Homelessness in Alaska

BRIAN WILSON: ALASKA COALITION ON HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS
JASMINE BOYLE: ANCHORAGE COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS
What causes homelessness?
What causes homelessness?

### Reason for Seeking Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment and Income</td>
<td>32.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Safety</td>
<td>24.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>12.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>19.36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HMIS Data from Previous Quarter
What causes homelessness?

When Housing is Out of Reach: Now more than at any other time, there is a lack of housing that low-income people can afford. Without housing options, people face eviction, instability and homelessness.

Income and Housing Affordability: Low-income households often do not earn enough to pay for food, clothing, transportation and a place they can call home.
What about affordable housing?

ALASKA

In Alaska, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is $1,292. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities — without paying more than 30% of income on housing — a household must earn $4,306 monthly or $51,669 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into an hourly Housing Wage of:

$24.84 PER HOUR
STATE HOUSING WAGE

STATE RANKING #11*

National Low Income Housing Coalition – ”Out of Reach” Report

• How much do you have to make in order to not spend over 30% of your income on a 1- or 2-bedroom rental home?
• Data available at the state or community level
• http://nlihc.org/oor
What else causes homelessness?

Homelessness is a statewide concern inextricably linked to other community challenges:

• Mental, Behavioral & Physical Health
• Public Health & Safety
• Social Isolation/Lack of Safety Net
• Domestic Violence & Child Abuse
• Statewide Economics
• Reentry/Incarceration History
• Lack of low-income and affordable housing
Who is most at risk?

- Those with economic challenges (38% of Extremely Low-Income households ELI)
  - Ex: 2018 Anchorage earthquake
- Elders and seniors: (21% of ELI households)
  - Since 2008, Alaska is the # 1 state in the nation for per-capita 65+ senior growth
  - Increasing trend expected through at least 2035
  - Anchorage and Matsu house over half of the 60+ population in the state
- Those living with disabilities: (31% of ELI households)
  - Lack of ADA compliant housing statewide
  - Two year plus wait list for those experiencing disabilities and elders in urban locations
  - Rent to income ratio for those with a fixed income
- Reentry community members:
  - Formerly incarcerated people are almost 10 times more likely to be homeless than the general public*
  - Anchorage Reentry Coalition’s recent survey shows 65.8% of reentrants are unsure (or do not have) a place to live upon release

Thank you:
- Access Alaska
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
- Anchorage Reentry Coalition
- Disability Law Center of Alaska
Safety nets work: Of the 1,903 people experiencing homelessness, 1,630 were sheltered by the system.
Safety nets work: Of the 1,111 people experiencing homelessness, 1,014 were sheltered by the system.
Homelessness Takes Different Forms...

Percentage of Overcrowded Homes by Census Area (2018)
Homelessness Takes Different Forms...

Overcrowding Rates by ANCSA Region (2018)
How many Alaskans are accessing housing and homeless services?
You’ve been busy!

In 2019, Alaskan agencies served 13,888 unique individuals in need of housing and homelessness services!
Of those 13,888 individuals...

- 3,195 actively fleeing or are victims of domestic violence
- 4,626 self-reported having a disabling condition
- 42% identified as Trust beneficiaries
“So....what is working?”
What you’re doing is working!

In 2018 & 2019, 3,102 Alaskans accessed Homeless Prevention Services funded by Homeless Assistance Program or Special Needs Housing Grant funding...

....95% did NOT return to homelessness!
But do we have enough?

• We still have a homeless population- and most urban communities are reporting a rise in concerns about unsheltered homelessness
• Many communities report that homeless prevention funds run out before end of the grant cycle
• Cuts to Housing Assistance Program directly impact our state’s homeless prevention system- prevention is more effective than treating homelessness’ symptoms
Housing First

**Typical “Housing Readiness”**

- Homeless → Shelter
  - Fail Points
- Shelter → Transitional
  - Fail Points
- Transitional → Permanent
  - Income
  - Landlord Relationship

**Housing First**

- Homeless → Permanent
  - Medical
  - Behavioral
  - Mental
  - Income
  - Landlord Relationship

**Life Stability**
What you’re doing is working!

• Rapid Rehousing
  • Temporary assistance
  • Supports to stabilize housing crisis
  • Targets individuals who are vulnerable but not in need of permanent supports
What you’re doing is working!

In 2019, **793** accessed Rapid Rehousing resources

- 287 are still active in the program
- 340 exited to an owned or rental housing option

**Over 92% client success rate!**

(Exited to a non-homeless living situation)
But do we have enough?

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<tr>
<td>Matanuska-Susitna 0.59 Juneau City &amp; Borough</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anchorage 0.42 Kenai Peninsula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairbanks North Star 0.25 Kodiak Island</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ketchikan Gateway 0.14 Nome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleutians East 0 North Slope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethel 0 Sitka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dillingham 0 Valdez-Cordova</td>
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According to the 2018 Housing Inventory Count, 15 of the 29 Census Areas in Alaska have no year-round Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, or Permanent Support Housing Facilities.
What you’re doing is working!

• Permanent Supportive Housing
  • It’s Permanent!
  • Tenants typically have leases
  • Services are sometimes co-located, but not required
• Congregate vs. Scattered Site
• Targets Individuals who are highly vulnerable
What you’re doing is working!

In 2019, **682** accessed Permanent Supportive Housing

- 505 are still living in PSH
- 120 exited to other permanent housing options

**Less than 2% exited to a homeless destination**
But do we have enough?

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Legislative Priorities

BRIAN WILSON: ALASKA COALITION ON HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS
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PRIORITY 1: Restore Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) funding to the FY19 level ($7,800,000) at a minimum

• The HAP program experienced a 45% cut during the previous budget cycle. HAP funding supports homeless prevention programs (rental/utility emergency assistance), emergency shelter options, and the ability for individuals to have access to rapid rehousing services.

• Any cut to HAP funding will result in an increase of unsheltered homelessness, causing extremely vulnerable Alaskans to lose access to live-saving safety net supports and increasing community concern around public health and safety as visible homelessness rises.

• Shelters, soup kitchens and day spaces not only promote public health and safety, they reduce unsheltered homelessness and panhandling. After last year’s cut to HAP we saw visible increases in unauthorized camping and panhandling as shelter beds and day services were reduced.
PRIORITY 2: Centralize housing and homelessness conversations across geographies and stakeholders creating shared solutions for all community members

• Increase engagement with the Alaska State Legislature in housing and homelessness services. This could begin with implementing the suggestions from the 2016 Governor’s Housing Summit such as assigning the topic of housing and homelessness to an existing legislative committee.

• Enhance continuity and connectivity of planning and discussions by partnering with the two Alaskan membership coalitions (Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness and the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness) to develop strategies to end homelessness in Alaska. Reducing silos and increasing cross stakeholder discussions maximizes efficacy and momentum.
PRIORITIZE 3: Re-visit the Alaska Strategic Supportive Housing Plan[1] and Utilize the Special Needs Housing Grant (SNHG) program to enhance and sustain its role as a significant driver of permanent supportive housing

- Supportive Housing (SH) is a national best practice for housing vulnerable individuals with complex needs. Based on UAA evaluations of Alaska’s SH programs[2], they have proven to be successful in improving mental health, reducing substance use, reducing ER visits & police calls, and reducing incarcerations for clients.

- Supportive Housing programs are very cost effective compared to the alternatives for both those in need and the greater community. A recent State of Alaska OMB cost analysis of six AK supportive housing properties showed the following average daily expenses[3]:
  - $51 a day for supportive housing
  - $142 a day in prison
  - $1,100+ a day in Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API)