



Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

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Commitments presented at the December 21st, 2020 and January 25th, 2021 Safe Shelter Summits:

Associated Ministries (AM)

Associated Ministries is an organization that works with interfaith partners who are deeply engaged in transforming our communities. We work together toward lasting solutions to homelessness. As a crossroad for communication and cooperation, we engage and equip faith communities and persons of good will to address the many needs in Pierce County through advocacy, education, and service.

Commitment:

Associated Ministries has long played a key role in assisting local faith communities to serve our vulnerable neighbors, and we commit to increasing those efforts. We commit to strengthening our work to build strong relationships between private landlords and the service providers seeking creative options to establish housing for vulnerable clients. We commit not to just continue our current homeless programs, but to work to expand them by advocating for new funding and resources. We commit to effectively serve communities which are disproportionately impacted by homelessness by integrating racial equity and social justice principles and practices into our work culture and policies, as well as into service delivery throughout our community.

Catholic Community Services of Western Washington (CCS)

Catholic Community Services is an outreach of the Catholic Church in Western Washington, under the leadership of the Archbishop of Seattle and the Boards of Trustees. CCS answers the Gospel call to loving and compassionate service with particular concern for the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death and the dignity of the human person. Our employees and volunteers come from many faith traditions to serve and support poor and vulnerable people through the provision of quality, integrated services and housing. Our focus is on those individuals, children, families, and communities struggling with poverty and the effects of intolerance and racism. We actively join with others to work for justice.

Commitment:

Catholic Community Services has a long history serving vulnerable adults and families in Pierce county. Over the decades, our Family Housing Network has sheltered and assisted thousands of Pierce County families move into permanent housing. Our program commits to providing hotel shelter for up to 50 households experiencing homelessness on inclement weather nights (when the temperature is below freezing), with a primary focus on families with children. Outside on a January night is no place for children to spend the night. This commitment is contingent on the availability of funding for the project.

City of Tacoma

The City of Destiny.

Commitment:

Shelter Expansion: The City is moving forward with the opening of a warming center at the Center for Norpoint that will serve 25 individuals at a time and is also working with the Salvation Army to open their building on 12th and Union to serve 35 individuals. The City remains committed to the expansion of shelter and will continue to look for additional opportunities for managed sites.

Community Voice in the City Strategy to Address Sheltering: Neighborhood and Community Services has been developing a five-year homeless strategy that will provide guidance on the City's direction in how we



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respond to homelessness in Tacoma. Staff will be presenting on this work at the February 5th meeting of the Coalition. The strategy will be a community-led effort with a focus on getting participation from persons with lived experience of homelessness and our BIPOC community.

Prioritizing Safety during COVID-19: The Mayor's Office has made a direct request to the Governor's Office to prioritizing individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as any employees who provide them with in-person services, in the distribution/administration of COVID vaccines.

Hygiene stations: The City is open and ready to explore options for hygiene stations where there is a provider who is willing and able to step forward with a proposal for managed locations.

On Encampment Removal: The City will continue to follow CDC guidance with regards to encampment removal and makes every effort not to disperse individuals in encampments unless there is an imminent life/safety threat or public need for that removal.

Improved Communications: The City is updating the way that it shares information. Staff will be adjusting the client outcomes report format as well as emphasizing exits to housing so that the success of various approaches and programs is more easily apparent to the public.

Prioritizing Health: The City is exploring expansion of the needle exchange programming at encampments with the Health Department.

FEMA Funding: The City will continue to explore ways to maximize the use of federal funds to address the needs of our homeless neighbors and monitor for additional changes under the new administration.

Comprehensive Life Resources (CLR)

Comprehensive Life Resources (formerly Comprehensive Mental Health) is a private, not-for-profit community mental health agency providing a continuum of behavioral health and community support services. We are committed to a recovery-focused, whole health approach and philosophy that considers and embraces the whole person.

We are social workers, therapists, case managers, peer support counselors, psychiatrists, nurses, nurse practitioners, and other health specialists. We come from many backgrounds and life experiences. The common bond that brings us together is our caring, our compassion and our commitment to serve our community and to help individuals and families to reach and to live the quality of life to which every human is entitled and deserves. We are governed by a dedicated group of community citizens who share our commitment to improving the quality of life for others.

Commitment:

Comprehensive Life Resources commits to providing community based Mental Health Assessments and Substance Use assessments at encampments, safe parking areas and for others who cannot reach a clinic.

The Coffee Oasis

The Coffee Oasis is a faith-based, non-profit organization that exists to change the world for homeless youth. The Coffee Oasis is made up of two things: coffee businesses and youth programs.

Our cafés provide community gathering places and serve our self-roasted coffee from direct-trade coffee beans. All proceeds from the businesses support the Oasis youth programs. The Oasis youth programs offer friendship, belonging, resources, and opportunity to ALL homeless and street-oriented youth, ages 13-25.



