities largely made homelessness disappear *from public view* until its re-emergence in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Since then, there have been several local initiatives and ongoing work related to homelessness – most notably the 10-year plan to end homelessness that was implemented in 2005.

Nationally, people of color experience homelessness at a rate higher than their representation in the general population. This is not a coincidence – it is directly tied to the nation’s history of structural and institutional racism and the treatment of indigenous people. A March 2018 report<sup>7</sup> from the Center for Social Innovation (using American Community Survey and US Department of Housing and Urban

Development data as well as their own research), showed

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/McKinney.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://mynorthwest.com/1030524/timeline-seattle-homeless/>, <https://mynorthwest.com/330086/a-look-at-seattles-homeless-shacktown-history/>

<sup>7</sup> Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities Phase One Findings, Center for Social Innovation, March 2018



40% of the homeless population, suggesting that poverty rates alone do not explain the over-representation.”

In King County, institutionalized discrimination against people of color over time – especially Black and American Indian/Alaska Native populations – has resulted in impacts that families and individuals in King County still face. The University of Washington’s Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project<sup>8</sup> lays out the history of segregation in twentieth century King County: “People of color were excluded from most jobs, most neighborhoods and schools, and many stores, restaurants, hotels, and other commercial establishments, even hospitals. As in other western states, the system of severe racial discrimination in Seattle targeted not just African Americans but also Native Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, people of Mexican ancestry, and also, at times, Jews.”

The practice of redlining (where the Federal Government created maps that outlined geographic areas where bank loans/mortgages were considered “risky” due to the race of its residents, quality of housing and other criteria) and restrictive covenants (restricting the sale or lease of housing by specific racial or ethnic groups) and its impact on communities of color over time is clear.<sup>9</sup> Project authors provide significant detail in the referenced report:

- “Throughout the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, restrictive covenants played a major role in dictating municipal demographics. Neighborhoods in North Seattle, West Seattle, South Seattle and in the new suburbs across Lake Washington adopted deed restrictions to keep out non-White and sometimes Jewish families.”
- “Racial restrictions were still more common in the suburbs. People of color had little chance of finding housing except in the central neighborhoods of Seattle.”

These practices made it very difficult for families of color to accumulate wealth through property ownership; neighborhoods were financially motivated to implement restrictive covenants so that they would not be redlined, and “redlining made it exceedingly more difficult for non-Whites to purchase property because financing was refused in the only neighborhoods they were able to live.<sup>10</sup>” That legacy continues today - people raised in redlined districts of the County continue to earn less than their

<sup>8</sup> <https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregated.htm>

<sup>9</sup> [https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregation\\_maps.htm](https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregation_maps.htm)

<sup>10</sup> [https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/covenants\\_report.htm](https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/covenants_report.htm)

## COVID-19 and Homelessness

Partners across King County must respond to and plan for both the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on people at risk of and experiencing homelessness, using a racial equity approach so that marginalized populations are accounted for and served with equitable outcomes.

According to the Antiracist Research and Policy Center’s [COVID Racial Data Tracker](#), people of color in Washington (like the country as a whole) are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 – while at the same time being disproportionately impacted by homelessness (see Figure 2). As of May 7, the tracker indicates that while black people make up 4.3% of the general population, they make up 7.17% of known COVID-19 cases. For Hispanic people, the disproportionality is worse: they make up 12.9% of the general population and 31.21% of known COVID-19 cases. The national data available on American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) persons is similarly alarming, even though many jurisdictions are [not accurately reporting](#) COVID cases for AI/AN persons.

As CARES Act and other funds begin to flow, it is imperative for private and public sector partners to work together to make resource allocations that align to the principles and structure of this Framework. The COVID-19 [Equity Impact Awareness Tool](#) aligns with the equity based decision making process discussed in Part III, and can be used to model how resources can be allocated.

No other emergency in recent history has pointed so clearly to the fact that housing is key to health and equity, both at the community and individual levels. Therefore, the priorities identified in this Framework become even more important:

- Build and preserve affordable and supportive housing to meet local needs – and do this with urgency.
- Get as many people into housing as quickly as possible by strengthening coordinated entry.
- Divert or prevent homelessness for as many households as possible.
- Re-think and scale temporary options like shelter and safe parking.



counterparts in other areas of the region. Public Health Insider makes the line even more clear in an article entitled *Why 50 Year Old Housing Practices Could Be Linked to Poor Health Outcomes Today*: “Disinvestment in segregated neighborhoods causes communities of color to have less access to resources and services than white communities...”

For the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) community the history and impact is also clear. An article by Greg Lange<sup>11</sup> asserts that “Two factors accelerated U.S. settlement of the Sound: The 1846 ratification of the Treaty of Oregon, which established United States sovereignty below the 49th parallel; and the 1850 passage of the Donation Claims Act, which granted 320 acres to each adult U.S. citizen (640 acres to married couples) who arrived in Oregon Territory before December 1850, and resided on their claim for four years.” These lands being claimed were not, as detailed in the referenced article, uninhabited land. They were long-standing home to Tribes that were being quickly displaced by white settlers. As in the case of those subject to housing practices described above, this dynamic resulted in difficulty for the AI/AN community to accumulate wealth due to displacement. Forced assimilation policies also uniquely impacted the AI/AN community. “In 1953, the U.S. Congress established a new policy towards American Indians: termination. This policy eliminated much government support for Indian tribes and ended the protected trust status of all Indian-owned lands.<sup>12</sup>” This “termination” policy resulted in the passage of the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, and has had a lasting negative impact on both AI/AN people and the restrictions on ways federal funding can flow to Tribal areas.

This painful history continues to be reflected in the disproportionate impact of homelessness on Black and American Indian/Alaska Native persons in King County today.

### Homelessness and Housing

Prior to the pandemic, a series of interrelated housing market dynamics created a perfect storm that continues to cause housing instability and homelessness for thousands of King County residents with the lowest incomes. Structural racism compounds these factors, keeping Black and Indigenous households out of specific geographies and out of housing altogether as seen by the racial disparities in households experiencing homelessness. Today’s public health emergency further illuminates how critical affordable housing is to the health and safety of individuals, families and communities. Increases in unemployment will likely result in increases in homelessness without significant mitigating measures. The path forward must be rooted in data about the need for affordable housing and dedication to re-establishing communities in which all residents can afford to have a place to call home.

### **Rent and Incomes**

Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the 22,500 households who experienced homelessness in King County in 2018 had “extremely low” incomes (ELI)<sup>13</sup>. Housing is “affordable” (as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) when a household does not spend more than 30% of its gross income on rent and utilities so that it can also afford food, transportation, clothing, and other living expenses.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://historylink.org/File/1660>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/indian-relocation.html>

<sup>13</sup> Extremely low income (ELI) families are defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as those whose incomes do not exceed the greater of either 30% of the MFI (or 60% of VLI income limit) or the federal poverty guideline published by the Department of Health and Human Services.

This is particularly important for households with extremely low incomes because paying even 30% of their limited incomes leaves little to nothing for other living expenses. Exhibit A illustrates basic budgets for three households with extremely low incomes paying fair market rents in King County.<sup>14</sup> All three household types (seniors on social security retirement income, individuals on social security disability income, and families with a parent working full time at the minimum wage with two children) are completely priced out of the King County rental housing market.

Figure 3: Incomes and Rents in King County

Family Household: One parent, 2 children Full-Time Minimum Wage Earnings			Individual Household: Social Security Retirement Income			Individual Household: Social Security Disability Income		
	Annual	Monthly		Annual	Monthly		Annual	Monthly
Hourly Minimum Wage	\$ 15	\$ 15	Av. Social Security Retirement Income	\$ 18,036	\$ 1,503	Av. Social Security Disability Income	\$ 15,096	\$ 1,258
Full-time hours	2080	173						
Gross wages	\$ 31,200	\$ 2,600						
<b>Rent</b>			<b>Rent</b>			<b>Rent</b>		
3-bedroom Fair Market Rent*	\$ 35,916	\$ 2,993	1-bedroom Fair Market Rent*	\$ 20,892	\$ 1,741	Studio Fair Market Rent*	\$ 19,524	\$ 1,627
Remaining Income after Rent	\$ (4,716)	\$ (393)	Remaining Income	\$ (2,856)	\$ (238)	Remaining Income	\$ (4,428)	\$ (369)
<b>Other expenses</b>			<b>Other Expenses</b>			<b>Other Expenses</b>		
Food	\$ 7,976	\$ 665	Food	\$ 3,592	\$ 299	Food	\$ 3,592	\$ 299
Healthcare	\$ 360	\$ 30	Healthcare	\$ 240	\$ 20	Healthcare	\$ 240	\$ 20
Transportation (Orca commuter)	\$ 1,836	\$ 153	Transportation (Orca Reduced Fare)	\$ 864	\$ 72	Transportation (Orca Reduced Fare)	\$ 864	\$ 72
Household supplies & clothing	\$ 1,440	\$ 120	Household supplies & clothing	\$ 480	\$ 40	Household supplies & clothing	\$ 480	\$ 40
Childcare	\$ 13,555	\$ 1,130	Childcare	\$ -	\$ -	Childcare	\$ -	\$ -
Subtotal - Other Expenses:	\$ 25,167	\$ 2,097	Subtotal - Other Expenses	\$ 5,176	\$ 431	Subtotal - Other Expenses	\$ 5,176	\$ 431
<b>Final Budget</b>	<b>\$ (29,883)</b>	<b>\$ (2,490)</b>	<b>Final Budget</b>	<b>\$ (8,032)</b>	<b>\$ (669)</b>	<b>Final Budget</b>	<b>\$ (9,604)</b>	<b>\$ (800)</b>

The homeless crisis is, in fact, an affordable housing crisis for King County households with the lowest incomes.

### Lack of Affordable Housing for Households with Extremely Low Incomes

Of the 76,000 King County ELI renter households,<sup>15</sup> 35,000 are living in housing affordable to them. (More than 80% of this housing is publicly subsidized.) **There are no affordable apartments for the remaining 41,000 ELI renter households anywhere in King County.**

As a result, 22,500 are experiencing homelessness; 14,500 are experiencing severe rent burdens and are at risk of homelessness; and nearly 4,000 are unnecessarily living in or cycling between institutional and residential settings. The situation continues to intensify as rents increase significantly faster than incomes and the small number of ELI apartments in the private market quickly diminishes.

*"The problem is getting worse. Since 2010, we have lost a total of 112,000 housing units affordable to households earning below 80% of the area median income."*

-McKinsey's Report: Why does prosperous King County have a homeless problem?

King County ELI Households With and Without Affordable Housing	
76,000	ELI renter households
35,000	Living in affordable housing (46%)
41,000	Without affordable housing (54%)

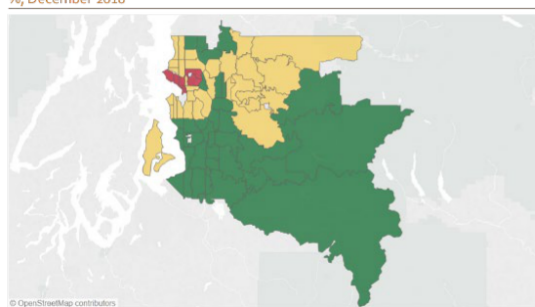
<sup>14</sup> The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually estimates FMRs for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defined metropolitan areas, some HUD defined subdivisions of OMB metropolitan areas and each nonmetropolitan county. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>

<sup>15</sup> Includes the 72,000 renter households as reported by McKinsey based upon the American Communities Survey and an additional 4,000 households as described in the following section on supportive housing.

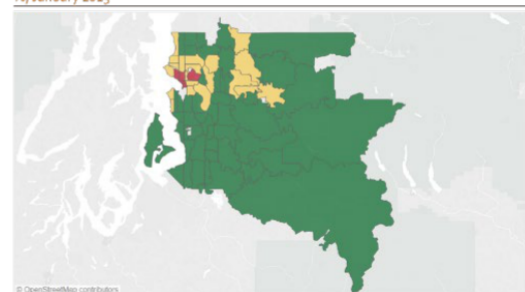
Living Situations for King County ELI Households Without Affordable Housing	
22,500	Households experiencing homelessness
14,500	Households experiencing severe rent-burden/at risk of homelessness
4,000	Households experiencing unnecessary institutionalization
41,000	Total ELI affordable housing need

This phenomenon is not limited to the City of Seattle – it is a regional issue. Affordability across the County is changing rapidly. The maps below show the significant change in affordability over a recent three-year period. The communities most impacted by these factors – ones with histories of redlining and disinvestment – are largely communities of color.

Percent of Area Median Income needed to afford median rent<sup>2</sup> by zip code  
%, December 2018



Percent of Area Median Income needed to afford median rent<sup>2</sup> by zip code  
%, January 2015



### ***The Need for Supportive Housing as a Subset of ELI Affordable Housing***

King County’s lack of ELI affordable housing is compounded by a lack of tenancy support services for a subset of renters who need assistance accessing and remaining in housing. “Supportive Housing” pairs ELI affordable housing with tenancy supports to help people with disabilities and others with significant needs to live in their own homes and communities with autonomy, dignity, and respect.

When communities do not have enough Supportive Housing, their most vulnerable residents often endure the longest periods of homelessness and/or unnecessary stays in public institutions. HUD defines the state of long-term homelessness for households with one or more disabling conditions as “chronic homelessness.”<sup>16</sup> People who live in publicly-funded facilities for no other reason than a lack of Supportive Housing in their communities often stay for years in nursing homes, jails, hospitals, and other healthcare settings (Appendix B)<sup>17</sup>. Research, including a locally-established evidence base, clearly shows that the annual costs of chronic homelessness and these settings far exceed the cost of Supportive Housing. (Lavena Staten, 2019).

Of the 41,000 ELI affordable apartments needed in King County, an estimated 10,500 will need to be paired with tenancy support services to create Supportive Housing for a subset of ELI renters.

<sup>16</sup>For the full HUD definition of Chronic Homelessness, visit: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Defining-Chronically-Homeless-Final-Rule.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> List of sources in appendix X.

Supportive Housing as a Subset of Total ELI Affordable Housing Need	
6,500	Supportive Housing apartments needed for people experiencing chronic homelessness
4,000	Supportive housing apartments needed for people living in, cycling between, or exiting institutions and residential settings
10,500	Total Supportive Housing need
26%	Supportive Housing need as a percentage of total ELI affordable housing need

### ***The Path Forward***

**The region’s ability to address the priorities in this Framework is dependent upon a significant increase in new resources to create and operate ELI housing.** Unfortunately, doing so is no longer profitable in the private market. It will be up to the public sector to take the lead in funding ELI housing so that households making minimum wage or living on social security incomes can afford to live indoors in King County. Creating new affordable and supportive housing requires subsidies for capital, operating, and services.

#### ***Capital***

The largest capital resource available to build ELI housing is the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit. This Internal Revenue Service program incentivizes private equity investment in the construction of affordable housing in exchange for dollar-for-dollar tax credits. Other key sources of ELI capital in King County include the Seattle Housing Levy; federal pass-through dollars (such as HOME and the Community Development Block Grant) administered by the state, county, and cities, including A Regional Coalition for Housing (made up of East-side cities); tax-exempt and municipal bonds; and State funding. Affordability covenants on these investments prevent future losses of ELI housing and increases in homelessness. Most of the developers and operators of ELI housing are nonprofit organizations.

#### ***Operating/Rental Assistance***

Even without debt on the construction of ELI housing, the rents that ELI tenants can afford to pay are not enough to cover the costs of ongoing housing operations and replacement reserves. Operating subsidies cover the gap between tenant rents and the true costs of operating a building. ELI housing operations can also be supported by rental assistance, a subsidy that pays the difference between what a tenant can afford and a “reasonable” market rent on a per-unit basis. This type of subsidy is usually funded in the form of housing vouchers that can be attached to new developments or existing housing to make it affordable to ELI households. Capital underwriters will only finance acquisition and new construction of ELI housing that can clearly demonstrate a development’s ability to cover operating costs for the duration of the affordability covenant.

The large majority of rental assistance funds in use in King County comes from the federal government and is administered by the three Public Housing Agencies (PHAs): Seattle Housing Authority (SHA), King County Housing Authority (KCHA), and Renton Housing Authority (RHA). SHA and KCHA are the two largest landlords in King County, and they have each achieved a prestigious, national status called Moving to Work from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for their high performance and innovation. Together, these three PHAs own and manage more than 10,000 housing

vouchers and nearly 18,000 ELI apartments. Housing stability rates for these households are conclusive: according to the national *Family Options Study*, after 37 months, 85% of households receiving a permanent housing subsidy were living in their own dwelling place relative to only 69% in the control group.<sup>18</sup> Expansion of these successful programs is subject to congressional appropriation. Unfortunately, little new funding for housing vouchers has come from the federal government in nearly two decades. Replication of these successful programs will likely be dependent upon the creation of long-term state and local subsidy streams.

### *Services*

Twenty-six percent of the ELI apartments needed in King county must be paired with tenancy support services to help tenants stabilize their lives and thrive. Supportive Housing that meets [national quality standards](#) has an 85% housing stability success rate after 12 months, even for renters with the most complex needs. Best practices in supportive housing services require funding for one tenancy supports specialist to every ten to fifteen households. Unfortunately, communities and mainstream systems often spend their services dollars on more expensive public interventions that are not effective in supporting people in housing. But Washington State's Healthcare Authority is changing that paradigm. It recognized that it was already paying for services for this population, but it was doing so through emergency and short-term interventions that did not address long-term health and housing stability needs. By changing the way it directs Medicaid resources, the State is on track to producing significant healthcare and justice system cost offsets and savings (DESC, 2009). The State's new Medicaid benefits, called Foundational Community Supports, pay for supportive housing and supported employment services.

Out of necessity and a clear view of what works for their clients, many nonprofits that once started as shelter and behavioral health providers have become masters of ELI housing development and learned to become landlords in addition to providers of tenancy support services. Some of the top-performing nonprofit supportive housing providers in the country operate in King County.<sup>19</sup>

When there is enough funding to create some amount new ELI affordable and supportive housing in a given year, it requires meticulous analysis and leveraging among funders to maximize dollars while meeting public requirements. Fortunately, when an influx of new resources becomes available to build back the ELI housing lost in King County, multiple funders will be well-positioned to do so using the region's nationally-recognized annual [Combined Funding Notice of Availability](#). This coordination lays the groundwork for quick implementation the ELI affordable housing pipeline plan described in Component 2 of this Framework.

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<sup>18</sup><https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Family-Options-Study-Full-Report.pdf>

<sup>19</sup><https://www.desc.org/category/research/>  
<https://www.plymouthhousing.org/v1/about-us/financial-information/>

## References

The data that inform this Framework build upon and are consistent with those used by McKinsey (citation below) and the [Regional Affordable Housing Committee](#) for their respective reports. Primary data sources for all three publications include the American Communities Survey (U.S. census) and King County's Homeless Management Information System.

DESC. (2009, March 6). *Housing and Health to End Homelessness*. Retrieved from <https://www.desc.org/>: <https://www.desc.org/first-national-housing-first-study-housing-retention-is-high-despite-significant-challenges-in-the-lives-of-participants/>

Wagle, B. M. (2020, January). *Why Does Prosperous King County Have a Homeless Crisis?* Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/>: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/why-does-prosperous-king-county-have-a-homelessness-crisis>

## Homelessness Today in King County

In order to develop appropriate goals and strategies, it is important to understand who is experiencing homelessness, what their needs are, how the system is currently performing, and what resources are in place. The factors detailed below are not an exhaustive analysis of homelessness in King County – the County has robust analytical capacity to supplement this data as part of the development of detailed implementation plans. The 2019 SAAR report by Focus Strategies<sup>20</sup> provides additional relevant detail. The purpose of this section is to summarize these factors in order to provide the basic information needed to understand the goals and strategies included in this Framework.

