

# POLK COUNTY

## PARTNERS ALIGNED TOWARD HOUSING SOLUTIONS (PATHS)

HB 4123 COORDINATED HOMELESS RESPONSE PILOTS – NOVEMBER 2023 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

Rural Polk County is pleased to be a Rural Homelessness Coordination Pilot (funded by House Bill 4123 in 2022). The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Polk County, Monmouth, Dallas, Independence, Willamina, and Falls City are committed to working together in a shared, strengths-based manner to address housing and homelessness issues in our region. Coordination of rural homelessness efforts will continue between Marion/Polk through the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance.

Rural areas of Polk County are encompassed by a diverse population of roughly 56,000 residents. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde include 5,400 enrolled tribal members located mainly in Polk and Yamhill counties, and membership expands throughout its ancestral lands. Demographic racial and economic intersections within rural Polk County will require localized, representative governance and intentional strategic planning to adequately address the unique nature of rural housing scarcity, homelessness prevention, and approaches to transitioning people to permanent housing.

The nature of rural poverty presents unique challenges and opportunities for meaningful interventions. For example, Falls City suffers from the highest rate of youth homelessness in the state, and 20% of preschoolers in Grand Ronde are homeless. However, there is a strong and growing commitment to addressing local challenges in each of our partner jurisdictions. Planning for the coordination of services across agencies and geographic areas, transportation barriers, addiction resources, and more sheltering have been identified as a collective need. The resiliency of institutional ecosystems in rural areas suffers compared to our urban neighbors, but there is strength in our relationships, community connectivity, and resourcefulness amidst scarcity.

Partners Aligned Toward Housing Solutions (PATHS) Advisory Committee: An advisory committee, called Partners Aligned Toward Housing Solutions (PATHS), first met in October 2022. Members are from Polk County, the cities of Dallas, Falls City, Independence, Monmouth and Willamina and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, Polk County Behavioral Health and any other interested parties. These partners coordinated efforts across communities to begin work on developing this 5-year strategic plan to prevent and address homelessness in rural Polk County.

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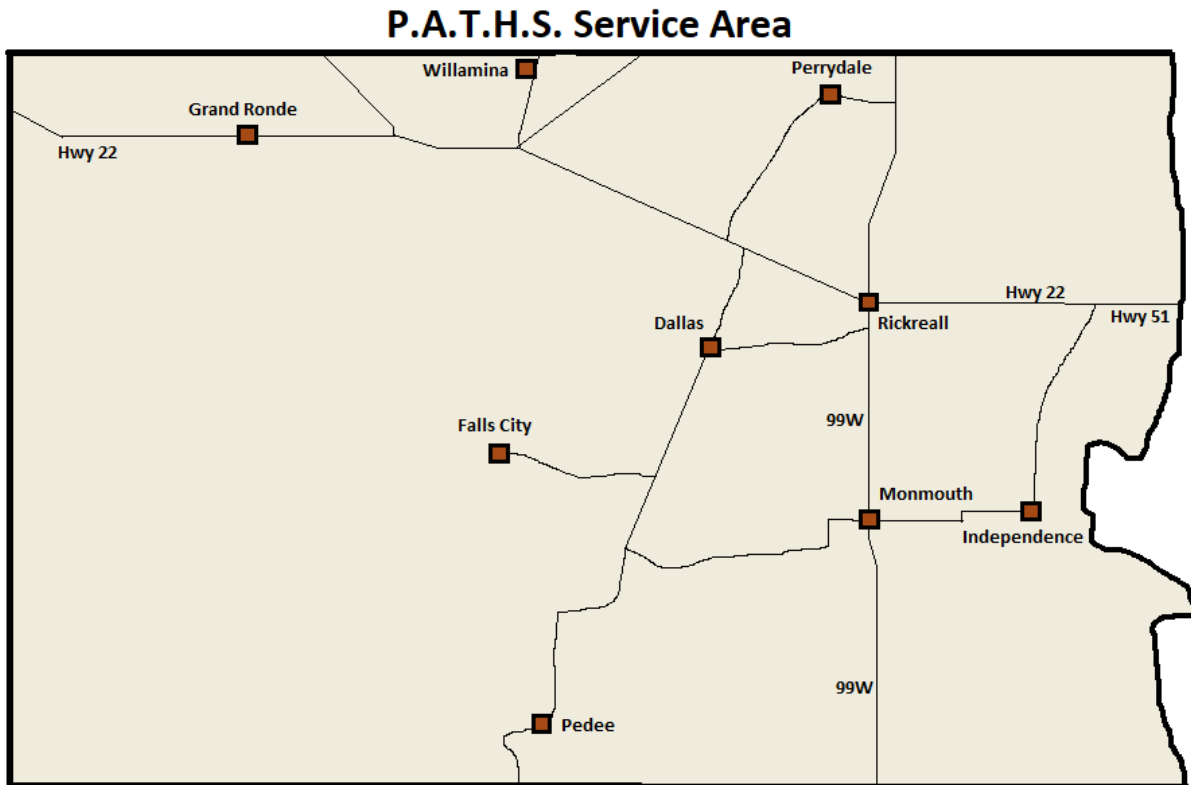
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“Rural Polk County” Region: “Rural Polk County” throughout this project and this strategic plan refers to all of Polk County, excluding West Salem, and including Grand Ronde and all of Willamina.