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The Coffee Oasis offers all resources, services, activities, and programs to youth without regard to religious beliefs, race, color, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, identity, or disability.

Commitment:

The Coffee Oasis serves vulnerable and homeless youth and young adults in Pierce County. We operate a 12-bed underage youth shelter at our new facility at the corner of Tacoma Ave and South 15th Street. We also provide street outreach and case management to youth and young adults 13-25 years old throughout the County. Our outreach team currently serves approximately 60 youth on the streets, and we are eager to commit to doubling this capacity by adding an additional FT street outreach specialist and an additional FT case manager, contingent on the availability of funding for the project.

Dave Purchase Project/Tacoma Needle Exchange

Dave Purchase Project is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to facilitate disease prevention. We are dedicated to the creation, expansion, and continued existence of syringe exchange programs (SEPs) as a proven method of stopping the transmission of blood-borne pathogens in the injecting drug using community. We are also dedicated to empowering vulnerable populations by providing them with the knowledge and resources to enable them to make informed choices regarding their healthcare options. Locally, we operate the Tacoma Needle Exchange (TNE) the first legally sanctioned SEP in the United States. TNE provides Tacoma and Pierce County residents with access to harm reduction education and resources, care coordination, insurance enrollment, wound care clinics, HIV/HCV testing, and new safer injection supplies.

Commitment:

We commit to providing opioid poisoning awareness training, naloxone and wound care supply distribution and street medic training to houseless individuals in Tacoma. In addition, we commit to working with 2-3 organizations in Tacoma to install and maintain syringe disposal kiosks that will provide 24/7 publicly accessible safe syringe disposal for all.

Helping Hand House (HHH)

Helping Hand House provides emergency shelter and housing solutions to families in our community, ending their crisis of homelessness. We provide housing and other services to families living in East Pierce County, whose income is below 30% of the area median income, and who are homeless or living in places not fit for human habitation. Helping Hand House provides assistance through multiple housing programs, serving families who need varying degrees of assistance based on their current situation. While we are unable to serve every family who walks through our door, those who qualify for services are helped through a number of programs.

Commitment:

Like many communities, Pierce County has had challenges related to moving those experiencing homelessness to permanent housing. And the effects of the COVID pandemic have simply demonstrated the additional difficulties of a vulnerable population in need of these services. Helping Hand House considers it an honor to partner with Pierce County Human Services and others to provide emergency shelter and other housing solutions to families in our community, ending their crisis of homelessness.

Helping Hand House has operated non-congregant emergency shelter and permanent housing programs for decades. Currently, we're preparing not only for the anticipated increase in need for shelter options as this pandemic wanes, but also committing to increase our output of our most successful permanent housing



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program as well – HHH’s Rapid Rehousing Program. In the nearly ten years we’ve offered Rapid Rehousing as our primary permanent housing solution, we’ve found it to be the most successful engagement strategy in our 36 years of offering these services. Immediate funding for all move-in costs and up to 12 months of rental assistance is ALL that most households need to transition back into normal life.

As funding for short-term emergency shelter and Rapid Rehousing Programs continues to increase, Helping Hand House commits to meeting our mission by increasing capacity to assist those most in need in our community.

LASA

LASA is a community-supported agency committed to the prevention of homelessness and recurrent homelessness. LASA’s programs include permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, low income affordable housing, rental, assistance, emergency shelter, and an essential needs closet.

Commitment:

LASA is committed to adding laundry services for people experiencing homelessness and or those at risk. To this end we have commissioned Architectural drawings for purpose and we will cover operations. We are in need of capital funds for the remodel as well as equipment.

Low Income Housing Alliance (LIHI)

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance leads the movement to ensure that all our residents have the opportunity to thrive in safe, healthy, affordable homes. We do this through advocacy, education, and organizing.

Commitment:

LIHI has decades of experience across the Puget Sound Region providing shelter and affordable housing. We have a good track record assisting homeless households move into permanent housing. We operate two tiny house villages in Pierce County one off McKinley in East Tacoma, and the brand-new tiny house village at 6th & Orchard. LIHI commits to building as many tiny house villages across Pierce County as funding allows. Heated and insulated Tiny Houses provide stability, safety, and a sense of community for families and individuals during the homelessness crisis. We look forward to working with new community, local government, business, and nonprofit partners.

Medical Reserve Corp (MRC)

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of volunteers, organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities. The MRC network comprises 998 community-based units and over 200,000 volunteers located throughout the United States and its territories.

MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals, as well as other community members without healthcare backgrounds. MRC units engage these volunteers to strengthen public health, improve emergency response capabilities and build community resiliency. They prepare for and respond to natural disasters, such as wildfires, hurricanes, tornados, blizzards, and floods, as well as other emergencies affecting public health, such as disease outbreaks. They frequently contribute to community health activities that promote healthy habits.

