

Tri-Cities Homelessness Plan of Action

2025 - 2026

Tri-Cities

HOMELESSNESS POLICY COMMITTEE

Englewood • Littleton • Sheridan



Background

In 2020, the Tri-Cities Homelessness Policy Committee conducted a PESTEL (political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal) analysis of the region's homelessness services to identify assets, opportunities and gaps. Findings included the strong commitment by local leaders to address homelessness, dedicated homelessness service organizations, regional public and private investments in homelessness, and consistency in local ordinances regarding occupancy of public spaces. Areas of opportunity included increasing affordable permanent housing options for persons existing homelessness such as rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and allocation of housing authority vouchers; increased participation in the local data collection platforms managed by Metro Denver Homelessness Initiative (MDHI) including the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and OneHome, coordinated entry system; and additional safe alternatives to unsheltered dwelling.

In October 2020, the Center for Housing and Homelessness at the University of Denver released two commissioned reports, one focused on family homelessness and one focused on family homelessness in the region. The reports applied qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews to capture the essence of homelessness for both the families and single adult populations.

Research sought to understand key drivers into homelessness and barriers to becoming housed. Themes emerged that included lack of access to affordable housing, changes to or inability to secure employment, physical and behavioral health challenges, and fragile or troubled social relationships. The report recommended a prevention approach to retain housed families in housing through the provision of comprehensive financial and service interventions; and holistic and flexible programs to stably rehouse chronic homeless adults.

On January 28, 2021, the City Councils of the three cities hosted a joint Council study session to update decision makers and the public on the findings of the reports. During this session, MDHI identified potential priority areas for the Tri-Cities Homelessness Policy Committee to focus on in the creation of its homeless strategy including a single access point for housing services; development of eviction prevention strategies; and development of diversion resources and strategies.

In 2021, The Tri-Cities worked with Florence Alise Advancement Associates to develop the Tri-Cities Homelessness Plan of Action ("Action Plan") which was adopted by all three cities and which runs through the end of 2024. The Action Plan is organized into four themes: (1) Governance; (2) Single Adult System; (3) Workforce Development; and (4) Family System.

Action Plan Successes

Over the course of the last three years, the Cities partnered with Arapahoe County, MDHI, and nonprofit service providers and achieved success in many components of the plan, including the development of a Tri-Cities Homelessness Coordinator position which oversaw the management and completion of strategic plan components.

Governance

The Governance theme focuses on collaboratively developing a strong governance foundation focused on program management, data collection, cross-jurisdictional partnerships, and community engagement. As of May 2024, 82% of the action steps in this thematic area have been completed.

Recommendation	Action Step	Status
1.1 Build a strong governance structure	Formalize a regional leadership body	Completed
1.1 Build a strong governance structure	Create a regional homelessness coordinator position	Completed
1.1 Build a strong governance structure	Increase local government staff capacity to address homelessness	In progress
1.1 Build a strong governance structure	Create a lived experience advisory board	Completed
1.2 Formalize a data-driven approach to guide allocation of homelessness resources	Increase participation in the homelessness management information system (HMIS)	Completed
1.2 Formalize a data-driven approach to guide allocation of homelessness resources	Increase referrals to MDHI's OneHome Coordinated Entry System	Completed
1.2 Formalize a data-driven approach to guide allocation of homelessness resources	Partner with Community Solutions Built for Zero initiative to build capacity by addressing the needs of specific sub-populations	Completed
1.2 Formalize a data-driven approach to guide allocation of homelessness resources	Develop a system of tracking and reporting on plan implementation and outcome achievement	Completed
1.3 Create a community education and engagement strategy	Create a centralized Tri-Cities webpage outlining the unified homelessness response	Completed
1.3 Create a community education and engagement strategy	Streamline volunteer and giving opportunities to help neighbors in need	In progress
1.3 Create a community education and engagement strategy	Create a welcome home community engagement program	Completed

Single Adult System

The Single Adult System theme focuses on meeting the needs of single adults experiencing homelessness by streamlining pathways to access services. As of May, 2024, 40% of the action steps for this thematic area have been completed, with significant planning work done on the establishment of a navigation center.