According to All Home and the King County Regional Homelessness Authority<sup>21</sup>, of the 22,500 households that flowed into homelessness in King County in 2018, 79% were considered newly homeless<sup>22</sup>. The community's snapshot on homelessness conducted in January 2019 – called the point-in-time count - showed 11,199 people were experiencing homelessness on a single day, 47% of whom were in unsheltered locations. While the point-in-time data has significant limitations, it is being used in this context to help the reader understand the extent of unsheltered homelessness at a given point in time because unsheltered people may not be enrolled in HMIS.

The data provided here was captured for specific analysis and may not be the most current data available. Up-to-date data dashboards are available on the KCHRA web site: <https://regionalhomelesssystem.org/system-performance/>.

### ***Household Composition and Characteristics***

The flow of households in and out of the homeless assistance system over the course of the year is an important metric to track in order to understand how the system functions and where people are living

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<sup>20</sup> *System Analysis and Accountability Recommendations (SAAR) Final Report*, by Focus Strategies, Commissioned by Vulcan Inc. May 2019.

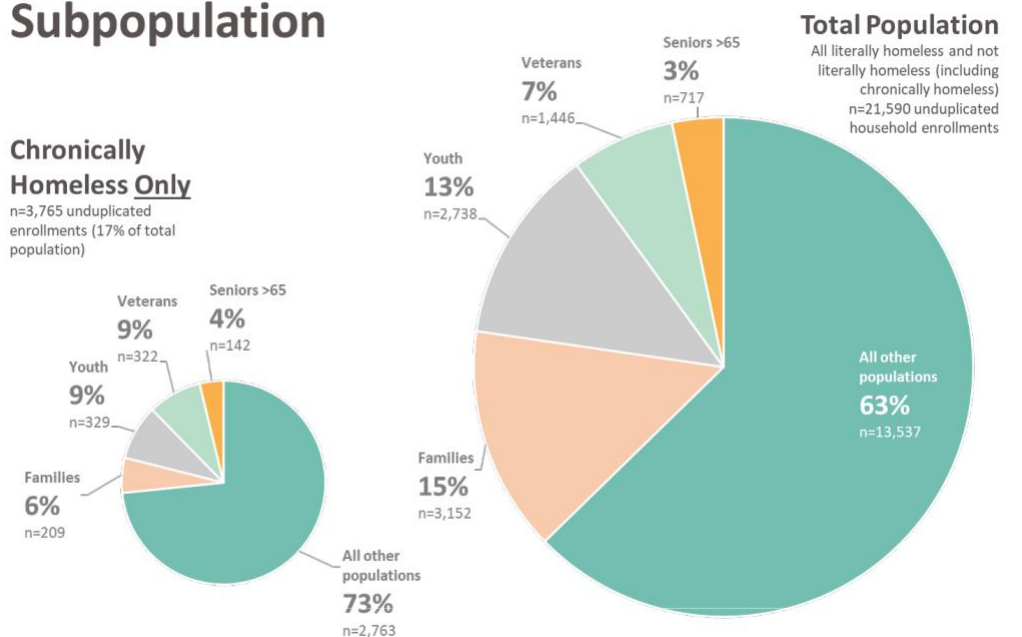
<sup>21</sup> All Home, supported by King County as the HMIS data administrator, provides up-to-date data dashboards on a variety of key measures on their web site at <http://allhomekc.org/data-overview/>.

<sup>22</sup> <http://allhomekc.org/system-flow/#by-episode>

when they enter the system. Within this flow, it is also important to understand the characteristics of the people who rely on the system for planning and funding purposes.

2018 enrollments into HMIS are detailed below<sup>23</sup>.

## 2018 HMIS Enrollments by Subpopulation



Prepared by King County Department of Community and Human Services - Performance Measurement and Evaluation Unit

Source: Seattle-King County HMIS as of July 2019  
Data Notes: Data includes HMIS enrollments beginning in 2018. Chronically homeless is defined as having chronically homeless status at any point in 2018. Data includes households that are literally and not literally homeless, served by any program participating in HMIS, or newly assessed in 2018 via Coordinated Entry.

**Chronic Homelessness:** People experiencing chronic homelessness<sup>24</sup> have long periods of homelessness and have disabling conditions – conditions severe enough to require long-term supportive services in addition to affordable housing. Enumerating people experiencing chronic homelessness is more complex than other subpopulations because the definition includes multiple characteristics, and because people are already experiencing homelessness – for a long period or over several episodes – when they meet the definition of chronically homeless. Therefore, over the course of a year people who are new enrollments may meet the definition while others already in the system may become chronically homeless during the year. Using HMIS data indicators, the County estimates that between 6,500 and 10,000 people experiencing homelessness in 2018 met the definition of chronically homeless and need permanent supportive housing.

**Families:** 3,152 people in families flowed into homelessness in 2018 – including both people who were newly homeless and those returning to homelessness. In the 2019 Point-in-Time Count, an estimated 2,451 people were in families with children. These individuals represented 763 family households, 72 households headed by a young parent under 25 years old. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of persons in

<sup>23</sup> Data source for charts in this section: King County Homeless Management Information System; prepared by King County Department of Community and Human Services

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4847/hearth-defining-chronically-homeless-final-rule/>



families were sheltered on the night of the count and 3% were unsheltered. Compared to 2018, the number of individuals in families with children decreased from 2,624 to 2,451. Because identifying unsheltered families with children is extremely difficult in the Point-in-Time Count setting, the number of unsheltered families is likely an undercount.

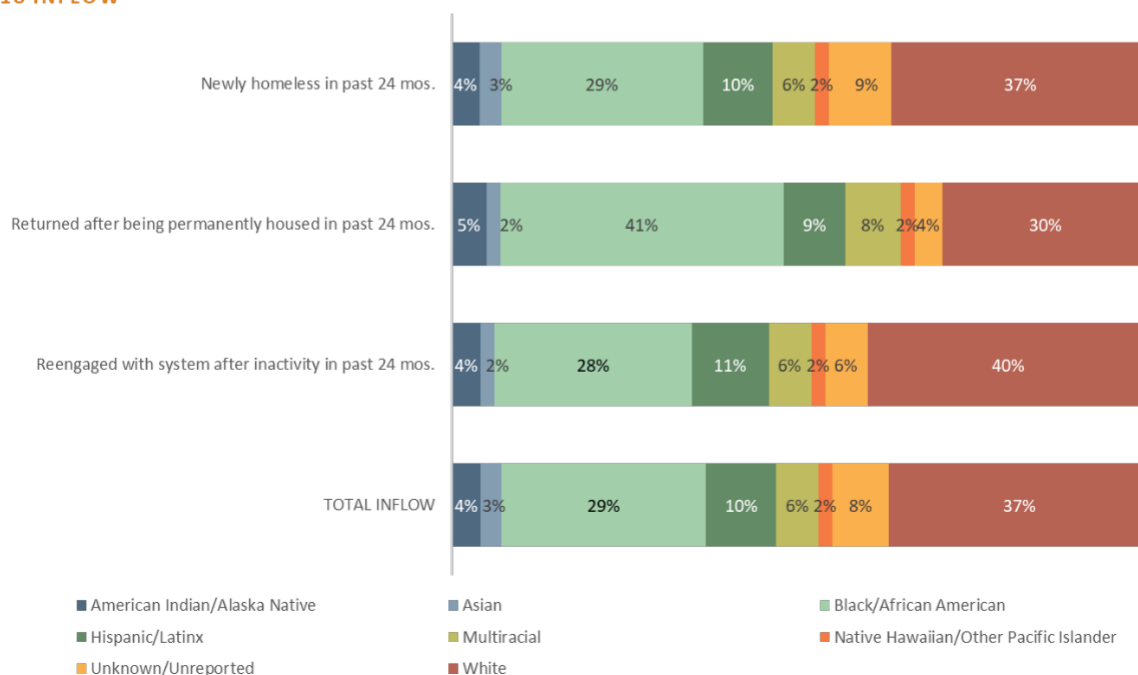
*Race and Ethnicity:* In order to advance the identified race equity principles, data must also be disaggregated by race. The charts below detail race and ethnicity for people experiencing chronic homelessness and for all persons at entry into the system and at exit.

Chronic Homelessness by Race and Ethnicity, Literally Homeless and Enrolled in HMIS in 2018

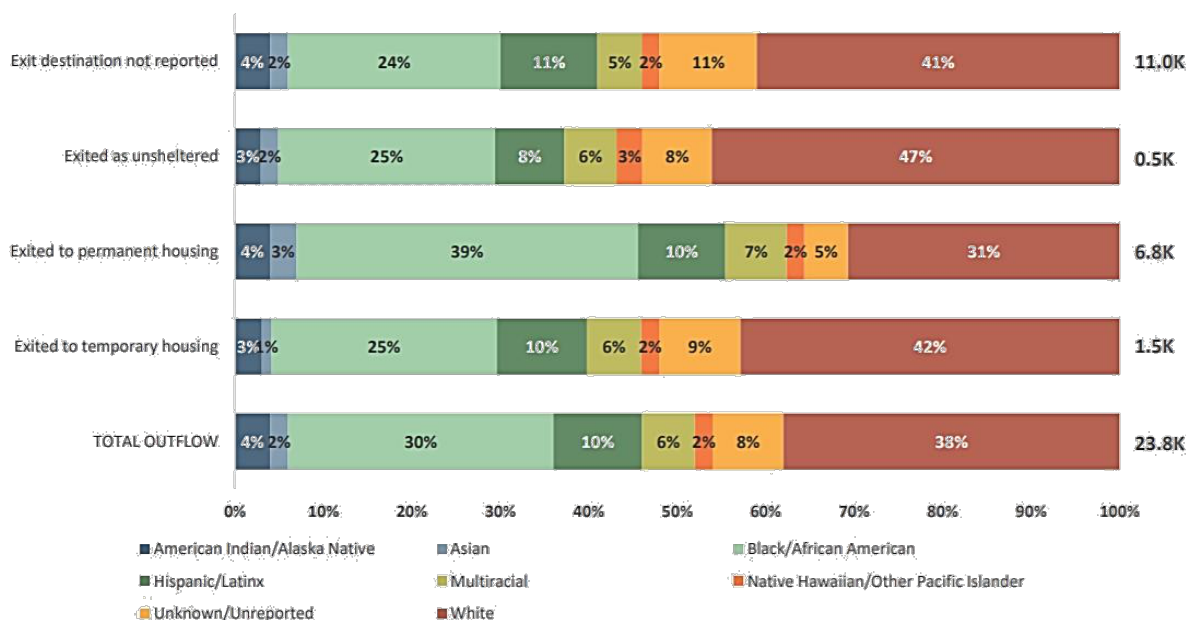
Race/Ethnicity	Chronically Homeless	Not Chronically Homeless
American Indian or Alaska Native	5.70%	4.66%
Asian	2.30%	2.86%
Black or African American	27.25%	31.99%
Hispanic/Latino	5.03%	5.03%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1.59%	2.30%
Other	6.55%	5.47%
Unknown	5.47%	11.15%
White	46.11%	36.54%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Source: HMIS as of 7/1/2019

#### 2018 INFLOW



## 2018 OUTFLOW



*Long-term Shelter-stayers:* King County also tracks people who live in shelters for long periods of time because they have no housing options. As of June 30, 2019, there were 418 single adults who had been in an emergency shelter for more than one year.<sup>25</sup>

- Of those in shelter for more than one year that provided a gender, 79% identified as male, and 20% as female.
- The average age was 53 years old, with the range being from ages 23 to 81.
- Sixty-seven percent of households reported no income, 13% reported earned income, and 20% had fixed incomes.
- Forty-two percent (42%) of long-term shelter stayers report that they have a disability. Of households that reported a disability, 40% had one condition, 10% had co-occurring disorders, and 10% had three or more.

### Long Term Stayers by Race and Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Adults	% of Total
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	2%
Asian	17	4%
Black or African American	85	20%
Hispanic/Latino	70	17%

<sup>25</sup> This number includes 57 people who have been in an authorized encampment for more than one year. It does not include people who have had multiple shelter stays totaling one year or more.

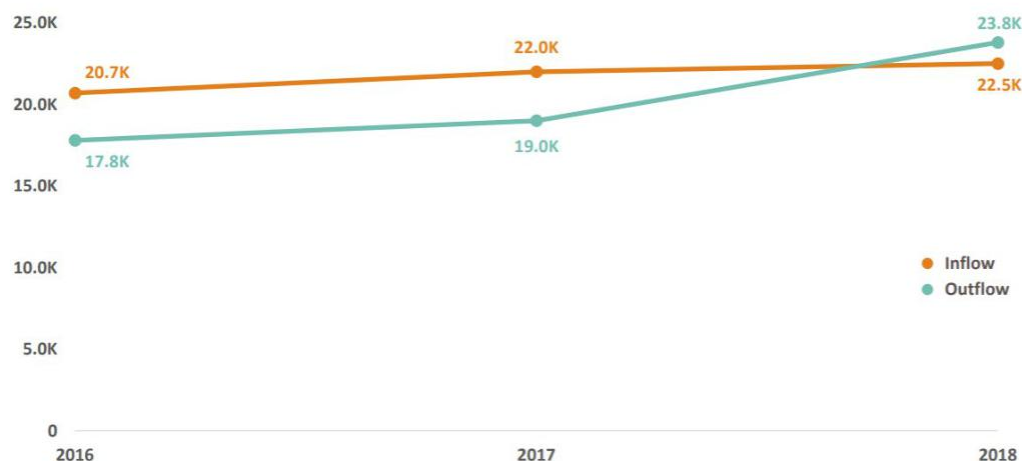
Multi-Racial	13	3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	1%
Unknown/Unreported	23	6%
White	196	47%
Grand Total	418	100%

### Current System and Program Performance

System performance measures how the homeless system functions. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has defined a series of system performance measures, which include total number of homeless persons, average and median length of time homeless, returns to homelessness, increases in income, number of persons homeless for the first time, and successful housing outcomes. King County tracks progress on these metrics through HMIS.

It is important to note that while the data shown in this section shows that the system is meeting performance targets in many areas, it is not operating at the scale that is needed to address homelessness in King County. This points to a significant need for additional resources to scale housing and crisis response to the need identified.

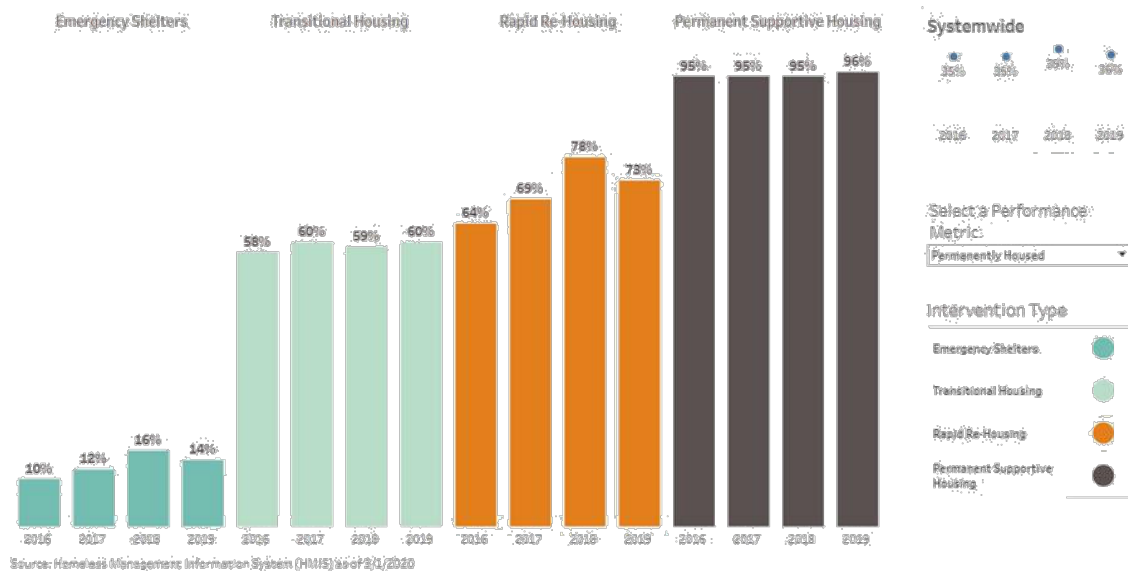
SYSTEM FLOW (INFLOW – OUTFLOW)



1. A single household can experience more than one episode of homelessness -- an entry and exit from the system -- per year.  
2. In September 2018, Coordinated Entry for All implemented a policy change to align with national best practices. CEA identified approximately 3,800 households who were inactive for more than 90 days. These households were removed from the community queue and appear in 2018 outflow.

Between January 2016 and July 2019, the homeless system grew in capacity and efficiency – although as noted it still does not meet the overall need. The number of households served per month has grown from 9,365 to 12,027– a 28% increase over that period. In the year ending June 30, 2019, 81% of the people served by homeless assistance programs were people considered literally homeless (living on the streets, in shelter or safe havens, exiting an institution or fleeing domestic violence) upon entry.

## What percent of households successfully gained permanent housing?



Nearly 40% of households who exited the system did so to a permanent housing destination or they maintained their permanent housing<sup>26</sup>. Excluding permanent supportive housing and other permanent housing, the average length of stay for households was 94 days. When reviewed by population, however, these indicators change significantly, as detailed in the chart below.

Program Performance January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019			
System Performance Indicator	Families with Children	Adults	YYA
Literally Homeless at Program Entry	84%	81%	60%
Permanently Housed	68%	33%	28%
Average Length of Stay	174 Days	91 Days	75 days
Returns to Homelessness	5%	13%	24%
Utilization	91%	93%	78%

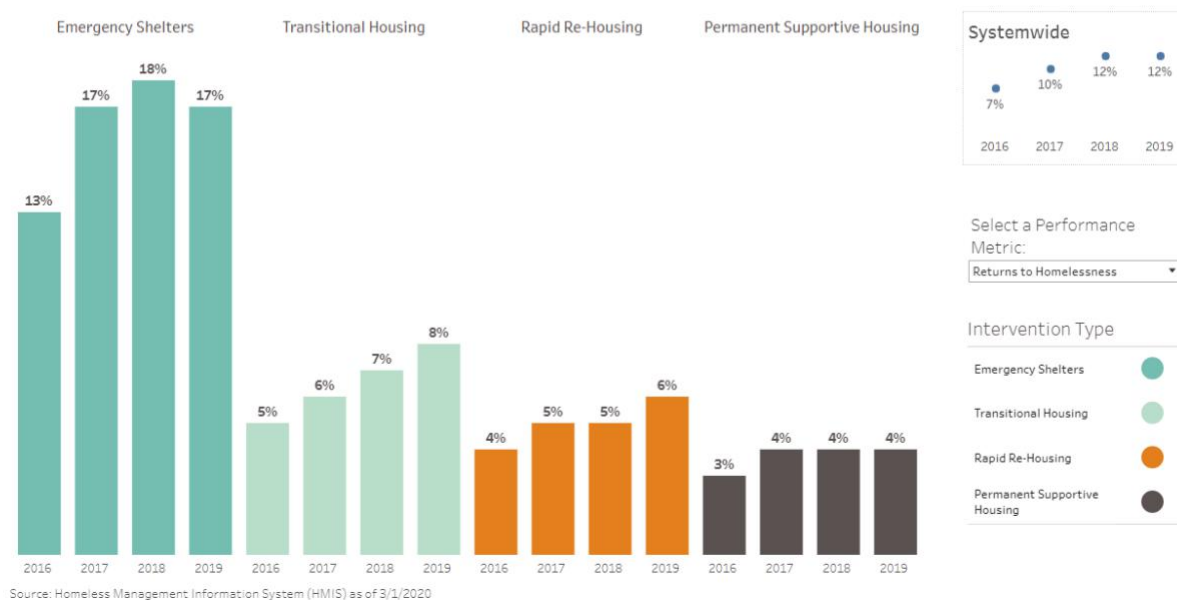
Rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing – key housing interventions - are performing well. That is, they perform near or above the performance benchmarks set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for these interventions<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> For PSH, this calculation includes those who maintained their housing, not only those who exited the program.