Rural Polk County or PATHS Service Area =  
Most of Polk County - West Salem + All of Grand Ronde + All of Willamina

Partners in rural Polk County convened to discuss preventing and addressing homelessness in rural areas. It quickly became evident that addressing homelessness in rural areas requires a vastly different approach than in urban areas. Partners across the region, including the City of Salem, agreed that the rural Polk County strategy would not directly include West Salem/urban areas. The main reason for this is the difference in approaches. West Salem is included in the efforts of the City of Salem and also the Marion-Polk regional response. The PATHS Service Area includes most of Polk County. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde are full participants. Also, all of Willamina, which straddles the border of Polk and Yamhill Counties, is included in the service area and is a full participant. This map shows the geographic region referred to as “rural Polk County” and that makes up the PATHS service area:



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Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): The participating communities and organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 8/26/2022.

Website: PATHS developed and published a website: <https://pc-paths.com/>

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Rural Polk County Pilot is housed within the Polk County Family & Community Outreach Department (Polk County FCO), a department within the overall government structure in Polk County. The Polk County Homeless Prevention & Outreach office is staffed by two full time positions which include a Homeless Prevention & Outreach Coordinator, a Homeless Prevention & Outreach Resource Connector, and a consultant. All of these positions were created following the award of pilot funding.

Oversight for this office is provided by the Director and Program Manager within the FCO department. This office is also supported by an advisory committee called P.A.T.H.S. (Partners Aligned Towards Housing Solutions). As described above, this committee consists of representatives from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the cities of Monmouth, Independence, Dallas, Falls City, and Willamina, Polk County, and the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency.

Other roles of this office include coordinating Landlord Luncheons, By Name Case Conferencing meetings, creating new partnerships, strengthening current partnerships, and connecting clients to local resources. Staff also maintain the Homeless Prevention and Outreach database to make sure client information is up to date and accurate data is being pulled. In addition to working with partners to build community capacity to address homelessness, staff also work directly with those who are experiencing homelessness to overcome barriers to housing and find paths to permanent housing placements. Below is an overview of the Homeless Prevention & Outreach Program.

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<b>Polk County Family &amp; Community Outreach – Homeless Prevention &amp; Outreach</b>	
<b>Director</b> Brent DeMoe	
<b>Program Manager</b> Stephanie Gilbert	
<b>Homeless Prevention &amp; Outreach Coordinator</b> Ryan Pollard	<b>Homeless Prevention &amp; Outreach Resource Connector</b> Grace Akin

The Polk County Family & Community Outreach department posted two open recruitments and hired successful candidates in each position within one month. Successful candidates met all qualifications, completed training, and now successfully perform their job duties. Polk County Family & Community Outreach has coordinated with other community partners to help address and prevent homelessness. One main partner is the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, ARCHES program. The ARCHES program currently has 5 full-time staff members stationed at Polk County Family & Community Outreach locations - 4 in Dallas and 1 in Monmouth. This partnership is vital to the success of getting clients into the Rapid Rehousing program and reaching out goals.

### STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

[Rural Polk County's Five-Year Strategic Plan to Prevent and Address Homelessness](#) includes the following sections:

- Introduction
- Statement of Need
- Mapping Assets and Gaps
- Goals/Strategies
- Conclusion
- Appendices

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It outlines the total need, examines the programs and work already in place, highlights gaps in the system, and outlines goals and strategies to fill those gaps. The plan is organized around 3 foundations and 3 solutions:



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We began the process to develop our strategic plan with a series of listening sessions. Each session was designed with a particular perspective in mind. For example, tribal/city leadership, public safety, service providers, education. During an 8-hour Community Connect event, we used a dot survey tool to foster conversations with 171 community members including those with lived experience. These listening sessions laid the foundation for the plan:

Group	Presenters
4/11/22 Tribal/City Leadership Perspective	Dana Ainan (Social Services Department, Grand Ronde), Kenna West (City Manager, Willamina), Marty Wine (City Manager, Monmouth), Amy Houghtaling (Council President, Falls City), TJ Bailey (Mayor, Falls City), Brian Latta (City Manager, Dallas)
4/25/22 Public Safety Perspective	Sergeant Todd Fenk (Polk County Sheriff's Office), Jodi Merritt (Polk County Community Corrections Director), Aaron Felton (Polk County District Attorney), Ben Stange (Chief, Polk County Fire District 1), AJ Foscoli (City Manager, Falls City), Derek Trombla (Community Support and Code Enforcement Officer, Willamina), Charlie Mitchell (Economic & Community Development Director, Dallas), Sergeant David King (Dallas Police Department), Lieutenant Matt Olafson (Monmouth Police Department), Chief Lyle Gilbert (Independence Police Department), Jake McKnight (Grand Ronde Police Chief), Steve Warden (Grand Ronde Chief of Emergency Management)
5/9/22 Service Providers Perspective	Trisha Vickers (Northwest Human Services, Jennifer Broadus/Jennifer Von Derahe/Denyc Boles (West Valley Hospital), Breezy Aguirre and Robert Marshall (Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency)
5/23/22 Service Providers Perspective (cont.)	Kerry Hammerschmith (Polk County Behavioral Health), Ben Smith (Polk County Resource Center), Family Promise (TJ Putman), Dana Goodale (Polk County School Based Mental Health Program)

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6/6/22 School District and West Valley Housing Authority Perspective	Ryan Sticka (McKinney/Vento Liaison, Dallas School District), Amy Houghtaling (Falls City School District), Ana Gil (McKinney/Vento Liaison, Central School District), Lynne Shore (McKinney/Vento Liaison, Willamina School District), Tammy Luker (Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator, West Valley Housing Authority)
1/24/23 Community Members including Voices of Lived Experience, Community Connect	Dot survey conducted to invite conversation among attendees at the Community Connect around the following questions: "How serious of a problem do you think homelessness is in Polk County?" And "Which of the following resources would be helpful to you?" 171 people (community members including voices of lived experience, service providers, elected officials, etc.) participated in the dot survey and the conversations.
Feb 2023 Survey among service providers	18 Rural Polk County service providers responded to a survey asking about 2022 activities, impacts and unmet needs.

Building on the listening sessions and looking at goal categories and priorities at the federal, state, and region levels, we identified our framework of 3 foundations and 3 solutions. The PATHS board approved that framework. A small team of PATHS board members and staff then began the process of writing the plan.

PATHS Board members and service providers were invited to provide input and feedback to various drafts of the plan. In September, a series of meetings were held. Each meeting had a focus on a piece of the plan (i.e. foundations goals, prevention, homelessness response, affordable housing). Comments and feedback were incorporated into the plan.

One-on-one interviews were conducted by staff with 7 community members who have past or current experience with lived experience to invite feedback on the plan. We asked about top priorities from their perspective to prevent and address homelessness. We shared the goals in the plan and invited input. These interviews confirmed that we are on the right track and highlighted in particular the urgency of adding local transitional housing.

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The Strategic Plan was approved by the PATHS team on 10/11/23. It did take longer than anticipated to compile and get approved. We began the process of developing the plan and then the Emergency Order came out. We paused our process to allow the regional plan to be developed together first. Then we could align our plan with that one.

### STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOMES

PATHS identified goals and action items for all 3 foundations and all 3 solutions. We established specific targets and outcomes for some of those goal areas as follows:

- Prevent homelessness for 120 households in 2023 facing eviction and plan for 100 per year 2024-2027 (as needed per annual review)
- Meet the need for transitional housing / shelter by adding 80 beds in 2023 with a target of 50 beds (to be adjusted per annual data review including data from local service providers and PIT Count data) per year 2024-2027
- Meet the need for rapid rehousing with a target of 75 households in 2023 and a target (to be adjusted per annual data review) of 50 households per year in 2024-2027
- Open 100 affordable housing units by the end of 2027. Add an additional 100 affordable housing units to the housing production pipeline by the end of 2027.

