



# Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

<https://pchomeless.org/> - [info@pchomeless.org](mailto:info@pchomeless.org)

## How can the coalition make it easier for our advocacy voices to be heard? Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 8.5.22

*"I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve (or save) the world and a desire to enjoy (or savor) the world. This makes it hard to plan the day."*

— E. B. White

*"There is no passion to be found playing small in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living."*

— Nelson Mandela

### More public visibility for coalition perspectives

- Work toward a much stronger presence on social media and news channels.
- More proactive media outreach.
- More media coverage, develop relationships with reporters interested in presenting other voices beyond the NIMBY perspective.
- News outlets are telling people what they think they want to hear, it is far too easy to demonize people who have no voice.
- We talked about reclaiming the narrative from media hostility towards the homeless, through media outreach.
- Messaging that recognizes competing rights and makes collaboration more possible.

### Ideas for creating broader understanding of coalition advocacy and being more proactive

- Advocacy can be hard and we need more people to do it.
- Teaching effective advocacy: newer advocates need leaders who can teach strategy and effective advocacy.
- It would be helpful to have more of a shared and transparent sense of how coalition advocacy occurs. What are the guidelines and guardrails?
- What's coalition advocacy and what is not? Would like a presentation and discussion.
- It's assumed that we advocate with and on behalf of unhoused. Who else?
- It would be nice to pick a theme or two to emphasize for a month or a quarter to maximize the effectiveness of our communication. Case in point, we all concentrated our voices around the weather event(s) and got the attention and traction with the city and community.
- Gather around specific topics in a more strategic, less reactive manner.
- Elevate importance of drawing on personal experience in moving to advocacy (e.g. being evicted leading to work on tenants' rights).
- The importance of messaging that directly confronts the NIMBY attitude, but builds on the idea that a healthy community finds ways for all to thrive.
- The coalition does not have a unified message about advocacy, but encourages individuals and groups to invite others to collaborate with them and to work with respect for others.



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- Explore issue of Organizing v Advocacy. How do we escalate into organizing? What falls under organizing and what skills do we need to build? Range of tactics - who can do what? Who is limited, esp. by funding relationships?
- To be heard better/seen - disrupt capital and make electeds uncomfortable - drawing attention of the media is difficult otherwise.
- Do we keep relationships or risk them? Is there a way to use the coalition to push without risking relationships between individual members and those in power?
- Communication between providers who are limited and untethered coalition members to know what topics to target (county payment delays, etc) - while carefully respecting the impact of naming names - use examples without targeting.

## **Possible issues for coalition advocacy**

- Hygiene & hydration for all - access to water, bathroom, shower (human rights).
- Environmental Health – hygiene, weather emergencies.
- Advocacy in support of ways to engage on more of emotional and empathetic level and more support around garbage and waste collection and pickup.
- community conversations about the cost & effectiveness (or lack thereof) of hostile architecture would be helpful?
- More advocacy on behalf of people doing the work. Sometimes funders are less than supportive and flexible toward those on the ground.
- Can we get speakers and teachers to come to this group, and teach about trauma, secondary trauma, and the effects of trauma on the communities we serve as well as the outreach workers? We can all be better educated on the realities of trauma experienced by those we serve. We can all use tools to take care of ourselves as well.
- Support activist groups and individuals lobbying local jurisdictions to respond to specific crises (such as evictions from manufactured homes/trailer parks).

## **Ideas for coalition political engagement**

- In a group filled with people who can "understand", how do we effectively help those at the City and County level understand the realities of what those we advocate for experience.
- City Manager – dissolving, make it elected instead of appointed (sweeps). Direct action/protest. Public events not hosted by the city to let people really ask difficult questions to be heard and answered.
- Get folks registered to vote.
- More attendance at City Council and committee meetings. They need to see our faces and know we're not going anywhere!

## **Highlighted resources**

Follow the WA Housing Alliance @WLIHA for their legislative updates both now and during session.