<sup>27</sup> A summary of HUD's System Performance Measures can be found here: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5793/national-summary-system-performance-measures-2015-2017/>

Returns to homelessness<sup>28</sup> vary by intervention type, with the highest number of people returning to homelessness after exit from emergency shelter.

What percent of households returned to homelessness after gaining permanent housing?

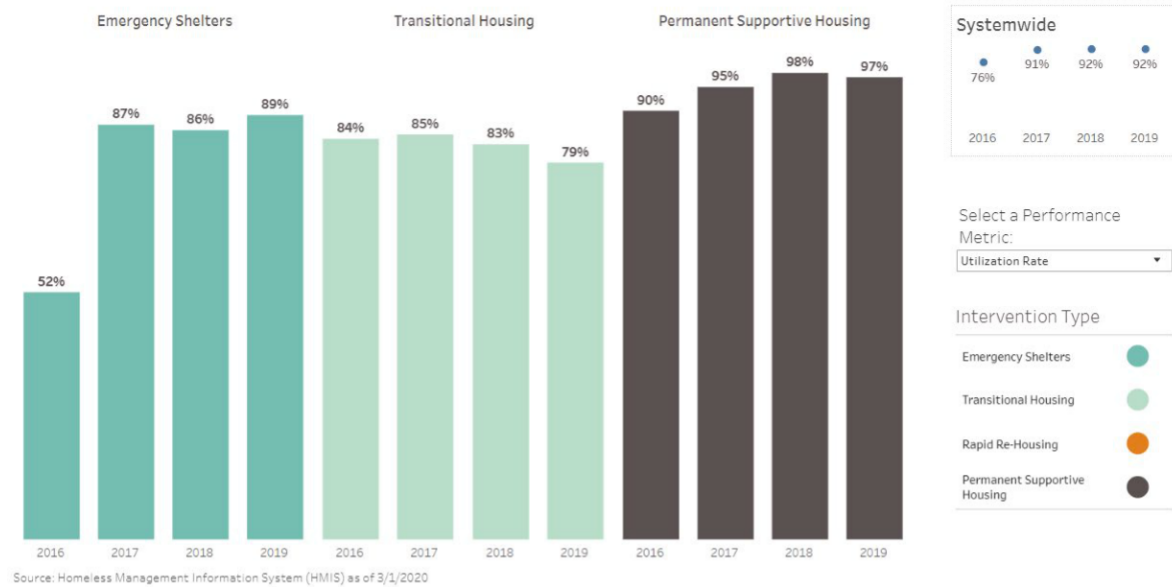


Utilization of available homeless resources is high in King County, which means that the system as a whole is often operating at maximum capacity even though it is not meeting the total need. Between 2016 and 2019, average length of stay remained relatively flat in emergency shelter, rapid re-housing and transitional housing. These two measures indicate that transitional housing as an intervention has room to improve/increase efficiency because its utilization is the lowest and its length of stay is highest among the intervention types.

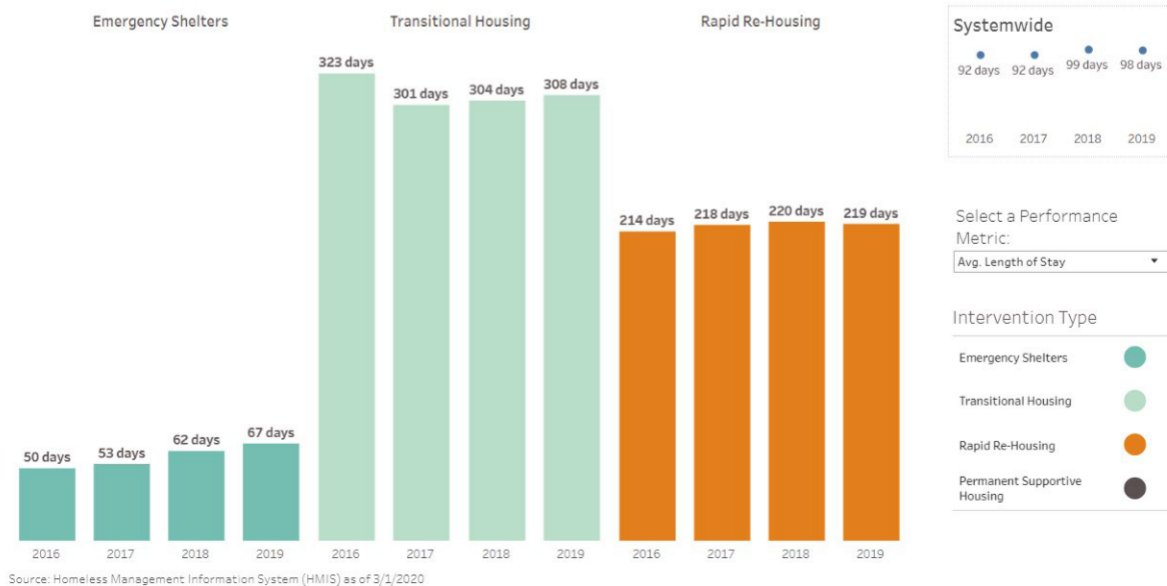
NOTE: Utilization is not calculated for Rapid Re-Housing because it is a funding-based program rather than a unit-based program. See Strategy 3B in Section III. of this document for additional detail.

<sup>28</sup> Defined as those who exit to permanent housing and then become homeless again within 6 months. This is only calculated for clients who consent to share identifying information in HMIS. For more information go to: <http://allhomekc.org/program-performance/#about-our-methodology>

## How efficiently are we using our existing resources?



## How long did households stay enrolled in each intervention?



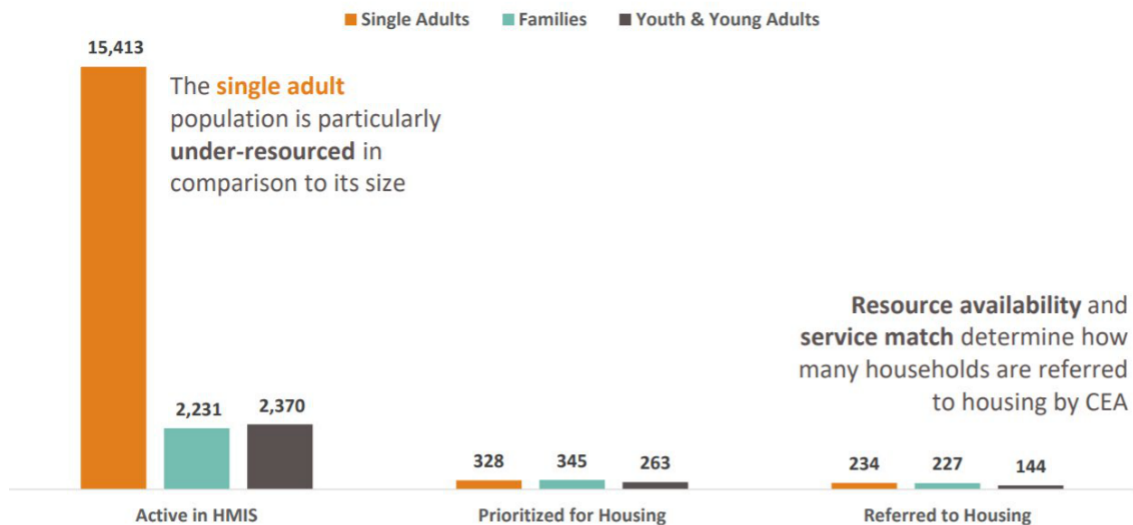
### **Coordinated Entry**

Coordinated Entry is the approach homeless systems use to prioritize households for limited interim supports and permanent affordable and supportive housing. As detailed in Part III of this Framework, Coordinated Entry as it is currently implemented lacks the capacity and authority to operate as the foundational underpinning of the system. In order for the system to operate more efficiently,

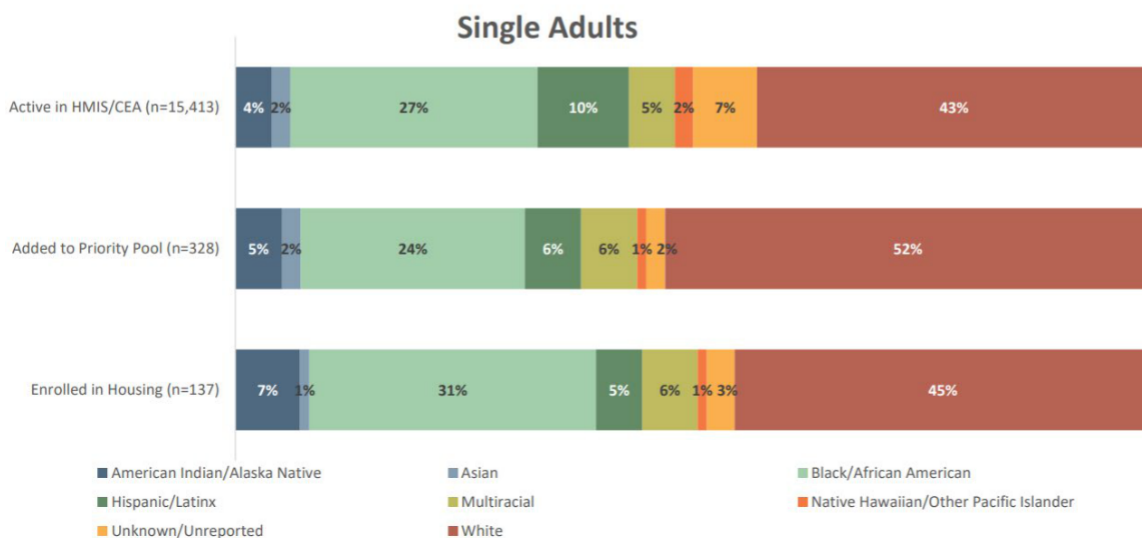
Coordinated Entry must be properly resourced and empowered to track unit availability in real-time. However, Coordinated Entry can only do so much – until additional affordable and supportive housing are available, it will continue to only serve a portion of the homeless population.

Coordinated Entry enrollment data is also disaggregated by race and ethnicity to understand performance and adherence to racial equity principles.

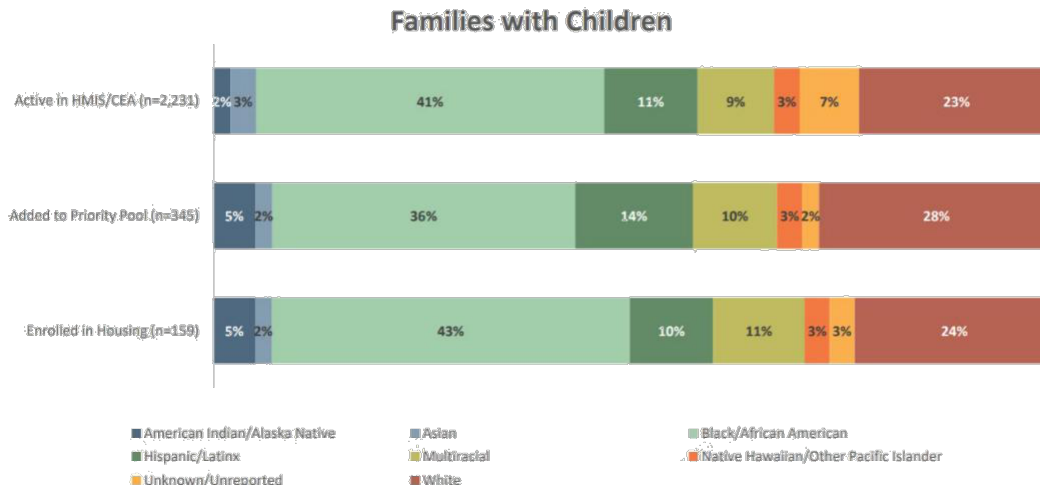
#### COORDINATED ENTRY FOR ALL ACTIVITY, JANUARY-JUNE 2019



#### COORDINATED ENTRY FOR ALL ACTIVITY, JANUARY-JUNE 2019







### System Interventions and Resources

The homeless assistance system in King County is comprised of beds and units in scattered-site or facility-based programs in six general categories: emergency shelter (basic, 24-hour and enhanced), safe havens for persons with severe mental illness, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing and other permanent housing<sup>29</sup>. The 2019 Housing Inventory Count (HIC) for the Seattle-King County CoC identified a total of 15,534 year-round dedicated beds in the six categories as detailed in the chart below. A total of 15,805 beds were identified in the HIC, including seasonal resources.

Total Year-Round Beds Currently On Line: King County Homeless Programs					
Populations	Total	Adults	Families	YYA (Singles)	Minors
Emergency Shelter	4,540	2,760	1,549	189	42
Safe Haven	45	45	0	0	0
Transitional Housing	2,129	515	1,432	166	16
Rapid Re-Housing	1,102	338	713	51	0
Permanent Supportive Housing	6,066	4,457	1,548	61	0
Other Permanent Housing	1,652	320	1,269	63	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,534</b>	<b>8,435</b>	<b>6,511</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>58</b>

Sub-Populations	Total	Adults	Families
<b>Veterans</b>	<b>1,905</b>	<b>1,092</b>	<b>813</b>
<b>Chronic Homeless</b>	<b>2,530</b>	<b>2,340</b>	<b>190</b>

The homeless assistance system in King County also includes important interventions that are not housing-based, including diversion, homelessness prevention, and outreach.

- **Diversion:** In 2019, there were **3,117 households** for whom diversion was attempted and **1,243** who had a successful diversion.
- **Prevention (Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative ONLY):** As of March 2020, **90% of households** served in YFHPI between 2017-2019 (2,858 households) did not subsequently

<sup>29</sup> Categories are defined by HUD in Housing Inventory Count Guidance: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Notice-CPD-18-08-2019-HIC-PIT-Data-Collection-Notice.pdf>

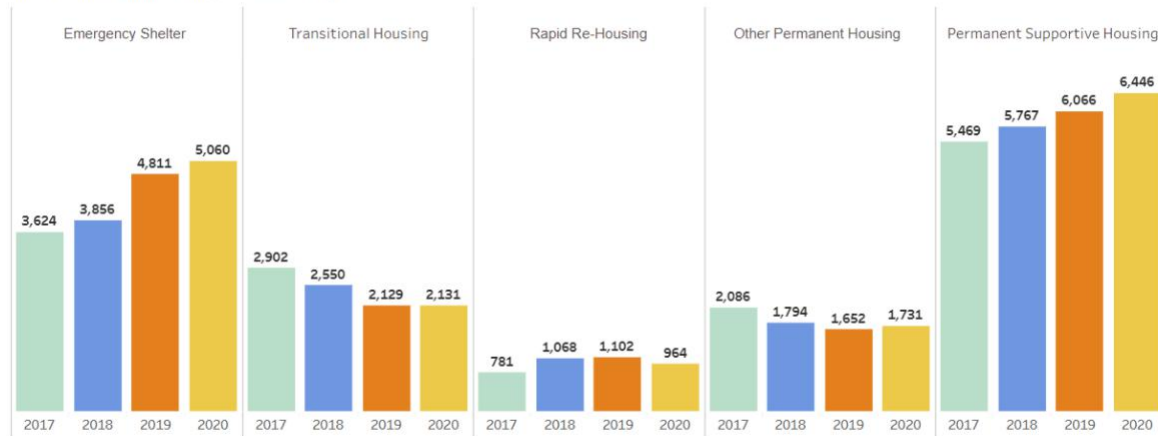
enter the homeless response system. (Note: this data reflects households served since inception because it is a pilot.)

- **Outreach:** In 2019, there were **2,632 street outreach enrollments**.

Recently posted data on inventory for 2020 is reflected in the chart below to illustrate the trends since 2017 for each intervention type.

### How many units are in the King County homeless response system inventory?

The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is a point-in-time inventory of provider programs within a Continuum of Care (CoC) that provide beds and units dedicated to serve persons who are homeless, categorized by five Program Types: Emergency Shelter; Transitional Housing; Rapid Re-housing; Safe Haven; and Permanent Supportive Housing.



Source: Seattle-King County Continuum of Care Housing Inventory Count (HIC) (2017-2020)

For the purpose of reporting in the HIC, CoCs count Rapid Re-Housing units based on the actual number of project participants who are on the night of the count:

1. actively enrolled in the project on the night of the inventory count, including persons who are only receiving supportive services in the RRH project; and
2. are in permanent housing on the night of the inventory count as evidenced by a Housing Move-in Date.

This chart excludes units still under construction on the night of the inventory count; Safe Haven units are also not depicted in the chart. In 2017, the HIC was recorded on 1/26/2017, in 2018 on 1/25/2018, in 2019 on 1/24/2019, and in 2020 on 1/23/2020.

Learn More about the HIC: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-housing-inventory-count-reports/>

## Youth and Young Adults

This Framework identifies ending homelessness for unaccompanied youth and young adults (YYA) by December 2021, in alignment with the *End Youth Homelessness Now* campaign. To ensure that decision makers could hear from young people directly, The Mockingbird Society and the King County Youth Action Board jointly conducted a survey in March-April of 2020 to help identify the needs of YYA and the action steps required to address those needs. Specifically, they surveyed YYA in relation to the four components outlined in this Framework: 1. Coordination and Foundational Items, 2. Affordable and Supportive Housing, 3. Crisis Response, and 4. Mainstream Systems and Services. The full report is attached to this Framework as Appendix C.

It is important to note that the survey was an imperfect tool due largely to the timing of its release during the early stages of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Mockingbird Society and the Youth Action Board felt that the timing impacted both the quantity and types of responses that were received, due to realities for young people like lack of access to the internet and shorter hours or closings at some YYA programs. **The most important recommendation of the survey is to continue to conduct this type of outreach to young people in order to truly understand and account for their experiences as the Framework is further developed and implemented, because circumstances change and “snapshot” surveys can quickly become obsolete.** The report specifically states: “A standardized process for continuous feedback is imperative for effective crisis management.”

Key Findings of the Survey Include:

1. Coordination and Foundational Items: “Young people expressed lacking flexible services that allowed longer hours or were easier to access. For those in rural areas, there were difficulties in transportation to/from work. Some young people found it difficult to learn about services or where to find them.” (p.7)
2. Affordable and Supportive Housing: Young people “consistently referenced needing financial literacy. Some specifically asked for cash or a steady income, implying a feeling of insecurity even when employed. They often talked about the affordability of housing, again implying a sense of being overwhelmed when needing to pay rent/bills.” (p.7)
3. Crisis Response: “Every young person mentioned needing physical or mental/emotional health service. Several times, participants reflected that mental health support could have prevented their homelessness altogether. There were repeated asks for food.” (p. 7-8)
4. Mainstream Systems and Services: “...young people wanted to find services at a school. There was a consistent reflection that education, job training, and money management was foundational to career and life success.” (p.8)

Other important items that young people communicated included:

- A desire for emotional support. “There is a sense of loneliness in these responses. Young people stated wanting someone to talk to or just be with...” (p. 8)
- “The internet was both a source of opportunity and an opportunity gap.” (p.8)

This survey cannot be a one-time outreach approach – in order to be meaningful it must be sustained over time and system planners must take this input into account as decisions are made. A feedback loop to young people should also be developed through the new KCRHA in order to build trust and momentum for change and progress. Future surveys should also replicate the efforts of this survey to reach a large and diverse group of YYA by using networks throughout the County, rather than concentrating only in the City of Seattle.