Recommendation	Action Step	Status
2.1 Streamline access to homeless services for single adults within the region	Designate a lead service provider to coordinate services for single adults	Completed
2.1 Streamline access to homeless services for single adults within the region	Create a central navigation center	In progress
2.1 Streamline access to homeless services for single adults within the region	Create an online platform to request homeless services	Completed
2.2 Provide street-based services to increase the health and wellbeing of unsheltered residents	Launch a coordinated outreach team	Completed
2.2 Provide street-based services to increase the health and wellbeing of unsheltered residents	Continue to support local meal and food distribution programs	Completed
2.2 Provide street-based services to increase the health and wellbeing of unsheltered residents	Pilot a safe parking program	In progress
2.2 Provide street-based services to increase the health and wellbeing of unsheltered residents	Convene local mental, physical, and behavioral healthcare providers to explore the creation of a medical street team	Completed
2.3 Expand housing opportunities for single adults exiting homelessness	Promote shared housing as a viable option to increase housing affordability	In progress
2.3 Expand housing opportunities for single adults exiting homelessness	Strengthen outreach to private landlords to increase participation in housing rental subsidies	In progress
2.3 Expand housing opportunities for single adults exiting homelessness	Sponsor a feasibility analysis to determine the approximate number of permanent supportive housing (PSH) units required to end chronic homelessness in the region	Planned

Workforce Opportunities

The workforce opportunities theme focuses on strengthening pathways to workforce opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and those who are housing vulnerable. As of May 2024, 50% of the action steps in this thematic area have been completed.

Recommendation	Action Step	Status
3.1 Create partnerships with existing workforce programs	Continue to pursue partnership with Bridge House	Completed
3.1 Create partnerships with existing workforce programs	Promote local library online skills training programs	In progress
3.1 Create partnerships with existing workforce programs	Support the launch of Cross Purpose at Wellspring Church	Completed
3.2 Create employment opportunities for persons exiting homelessness	Engage the local Chamber of Commerce	In progress



In Their Words

Places like Movement 5280 and GraceFull Café, they mean the world. If it weren't for them, I'd be dead.

I have a partner now, and I'm doing my best to help provide for her and her kids. I'm trying to get back in the gym. I'm done with the streets and getting high.

The difference is I love myself now, for the first time. I hope that benefits the people I love. I don't see life like I used to anymore.

They say the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. Well, I'm trying something different now, and I like these results.

- Josh Casias

Family System

The family system theme focuses on developing a streamlined system to address the needs of families at imminent risk and experiencing homelessness. 40% of the action steps in this thematic area have been completed as of May 2024.

Recommendation	Action Step	Status
4.1 Streamline access to homeless services and prevention for families experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness within the region	Engage the local school districts as partners to help lead prevention and homelessness services for families	Completed
4.1 Streamline access to homeless services and prevention for families experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness within the region	Designate a lead service provider to coordinate services for families	In progress
4.2 Prevent families from becoming homeless	Collaborate with the school districts to ensure that school families at risk of homelessness are aware of new eviction prevention programs	In progress
4.2 Prevent families from becoming homeless	Pilot a peer support specialist program to extend outreach to immigrant families at risk of homelessness	In progress
4.3 Increase housing opportunities for families	Work with local housing authorities to explore possible ways of expanding Housing Choice Vouchers (HCH) to families exiting homelessness	In progress



In Their Words

I'm a personal navigator at Movement 5280. We're here to walk alongside people in need.

We have a food bank, clothing bank, hot meals, peer coaching, mental health services – we even bring in dentists and a mobile DMV clerk.

I'm a recovering addict myself, and I figured I could stand to help others more. A girl here told me one time, "you don't know what it's like to struggle." I shared my story, and we clicked. I tell people, "You can recover. I'm proof."

- Kelly Utter

Second Iteration of the Action Plan

The second iteration of the plan includes action items from the original plan that were yet to be completed; new action items, primarily focused on developing a long-term financial and governance model; and performance metrics to track the success of action plan items launched under the original term of the Action Plan. The proposal for the second iteration of the Action Plan includes 16 projects organized into three of the original Action Plan themes; (1) Governance; (2) Single Adult system; and (3) Family System. Staff recommends sunsetting the Workforce Development theme, given that the major projects, intended to start workforce development programs, are in the process of launching. The updated Action Plan also includes approximately 25 metrics which connect to the four themes of the original Action Plan, which will be reported on quarterly to show long-term progress in achieving goals identified in the development of the Action Plan.

Reporting

If renewed, the Action Plan will run from the beginning of 2025 (from the data approved by the three Councils) to the end of 2026. The Tri-Cities Coordinator will publish a quarterly action plan that includes a progress update on all projects included in the Action Plan, in addition to data towards performance metrics, noting that data towards some performance metrics are only available on an annual basis.