Commitment:



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The Medical Reserve Corps commits to assisting in systems that will increase access to healthcare. This will target populations living homeless, both sheltered, and unsheltered.

Metropolitan Development Council (MDC)

Metropolitan Development Council is a vital community resource for Tacoma and Pierce County. Founded in 1964 as a non-profit Community Action Agency, MDC responds to community needs by providing services in the areas of healthcare, housing, education, and employment that address the challenges faced by low-income individuals and families.

Commitment:

I am Pamela Duncan, the President and CEO of Metropolitan Development Council. MDC, founded in 1964, works with and advocates for people experiencing poverty to ensure access to services, resources, and tools needed to create a more equitable community. MDC commits to offer its property at 2342 Tacoma Avenue as a temporary winter shelter site through April, under the assumptions that: 1. MDC will not operate the shelter, only serve as the landlord; and 2. The facility costs to operate must be covered by the funding source.

New Connections

New Connections began as an outreach ministry for previously incarcerated people under the auspices of the St. Vincent DePaul Society. Sharing the vision of housing and reentry services for formerly incarcerated women, Father Bill Bichsel, S.J. (Bix) and the Tacoma Catholic Worker Community enlisted volunteers to renovate a house in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood specifically to meet the needs of this program.

We promote our mission by offering community engagement and education, participatory defense, pre-release support, supportive shelter for women, family reunification, resource coaching, positive support for individuals of all sexual and gender identities, leadership development with justice impacted people, advocacy and referral services, and outreach to justice involved people who are experiencing homelessness.

Commitment:

New Connections works to interrupt the poverty-to-prison pipeline and promote community reintegration after incarceration. For two decades we've offered shelter for women who are released to Pierce County from Washington State correctional institutions. Our commitments are to:

1. expand our current "Bank on it" program to help people with barriers get bank accounts through Seattle Credit Union. In addition to assisting those with criminal histories, we serve people with other barriers such as homelessness and poverty.
2. provide training for housed and unhoused neighbors in "community benefit agreements" ALSO: gather, develop, and distribute materials to clarify local policies related to homelessness, camping, vehicle residency, and the low-income communities that host the majority of our unsheltered neighbors.
3. offer Zoom-based training for people who want to volunteer in shelters, safe lots, and other basic need organizations.

The R.I.S.E Center

We have a variety of services with specific focus on life, literacy, and leadership as the foundation of our existence in the community. These services include providing food to families and the homeless population, credit education, therapy, chemical dependence, and VA services.



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Commitment:

The R.I.S.E. Center which stands for Restoring and Igniting Self-Empowerment in Community, is a non-profit 501(c3) organization that has been in existence for 3years and 2months. we are a holistic, innovative and comprehensive service organization focusing on ending homelessness by addressing the underlying cause of homelessness in the central Tacoma, WA area. The rise center helps people build pride in their communities by instilling in them the importance of developing their self-awareness and self-evaluation of their individual personal strengths in order to build upon as well as habits and tendencies that may be self-destructive. We commit to operating a winter weather shelter provided that we can identify a funding source.

St. Leo's Social Justice Commission

St. Leo Catholic parish for many decades has been reaching out to those experiencing difficulties in life with housing, food, work, and life in general. We started in 2019 providing training for volunteers working with these community neighbors. The purpose of this letter is to reach out to you as partners in Christ as we realize you also serve those in need with services, love, and compassion.

Our mission is to promote access to adequate shelter and other basic needs in Pierce County. It is our vision that everyone has a safe place to sleep, and have other basic human needs met. As with all social justice issues, both working face-to-face and being advocates to all levels of governmental bodies is needed to get results. We believe that this training will help volunteers become comfortable supporting organizations that help the homeless, and build community. We are hopeful that as more people volunteer to help those unhoused face-to-face, they will also become strong advocates for long-term solutions. Hence, the training is designed to give volunteers confidence and knowledge, along with a community to discuss their experiences and have questions addressed.

Commitment:

The St. Leo Social Justice Commission leadership commits to continuing advocacy for an immediate and significant regional response to the shelter emergency, and urges the Pierce County Council to pass a 1/10th of 1% tax for housing and related services. This tax could generate between \$18- 20M annually. Dedicating this funding to bonding, construction and operations of permanent supportive housing over 10 years will help meet an expected need for 2300 housing units throughout the county for the most vulnerable of our residents.

TacomaProBono

Tacomaprobono changes lives, fights systemic racism and works against chronic poverty by providing access to timely, effective, professional civil legal aid services for low-income clients. We are focused on providing efficient, dignified solutions to legal issues affecting basic human needs such as housing and family safety.

Our board, directors, staff attorneys and paralegals work with our clients, volunteer attorneys and community partners to level the playing field for those in our community who face barriers to successfully accessing the civil justice system.