## II. Framework: Vision and Goals

In order to make progress towards ending homelessness as we know it, stakeholders engaged in homelessness-related work must be united towards a common vision. This vision should drive strategies and actions that result in incremental and measurable progress toward permanent housing placements and retention that can be used to rally support and excitement about the work ahead.

### Vision

In December 2018 the community implemented a Theory of Change regarding its work on homelessness:

**If we create a homelessness response system that *centers customer voice*, then we will be able to focus on *responding to needs* and *eliminating inequities*, in order to end homelessness for all.**

This statement not only details what the community believes will create the change needed, but acts as a value statement against which stakeholders and partners should test potential actions or decisions.

Expanding on the theory of change, community stakeholders developed a vision for the desired end state of the regional homeless services system. Articulating a shared vision allowed the community to identify system-level strategies that will reduce inflow into homelessness, address the needs of people currently experiencing homelessness, and increase outflow from the homeless services system.

Success for these system-level strategies is defined in the medium-term by decreasing or ending homelessness for three highly impacted populations: unsheltered minor children in families, youth and young adults, and unsheltered adults.

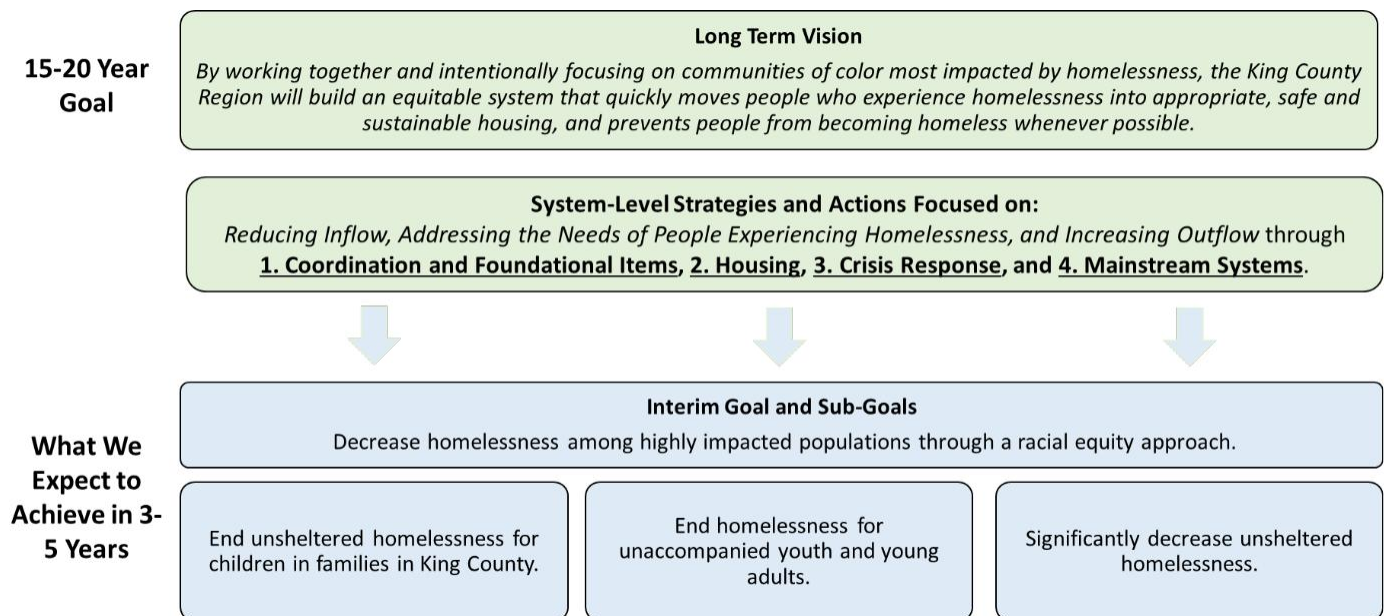


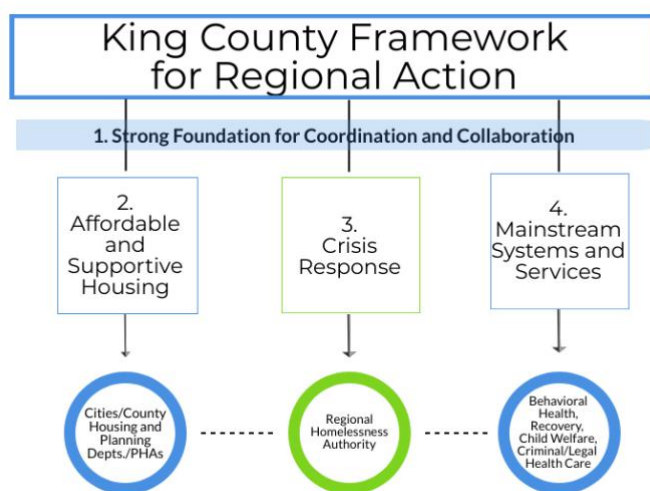
Figure 4: King County Vision and Goals

While the COVID-19 global pandemic has temporarily shifted priorities for many homeless service providers and public sector leaders to addressing the public health and economic crises it caused, it has also illustrated the risks of unsheltered homelessness not only for the people who experience it, but for the community as a whole. This pandemic has shown us that when we protect people experiencing homelessness by providing safe and affordable housing, we protect our community. It has also pointed to the incredible ingenuity and strength of many of the partners involved in the development of this Framework.

### III. How We Get There: Strategies and Actions

King County is facing an extremely difficult situation – unsheltered homelessness is at unprecedented levels; approximately half of rent-burdened, extremely low-income residents experience homelessness each year.<sup>30</sup> Thousands of people with disabilities are experiencing long-term homelessness, and there is a clear racial disproportionality as to who is impacted.

In addition to the factors present during the development of this Framework, the region must grapple with the economic and public health crises brought on by the COVID-19 global pandemic. Preliminary data shows that the same communities that are most impacted by homelessness and housing instability are also highly impacted by both the virus itself and by the financial hardships caused by job loss.



However, it is important to note that this Framework can help to provide a guide to the community in acting upon the values, priorities and strategies that will dictate how federal, state and local resources appropriated for COVID-19 response.

Note that the first step in implementation of this Framework will be for the KCRHA and other partners to develop specific implementation-operational plans. Time frames have not been addressed in the strategies detailed due to the unknowns regarding the

implementation timeline and staffing for the KCRHA.

#### Framework Components

As detailed in *Figure 1* of this document, the Framework relies on four components to organize the strategies and actions recommended.

1. Coordination and Foundational Items
2. Affordable and Supportive Housing

<sup>30</sup> Why Does Prosperous King County Have a Homeless Crisis? Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/why-does-prosperous-king-county-have-a-homelessness-crisis>

3. Crisis Response
4. Mainstream Systems and Services

These four components contain inter-related strategies that work together to form the core response needed to reach the vision articulated by this community.

Each component is summarized at the beginning of the section for ease of review.

### Prioritizing Workload

The strategies detailed in this section are far-reaching and will take significant effort from across the system to implement. It is important to note that the King County homeless assistance system is in the midst of significant change – implementation of the new KRCHA requires combining the efforts of the City of Seattle and King County, which will take time as staff and operations are merged and the new governance mechanisms are put into place. Implementation of a new External Partners Group will also take time as a new entity is brought on board and operations are implemented.

These changes – especially the implementation of the KCRHA – will necessarily rely on and impact the very people who are normally tasked with key government functions and who are providing services to people experiencing homelessness. Because those activities cannot be paused, it is imperative to prioritize the strategies that impact the most important pieces of work so that staff and providers are clear on their workloads and priorities. Of the strategies identified, four are marked with a star, indicating that co-creators have identified these strategies as the priority for immediate action.

**The sequence does not diminish the urgency of the situation** – it simply provides implementers with guidance on what actions must be taken first to achieve the most effective results.

## COMPONENT 1: COORDINATION AND FOUNDATIONAL ITEMS

Coordination and Foundational Items: Summary		
Accountability	Year One Priorities	Longer-Term Priorities
Mayors and County Executive direct cross-system implementation of the Framework.	System-wide policy development to reduce disproportionality and disparities.	Develop and implement a person-centered approach to address the needs of all sub-populations.
Collaboration between systems in alignment with Framework.	Improve and empower Coordinated Entry as a foundational system element.	Identify unique needs of all subpopulations.
City/County Councils appropriate funds to implement Framework.	Implement Framework accountability mechanisms.	Conduct system and program evaluation/continuous quality improvement.
KC Regional Homelessness Authority acts as liaison to mainstream systems.	Develop sub-regional implementation plans.	Implement and maintain evidence-based approaches and best practices.
External Partners Group reports investments to KCRHA and holds government accountable.	Implement system-level planning.	Invest in sector capacity and workforce quality.
	Coordinate communications across partners.	Advocacy to State and Federal government for increased/adjusted resources for housing and services.
Use Racial Equity and Social Justice Structure for Accountable Decision Making <sup>31</sup> Across All Components Robust Sub-Regional Planning that Clearly Addresses Subpopulations and Disparities		

### Strategies

The first step in any approach to reduce fragmentation and create collaboration across multiple systems and stakeholders is to build a strong foundation of shared values and priorities, definitions, policy development, program design and accountability through data collection, analysis and reporting.

In order to meet the long-term vision for the system as a whole, we must first address how to reduce the fragmentation of activities in the following categories:

- Policy
- Program
- Operations

### Year One Priorities

#### **1A. Develop System-Wide Policies to Reduce Disproportionality (Policy)**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority, Mainstream System Leadership

**Support:** Service Providers, Continuum of Care (CoC) Advisory Committee, Persons with Lived Experience, Office of Civil Rights/Equity and Social Justice, Cities, King County

**Description:** Disproportionality among people of color, especially AI/AN and Black people, exist within both the systems that feed into homelessness (inflow) and within the homeless system itself (housing placement). The intent of this strategy is to conduct an initial review of policies, set baseline data for the purposes of measuring progress, and conduct continuous review and

<sup>31</sup>See Appendix D for the *Racial Equity and Social Justice Structure for Accountable Decision Making*



refinement of policies and practices to reduce disproportionality over time. This will intersect with work conducted through CEA and with training strategies.

The immediate action is to implement and use the *Racial Equity and Social Justice Structure for Accountable Decision-Making*.

**1B. Improve and Empower Coordinated Entry for All as Foundational System Element (Program)**



**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Providers, CoC Advisory Committee, Mainstream Systems, Persons with Lived Experience, External Partners Group

**Description:** In order for the system to function as outlined in the vision statement, coordinated entry must operate as the functional underpinning of the system as a whole rather than as a stand-alone program. To accomplish this shift in functionality, it must be right-sized and given appropriate levels of authority to hold system partners and providers accountable for participation (minimizing external fills), adherence to foundational rules of engagement as well as implementation of by-name lists for various populations. It also must move more swiftly to fill system vacancies so housing providers minimize holding costs and risk related to funding. This work is already underway, but will take additional resources and support during the implementation of the KCRHA to be completed.

- Tool Development (Prioritization and By Name List)
- By Name Lists by Population
- Accurate Inventory of Units
- Staffing Expansion
- Accountability (reviewing current contract language/ensuring compliance with contract requirements)
- Create feedback loop with provider community

**1C. Implement Accountability Mechanisms (Operations)**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Cities in King County, King County, CoC Advisory Committee, External Partners Group

**Description:** The KCRHA will provide the central accountability mechanism for the Framework. While not all actions will be led by the KCRHA, progress against the plan should be centrally gathered from all supporting entities, tracked and reported through the Executive of the KCRHA and the governing boards. This function is critical to achieving alignment between partners in the region and maintaining transparency throughout the process of updating the Framework and implementation plans.

In addition, the KCRHA Governing Committee should play a critical role in creating cross-system coordination and problem-solving as barriers or challenges are faced by implementing staff. This will include functions such as:

- Contract Management (ensure accountability to CEA and CoC Policies/Best Practices)
- Data Analysis
- Reporting

All parties will be required to work together to create inter-related implementation plans.

**1D. Create Impactful Sub-Regional Implementation Plans (Policy)**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Cities in King County, King County, Providers, People with Lived Experience

**Description:** Homelessness is an important issue to many leaders and residents in all areas of the County. Some cities and suburban/rural areas have more access and/or dedicated resources to affordable and supportive housing, services and other related community assets than others, and all have unmet needs or are struggling with issues like vehicle homelessness, encampments or family homelessness. Therefore, as part of its implementation of this Framework, the KCRHA and sub-regional areas must collaborate to develop robust plans unique to each area's needs. Sub-regional plans will be clearly tied to accountability mechanisms, goals and strategies of the Framework so that all areas of the County will create stronger systems and have access to resources developed under this plan.

**1E. Implement Homeless System Planning and Training/Technical Assistance Capacity (Policy)**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** CoC Advisory Committee, King County, City of Seattle, People with Lived Experience, Providers, External Partners Group

**Description:** Create a *data-informed* culture at the KCRHA and with key system partners. Support a robust ongoing planning process that maximizes the availability and accuracy of data for homeless planning, creates dashboards for monthly and quarterly tracking against goals, and defines metrics that lead to short, medium and long-term success.

Establish and update system modeling (milestones, targets, crisis response need) at least annually to account for new resources or changing environment. System level performance measures should be defined, and they should appropriately inform (not be the same as) program level performance standards included in contracts. Consistently review system level decisions through racial equity lens. Allow for all data to be broken down by race/ethnicity. Data should also inform system-wide decisions on training and technical assistance.

**1F. Coordinate Communications (Operations)**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority, City/County Communications

**Support:** External Partners Group, Providers, Sound Cities Association, People with Lived Experience, Advocates, Mainstream Systems

**Description:** The KCHRA and its City/County partners will coordinate communication on behalf of all system partners, a key element to a community-wide approach. Advocates, providers and Persons with Lived Experience will identify voices of lived experience to inform public awareness campaigns and initiatives to ensure diverse and authentic participation in support of the collective work of ending homelessness. The public sector will support this work by connecting

their public relations teams with the appropriate lead staff, and meeting regularly to discuss strategy and roles for events or inquiries.

As part of this strategy, leaders should identify opportunities to recognize contributions of local partners, including mainstream systems, people with lived expertise, landlords, providers, staff and community champions. This type of recognition also works to motivate and thank public sector staff for their hard work in implementation of new governance and actions.

### Longer Term Priorities

#### **1G. Implement a Person-Centered Approach to Address the Needs of All Sub-Populations (Policy)**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Providers, People with Lived Experience, CoC Advisory Committee

**Description:** Using a [targeted universalism](#)<sup>32</sup> approach, King County can fundamentally improve the quality of its crisis response and other systems for all persons by ensuring the needs of the most impacted are fully addressed.

In order to address the needs of a diverse set of people experiencing homelessness and housing instability, the system must be re-oriented towards delivering person-centered services, interim interventions, and coordination so that the needs of all people – including those who identify in more than one sub-population – can be addressed holistically.

While programs and services tailored for some subpopulations will still continue to exist under strategy 1H, the implementation of a strong person-centered systems approach will allow the system to respond to the strengths and needs of people related to parts of their identities that may be important to them such as members of families (however they define family), people who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ), nonbinary persons, people experiencing chronically homeless, unaccompanied youth and young adults, persons with disabilities, persons of color, veterans, survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking, immigrants and refugees (to name several – this is not meant to be an exhaustive list).

#### **1H. Identify Unique Policy Needs for Specific Sub-Populations**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Providers Serving Specific Populations, People with Lived Experience, CoC Advisory Committee

**Description:** While a person-centered approach will be key to ensuring that the system as a whole meets the needs of all people, especially those who have been marginalized, it may be necessary to identify and produce policy or program design with certain populations or sub-populations. For example (not exhaustive):

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<sup>32</sup>Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society defines targeted universalism as “Targeted universalism is a platform to operationalize programs that move all groups toward the universal policy goal as well as a way of communicating and publicly marketing such programs in an inclusive, bridging manner.”

- Youth and young adults have unique developmental and program needs, and outcomes are often different for youth than for adults or families. See the box on page 22 of this document for further detail.
- Veterans and people experiencing chronic homelessness may also require specific policies to address particular needs, federal requirements or service requirements.
- LGBTQ and gender-nonconforming people experiencing homelessness require specific policy to ensure equal access to all programs. The KCHRA should refer to the Ingersoll Gender Center's report entitled "Improving Conditions for Transgender and Gender Diverse Communities within Seattle Shelter Systems" for specific recommendations.
- Survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking require specific policies to ensure safety and access to system resources.

As discussed throughout the Framework, Black and AI/AN persons who are disproportionately impacted by homelessness may need specific policy considerations to achieve the goal of decreasing disproportionality and using a targeted universalism approach.

## **1I. Conduct System and Program Evaluation/ Continuous Quality Improvement (Operations)**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority, Cities, King County

**Support:** Providers, CoC Advisory Committee, External Partners Group

**Description:** While system-level planning is an immediate priority, evaluation and improvement is a longer term strategy focused on building the infrastructure needed to evaluate plans and assist with quality improvement over time. This strategy is key to having both the discipline and flexibility needed to implement mid-course corrections or changes to this Framework or implementation plans when needed. KCHRA and its partners should:

- Continue to develop and institutionalize infrastructure to track progress, evaluate success of strategies in reaching desired outcomes, and implement course corrections as needed to ensure the successful implementation of the Framework.
- Conduct evaluation of system and program level performance on a regular basis, to ensure highest level of efficiency and effectiveness of programs. As stated in the SAAR Final report, "...developing a more robust evaluation infrastructure in Seattle/King County would significantly improve the community's positioning to make data-informed policy decisions and ultimately assist in driving down the rate of homelessness. Just as most system funders conduct periodic monitoring for contract compliance and performance assessment, the system must regularly conduct rigorous evaluation to ensure the system is performing as desired and achieving real progress towards ending homelessness."

## **1J. Implement and Maintain Evidence Based Approaches and Best Practices (Program)**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Providers, CoC Advisory Committee, External Partners Group

**Description:** The consistent implementation of evidence-based approaches is key to the performance of the homeless assistance system. For the purposes of this strategy, evidence

based approaches are defined as: housing first, trauma informed care, motivational interviewing and harm reduction. Providers should adhere to these practices in their direct service to people in their programs, and contracts should clarify requirements. The KCRHA should provide consistent training support and enter into contracts that hold providers accountable for using these practices, with proper corrective actions (including capacity building and training) identified for providers who do not meet these requirements. The KCRHA should also hold the system as a whole accountable for these practices through review of system performance, policy documents, and (as applicable) the Ombuds Office.

From time to time, local best practices may emerge from the provider community, and be funded by local philanthropy. The KCRHA should implement a review process for practices that wish to be recognized as a local best practice or evidence based approach.

**1K. Invest in Sector Capacity and Workforce Quality (Operations)**

**Lead:** City/County Government (Councils and Executive Offices)

**Support:** Advocates, People with Lived Experience, King County Regional Homelessness Authority, CoC Advisory Committee

**Description:** Meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness and housing instability is difficult work that requires provider staff and their partners to have consistency, strong internal capacity, and a high performing workforce. Providers across King County struggle to pay their staff a wage sufficient to live in the region, and front line staff themselves are often experiencing housing instability even while they work to provide affordable and supportive housing to the people whom they serve. This leads to high turnover of front line staff, and can lead to lack of trust between people experiencing homelessness and service providers as well as lack of trust between service providers and funders. Trust is key to a provision of high-quality services and a successful system.

