

### How can we make housing more secure?

#### TRYING TO FIND HOUSING SUPPORT BEFORE BECOMING HOMELESS

Elsie has received rental assistance through a housing voucher that is expiring in a few months. She is trying to be proactive to line up new housing support, but it's a real struggle. She loves her apartment - the affordable rent and central location have been the key to her independence after a life-altering injury - and doesn't want to move. She is on Social Security Disability and is connected with her tribe, so receives assistance from a number of programs, but she keeps getting referred from one program to another. She wants a case worker to help her navigate the system, but they seem to be in short supply and not always knowledgeable about housing assistance. The clock is ticking and she's getting worried.



#### WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

- Housing vouchers that allow you to live in the location of your choice are offered by a waitlist that is only open for applications sporadically (~once a year).
- Case workers who can help with wrap-around support are in short-supply; there is often little public or grant funding for organizations to do this type of work.
- Organizations that provide low-income services often don't have the latest information on housing programs and availability.
- People experiencing mental or physical disabilities need a friend or family member to help - it's nearly impossible for them to navigate the system on their own.
- Just because you receive Medicaid, food stamps or Social Security, doesn't mean you automatically qualify for housing or get assigned a case worker to help navigate the systems.
- There aren't many programs to keep people in their current house - you often have to become homeless or leave your current home to get help.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## How can we make housing more secure?

### TRYING TO FIND HOUSING ASSISTANCE BEFORE BECOMING HOMELESS

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Gather in small groups to review and discuss the case study presented on the reverse side, using the questions below as a guide. If you are part of a larger group, you can share your small groups' key takeaways with the larger group and continue the discussion.

- **How does this case study relate to Anchorage's bigger housing challenges?**
- **Looking at the list of strategies and actions in the Assembly's draft Housing Action Strategic Plan, which actions might fix these problems and have the most impact? Are there different short and long-term solutions?**
- **What questions do you have about the solutions proposed in these actions?**
- **What do you think the community's questions or concerns about these actions might be?**

#### TRY THIS AT HOME!

Take this sheet to your next book club, family gathering or association meeting to bring the conversation further into our community. Anchorage's housing crisis is an everyone problem and we need the community to come together to solve it. Choose from six case studies:

#### **Act on Housing: Breaking Barriers**

1. Why are good properties undeveloped?
2. Are we leaving housing units on the table?
3. Who pays for public infrastructure?

#### **Act on Housing: Invest in Ourselves**

1. How can we make housing more secure/keep people housed?
2. What are barriers to affordable rent?
3. Get to know the Anchorage rental market

Find the Assembly's draft Housing Action Strategic Plan, all six case studies, and more information on housing at [anchoragehousingaction.org](https://anchoragehousingaction.org)

