

LEWIS COUNTY 5-YEAR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION: Every person in Lewis County has access to safe, affordable housing.

GOAL: Maintain an emergency shelter and housing support system that effectively identifies and responds to persons at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Quickly identify and engage people experiencing homelessness in Lewis County.

STRATEGY ONE: Ensure the coordinated entry system is easily accessible, and utilized county wide.

Action Items:

- A. Prioritize funding for projects that utilize the coordinated entry process.
- B. Provide ongoing community-wide messaging and education about coordinated entry, what it is and how it works.
- C. Facilitate quarterly meetings for all providers working in the homeless crisis response system to ensure coordinated approach and identify gaps in service.

STRATEGY TWO: Award funding to agencies who perform/provide the following:

Action Items:

- A. Services that locate every literally homeless person living in Lewis County.
- B. Targeted outreach efforts that engage underserved populations.
- C. Regularly provide housing updates and information to all community Social Service and Healthcare providers.

OBJECTIVE TWO: Prioritize services to clients experiencing the greatest barriers and highest levels of need.

STRATEGY ONE: Promote low barrier housing programs

Action Items:

- A. Prioritize funding for programs that utilize housing first models.

STRATEGY TWO: Educate stakeholders and community partners on fiscal and practical efficiency of prioritizing high risk populations.

Action Items:

- A. Regularly update the Public Health & Social Service Advisory Board, the County Manager, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and other elected officials.
- B. Provide ongoing community-wide education about benefits of prioritizing high risk and high need first.

OBJECTIVE THREE: Maintain effective and efficient homeless crisis response system.

STRATEGY ONE: Establish adequate, low barrier emergency shelter capacity.

Action Items:

- A. Identify how many, and what type of, emergency shelter beds are needed in Lewis County.
- B. Develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) that may provide appropriate funds for the development of adequate facilities.

STRATEGY TWO: Monitor homeless crisis response housing services using an outcome based model that incentivizes the following specific, targeted outcome measures:

Action Items:

- A. Increase percentage of exits to permanent housing to the level of the top performing 20% of the homeless crisis response systems nationwide.
- B. Reduce returns to homelessness after exit to permanent housing to less than 10%.
- C. Reduce average length of time homeless of those served to less than 90 days.

OBJECTIVE FOUR: Advocate for increased safe, affordable housing availability county-wide.

STRATEGY ONE: Inform countywide policy that promotes increased development of all types of housing.

STRATEGY TWO: Partner with businesses whenever possible to provide data supporting the need to develop more housing.

STRATEGY THREE: Partner with area schools and Centralia College to promote workforce development for residential development experts.

The current estimated number of homeless households in Lewis County is 132. The impact of full implementation of this homeless strategic plan will result in 91 of those households becoming housed, which would leave 41 households remaining unsheltered. This assumes existing resources and state policies remain the same.