In addition, providers must have access to capacity building activities that allow for consistent staff training and access to peer coordination and collaboration opportunities.

**1L. Advocacy to State and Federal Government for Increased/Adjusted Resources for Housing and Services (Policy)**

**Lead:** Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, City of Seattle, King County and SCA Executives

**Support:** Providers, Advocates, People with Lived Experience

**Description:** State and federal partners provide much-needed funding for key aspects of the Framework, and also can alleviate some of the regulatory challenges that create barriers to development at the local level. Specifically, local public partners can work together to advocate for items from the State or Federal government that will address such as: local taxing/fee-generating authority; progressive revenue sources; SEPA relief where possible; permit expediting; expansion of LIHTC; an increase housing choice vouchers; and including homeless-specific metrics in measuring performance of public housing authorities.

In addition to housing, the following items should be considered as part of an advocacy agenda, because these changes could positively impact how the homeless system functions:

- Change consent for Homeless Management Information System from opt-in to opt-out;
- Require Mainstream System coordination in housing and crisis response efforts
- Support additional revenue for homelessness-specific efforts.

## COMPONENT 2: ELI AFFORDABLE AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Affordable and Supportive Housing: Summary		
Accountability	Year One Priorities	Longer-Term Priorities
County Executive and mayors raise new investments and direct implementation of the ELI Housing Plan.	Using a racial equity focus: Create an ELI pipeline plan with metrics for affordable and supportive housing.	Raise enough revenue to meet the ELI affordable and supportive housing need.
ELI Housing Pipeline implementation is aligned with other housing plans and Framework strategies.	Begin raising new capital and operating revenue for ELI housing.	Expand capacity to develop and operate new ELI housing.
City/County Councils raise/appropriate funds/provide authority for revenue development.	Financially support the capacity of supportive housing providers to maximize Foundational Community Supports.	Expand capacity to provide tenancy support services in supportive housing.
State and local jurisdictions administer federal pass-through dollars according to local priorities.	Coordinate efforts of suburban cities to support the ELI pipeline.	Maximize the innovative uses of dedicated public resources and landlord engagement to expand housing options.
PHAs and non-profits develop and operate ELI housing.	Implement regulatory and policy changes to incentivize affordable housing development.	
All parties participate in advocacy at state and federal levels.	Identify options/alternative construction methods to decrease cost of development.	

### Strategies

Affordable housing is the solution to homelessness and a documented social determinant of health. Supportive housing is an evidence-based approach to pairing affordable housing with tenancy support services to help a subset of ELI renters access and remain in housing. This ELI housing framework focuses on increasing resources and capacity. Year-one goals are to create a pipeline plan for housing affordable to people with extremely low incomes and to make policy changes to expedite production of affordable and supportive housing. The Framework focuses on housing that is affordable to households who have extremely low incomes because 98% of people experiencing homelessness in King County have incomes in this income range.

### Year One Priorities

#### 2A. Create a pipeline plan for ELI affordable and supportive housing.



**Lead:** Co-leadership between the City of Seattle Office of Housing and the King County Department of Community and Human Services

**Support:** A Regional Coalition for Housing, King County Housing Authority, Seattle Housing Authority, Renton Housing Authority, the Regional Affordable Housing Committee, South King Housing and Homelessness Partners, Suburban Cities that provide leadership and/or investment in affordable housing, Washington State Department of Commerce, Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Washington State Health Care Authority, King County Regional Homelessness Authority, ELI housing developers and operators, tenancy support service providers.



**Description:** Establish annual targets for ELI housing production over a designated period of time, e.g. eight-ten years. Create and implement monitoring of financing, production, quality, access, and housing retention.

King County communities are poised to begin work on the ELI Pipeline with an advantage over other communities because they have recently completed one of the most comprehensive affordable housing needs analysis in the country, the results of which are included in this Framework. King County and cities in the region are also well-positioned for immediate action because of their robust funder coordination and use of a common application form among multiple funders. Immediate next steps include the following.

Within 12 months, create and publish an ELI Housing Pipeline Plan and Public Dashboard that includes:

- Shared priorities, timelines (including the need to respond to opportunities when they arise), and responsibilities for managing the pipeline and production among multiple cities and funders.
- A dashboard that includes annual targets for financing, developing, and leasing ELI housing with a prioritization on the creation of supportive housing for people who meet applicable eligibility criteria and are currently unsheltered.
- Production targets that focus on new construction and acquisition/rehabilitation to increase the net supply of ELI housing with smaller targets for leasing with rental subsidies in the private rental market.
- Commonly-established eligibility criteria for all new supportive housing that mirror those of the State's Foundational Community Supports program to leverage sustainable revenue for the provision of tenancy support services.
- Metrics for monitoring leasing, occupancy rates, housing retention, and providing quality assurance to investors with a focus on racial equity.
- Monitoring of opportunities and strategic decision-making regarding the relative merits of acquiring and preserving existing housing not currently affordable to households with extremely low incomes, which might not include hotels and motels that can be renovated for permanent housing and paired with deep rental subsidies or held for long-term affordability.
- Coordination with the Regional Affordable Housing Committee to track progress, ensure alignment, and coordinate reporting on regional efforts to track further losses or increases in private market housing for households whose incomes are 30-80% of the area median.

**2B. Begin raising new revenue for the capital, operating, rental assistance, and services of ELI affordable and supportive housing.**

**Lead:** Executive Offices of Cities and County

**Support:** External Partners Group, State of Washington, Third Door Coalition, King County Regional Homeless Authority, entities with resources currently prioritized to create ELI housing and other, new interested parties.

**Description:** To meet the long term vision for ending homelessness for those currently experiencing it and at the greatest risk, the community will need to invest heavily in building new affordable and supportive housing for residents whose incomes are below 30% of AMI. While the cost of development in King County is high, the cost of not addressing this need is higher – to people experiencing homelessness and housing instability, to the region, and to public systems.

**2C. Implement appropriate regulatory and policy changes to incentivize ELI affordable and supportive housing development.**

**Lead:** Executive Offices, Planning Departments, and Housing Departments of Cities and County

**Support:** Third Door Coalition, Nonprofit and Private Housing Developers, PHAs, External Partners Group

**Description:** Cross reference local regulations, policies, processes, and construction methods with those of other areas of the country and update local approaches to reduce costs and expedite acquisition, siting, and permitting of affordable and supportive housing.

*Longer Term Priorities*

**2C. Raise new revenue for the capital, operating, rental assistance, and services of new ELI affordable and supportive housing.**



**Lead:** Executive Offices of Cities and County

**Support:** External Partners Group, State of Washington, Third Door Coalition, King County Regional Homeless Authority, entities with resources currently prioritized to create ELI housing and other, new interested parties.

**Description:** Fundraising will need to continue throughout implementation to create the ELI housing needed for all King County residents to be able to afford to live indoors. Short-term and one-time investments (e.g. private capital donations) should be used for short-term uses while long-term resources should be committed to long-term uses (e.g. public operating, rental assistance and services funding). (Leaders should also continue to prioritize the use of the deepest existing public subsidies, e.g. 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits for capital, dedicated PHA rental assistance, and State Foundational Community Supports for tenancy support services to drive the creation of new supportive housing while maintaining the quality of existing ELI housing.)

**2D. Expand capacity to develop new affordable and supportive housing.**

**Lead:** Co-leadership between Seattle Office of Housing and King County Department of Community and Human Services

**Support:** A Regional Coalition for Housing, Suburban Cities that provide leadership and/or investment in ELI housing, the Regional Affordable Housing Committee, Washington State

Department of Commerce, Washington State Housing Finance Commission, affordable, and public and private supportive housing developers, operators.

**Description:** Developing quality ELI housing at scale will require an unprecedented effort on behalf of nonprofit and private developers. Strategies such as turn-key development and new incentives will need to be enhanced, and the private and public sectors will need to work together in new ways to balance expediency in development with the need for quality and long-term affordability and sustainability. Early-lending capacity for the pipeline will require expanding resources (ideally including multi-sector investments) and ensuring nimbleness of intermediaries that provide start-up capital.

**2 E. Expand capacity to operate and deliver services in affordable and supportive housing.**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homeless Authority

**Support:** External partners Group, King County Department of Community and Human Services, Washington State Department of Commerce, Washington State Healthcare Authority, Seattle Office of Housing and tenancy supports service providers.

**Description:** A significant uptick in production will require early and thoughtful capacity-building for the organizations who will successfully own, operate, and provide services in affordable and supportive housing, i.e. nonprofits and PHAs. This will include a need for infrastructure enhancements such as information technology capacity, physical office space increases, support with management systems and hiring, training in culturally-specific approaches, race equity, and the evidence-based practices of Housing First, Trauma Informed Care, Motivational Interviewing, and Harm Reduction.

**2F. Maximize the innovative uses of dedicated public resources and landlord engagement to expand housing options.**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Executive Offices of County and Cities, King County Department of Community and Human Services, Seattle Office of Housing, King County Housing Authority, Seattle Housing Authority, Renton Housing Authority, Faith Communities, Service Providers, Nonprofit and Private Landlords

**Description:** King County Regional Homeless Authority will learn about and support efforts of its partner agencies to maximize the use of existing and new strategies that further engage the affordable and private rental sectors to create movement in the system while additional housing resources are coming online. Guidance on how to implement these options should ensure long-term housing retention and consistency with approaches in the Crisis Response System. Efforts to prioritize existing affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness should ensure a net-zero loss of affordable and supportive housing for households whose incomes are between zero and 80 percent of the area median. Enhanced and new, smaller strategies may include:

- Developing shared housing, room-leasing, and roommate-matching

- Developing a long-term shallow rent-subsidy program in which tenants pay more than 30% of their incomes on rent and utilities (implemented as a percentage of income or a flat-rent amount) while keeping rent/utility burdens well below 60% of income).
- Land-banking.
- Exploring racial equity enhancements and potential limited expansion of existing successful strategies such as “Moving On,” which assist a small percentage of supportive housing tenants who no longer need intensive tenancy supports to transition to new apartments to make room for people in need of supportive housing; converting existing remaining, time-limited transitional housing to permanent housing; and expanding the Housing Connector program, which engages and supports private-market landlords interested in renting to ELI households.
- Financial incentives and rewards for providers who create innovative practices that produce permanent affordable housing with long-term housing stability outcomes for ELI households and communities.

### COMPONENT 3: CRISIS RESPONSE

Crisis Response: Summary		
Accountability	Year One Priorities	Longer-Term Priorities
KCHRA leads on activities.	Using an equity focus: Improve and empower Coordinated Entry as a foundational system element.	Decrease inflow by scaling diversion to at least 10% of inflow.
KCHRA collaborates with mainstream systems in alignment with Framework.	Close gap in households enrolled versus housed in Rapid Re-Housing.	Decrease inflow by scaling prevention programs across all systems.
City/County Councils appropriate funds to implement Framework.	Scale diversion to as close to 10% of inflow as possible.	Implement coordinated outreach framework.
State and Federal funds allocated by grantees.	Right-size temporary options (shelter and safe parking).	
Advocacy at state and federal levels.	Develop implementation and sub-regional plans.	
External Partners Group reports investments to KCHRA and holds government accountable.	Establish annual metrics.	

#### Strategies

This Framework identifies the need to build sufficient affordable and supportive housing supply to solve the homeless crisis. It also calls for aggressive interim strategies to address immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness.

The system as a whole should continue to scale crisis response through implementation of enhanced shelter, creating a coordinated outreach framework, and enhancing the services necessary to support medical, substance use, behavioral health and other needs of people living in shelter and in unsheltered locations.

All priorities described in this section must be implemented using an equity focus.

#### Year One Priorities

#### **3A. Improve and Empower Coordinated Entry for All as Foundational System Element (already detailed in Section 1)**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Providers, CoC Advisory Committee, Mainstream Systems, Persons with Lived Experience, External Partners Group

**Description:** See Section 1B on page 30

### **3B. Close Gap in Households Enrolled versus Housed in Rapid Re-Housing**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Providers, Housing Connector, Affordable Housing Property Managers, Businesses

**Description:** Rapid Re-Housing is a successful intervention in King County for households that can access affordable units. As of June 30, 2019 - 3,014 households are enrolled in RRH, but only about 72% in Q2 of 2019 were housed. It takes on average 84 days (all populations) to move into a unit in the RRH program. The intent of this strategy is to find innovative ways to close the gap between household enrolled and housed, to set the stage for future expansion. The current rate of returns to homelessness in 24 months was 11% in 2018.

This strategy is closely tied to the strategy to increase access to available market rate units.

### **3C. Scale Diversion as Close to 10% of Inflow as Possible**



**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** External Partners Group

**Description:** Diversion has proven to be a successful intervention to decrease inflow into homelessness by helping people who are facing homelessness find safe, shared-housing options with family and friends or negotiating with landlords. Specifically, scaling the existing, local Centralized Diversion Fund (which is based on racial equity principles) should be a key activity to increase diversion from 3% of inflow (currently) to 10% of inflow within five years. Investment in this type of program should be considered by private sector partners.

Development of implementation plans should include a clear program definition of diversion (versus prevention) to ensure clarity regarding annual targets and potential partners/funding sources.

### **3D. Right Size Shelter and Safe Parking Options Temporary Options**



**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Providers, Business, Faith Community

**Description:** In order to better serve people currently living in unsheltered locations and in vehicles, the KCRHA should expand shelter and safe parking options available and enhance services in some current shelter operations, to provide a mix of options that provide accessible, safe sheltering options paired with supports to help people move back into permanent housing, including safe parking and enhanced shelter with navigation services.

The KCRHA should not invest in permanent shelter structures (unless a specific sub-region has no permanent options, as is the case in South King County) but rather identify public or private building to be used temporarily until enough housing and rental assistance are in place. Three key factors impact the need for shelter capacity:

- Average length of stay in shelter
- Utilization, and

- Diversion rate.

Therefore, the system should work to increase utilization, and as housing resources become available to increase diversion and rapid resolution work to decrease the average length of stay. These changes over time will decrease the need for additional temporary shelter options.

Regularly review outcome data for success rates for returning to permanent housing disaggregated by race for enhanced versus basic shelter.

*Note on COVID-19: The global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted homeless services in several ways, but no area more so than congregate shelter operations. Shelter operators across the country struggle to implement proper social distancing and public health protocols in congregate spaces. This has prompted a nation-wide discussion on the appropriateness of congregate shelter as an intervention, and whether the field should move to non-congregate models. KCHRA should convene discussions with homeless service providers and public health experts on this topic, and must make decisions with a clear sense of trade-offs that would be required in order to implement non-congregate models in the future.*

### **3E. Create Implementation Plan (per ILA)**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Cities, County, SCA, Providers, Faith Community, Regional HACs

**Description:** Within year one of Framework implementation, KCHRA and its partners should create an implementation plan that specifically addresses:

- Sub-regional details
- Disproportionality
- Sub-population needs as appropriate

Establish metrics and annual milestones that reflect need to measure and make progress on decreasing racial disproportionality

Youth and Young Adults: The implementation plan for YYA should build on existing Continuum of care and provider plans as a blueprint for youth activities.

Families: The Gates Foundation Impact Report on its Family Homelessness Initiative and its previous work with families should inform priorities for families included in specific implementation plans.

#### Longer Term Priorities

### **3F. Decrease Inflow by Scaling Diversion to at Least 10% of Inflow**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** External Partners Group

**Description:** Diversion has proven to be a successful intervention to decrease inflow into homelessness. Specifically, scaling the Centralized Diversion Fund (which is based on racial equity principles) should be a key activity to increase diversion from 3% of inflow (currently) to

10% of inflow within five years. Investment in this type of program should be considered by private sector partners or through CARES Act funding that is newly available.

Development of implementation plans should include a clear program definition of diversion (versus prevention) to ensure clarity regarding annual targets and potential partners/funding sources.

### **3G. Decrease Inflow by Scaling Prevention Across Systems**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority/Mainstream Systems

**Support:** Providers, Business, External Partners Group, Public Housing Authorities

**Description:** This strategy is closely tied to both scaling diversion (Crisis Response: Immediate) and cross-systems collaboration (Mainstream Systems and Services: Long term). As detailed in the [McKinsey article](#) released in January 2020, even though the capacity of current crisis response system is maximized, inflow into homelessness outpaces exits. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure long-term efforts are in place to identify how systems can work together to address housing instability so that people can either keep their housing or exit institutional settings without experiencing homelessness. Areas of focus include:

- Identifying and scaling successful prevention programs that serve people at different points of instability:
  - Preventing homelessness for people with affordability and temporary crises is conducted through the King County’s homelessness prevention program, which is considered “downstream prevention”.
  - “Upstream prevention” conducted through community based employment efforts and cross-system collaboration and planning.
- In addition to these prevention approaches, diversion has been successful in decreasing inflow in King County. It is unlikely that diversion can be fully scaled in Year One to the target of 10% of inflow. Therefore, the long-term strategy is to scale these efforts to reach at least 10% of inflow into homelessness.

In order to be most effective and coordinated through these approaches, leaders from upstream prevention, downstream prevention and diversion programs should lead conversations among community programs and the feeder institutions and their customers to develop specific plans to stem inflow. Philanthropy and other non-governmental funders can convene these important discussions and to financially support diversion and upstream prevention programs while housing resources are being developed.

### **3H. Implement Coordinated Outreach Framework**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Outreach Providers, People with Lived Experience, HUD TA

**Description:** Outreach is a critical component of the crisis response system, and generally has two fundamental functions: to provide life-saving services to people living in unsheltered



locations or in vehicles, and to connect people experiencing homeless to housing and services they want and need. Outreach in King County lacks cross-county coordination and a housing focused approach. In 2018 only 1,588 persons were exited from outreach, although 58% of those were positive outcomes.

## COMPONENT 4: MAINSTREAM SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

Mainstream Systems and Services: Summary		
Accountability	Year One Priorities	Longer-Term Priorities
Mayors and County Executive direct cross-system implementation of the Framework.	Using an equity focus: In-reach into acute care settings/hospitals to identify at-risk families with children.	Create cross-system leadership council to develop plan to reduce inflow into homelessness.
Collaboration between systems in alignment with Framework. Leadership Council reports on collaboration to Mayors and County Executive.	Conduct in-reach into institutional settings to identify areas that prevention can be implemented or improved.	Align access to behavioral health and other health care services for housing and crisis response.
City/County Councils appropriate funds/provide authority for revenue development.	Create plans for mainstream implementation of this Framework.	Reduce inflow through cross system collaboration and data sharing.
State and Federal funds allocated by grantees and PHAs.	Establish annual metrics.	Increase income and employment for people experiencing homelessness and housing instability.
Advocacy at state and federal levels.		

### Strategies

Mainstream systems intersect with homelessness in important ways that could be changed to serve people better.

- Youth exiting the Child Welfare foster care system experience homelessness at a rate of 25% within one year of exiting.
- The Justice system often jails people with extremely low incomes whose crimes are symptoms of homelessness, and people exiting jail are often discharged back into homelessness.
- The Healthcare system provides a significant amount of home and community-based services, but these services are not often accessible to people experiencing homelessness and significant housing instability. It also continues to provide services in institutional and congregate settings such as mental health hospitals, nursing homes, hospitals, and group homes to people who could instead live independently in supportive housing if there were sufficient behavioral health and tenancy support services.

While mainstream service systems are designed to provide healthcare, rehabilitation, independence, and support, they are often ill-equipped to serve the people who need them the most. As a result, resources are wasted and racial inequities are perpetuated.