We engaged in energetic conversations about these targets. Some were hesitant to target a number. Others felt that having measurable goals would be the best way to track success. This strategic plan was built over the span of quite a few months. We identified goal areas early on and then were able to do work in our communities before finalizing our targets. We also set goal areas in alignment with the Executive Order funding. With funding allocated to rural Polk County programs and goals specifically set in conjunction with that funding, we were able to refine goals knowing that we had service providers and funds in place to work towards them. We will measure success with an annual review.

### **Regional Coordination**

An early step in our process was to review strategic plans for organizations in our region. For example, the CoC's strategic plan, the Sequential Intercept Model Mapping Report, the Marion/Polk Community Health Improvement Plan, and Polk Community Development Corporation's 5-Year Plan. Part of our process was to observe the work currently being done as well as goals already outlined and priorities identified. An advantage in our region is that there is alignment across these plans. For example, the Community Health Improvement Plan identifies "Housing" as one of the three priority areas.



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The Governor's Executive Order and the 2023 legislative funding have impacted our efforts. As a result of the Executive Order, our CoC developed a regional plan that highlighted specific priority populations. We have highlighted efforts to serve those priority populations in this plan. In addition, the Executive Order allocated funding for prevention, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing. We included those specific goal areas in our plan. We also included projects funded by the Executive Order funds as part of our plan.

Rural Polk County has participated more in the CoC and CoC meetings this year than in previous years. Polk County Commissioner Jeremy Gordon and the PATHS board chair became the CoC Board Chair in Dec 2022. This year, rural Polk County has added members to the HMIS Work Group and the Performance & Evaluation Committee. We will be presenting our 5-year plan at the CoC Collaborative Committee meeting on 11/15 and to the CoC Board on 12/14 (or 1/11, agenda pending).

In terms of staffing, we have embraced a multi-prong approach. Our Homeless Response Office is housed within the Polk County Family & Community Outreach (FCO) Department. Brent DeMoe and Stephanie Gilbert have provided leadership and coordination in that department for years and they have extended their efforts to support the PATHS team and the homeless response office. Marianne Bradshaw is an outside consultant who is under contract to meet needs this year. She has coordinated efforts to develop the 5-year strategic plan and also has provided support to the PATHS project (website, youth/young adult video project, etc.). Ryan Pollard was hired in May 2023 as an FCO employee who works as the Homeless Prevention Liaison doing outreach and client work as well as providing staff support to the PATHS team. Grace Akin joined the homeless response office team in June 2023 focused on homelessness prevention and outreach.

### **Equitable, Accessible and Responsive System**

The rural Polk County strategic plan elevates equity as one of the foundations. It highlights equity in terms of race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and geography. This includes strategies such as:

- Increase understanding of the experiences and needs of members of marginalized groups as they navigate the housing continuum
- Amplify voices of lived experience
- Develop a plan for data analysis/reporting with an equity lens
- Then develop a plan to rectify any inequities identified

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- Strive for geographic equity in providing services across the various communities in rural Polk County
- Support employment practices among service providers to honor diversity

We see success across service providers who are providing materials in languages beyond just English. We see an opportunity to better understand LGBTQIA+ experiences and to develop ways to track and measure inclusion in that regard.

We see success in supporting tribal members experiencing homelessness as CTGR has opened transitional housing in 2023. We see success at the FCO Resource Centers in being able to serve Spanish-speaking community members. We recognize that members of marginalized populations may not be as comfortable engaging with the system and see an opportunity for outreach to marginalized populations.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

On 1/26/23, Jeremy Gordon, Brent DeMoe and Marianne Bradshaw met with Joshua Fleming of OHCS to discuss technical assistance needs for this project. We received useful advice on several questions, including questions about data sources and data integration. The OHCS data dashboard was a valuable resource in putting together the Statement of Need portion of the strategic plan.

Marion-Polk Counties were awarded a \$3.7 million Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant in Sept 2021. About 75% of the funding is allocated to projects in rural Polk County. The technical assistance provided in conjunction with that program was robust, and the YHDP TAs have given meaningful input to the programs in this plan focused on preventing and addressing homelessness among youth and young adults.