Action Plan Cost

The original Action Plan was projected to cost approximately \$750,000, which did not include funding that the cities provided for workforce development projects, such as the launch of CrossPurpose and Bridge House Ready to Work, which received funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Additionally, funds originally identified for some Action Plan action steps were not expended, and could presumably be expended to finalize those projects in the second iteration of the Action Plan:

- Create an online platform to request homelessness services- Single Adult theme (\$10,000);
- Pilot a safe parking program- Single Adult theme (\$25,000);
- Strengthen outreach to landlords- Single Adult theme (\$25,000);
- Peer-based support model (\$25,000)
- Sponsor a permanent supportive housing feasibility analysis- Single Adult theme (\$50,000); and
- Designate a lead service provider- Family theme (\$50,000).

The total budgeted cost of the second iteration of the Action Plan is expected to be \$185,000. The majority of the funding for these projects comes from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA), and ARPA funds must be committed by the end of 2024, and expended by the end of 2026, which is when the Action Plan will end. Staff believes that most other action plan items can be carried out with existing staffing levels and resources, contingent on maintaining the position of Tri-Cities Homelessness Coordinator, the cost for which is estimated at approximately \$120,000 per year.

The development of governance and financial sustainability models, included in the Governance theme, will help the Tri-Cities to develop a long-term approach to funding the Tri-Cities Homelessness Coordinator, as well as long-range funding for the navigation center. The majority of the projects included in the Action Plan that require seed funding are not expected to need substantial resources from the cities to continue into the future.

Theme One: Governance

Recommendation 1.1- Develop a long-term governance model for Tri-Cities

Action Step	Description	Existing or New	Approximate Cost	Year
Develop a long-range governance sustainability model for the Tri-Cities Policy Committee	Work with Arapahoe County and other stakeholders to explore and make recommendations relative to the long-term governance structure of the Tri-Cities Policy Committee	New	N/A- No additional costs are expected to be needed for this action item	2025

Recommendation 1.2- Develop financial sustainability of Tri-Cities programs and initiatives

Action Step	Description	Existing or New	Approximate Cost	Year
Develop a long-range governance sustainability model for the Tri-Cities Policy Committee	Work with Arapahoe County and other stakeholders to explore and make recommendations relative to the long-term governance structure of the Tri-Cities Policy Committee	New	N/A- No additional costs are expected to be needed for this action item	2025
Determine the feasibility of developing a hosted fund	Work with area philanthropic organizations to determine the feasibility of establishing a hosted donor fund to support philanthropic dollars supporting program efforts	New	N/A- No additional costs are expected to be needed for this action item	2025
Determine whether and how opioid settlement funds may be utilized to support the efforts of this Action Plan	Explore the feasibility of utilizing opioid settlement funds to support Action Plan initiatives	New	N/A- No additional costs are expected to be needed for this action item	2025



Theme Two: Single Adult System

Recommendation 2.1- Streamline access to homeless services for single adults

Action Step	Description	Existing or New	Approximate Cost	Year
Create an online platform to request homeless services	Such a platform could help reduce police responses to non-emergency calls related to people experiencing homelessness	Existing	Up to \$10,000 in software costs (budgeted as part of the original plan)	2026

Recommendation 2.2- Provide street based services in increasing health and wellbeing

Action Step	Description	Existing or New	Approximate Cost	Year
Pilot a safe parking program	Safe Parking programs emerged over the last several years using both public and private parking lots after-hours to offer a safe place to sleep. Participants are typically required to pre-register to access parking lots and have operable vehicles. These programs often offer services such as access to restrooms, mobile showers, and overnight security. The exploration would include a review of existing zoning laws and possible locations	Existing	\$25,000 (budgeted as part of the original plan)	2025
Continue to engage local healthcare providers to discuss feasibility of a street medicine team	Engage local healthcare providers and determine the feasibility of a street medical team which could include a licensed social worker, public health nurse, substance abuse counselor, and other medical professionals	Existing	N/A- No additional costs are expected to be needed for this action item	2025