The homeless system cannot address these issues alone. Therefore, it is critical that mainstream systems are fully engaged in activities designed to both decrease the inflow into homelessness and increase exits from homelessness into stable housing through the provision of appropriate services. The homeless system will never be successful if it continues to bear the burden of addressing the inadequacies of mainstream service systems while attempting to re-house people with the greatest needs.

Strategies included under this component of the Framework rely heavily on the work conducted through *One Table*<sup>33</sup>. The recommendations released as a result of the One Table process are incorporated throughout the year one and longer term priorities outlined below.

#### Year One Priorities

#### **4A. Conduct In-Reach into Hospital Systems: Prevent Families with Sick Children from Becoming Homeless**

**Lead:** Family Shelter Providers, King County Regional Homelessness Authority, Hospital Systems

**Support:** State of WA, City of Seattle, King County, Managed Care, Legal Aid, External Partners Group, Ronald McDonald House

**Description:** A relatively new dynamic has emerged among families with children who need medical attention or who are newborns – they are experiencing housing instability and homelessness while receiving medical treatment. While the data is incomplete in this area, family service providers and hospitals report that although resources like Ronald McDonald House exist for the families of children while they are in inpatient treatment, there is no corresponding resource for unstably housed children who are in outpatient treatment for serious illnesses or who have been recently discharged. The result is that sick children or newborns and their families are sleeping in car camps or are entering the emergency shelter system without the supports necessary to either maintain their housing in another part of the state or identify new housing in King County.

#### **4B. Conduct In-reach into Institutional Settings to Improve Discharge Planning and Prevention**

**Lead:** Mainstream Systems, King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** State of WA, City of Seattle, King County, Managed Care

**Description:** Exits from institutional and congregate system settings can lead to homelessness and housing instability. Mainstream systems should work with KCHRA to expand in-reach into institutional settings and set up discharge planning structures that support people in moving directly into permanent housing.

#### **4C. Mainstream Systems and Services: Implementation and Sub-Regional Planning**

**Lead:** Mainstream Systems Leaders, King County Regional Homelessness Authority

**Support:** Cities, County, SCA, Providers

**Description:** Within year one of Framework implementation, Mainstream Systems Leadership, in consultation with the KCRHA and its partners, should create an implementation plan that specifically addresses:

- Inflow into homelessness
- Disproportionality
- Sub-population needs as appropriate

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<sup>33</sup><https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/housing/services/homeless-housing/one-table.aspx>

- Sub-regional details as appropriate

Establish metrics and annual milestones that reflect need to measure and make progress on decreasing racial disproportionality.

#### Longer Term Priorities

#### **4D. Create Cross-System Leadership Council to Develop Plan to Reduce Inflow into Homelessness**

**Lead:** Mayors, County Executive, City/County Councils

**Support:** State of WA, King County, Cities in King County

**Description:** Implementation of a cross-system leadership council is key to ensuring that mainstream systems work together with KCHRA, under the direction of executive offices, to identify resources and plans to address both prevention of homelessness (for example, exits from systems directly into homelessness) and services to people experiencing homelessness or who are in permanent supportive housing. A leadership council will ensure the appropriate level of executive and system level involvement and allow for innovation.

#### **4E. Align Access to Behavioral Health and Other Health Care Services for Housing and Crisis Response**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority/King County DCHS Behavioral Health and Recovery Division

**Support:** State of WA, King County

**Description:** There are not adequate health services to support safe and stable exits from living outside for people experiencing chronic unsheltered homelessness. There have been many behavioral health improvements and innovations in King County, however, the lack of targeted care for people experiencing homelessness is a significant barrier. State-wide funding and changes to the managed care of behavioral health create needs and opportunities to fully fund and address behavioral health needs.

- Identify providers not accessing the Foundational Community Supports Benefit (Medicaid funding supportive services in housing). Conduct focus groups or individualized engagement to determine barriers and strategy to address their concerns including opportunities for funding support.
- Ensure any health related services specific to people experiencing homelessness can be provided with physical care and behavioral health care being coordinated.
- Expand access to low-barrier emergency shelter for substance users to ensure shelter is accessible. Increase access to street-based and physically located mental health services.
- Expand access to both low-barrier, supportive housing for substance users and sober housing to ensure housing is accessible for both substance users and non-substance users.
- Ensure access to medication treatment for opioid and heroin use disorder remains readily available at service locations.

- Expand high barrier/high impact eviction mitigation services through providing clinical staffing and interventions to reduce eviction proceedings resulting from behavioral health problems.

#### **4F. Reduce Inflow Through Robust Cross-System Coordination/Collaboration**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority CEO/Mainstream System Leadership

**Support:** Cities and County

**Description:** The Executive at the KCRHA must be closely connected to leadership of the Justice, Child Welfare, Behavioral Health/Recovery, Education, Workforce and Healthcare systems to identify specific opportunities to conduct upstream homelessness prevention or in-reach to mainstream systems that discharge into homelessness.

Priorities for this strategy include:

- Joint planning between the KCRHA and other system leaders.
- Conducting data matching for County operated systems (to start) through an integrated data hub to understand the scope of system intersection as well as racial disparities.
- Identification and re-directing of funding sources within mainstream systems to serve people experiencing homelessness.
- Families with children living in unsheltered situations can be identified through robust coordination with McKinney-Vento school liaisons within the public school system. Liaisons should have direct connection to the family shelter system in order to refer high-need/unsheltered families for placement into shelter or housing resources.
- Using a racial equity approach, identify potential pilot programs to house people who make the most frequent use of systems that are not designed to adequately meet their needs.

Behavioral Health Priorities (from One Table):

- Create a housing stabilization fund to pay rent in order to preserve housing while people are receiving inpatient treatment (priority).
- Fund an incentive pool so that behavioral health providers bring services to people whether in housing, shelters or unsheltered (priority).
- Expand care options that connect individuals experiencing behavioral health crisis with peers who have similar lived experience, and create peer crisis respite houses in all communities throughout King.
- Provide resources for inpatient treatment programs to find stable, long-term housing for people exiting treatment.

Child Welfare Priorities (from One Table):

- Increase investments in family reunification (priority).
- Provide counseling, training and behavioral health services for families at risk of child welfare system engagement (priority).
- Implement a campaign to increase foster families of color and increase availability of foster placements for youth of color (priority).
- Broaden the extended foster care program to provide youth up to age 25 with comprehensive, person-centered services.

- Recruit, incentivize and support people of color and/or people with lived experience in the child welfare system to become social workers.

Justice Priorities (from One Table):

- Work with the criminal justice system (judges, staff, and law enforcement) to increase understanding on homelessness and housing needs (priority).
- Pass fair housing laws in King County and local municipalities that support housing choices for individuals with criminal records (priority).
- Divert low-level homelessness-related bookings to services rather than jail (priority).
- Conduct an analysis of current criminal justice investments to determine if any can be redirected to early intervention, diversion and behavioral health services.
- Human-centered and racially explicit review and redesign of compliance requirements so that they do not penalize homelessness and poverty.

#### **4G. Increase Income and Employment for People Experiencing Homelessness and Housing Instability**

**Lead:** King County Regional Homelessness Authority/Mainstream Workforce Development and Employment Programs

**Support:** VA, Business, WIOA, Behavioral Health

**Description:** As described in the December 2019 NIS Report, income supports are key to both preventing or diverting homelessness and mitigating the number of returns to homelessness due to economic instability. Mainstream workforce systems should align resources and metrics with homeless development programs and identify new funding for these supports. The KCRHA and its mainstream partners should work with government and local businesses to identify opportunities for prioritizing employment for persons experiencing homelessness within the local economy. The Foundational Community Supports benefit for supported employment should be maximized for people who need an IPS approach.

Strategies Identified through the One Table process include:

- Expand and improve opportunities in the behavioral health workforce for people with lived experience, particularly for people of color.
- Scale King County Jobs Initiative and increase other dedicated funds for training pathways in high wage jobs for groups most at risk of homelessness.
- Change employment program policies to allow for more flexible funding to address needs of individuals and prevent homelessness.
- Train housing and homeless service providers on income/employment referral options.
- Place more high-quality teachers, counselors and community-based mentors in the highest poverty middle schools to support youth in need/at risk.

#### IV. Measuring Progress: Outcomes and Milestones

The KCRHA must build a data-informed culture within the new organization that relies on real-time information to award resources, make informed decisions and determine when mid-course corrections are needed. Using this data on a regular basis and reporting progress or challenges to people with lived experience, the broader community and to organizational leadership increases transparency, accountability and trust across the system. The tools needed to build this culture at the KCRHA already exist – the HMIS system and current analytic capabilities of staff and technology are well positioned for this purpose.

##### Tracking System Outputs and Outcomes: Year One

The Framework outlines the metrics required to track progress against the goals and strategies. These metrics are broken out into three main categories: Decreasing Inflow, Increasing Capacity, and Increasing Outflow. Data dashboards with these key indicators (in addition to the dashboards already in place) can be used for reporting purposes. Additional dashboards should be created to track progress on process actions.

Outputs
Development of Implementation Plans and Metrics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing Development and Revenue Generation</li><li>• Crisis Response (ILA Required)</li><li>• Mainstream Systems</li><li>• Development of Sub-Regional Plans</li></ul>
Development of Coordination and Foundational Items
Improvement and Expansion of CEA (process steps e.g. staffing, unit tracking, tool development, by name list development, contract language, etc.)
Temporary Options: Number of ES Beds and Safe Parking Slots as Compared to 2019 Baseline
Diversion Slots and Funding
Data quality for HMIS/CEA

Outcomes
Number/percentage of total inflow of households diverted
Inflow into CEA – Number of households, race, location at entry (other systems) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families/children</li> <li>• YYA</li> <li>• Unsheltered (include veterans and CH here)</li> <li>• Newly homeless/returns to homelessness</li> </ul>
Outflow: Placed into housing through CEA (including race) – Number of households and destination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families/children</li> <li>• YYA</li> <li>• Unsheltered (include veterans and CH here)</li> </ul>
Households housed through RRH against 2019 baseline (versus enrolled only)
Number of children in unsheltered locations Number of children in shelter and entering from hospitals
Total number of unsheltered persons (HMIS)
Average length of homeless episode (Families, YYA, Unsheltered including Veterans and CH)
Disproportionality at entry and exit. Relative/absolute difference between race/ethnicity distribution of system inflow/outflow and the King County population

### **Driving Progress**

The desired outcome for the system in the long term is to end homelessness for the households that experience it. Because the program, resources and strategies for populations may differ, it is often more effective to create housing placement targets by population. The medium-term outcomes outlined in this Framework include progress on unsheltered families with children, youth and young adults and unsheltered persons. Therefore, forecasts should be created to track progress on reaching these outcomes. Progress on decreasing homelessness for people experiencing chronic homelessness and veterans – national priorities that will contribute to meeting medium-term desired outcomes – should also be closely tracked.

Changes in the forecast will occur as a result of the following investments:

1. Addition of supportive or affordable housing inventory
2. Increased diversion and prevention
3. Robust management of inflow through coordinated entry and housing navigation
  - a. Problem solving and diversion when possible
  - b. Accurate matching to appropriate housing resource
  - c. Ensuring that a higher percentage of referrals to housing result in a move-in
  - d. Reducing the average length of time from assessment to housing



## **Appendix A**

### **King County Framework for Regional Action: Stakeholders and Engagement**

#### **Public Sector Staff Co-Creator Group**

##### **(City of Seattle, King County, All Home)**

Jess Chow  
Mary Flowers  
Thalia Garcia  
Lamont Green  
Alex Ibrahim  
Owen Kajfasz  
Dusty Olson  
Felicia Salcedo  
Kate Speltz  
Triina Van  
Danielle Winslow

#### **Provider Co-Creator Group**

Catholic Community  
Services Chief Seattle Club  
DESC  
El Centro de la Raza  
Mary's Place  
Plymouth Housing  
Public Defender Association  
Refugee Women's Alliance  
Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness  
Youth Collaborative  
YWCA

#### **People with Lived Expertise**

End Youth Homelessness Now Youth  
Action Board  
Lived Experience Coalition (Leadership,  
Full Coalition)  
Undoing Institutional Racism Collaborative

#### **Public Sector**

All Home: Staff, Continuum of Care  
Board, System Performance Committee  
City of Seattle: Human Services Department,  
Office of Housing, Embedding  
Equity/GARE Team, Office of the Mayor  
City and County Council Staff  
King County: Department of Community and  
Human Services (Data Team (with Seattle),  
Coordinated Entry Team, Contracts), Office  
of the County Executive

Federal (HUD) Technical Assistance  
King County Housing Authority  
Seattle Housing Authority  
Sound Cities Association  
U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

#### **Other Stakeholders and Community**

**Meetings** Building Changes  
Coalition on Ending Gender Based Violence  
East King County HAC  
External Partners Group  
Ingersoll Gender Center  
McKinsey and Company  
Mockingbird Society North King  
County HAC SKCCH Community  
Meetings South King County  
HAC Meetings Third Door  
Coalition  
Youth Collaborative Meeting (various  
providers, 1/2020)

#### **Funders and Business**

Ballmer Group  
Bill and Melinda Gates  
Foundation Microsoft  
Raikes Foundation  
Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of  
Commerce Vulcan Inc.

## **Appendix B**

### **King County Framework for Regional Action: Sources of Information for People Exiting and Living in Public Institutions**

#### **Child Welfare Families Data:**

The King County Housing Authority's Family Unification Program Statement of Need (2018), which is rooted in data from the Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families.

#### **Data on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care:**

Rate of need is based on extensive national research on the prevalence of homelessness among transition-aged youth, data from the Seattle/King County CoC Point in Time Count, 2018, and conversations with local stakeholders.

#### **Jail Data:**

The King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention *Detention and Alternatives Report November 2019 Annual ADP*. The 19% rate of need was based on interviews and input from local stakeholders, and was applied to the average daily jail population.

#### **Juvenile Justice Data:**

The King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention, *Detention and Alternatives Report November 2019 Annual ADP* and a share of the average daily population supported by national and local research, which is heavily informed by the *Local Roadmap to Zero Youth Detention*, King County's strategic plan to further reduce the use of secure detention for youth and launch the County on a journey to eliminate it.

#### **Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Data:**

The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration *2019 Caseload and Cost Report*. Data from this report takes into account the housing situation of individuals receiving different tiered services. Rates of need were determined based on the share of individuals that could live independently with support but are currently housed in institutional or residential settings, or of older adults living with aging parents. This data is based on a statewide total, and uses the proportional share of the population attributable to King County.

#### **Mental Health System Data:**

A 2017 summary of the Community Alternatives to Boarding Task Force and conversations with County staff. Total need reflects a combination of individuals voluntarily and involuntarily boarded for mental health, and is based on rates of successful returns vs. recidivism per intervention type.

#### **Substance Use System Data:**

The King County Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division's *Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Annual Report 2014*.

#### **Data on Older Adults:**

The Seattle-King County Area Agency on Aging 2016-2019 Area Plan. Numbers reflect direct outputs from the report regarding the share of aging individuals that do or will need support to live independently.

## Appendix C

# A Youth and Young Adult Community Response To the Regional Action Plan

The Mockingbird Society's & King County Youth Action Board's Report

May 2020



## **Final Report Contributors:**

### ***The Mockingbird Society***

**Lauren Frederick:** Public Policy and Advocacy Manager of The Mockingbird Society

**Amanda Sandoval:** Public Policy Coordinator of The Mockingbird Society

**Wesley Stewart:** King County Network Representative of The Mockingbird Society

### ***End Youth Homelessness Now Youth Action Board***

**Jonathan Hemphill:** President of the End Youth Homelessness Now Youth Action Board

**Orion Olsen:** Vice President of the End Youth Homelessness Now Youth Action Board

**Brianna Franco:** Public Relations and Communications Officer of the End Youth Homelessness Now Youth Action Board

### ***End Youth Homelessness Now***

**Dr. LaMont Green:** Initiative Director of End Youth Homelessness Now

**Latrice Donahue:** Project/Program Manager III, End Youth Homelessness Now

## **Acknowledgments**

This report would not be possible without all the voices of the young people in King County who participated and who are the experts in their own experience and are the ones we need to look to for solutions. This was a joint effort between The Mockingbird Society and the End Youth Homelessness Now Youth Action Board with support from the End Youth Homelessness Now campaign. The Mockingbird Society is grateful to the Raikes Foundation for supporting our work in King County. Thank you again to all who gave feedback, and who helped put this report together, it was important to us that this was the voices of young people, written by young people!

## **Summary**

In the Fall of 2019, the City of Seattle and King County signed an interlocal agreement to create a regional homelessness authority, the intent is to help coordinate a unified response. A part of that authority is to create a regional action plan (RAP), a community plan that would be the roadmap to help provide success benchmarks, milestones and recommendations as we move forward with this work. In order to have a RAP that is truly informed by the community the RAP needs to center around the voices and experiences of those with lived experience including those of youth and young adults (YYA) who are experiencing homelessness and receiving services county wide; It is crucial, as they are most impacted by the structures and plans included in the RAP.

As such, The Mockingbird Society (TMS) compiled the King County Youth and Young Adult Plan Survey in March and April of 2020. In partnership with the End Youth Homelessness Now Campaign's Youth Action Board (YAB), this is the final written report of the survey findings.

The purpose of the survey was to gather the experiences, needs, wants and suggestions of homeless YYA throughout King County regarding the following:

1. Prevention of Homelessness
2. Crisis Intervention
3. Long-term services
4. Aftercare Services
5. Stable housing
6. Permanent  
Connections
7. Employment and  
Education

## **Survey Goal**

We believe that for a Regional Homeless Authority to function most effectively, it should be informed by the experiences and knowledge from impacted communities. Our goal in this survey was to collect general feedback on young people's experience, and synthesize that into clear, concise, and relevant data. This report is not an effort to present a detailed picture on any one person's journey, but rather a depiction of trends. This data is to be used as qualitative evidence when constructing a work plan to the homelessness and housing crisis as it applies to youth and young adults.

## **Survey Process**

This Report did not benefit from a perfect process. There were multiple external and unavoidable circumstances that hindered our ability to engage with young people. Because homelessness is more than just an issue with affordable housing, young people experience an incredible digital inequality which corrupted a comprehensive assessment. Our process for outreach included sharing our materials with service providers at the staff and director level. In addition to social media posts, we also utilized TMS Network Representatives and the YAB to share directly with young people. There were multiple ways for participants to complete the survey: online, by phone, or paper copy. The survey was open for almost two weeks before we became overburdened and had to shut down.

Although there was a financial incentive to complete the survey, too many young people were overwhelmed with COVID-19, housing insecurity, and a digital divide to fully engage with our outreach. For a more robust process, there should be more communication infrastructure and networks for service providers, advocates, government bodies, and young people to quickly and safely share knowledge. A "snapshot" in time quickly becomes irrelevant when other environmental circumstances impact our homeless neighbors. A standardized process for continuous feedback is imperative for effective crisis management. Furthermore, young people's needs for easy and cheap access to the internet and other technologies was increasingly apparent. As society becomes more and more paperless, we cannot allow poor communities to suffer additional inequities.

## **Survey method/results**

Data for this report was collected via an online survey created using survey monkey. Each survey had a total of 20 questions; five of those questions were demographic questions (See appendix A for full survey questions). Respondents were those ages 13-26, who have or are currently experiencing homelessness, and were asked for their opinion on the new regional action plan, for those who have not heard of the plan prior to this they were given an information sheet to explain what exactly it is (see appendix B). A total of 110 individuals were included in the survey, each participant was given a \$25 gift card to Target for their feedback.