Commitment:

Tacomaprobono Community Lawyers changes lives, fights systemic racism and works against chronic poverty by providing access to timely, effective, professional civil legal aid services for low-income clients. We are focused on providing efficient, dignified solutions to legal issues affecting basic human needs such as housing and family safety. Our board, directors, staff attorneys and paralegals work with our clients,



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volunteer attorneys and community partners to level the playing field for those in our community who face barriers to successfully accessing the civil justice system. Tacoma Probono Community Lawyers commits to working with unsheltered people in encampments, sheltered people in individual and congregate settings, and people in Coordinated Entry to eliminate barriers caused by past evictions and other civil legal issues.

Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

The Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness is a loose network of individuals, non-profit agencies, government agencies, and community businesses working together to serve people experiencing homelessness. Our end goal is to help folks establish safe housing as quickly as possible and help them to retain that housing so their homeless episode is short and never repeated. We also work to address many of the factors that drive homelessness.

Commitment:

As you may know, finding a shelter bed can be a challenge. The Coalition commits to making that easier. We have developed and launched a tool that allows shelters to update and publish bed availability in real time. Visit our webpage, and you can see available shelter beds at shelters across the County. We have just started roll out, with about 1/3 of our shelters tracking current availability. We are hoping for full adoption in the coming weeks.

Tacoma Public Library (TPL)

Tacoma Public Libraries works to break down barriers of access. Our commitment to racial equity and social justice guides our work, allowing us to learn about and respond to Tacoma's diverse communities' needs and opportunities. We believe that learning is a human right. We work to provide free access to information and ideas from diverse points of view and encourage our community to explore new ideas, perspectives, and experiences. We foster a culture of teamwork. We engage with our community, our partners, and one another to cultivate collaboration and innovation. We are committed stewards of our human, environmental, and financial resources. We practice equitable decision-making and resource allocation, and take an active, visible role in supporting sustainable and resilient communities.

Commitment:

Tacoma Public Library is committed to serving the needs of our unhoused population by providing a welcoming environment when we re-open to the public this year. We will strive to provide compassionate service, relevant information, connections to opportunities and to local service providers.

Workforce Central

WorkForce Central carries out the vision of the Chief Local Elected Officials and the Pierce County Workforce Development Council by coordinating, administering, and advancing the work of the workforce development system, known as WorkSource Pierce.

Our mission is to increase access to services for job seekers, workers, and businesses. We strive to enhance the quality of services offered across the system to ensure consistent, effective experiences for its stakeholders, cultivating economic prosperity for our clients.

Commitment:

Workforce Central's core aim is ultimately to connect job seekers across Pierce County to living-wage employment. We are especially focused on serving community members facing systemic barriers to



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employment – including job seekers experiencing homelessness. Through the Pierce County Community Engagement Taskforce, we commit to launching a Speaker’s Bureau, a cross-agency initiative designed to elevate and amplify the voices of individuals with lived experiences in homelessness, incarceration, poverty, and many other drivers of homelessness. We so often design solutions for populations without true understanding or input from individuals experiencing the barriers we’re working to eliminate. The Speakers Bureau is a compelling step towards honoring those perspectives and designing *with*, not simply for, community members experiencing homelessness. It is an effort to ensure those making decisions and building systems are truly informed by community members about the challenging situations many of them face. The goal is a better collective understanding of each other and our unique lived experiences, as well as to create a professional development and growth opportunity for the speakers who engage in the series. This is a cross-sector initiative that developed through the Pierce County Community Engagement Taskforce, and we see it as the first of many steps toward more meaningful community engagement in our workforce development efforts.

Virginia Mason Franciscan Health

Since the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia established St. Joseph Hospital (now Medical Center) in Tacoma in 1891, we’ve focused on providing the best possible health care for people in the communities we serve. At CHI Franciscan, we’re dedicated to healing the whole person — body, mind and spirit.

Commitment:

Virginia Mason Franciscan Health will commit to being an active member of ongoing coalition meetings. VMFH will commit to discussing discharge challenges as they come up with coalition and shelter partners and brainstorm solutions. VMFH will explore process changes within our discharge planning, with a focus on expanding communication and collaboration with shelter providers.

Valeo Vocation

Valeo Vocation provides individuals in Tacoma and Pierce County who are experiencing homelessness with an opportunity to earn a wage, escaping unemployment and homelessness, including case management to navigate support systems and reduce barriers to employment and supportive services to enhance success in the workplace.

Commitment:

Valeo Vocation is a nonprofit staffing agency dedicated not to simply employing people experiencing homelessness, but helping them get housed as well. Valeo will offer employment services to individuals experiencing homelessness and with barriers to employment. We will partner with local behavioral health partners to provide assessments and treatment navigation, case management, and housing navigation.