Recommendation 2.3- Expand housing opportunities for single-adults

Action Step	Description	Existing or New	Approximate Cost	Year
Promote shared housing	Partner with nonprofit partner organizations to promote shared housing as a viable option to increase housing affordability	Existing	N/A- No additional costs are expected to be needed for this action item	2025
Strengthen outreach to landlords	Robust landlord engagement programs could provide dedicated funding for signing bonuses, additional security deposits, and minor repairs	Existing	\$25,000 budgeted as part of the first plan	2025
Sponsor a feasibility analysis for permanent supportive housing (PSH)	PSH is an evidence-based housing model that provides congregate or scattered site housing units to vulnerable persons	Existing	\$50,000 budgeted as part of the first plan	2025
Explore and determine the feasibility of coordination of affordable housing studies and initiatives	Explore and determine the feasibility of coordinating previous, current, and future affordable housing studies and initiatives in the three cities	New	N/A- No additional costs are expected to be needed for this action item	2025



In Their Words

I was on the streets for 20 years before Movement 5280 helped me get an apartment.

I had buddies freeze to death. I got frostbit real bad. I had so many trespassing tickets, if it weren't for the folks at 5280, I'd probably be dead or in jail before much longer.

I grew up in Englewood. I was a welder. After my wife died, things just kind of fell apart in my life. I ended up homeless. ... You start to believe nothing good will happen. I prayed a lot, and God gave me Kelly and Movement 5280.

- Kenneth Davison

Theme Three: Family System

Recommendation 3.1- Streamline services for homeless families

Action Step	Description	Existing or New	Approximate Cost	Year
Engage local school districts as a resource partner	In the development of the original plan, all three school districts expressed active engagement in identifying and working with families experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness through their student services staff	Existing	N/A- No additional costs are expected to be needed for this action item	2025
Designate a lead service provider	Designation of a lead service provider as the central coordinator for resources dedicated to family homelessness in the region	Existing	\$50,000 as part of the original plan	2025

Recommendation 3.2- Prevent families from becoming homeless

Action Step	Description	Existing or New	Approximate Cost	Year
Collaborate with school districts to ensure that school families at risk of homelessness are aware of new eviction prevention programs	In 2020 and 2021, Arapahoe County received nearly \$10 million in CARES Act funding to protect families at risk of eviction from inability to pay rent due to COVID-19 related job loss. And, due to disparities in technology access, not every family will be able to navigate online applications. A regional family coordinator could bridge support by working with the school districts to identify families and help them apply for relief	Existing	N/A- No additional costs are expected to be needed for this action item	2025
Pilot a peer-support specialist program to outreach to homeless families	Peer based support models may be an appropriate intervention to outreach to families	Existing	\$25,000 budgeted in the original plan	2026

Recommendation: Housing Opportunities for Families

Action Step	Description	Existing or New	Approximate Cost	Year
Explore expanding Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) to families	Partnering with MDHI to explore the feasibility of increasing housing choice vouchers through application to special programs, and vouchers designated for youth aging out of foster care or for parents seeking to reunite with children in the child welfare system	Existing	N/A- No additional costs are expected to be needed for this action item	2026

Performance Metrics

Governance/ Homelessness in the Tri-Cities Region

- # of people experiencing homelessness in the Tri-Cities Region
 - % of people experiencing homelessness in the Tri-Cities region who are sheltered
 - % of people experiencing homelessness in the Tri-Cities region who are unsheltered
- (Source: Metro Denver Homelessness Initiative (MDHI) Point in Time (PIT) count)
- % of action items completed

Single Adult System

- Safe Parking Pilot Program
 - # of safe parking locations in the Tri-Cities included in the pilot
 - # of people utilizing established safe parking pilot locations
- Navigation Center
 - # of unduplicated individuals who access base services
 - # of unduplicated clients being served by case management
 - # of service referrals provided by case management
 - # of participating agencies within case conferencing
 - # of housing placements through case management and case conferencing

Workforce Development

- Bridge House Ready to Work
 - Graduation rate
 - # of hours worked by program participants in fields such as landscape and culinary arts
 - # of hours of career coaching offered utilizing the space/ equipment provided by the funding
 - Average hourly wage of graduates (projected)
 - CrossPurpose
 - # of graduates who utilized the space/ equipment provided by funding from the cities
 - # of hours of career coaching offered utilizing the space/ equipment provided by this funding
 - Average hourly wage of graduates (projected)
- (Source: CrossPurpose reporting to the City of Englewood)

Family System

- # of students experiencing homelessness
- # of students experiencing homelessness who are sheltered
- # of students experiencing homelessness who are not sheltered
- # of “doubled up” students (staying with family or friends)
- # of students staying in hotels/motels