In order to recruit participants that fully reflected the youth and young adult population in King County we reached out to partners throughout the different regions of King County, with a specific emphasis on South King County, East King County, and rural areas. As we know a lot of times these areas are not engaged in the same way that Seattle and surrounding areas are. We also emphasized reaching out to service providers that serve Native American, LGBTQ+, and youth of color as we know there are disparities among these populations. Overall, we sent our survey to 25 different coalitions, organizations, and committees.

Although we sent our survey to several partners that worked with diverse groups of people to include the ones we mentioned above, we were surprised to see that out of 110 responses just under 51.38% of individuals identified as white. We think much of this has to do with additional barriers that COVID-19 produced, such as many shelters and drop in centers for young people were temporarily closed or operating at reduced hours, and so many did not hear about this opportunity, as well as many young people access Wi-Fi or use the computers at these shelters. It is important to note that these barriers should have impacted clients similarly if it was not for the prominence of race, youth of color must deal with all the same barriers listed above as well as navigating an inherent racist system. Also many partners who would usually help us spread the word did not have the capacity to help us, as the first priority is making sure the young person has shelter, food, and their healthcare needs are met, and again this is made harder with the threat of COVID-19.

As mentioned above just over half of all respondents self-identified as white, (51.3%), a majority self-identified as male (54.13%), 65.74% said they were straight, and a majority of respondents (90.38%) agreed that the plan addresses the key areas to help prevent and end homelessness. Of those who self-identified as white, only 6 respondents self-identified with more than one race. 76 respondents answered a question to self-identify as pregnant or parenting (34.21%), have a chronic condition (47.37%), or diagnosed



with a disability or impairment 48.68%, is also important as many respondents when asked what also needs to be included in the plan, the overwhelming response was access to medical services including mental health.

## **Survey Data**

Environmental factors and digital inequity contributed to the gaps in our data. We saw a disproportionate amount of white folks in urban areas that had time or ease of access to our survey. This provides a certain amount of survivorship bias\*. Because these young white urbanites had easier access, their feedback was built into the report. Because young people of color, indigenous communities, and rural dwellers had less access, their feedback will have a smaller impact on the report, and subsequently, the policy. Our intent was to flip this dynamic, and yet our process was still heavily disrupted by this survivorship bias. Please keep this in mind when reviewing the data.

\*a data gap from concentrating on the people that made it through some process and overlooking those that did not.

When it comes to the materials of the survey, we attempted to naturally funnel the feedback into the 4 RAP framework components: ***Coordination and Foundational Items, Housing, Crisis Response, and Mainstream Systems and Services.***

Under ***Coordination***, young people expressed lacking flexible services that allowed longer hours or were easier to access. For those in rural areas, there were difficulties in transportation to/from work. Some young people found it difficult to learn about services or where to find them.

When young people talked about ***Housing***, they consistently referenced needing financial literacy. Some specifically asked for cash or a steady income, implying a feeling of insecurity even when employed. They often talked about the affordability of housing, again implying a sense of being overwhelming when needing to pay rent/bills. On the topic of jobs, some folks would ask to be given an opportunity or have a job offered to them. Young people generally have little to no experience applying for a job, so this is understandable. Several participants mentioned aspects of community (friends, family, “government”) when asked what makes them stable in their housing. These statements probably relate to a greater need of belonging that young people often experience while homeless.

Not many young people addressed ***Crisis Response*** directly. However, there was an obvious desire for medical access. Every young person mentioned needing physical or mental/emotional health service. Several times, participants reflected that

mental health could have prevented their homelessness altogether. There were repeated asks for food. In most shelters meals are often provided for young people; this could relate to their experiences outside a shelter, or the feeling of food insecurity as they navigate between services.

School was often referred to as a **Mainstream System**. Either as a trusted institution and a source of empowerment or stability, young people wanted to find services at a school. There is no doubt that young people have their lifetimes heavily influenced by being in school. There was a consistent reflection that education, job training, and money management was foundational to career and life success. Most young people that talked about money management skills, stated wanting to be taught how to balance their income and expenses. Again, this suggests an experience informed by a paternalistic education system.

Our intent was to collect a spectrum of experiences and relate them directly to the existing framework. This serves as an effective way to collect specific feedback rather than detailed feedback. This approach no doubt contributes to gaps in the data.

When combing through the responses, there were consistencies that lay outside the 4 RAP components. Many times, young people communicated a desire for emotional support. There is a sense of loneliness in these responses. Young people stated wanting someone to talk to or just be with -- sometimes they specifically stated needing friends or family -- but there were also statements that would suggest wanting peers (coworkers, other students, other LGBTQ acquaintances, "community members" etc.). There is a possibility these responses of loneliness could be directly related to the timing of this survey, as with the COVID-19 response there are not many gathering spaces open and with social distancing shelters and drop in spaces are closed or limited. These responses were closely related to other messages of needing safe places to have fun or unwind. Safe spaces and peers are components of community that young people clearly communicated a need for. This trend of wanting/needing community was also present when asked about maintaining a stable job; suggesting that young people need a network of accountability to be successful and stable.

In dozens of forms, young people communicated that the internet was both a source of opportunity and an opportunity gap. Young people knew they could look up resources, find a job/education, or make friends on the internet; yet they still had difficulties in these matters. This feedback comes from young people who do have access to the internet since they were able to complete the survey. This reveals that lack of internet access directly correlates with a lack of access to other resources, which then negatively impacts a young person's chance of escaping homelessness

These data gaps are unique to a young person's life experience, as well as their experience being homeless. Please evaluate the gaps and consider adding or adjusting the RAP components to better respond to the thoughts and behaviors of young people.

## **Anonymous Quotes**

### *Coordination & Foundational Items*

**“Service time is too short.”**

**“Please just try and connect with youth more, understand that the freedom they’re experiencing is a newfound sensation...”**

### *Housing*

**“Make sure I have job safety, stable income so that I can pay bills and insurance, a support group that would work for us and take care of our situation under any circumstances”**

**“Clear pathways to gainful employment, financial literacy and a sense of community/support.”**

### *Crisis Response*

**“The problem [of] homelessness is people give up, lose hope, lose interest in things, we get lost in all this social media, and wanting this, wanting that, we are not taught how to keep going with that same power, you once had.”**

**“Provide basic living expenses when my life is not guaranteed.”**

**“Don’t just think about the physical needs of homeless people, think about their minds and hearts because a lot of the time that is a big part of why they are homeless in the first place.”**

### *Mainstream Systems & Services*

**“Social security card , Birth Certificate , ID : Those always came up as a problem and a lot of people who are homeless either haven’t had one for a while or lost theirs somehow”**

**“Affordable college would be a great way to minimize homelessness.”**

### *Other/Policy Gaps*

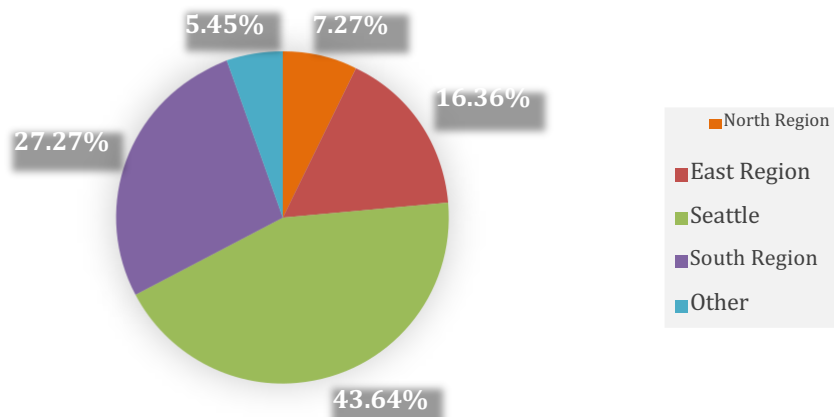
**“Make sure students in need have access to extracurricular activities. Activity fees may limit the ability of homeless/low-income students to participate”**

**“Counseling to help talk about mental health issues that can ruin relationships”**

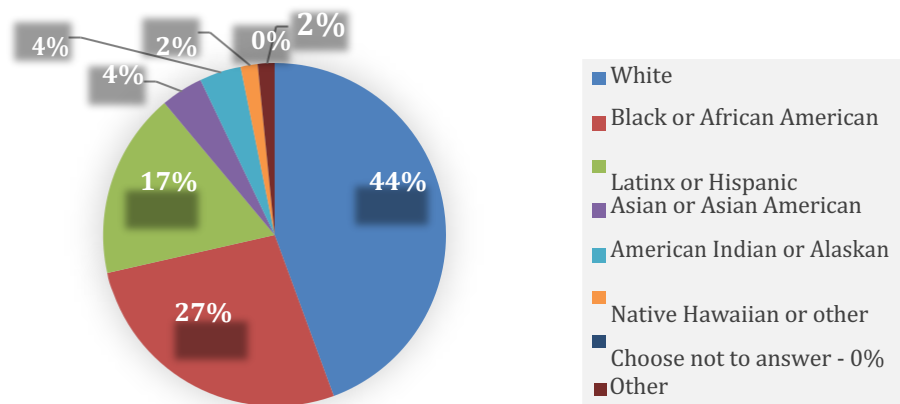
**“I believe nothing is permanent. So even though I am employed today I can be unemployed anytime. So people [who] get out of homelessness should be ready for anything and any challenges.”**

## Survey charts

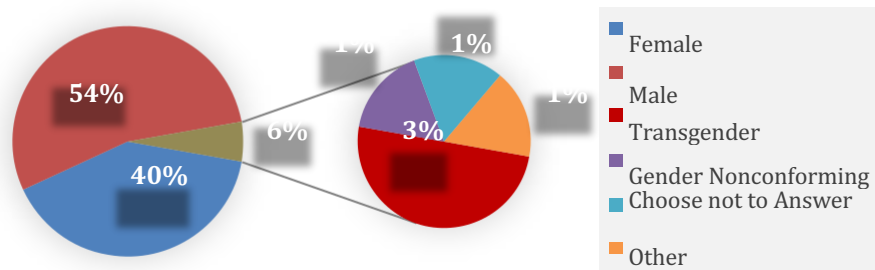
**Q3 What part of King County are you from?**



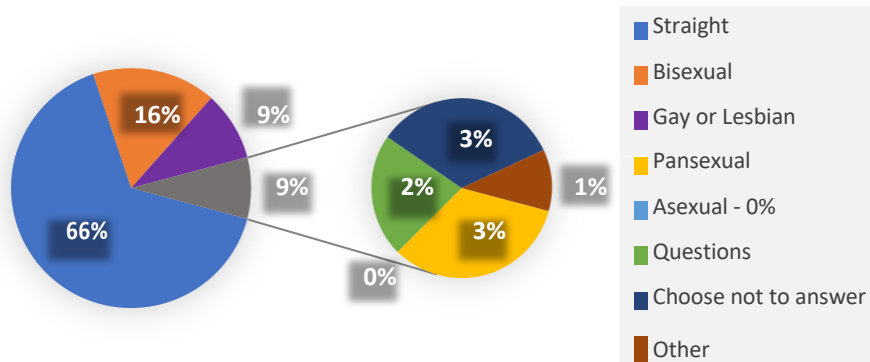
**Q7 How would you describe your race/ethnicity?**



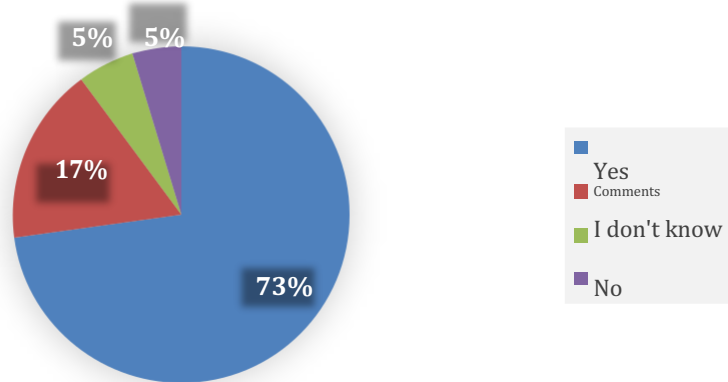
## Q8 What gender do you identify with?



## Q9 How would you describe your sexual orientation?

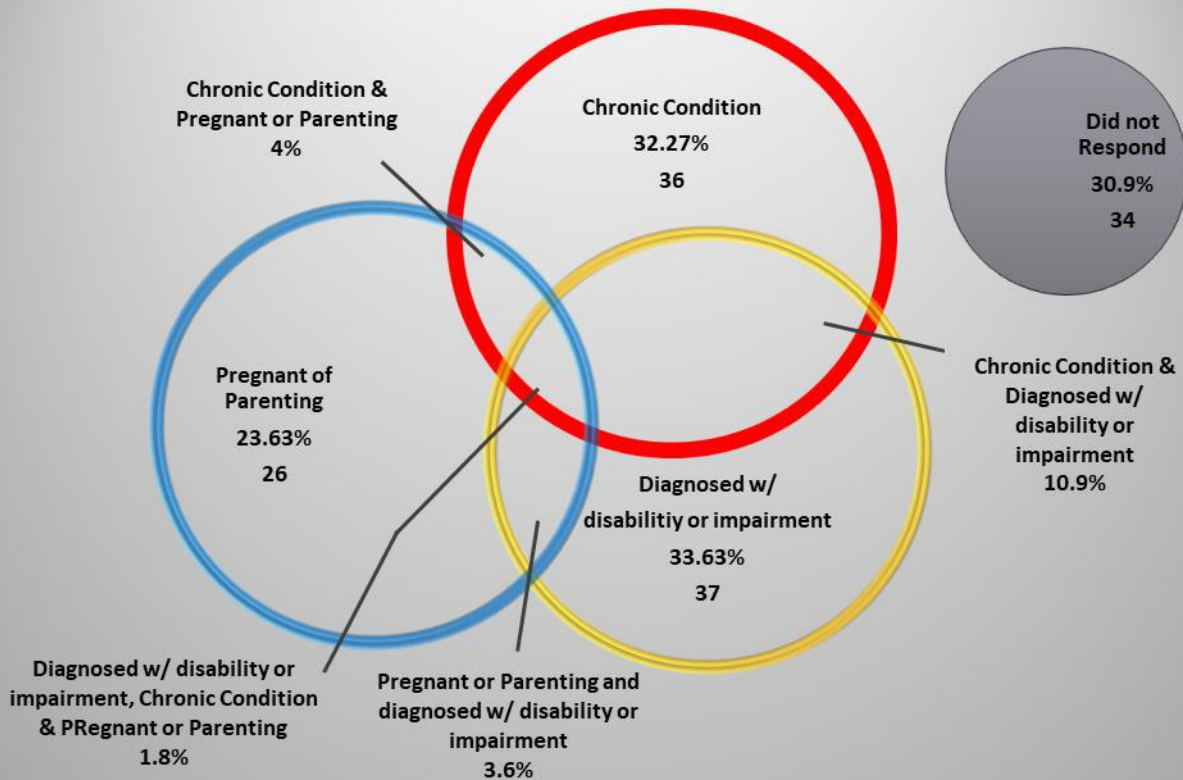


**Q10 The county and city are considering these key areas to address in the homelessness plan for young people: - Prevention of homelessness - Crisis intervention - Long-term services - Aftercare services - Stable housing - Permanent connections - Employmen**



### Q18 Do you Identify with any of these conditions

■ Chronic Condition ■ Pregnant or Parenting ■ Diagnosed with a disability or impairment



## **Recommendations**

**1. Develop and modify approach based on feedback from Youth and Young Adults.** Youth and Young Adults should be engaged throughout the process of building, implementing, and reviewing King County's regional homelessness approach. We must use a Racial Equity and Anti-Oppression lens to ensure that young people from communities most impacted are at all tables where planning is happening, and decisions are being made. Young people should be included in creating the review parameters and the County, City, and local philanthropic partners supporting this endeavor must accommodate the proper time requirements it takes to engage young people in ways that are meaningful and non-tokenizing. If circumstances hinder the process of engaging young people, these variables should be considered, and expectations should be adjusted. Because young people expressed interest in their governments and community's action, there should be a standard process for continuous reporting to, and feedback from, young people. And because young people are more vulnerable to change, King County, City, and local philanthropic partners must be nimble enough to respond to the shifting dynamics.

**2. Continue to solicit feedback from YYA, we also recommend a similar survey process once the COVID-19 crisis has ended.** It is critical that youth continued to be engaged; consider focus groups, and feedback session throughout the region and especially in areas outside of the Seattle area, there are also several YYA organizations that can be engaged outside of the YAB and TMS. We consider the gaps in our data to be unacceptable. For a more comprehensive assessment we need the voices of underinvested communities to be included.

**3. There needs to be a clear report back on progress and decisions.** Regular reports that are youth legible should be provided to the correct points of access (web-based, service providers, advocates, community services, schools etc.) Young people are working-class voters and valued members of our communities. They deserve a government that works to respond to their needs.

**“Give us an opportunity to attempt and prove our abilities.” -Anonymous participant**



## **Conclusion**

As acknowledged already, we felt the limitations of this report included that of time frame, accessibility, and lack of diversity in respondents. We noticed limitations especially in technology as accessibility for our desired populations were limited and the experience of spammed responses. There may have been some limitations in how the questions were formed and came across misunderstood.

We, The Mockingbird Society and the End Youth Homelessness Now Youth Action Board, hope this report will be used to inform more inclusive, thoughtful decision making as the RAP and the county decide how to best serve the youth out of homelessness. We hope that this data will inform how the RAP will best pursue each of the four key areas; coordination & foundational items, crisis response, mainstream systems, and housing.

Including youth experience is vital to the very work that organizations and partners like the Youth Action Board and The Mockingbird Society to better support and transform the systems that affect those with lived experiences by being informed by lived experiences. We say young people are the future and it is so true that they hold the key to creating the next generation's societal experience and we especially need to be informed on more populations we have interest in, such as homeless young people, young people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, young people in the juvenile system, etc.

When we do not include young people in the decisions, we make about them, we see that some decisions made can be more harmful than helpful, we see that certain demographics get missed and these things contribute to generational homeless.

Due to the current circumstances, we want the RAP to keep in mind that again we have not had the chance to collect data for this survey as we would have liked to and therefore affected the results of this survey. We emphasize the request to conduct a similar, if not the same survey, to the partners and organizations that would help us gain the necessary data for better informed responses.

## Appendix A. Full survey

King County Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Plan Feedback
<b>Basic Registration Information:</b>
<p><b>King County is developing a new joint plan to address homelessness for King County and the City of Seattle. The voices of young people are important to include in the plan. We appreciate your feedback!</b></p>
1. First Name
<input type="text"/>
2. Last Name
<input type="text"/>
3. What part of King County are you from?
<input type="radio"/> North Region- includes areas of Bothell, Cottage Lake, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, Shoreline, and Woodinville
<input type="radio"/> East Region- includes Bellevue, Carnation, Duwamish, Issaquah, Kirkland, Medina, Mercer Island, Newcastle, North Bend, Redmond, Sammamish, and Skykomish
<input type="radio"/> Seattle
<input type="radio"/> South region- includes Auburn, Burien, Covington, Des Moines, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Kent, Maple Valley, Normandy Park, Renton, Tukwila, SeaTac, White Center/Boulevard Park, and Vashon Island
<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)
<input type="text"/>

1

4. King County considers parts of these areas as "rural" if you identify as coming from any of these areas, are there any challenges you face in receiving resources? (lack of resources, hours of services, etc.)

