



Seattle/King County Systems Transformation

Frequently Asked Questions

On any given day, more than 10,000 people are experiencing homelessness in King County, and over 40 percent are unsheltered. Homelessness is a crisis in our region and our community has committed to a collective impact approach to ending homelessness in King County that aligns strategy and funding towards shared outcomes.

The federal Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act requires that each Continuum of Care (CoC) establish targets and show annual progress in achieving those targets and reducing homelessness. In 2013, the Seattle/King County CoC (now All Home) began the process of setting and establishing system-wide targets for ending homelessness.

Why was the SWAP report Commissioned?

The Key Goals and Intended Outcomes of this work were to:

- Outline an investment strategy based on a systemic analysis of system and program performance,
- Identify housing focused solutions to create a positive impact on access to housing, and
- Improve investment alignment among funders in King County that support our shared goals in addressing homelessness.

What is SWAP?

System-Wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) Suite of Tools is a joint project of Focus Strategies and the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), designed to enable communities to use local data to understand what their current system is accomplishing, and model what happens when system and program changes are made. The SWAP analyzes system performance at a program-by-program level and

allows communities to model the results of changes to individual programs or groups of programs. The SWAP tools assist communities in creating a detailed vision of homelessness system changes that will have the greatest impact on reducing homelessness. Focus Strategies used the SWAP along with document review, stakeholder interviews, and review of local context and promising models from other communities to complete their report: *Seattle/King County: Homeless System Performance Assessment and Recommendations with Particular Emphasis on Single Adults*.

Why do we have unused shelter capacity across the county when thousands sleep outside each night?

In order to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness each night, it is critical that our homeless investments are used as effectively as possible. This includes a close examination of where existing resources are not fully utilized. Some reasons for underutilization are related to shelter models that are not reflective of the needs of people without shelter. King County and the City of Seattle are currently identifying opportunities to support a shift in shelter models that include a 24/7 model with a safe place to store belongings, accessibility for couples, and ability to bring pets.

Why use length of time homeless over vulnerability for prioritizing people for housing?

In its current state, King County's emergency shelter system is saturated by "high utilizers," individuals who utilize shelters for extended periods of time and/or repeated times over a year. Despite representing just 40% of the total homeless, single adult population, high utilizers account for 74% of shelter capacity. Moving these "high utilizers" into housing as quickly as possible would free up nearly three-quarters of all shelter capacity, leaving an excess of 563,712 nights in the shelter system to provide shelter to those who are unsheltered, but not considered "high utilizers."

Decisions were made about CEA prioritization very recently. What do the CEA recommendations mean for current CEA implementation? How can we expand

Funders will be further examining the options for adopting the specific recommendations related to Coordinated Entry for All, including overall prioritization and inclusion of single adult and young adult shelter. The process for outlining an action plan specific to CEA will be integrated into the existing CEA quarterly evaluation process including the funder group and the All Home Executive Committee including stakeholder input through the Data and Evaluation Committee, the Subpopulation Advisory Groups, and the monthly All Home Stakeholder Forum. Even in this challenging housing market, the consultants' findings show that Rapid

Rapid Re-Housing in the current rental market?

Rehousing in Seattle/King County is three times more cost effective than transitional housing. Rapid Rehousing is not an intervention that will address poverty, though communities with similar markets have shown RRH to be an effective strategy in successfully housing people without significant returns to homelessness.

Success of RRH in Seattle/King County will require a commitment of funders and providers to embrace best practices, using a renewed effort to engage landlords, innovative and adaptable program designs, and a focus on progressive engagement, providing the minimum assistance needed to resolve the homelessness. Without new housing stock, RRH programs will need to explore creative housing solutions such as shared housing and rooming houses, and at times, housing options outside of King County may need to be considered.

The recommendations on leadership and governance provide an opportunity to refine All Home governance to be more accountable to the goals of making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time. All Home will be making adjustments to the governance structure and Charter Agreement that will provide greater clarity and transparency regarding decision-making related to county-wide strategies related to the homeless crisis response. The primary changes will include:

How will All Home governance be changed by these recommendations?

- Maintaining the Coordinating Board and existing members and defining their role as an Advisory Body;
- Adjusting membership of the Executive Committee to include the major funders of homeless investments and defining their role as the sole decision-making body for system-wide homelessness efforts;
- Clarifying the role of the Funder Alignment Committee as the entity responsible for implementing decisions made by the Executive Committee.

All changes made to existing board and committee membership will be reviewed with a racial equity lens with a goal of maintaining at least 1/3 of membership to include people of color (current Coordinating Board membership is 33% people of color, and Executive Committee includes 20% people of color).

How will providers and consumers inform decision-making if we move to a funder-driven model?

Though a funder-driven approach is needed for adopting a seamless system response to the homeless crisis, input and engagement from all community stakeholders is critical. Funders must be accountable to overall system performance and their decisions must be informed by those impacted the most. All Home will continue to lead the effort of soliciting input from people who are experiencing

homeless or have experienced homelessness in the past, service providers and housing providers, and many other system partners. All Home will be accountable to ensuring the input is a part of the decision-making process and marginalized communities are prioritized in these engagement efforts.

A critical component of the Systems Transformation work is improving overall system performance. Implementing performance based contracting is needed to achieve this goal and all agencies will be offered the opportunity to participate in technical assistance and support activities. Technical assistance may include the following:

What kind of technical assistance will be provided?

- Peer-to-Peer Best Practice Seminars: Highlighting high-performing projects and cross-training/learning opportunities,
- Provider learning circles,
- System-wide capacity building efforts including Fair Housing Training, Behavioral Health Cross-Training and resources, Housing First community conversations, and Risk Mitigation Funding.

How will existing shelters be supported in increasing the system performance of exits to housing from shelter?

King County has recently released an RFP which includes funding for emergency shelter and aims to support shifts in shelter that will promote successful exits to housing. For more information, see the King County procurement site. City of Seattle Mayor Ed Murray also recently announced an executive order to create a new low-barrier 24-hour shelter program similar to the Navigation Center in San Francisco.

How will anti-poverty work be supported if not considered part of the homeless crisis response?

Our region faces significant challenges of increasing poverty and we are in the midst of an affordable housing crisis. Anti-poverty efforts which support financial self-sufficiency and improve access to basic needs and safety net programs are a critical part of our community; however, it is important to address the solution to the homeless crisis response as distinct from poverty and affordable housing. Effective solutions to addressing poverty are not the same as effective solutions to addresses homelessness. Anti-poverty work is a priority of all the funders who have commissioned this report, and yet, it is crucial to distinguish which resources and investments are addressing poverty and which are intended to address homelessness. All Home continues to commit to making homelessness RARE, BRIEF, and ONE-TIME while ensuring appropriate resources are being used to address each goal.

All Home, United Way, King County, and the City of Seattle are carefully reviewing all recommendations from the report and have established a preliminary implementation plan. Some of the recommendations are aligned with efforts currently underway, such as, expanding diversion services and improving HMIS capacity system-wide. Other recommendations will be implemented over time and some will need a deeper level of analysis to identify needed resources and review the most recent HMIS data.

How quickly will changes be made?

Funders recognize that projects have made considerable efforts to align with and reach the current Continuum of Care performance targets. To that end, King County, the City of Seattle, and United Way will be phasing in a shift to the recommended system targets and minimum standards over the next two years. Immediate steps for implementation of the changes in performance metrics will include communication with agencies regarding 2015 performance in relation to the new system targets and minimum standards and description of support and technical assistance that will accompany the rollout of performance based contracting.

These plans are articulated in the System Transformation Implementation Plan which can be found on the All Home website.