- -Sammamish
- Duvall
- Carnation
- North Bend
- Skykomish
- Issaquah
- Maple Valley
- Covington
- Auburn
- Enumclaw
- Vashon island

5. You will receive a \$25 gift card for completing this survey. How do you want to receive the gift card?

Please email the gift card to me. My email address is:

Please give me a physical gift card. The best way to get the card to me is:

6. What is the best way to contact you in case we have questions about sending you your gift card? (phone, case manager, text, etc.)

7. How would you best describe your race/ethnicity? (check all that apply)

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ LatinX or Hispanic
- ☐ Asian or Asian American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ choose not to answer
- ☐ Other (please describe)

8. What gender do you identify with (please choose one)

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Gender nonconforming
- ☐ choose not to answer
- ☐ Other (please describe)

9. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Gay or Lesbian
- ☐ Straight
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Pansexual
- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Choose not to answer
- ☐ Other (please describe)

10. The county and city are considering these key areas to address in the homelessness plan for young people:

- Prevention of homelessness
- Crisis intervention
- Long-term services
- Aftercare services
- Stable housing
- Permanent connections
- Employment and education

Are these areas the right areas to focus on to help young people who are homeless?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know/need more information

☐ Comments:

11. Besides the areas above, what else should be included in a plan to help youth who are homeless in Seattle and all parts of King County?

12. What are three things that would have helped you the most when you were homeless?

13. What services could have helped to prevent you from experiencing homelessness? Where would you want to access these services? (school, online, etc.)

14. For young people who are able to get out of homelessness, what kinds of supports are needed so that they won't experience homelessness again?

15. What are three things that would help you be stable in your housing?

16. What would help you have a network of supportive people in your life?

17. What help do you need in order to get a job or go to school when you are experiencing homelessness?

18. Please check all of the boxes that you identify with.

- ☐ Chronic Condition
- ☐ Pregnant or parenting
- ☐ diagnosed with a disability or impairment

19. Are there resources that are not currently available to you that would be helpful in navigating the system with an impairment, chronic condition or disability?

20. Do you have any additional suggestions/comments/feedback?

## Appendix B. Information sheet

The King County Regional Homeless Authority was established by King County and City of Seattle to significantly decrease homelessness county-wide. Their plan to do so is referred to as the **Regional Action Plan (RAP)**.

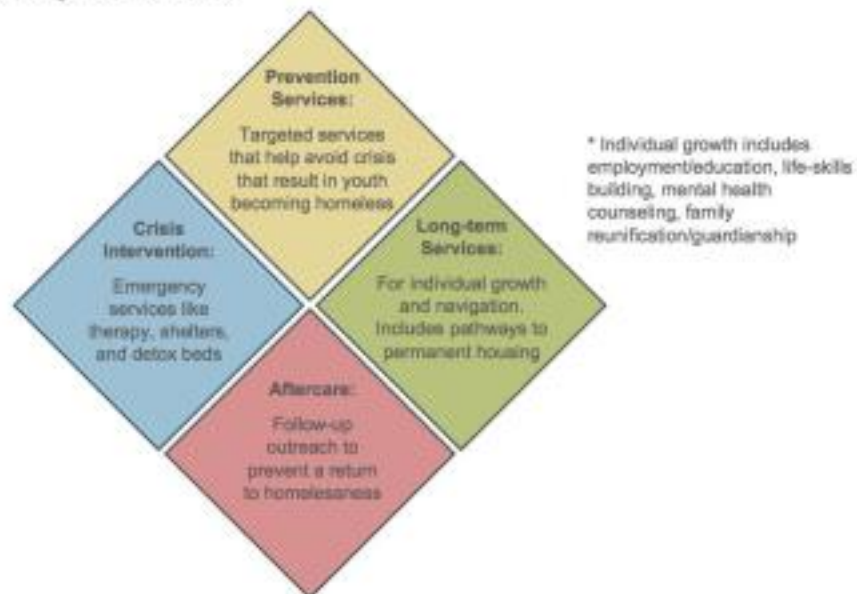
The RAP's youth and young adult focus is informed by the **Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP)** from King County, and a plan from the **King County Youth Service Providers (KCYSP)** who directly assist youth and young adults who are homeless. Because young people are most affected by these structures and plans, The Mockingbird Society and The Youth Advisory Board think it is important for young people to be involved in the process of building the RAP.

This summary is meant to provide you with clear and concise information on the plans for your expert opinion.

### King County Youth Service Providers Plan

This collection of agencies and providers interact directly with youth and young adults as they navigate out of homelessness. The broad goals are focused on **stability, self-sufficiency, and personal growth**.

The plan has four key areas of work:





Additional details:

- The KCYSP acknowledge the racism and disproportionality within the homelessness system. More youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth are homeless despite being a smaller population in the region.
- Providers know that their staff need additional training and less workload to improve their interactions with youth and young adults. They also hope to pay their staff a living-wage to decrease the effect of personal stress on their work.

### **Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program**

This program is oriented towards the homelessness system to coordinate the many agencies and government structures. The main mission is **Functional Zero** by 2021 – preventing youth and young adults from becoming homeless and, if they do, housing them in 30 days or less.

The Joint Committee is the governing structure in charge of implementing the plan and holding the system accountable.



When **Functional Zero** is achieved, youth homelessness will be Rare, Brief, One-Time, and with No Inequitable Disparities.

## **King County Regional Action Plan (RAP)**

This plan will be the core function of the new King County Regional Homeless Authority. There are four “framework components”:

### **Coordination and foundational Items**

- Focus on addressing disproportionality with YOC and LGBTQ+ youth
- Collaboration between regions and addressing regional challenges for impactful results
- Person-centered rather than based solely on identities
- Implement unique policies for sub-populations (including youth and young adults)

### **Housing**

- Creating affordable housing pipeline for people making less than 30% area median
- Subset of housing to be paired with supportive services



### **Crisis Response**

- Diversion fund to help prevent inflow of homelessness
- Expand emergency housing service to include a robust variety (safe parking, 24hr shelter with case management, basic shelters)

### **Mainstream Systems**

- Reaching into institutional settings to improve homelessness prevention
- Expansion of behavior/mental health and other health care service for people experiencing homelessness
- Increase income and employment to prevent inflow and returns to homelessness

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## Racial Equity and Social Justice Structure for Accountable Decision-Making

**Purpose:** The purpose of the King County Regional Homelessness Authority's Racial Equity and Social Justice Structure for Accountable Decision-Making<sup>1</sup> is to ensure that the homeless service system's processes and policies proactively eliminate racial inequities and advance equity. This decision-making structure is mandated by the Charter of the King County Regional Homeless Services Public Development Authority.<sup>2</sup>

The overrepresentation of people of color and members of other historically marginalized communities among the population of people experiencing homelessness is rooted in and perpetuated by structural racism and other types of intersectional systemic oppressions. This decision making structure is designed to deconstruct the processes that perpetuate oppression and, instead, establish accountability to people experiencing homelessness and position those that use the system and its services as decision-makers and power holders within the system.

The framework will be applicable across the system in all functions of the agency, including in all hiring, budgeting, contracting practices, technical assistance provision, human resources processes, and policy and program design and operations. It is also designed to further the community's theory of change:

*"If we create a homelessness response system that centers customer voice, then we will be able to focus on meeting needs and eliminating inequities, in order to end homelessness for all."<sup>3</sup>*

Specifically, the framework is designed to ensure that the King County Regional Homelessness Authority's decision-making processes:

- Are guided by clear goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes to advance racial equity and social justice;
- Establish people with lived experience of homelessness as decision-makers across the system;
- Support and advance people of color and historically marginalized communities within leadership in the new entity;
- Identify who will benefit or be burdened before decisions are made;
- Integrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive strategies and mechanisms into implementation;

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<sup>1</sup> This draft was developed based on the Government Alliance for Racial Equity Toolkit and tailored to the local context in King County, Washington. The GARE toolkit is accessible [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> The charter requires the use of an equity-based decision-making framework. This document is intended to be the first draft of that framework.

<sup>3</sup> This theory of change was developed by a group of system administrators, philanthropic, and business community representatives, and representatives from the broader region and refined by customers and lived experience advocates. This work was managed by the National Innovation Service, formerly Future Laboratories, and documented on the Homeless Response System Redesign [website](#). In addition to the framework of the theory of change, it should be noted that inequities across the system should be defined by people and communities most impacted by homelessness.

- Include mechanisms for evaluation of impact; and
- Include mechanisms for addressing negative consequences and revisiting decisions at a regular cadence that have negative consequences or hinder efforts to advance equity.

This structure was developed by staff from King County and Seattle government, including All Home, as well as agencies serving people experiencing homelessness; informed, vetted and iterated on by people with lived experience of homelessness; and ultimately connected to the customer-driven process of designing the functions of the Office of the Ombudsperson and other accountability processes. This structure will be offered to the board of the King County Regional Homelessness Authority for consideration for official adoption.

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Policy Decisions and Strategy

Business Operations

Hiring Operations

Terminology

## Policy Decisions and Strategy

Decision-making processes within the Regional Authority, including in cross-system work, will be developed using the following process:

1. **Proposal Articulation:** Proposals or proposed decisions will explicitly name the policy, program, practice or budget decision under consideration. It will also articulate the assumptions that informed the proposal, the desired results and the desired outcomes in racially-explicit terms. Proposals and proposed decisions should originate from insights and feedback offered by people with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability.
2. **Community engagement:** Proposals will be informed by communities that are disproportionately impacted by homelessness, leading with race, and the specific issues any given proposal seeks to address. Proposals will originate from insights and feedback offered by people with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability, and the proposal development and implementation process will be a circular process that is regularly iterated upon based on customer feedback and data. Community engagement processes will include opportunities to provide feedback on the proposal, inform the assumptions underlying the proposal, and add qualitative context to the quantitative data articulated above before submission. These processes should be ongoing to ensure that decisions can be shifted and changed based on engagement outcomes and insights. Additionally, the individuals and communities engaged should reflect those disproportionately affected by any given issue based on the most recently available demographic data with specific emphasis on race and its intersections with disabilities, gender and sexual orientation, immigration status, and housing status.

3. **Data:** The proposal development process will be informed by data specific to those overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness and historically-marginalized communities—including people of color, people with disabilities, transgender individuals, and women--and will articulate what the data tells us about the impact on people of color. That will also include a comparison to data specific to the population of people experiencing homelessness more broadly as well as data specific to white people. The proposal will include each of these data points and data sources. Data will include community indicators and desired results, as well as specific outcomes and performance measures that evaluate both quality and quantity. Quantitative data will be complemented by qualitative data from people experiencing and with lived experience of homelessness.

Data will, whenever possible, assess impacts on specific geographic areas with particular attention to hubs for communities of color. Finally, the proposal can delineate what data gaps exist and strategies to obtain better data moving forward. When and if the proposal is approved, those insights on data gaps will be shared with the Regional Authority's data teams and the Office of the Ombudsperson.

4. **Analysis:** The proposal will analyze how the proposal will change current dynamics, which stakeholders will potentially benefit from the proposal, and which stakeholders will potentially be burdened by the proposal, with particular attention paid to the implications for people experiencing homelessness across demographic groups, leading with race. Engagement with people with lived experience of homelessness will shape this analysis.
5. **Racial Equity Strategies:** The proposal will also include explicit strategies to advance racial equity and justice and/or strategies to mitigate unintended consequences if the proposal is adopted. Strategies to advance racial equity and social justice include: identify the existing inequities the proposal seeks to address, identify the goals the proposal seeks to accomplish, and identify the power dynamics influencing the existing inequities. The proposal should also include strategies to shift existing power dynamics, as well as ways to mitigate consequences if the proposal is adopted by identifying who is helped and harmed by the proposals.
6. **Implementation, Accountability, and Evaluation:** Proposals will include implementation plans that articulate what implications it has for funding and resources, including a plan for adequately resourcing customer engagement processes, on-going data collection, and evaluation. If additional resources are needed for the proposal to be implemented, the plan to gather or leverage those resources will be included.

Implementation plans will articulate when qualitative and quantitative data demonstrating the impact of the decision will be collected and analyzed and how the decision will be revisited or reaffirmed if there are unintended consequences on people of color experiencing homelessness. The process to revisit decisions in the case of negative

outcomes will include targeted customer engagement to inform an improved proposal. The proposal will articulate how accountability processes will be managed, explicating evaluation processes.

7. **Communication:** The proposal will include a plan for communicating the decision to customers and others affected by the decision across the system. Each communication plan will be transparent, accessible, and will center accountability to people experiencing homelessness. Communication plans identify communication strategies for people currently experiencing homelessness, governing board members, members of the community across the region, service providers, elected officials and their offices, and other stakeholders as needed.

## Business Operations

Budgeting and procurement processes within the Regional Authority, including in cross-system work, will be developed based on the following process:

1. **Participatory Budgeting:** For each legislative budget cycle, the Regional Authority will identify which budget categories can be substantially shaped by community-defined needs, priorities, and desired results, within the strategic framework established by the Regional Action Plan. The Board of the Regional Authority will work with Councils to extend planning timelines to ensure that participatory budgeting is feasible.

The participatory budgeting process will be managed by the Innovation and Equity teams within the Regional Authority. Those teams will lay out the framework and rules for the process and, in coordination with the Community Impact team, publicly communicate clear information on the process and how to get involved. They will also identify and fund community-based organizations in the communities most impacted by the experience of homelessness to co-design and run public assemblies for broader community input.

2. **Request For Proposal (RFP) Framework:** RFPs will include a description of the relevant needs, priorities, and desired results identified through participatory budgeting.

Responses to RFPs will have clear strategies and activities that directly address structural racism and intersectional oppressions including ableism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, misogyny and other sources of inequities for people who are currently homeless. They will also articulate the underlying assumptions in the proposal and analyze who will benefit from and who will be burdened by the program.

3. **Contractor Selection:** The proposal review process will evaluate a contractor's connection to historically marginalized and disproportionately impacted communities, in particular people with lived experience of homelessness. This will include an evaluation of those in leadership and decision-making roles, not just people in frontline staff positions,

as well as how a contractor centers lived experiences of homelessness in program design and execution. Representation of members of impacted communities in leadership roles will be a critical factor in selection.

The Regional Authority will determine the cost of living where contractor staff live and seek to ensure that contract amounts allow for wages at or above the median income or “liveable wages”. Proposals will prioritize an increase in wages for frontline staff, before increasing wages for senior management.

There will also be a process for people with lived experience to participate in contractor interviews, site visits, and final selection decisions.

4. **Data and Performance Management:** The budgeting and RFP development process will be informed by data specific to and provided by communities overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness, leading with race, and will articulate what the data tells us about the impact on people of color. Proposals will articulate program metrics, qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, and evaluation processes to evaluate the success of the program that are aligned with the metrics and performance targets established through the Regional Action Plan community engagement process and the community needs, priorities, and desired results specified in the budgeting process.

Procurement processes will provide adequate time and financial resources for customer engagement processes, on-going data collection, and evaluation. Proposals will articulate how the program structure and metrics will be revisited if there are negative impacts on customers and other people experiencing homelessness. The process to revisit program design will include targeted customer engagement to inform an improvement.

The proposal could show what data gaps exist and strategies to obtain better data moving forward. If the proposal is approved, those insights on data gaps will be shared with the Regional Authority’s data teams and the Office of the Ombudsperson.

5. **Public Communication and Accountability:** The budgeting and procurement process and decision-making protocols will be reviewed by the Community Impact team in the Regional Authority to ensure they are accessible to community members, customers, and other stakeholders. The Community Impact team will create a public communications plan for that information, including identifying and funding community-based organizations in impacted communities and individual customers to proactively educate community members on how those processes work.

The Regional Authority will also publicize all budgeting and contractor selection decisions, as well as articulate where customer and community input was used and not used in those decisions. If specific customer and community input could not be used,

there will be an analysis of why that was the case and how it could be incorporated into the budgeting and procurement process in the future.

## Hiring Operations

Hiring and related talent processes within the Regional Authority will be developed based on the following process:

1. **Participatory Budgeting during Headcount Planning:** As a part of the business operations process, the Regional Authority will identify which budget categories will be substantially shaped by community-defined needs, priorities, and desired results, within the strategic framework established by the Regional Action Plan. During this process, related short term and long term hiring needs should be reviewed to ensure that each initiative has the necessary capacity for design and implementation.

This human capital focused portion of the participatory budgeting process will be managed by the Human Resources team in collaboration with the Innovation and Equity teams within the Regional Authority. Those teams will lay out the framework and rules for the process and, in coordination with the Community Impact team, publicly communicate clear information on the process and how to get involved. Those community stakeholders assembled to co-design and run public assemblies for broader community input for business operations initiatives may also be used to provide feedback on capacity needs and any new role scopes, as identified, when needed.

2. **Active Recruitment Strategy:** To expand and diversify recruitment pipelines of highly skilled candidates for all open Regional Authority positions, the Regional Authority will post all new roles. This includes any newly vacant roles deemed necessary for the continuation of related workstreams.

This work will be managed by the Human Resources team with consultative support from the Equity team. Those teams will lay out the framework and rules for the recruitment process for each role, including the creation of a targeted recruitment plan for each role to ensure a diverse, highly-skilled group of 2-3 candidates can be evaluated at the final stage of the interview process. This will also include any relevant guidelines for role(s) to be posted internally (internal applicants only), in alignment with any relevant labor agreements, as needed. The HR team, in coordination with the Community Impact team, will publicly communicate the opening of each new role, including clear information on the application process and how referrals can be made. All processes, policies, and guidance must be in alignment with federal and state regulations and EEO requirements.

3. **Multi-stage/Competency-based Selection Process:** To support a rigorous hiring process that actively works to acknowledge and minimize bias, the Regional Authority will



leverage a multi-stage, competency-based process account to support objectivity in the identification and selection of a highly-qualified candidate, most qualified for each role posted. This work will support diversifying finalist pools, reinforcing active recruitment efforts. This model will be leveraged for all new roles. This includes any newly vacant roles deemed necessary for the continuation of related workstreams.

This work will be managed by the Human Resources team with consultative support from the Equity team. Those teams will lay out the framework and rules for the recruitment process for each role in collaboration with the hiring manager for the role. This includes the creation of a 2-5 stage interview process, inclusive of third-party reference checks, to assess philosophical alignment to the Regional Authority, content knowledge expertise and job acumen specific to the role. This will include any guidelines for internal applicant(s), in alignment with any relevant labor agreements, as needed. The HR team, in coordination with the Community Impact team, will publicly communicate the opening of each new role, including clear information on the application and selection process. All processes, policies, and guidance must be in alignment with federal and state regulations and EEO requirements.

4. **Diverse Hiring Panels & Collective Input Practice:** To acknowledge and minimize bias in the hiring process and build a culture of inclusive decision making, the Regional Authority will create hiring panels that reflect diversity including, but not limited to role level, department name, gender/gender identity and racial self-identification to garner input from a variety of individuals a part of the selection process to support the selection of a highly-qualified candidate, most qualified for each role posted.

This work will be managed by the Human Resources team with consultative support from the Equity team. Those teams will lay out the framework and rules for the selection model design and implementation for each role in collaboration with the hiring manager for the role. This includes the creation of a model with ~2-3 selectors providing input at each stage in the selection process, typically totaling ~6 contributors to support the hiring manager in making a final selection decision. This guidance will include any guidelines for selection models for internal applicant(s), in alignment with any relevant labor agreements, as needed. Typically, panelists will have aligned content knowledge expertise and job acumen specific to the role and/or work closely with the individual selected for the role. The HR team, in coordination with the Community Impact team, will publicly communicate the opening of each new role, including clear information on the application and selection process. All processes, policies, and guidance must be in alignment with federal and state regulations and EEO requirements.