Future technical assistance in support of the following action items will be useful:

- Develop a data analysis plan with an equity lens
- Explore permanent supportive housing in rural areas
- Coordinate rural efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing with legislative initiatives

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### DATA

Our plan includes a section called “Statement of Need.” It outlines data from a variety of sources including PIT Count, HMIS, Coordinated entry, by name lists, McKinney-Vento, Warming Centers, Housing Needs Analysis, OHCS, etc. We recognize that different data sources have different definitions and different timelines. People ask, “How many people are experiencing homelessness in rural Polk County?” And because we have many different data sources that tell part of the story but no single source that can tell the whole story, the answer to that question is complex. Our plan includes data integration using By-Name lists that will help us deduplicate across data sources and get to a clearer picture of current needs.

We have made progress on data integration. The FCO Resource Centers have added the PIT Count questions to their intake interview so we essentially are doing PIT Count year round. We have developed a process by which people experiencing homelessness can authorize communication between service providers which allows us to do By Name Case Conferencing and also allows us to look across data sources and deduplicate lists.

One of the Foundations of our plan is “Use Data and Evidence to Make Decisions” and includes the following strategies:

- Develop plans to report (regional) data split to show rural Polk County
- Improve quality/completeness of data gathering in rural Polk County
- Integrate rural Polk county data into regional data
- Develop a plan for data analysis/reporting with an equity lens
- Report data broadly to community partners and community members

### IDENTIFYING, ACCESSING AND ALIGNING FUNDS

Our strategic plan commits to aligning homelessness funding sources by braiding and blending funds to support the needs of homelessness initiatives in rural Polk County. All funds distributed from the HB4123 Pilot are first vetted by the FCO department and then voted on by voting members of the PATHS Committee to ensure that funds are being spent on projects that align with the 5 year strategic plan. In addition to the HB4123 pilot funding, FCO was awarded funding through the Governor’s Emergency order to provide both prevention and Rapid Rehousing support directly to those experiencing homelessness. Rapid Rehousing funds were awarded to

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FCO through the local CoC, these funds are used to address barriers to housing, support rental application fees, and Landlord incentive funds.

Additionally, FCO contracts with Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency to administer the prevention funding awarded to the region through the governor's emergency order. The goal for these funds is to prevent 200 households, currently facing eviction, from experiencing homelessness. FCO is on track to reach this goal in the next 30 days.

It is important to note that all of these funding sources are braided and blended with a multitude of funding opportunities that are available through the FCO department and its partners. This funding has also given our clients and Landlords in our community the ability to maintain positive relationships, grow new relationships, prevent homelessness, and work together.

### COMMUNICATIONS

One of the Foundations of our plan is to "Collaborate at All Levels." That is split between partnering with organizations and engaging community members.

- Community facing website kept current with "Community News" [www.pc-paths.com](http://www.pc-paths.com)
- Meetings/events for community members such as 1/24 Community Connect, 2/16 panel about youth/young adult homelessness, 6/21 Community Information Session, 9/19 Virtual Community Information Session

The website has been successful. We have received positive feedback that it is informative and helpful. One of the challenges that we have faced is opposition from community members. The stigma and assumptions that some people make about experiencing homelessness and the harsh comments they post online and state in City Council meetings engenders fear and anxiety. We hope to continue to counter misinformation with current and local information.

We have future plans to amplify voices of lived experience in ways that will help community members understand the variety of causes and experiences of homelessness. For example, the strategic plan includes a video project to give a platform to youth/young adults who have experienced homelessness in rural Polk County to tell their stories. We also have scheduled on 11/15 a "Humanity of Homelessness Storytelling Event" at Western Oregon University in Monmouth where local folks who have experienced homelessness will share their stories. We will continue to elevate voices of lived experience.

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### ADDRESSING RACIAL DISPARITIES

In the Foundations section of the 5 year strategic plan, Foundation C, “Elevate Equity,” outlines a strategy being “Increase understanding of the experiences and needs of members of marginalized groups as they navigate the housing continuum.” Through this strategy, FCO will continue to partner with organizations who work with culturally specific populations, focusing on Latino and Native American populations.

Under Foundation C in the strategic plan, data collection and analysis on culturally specific populations, including Latino/Hispanic, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, federally recognized tribes and tribal members will be collected. Once data is collected, specific goals to support these populations and identify solutions for housing and supportive services will be developed.

Collaboration within the community is an overarching goal of the 5-year strategic plan. This will be accomplished by creating new partnerships and strengthening current partnerships. One partnership that FCO plans to strengthen is with the Central School District Homeless Liaison, who serves Latino/Hispanic youth populations. Reaching this group is crucial as more than 40% of Central High School is Latino/Hispanic.

Another partnership that FCO plans to strengthen is with the Confederate Tribes of Grand Ronde. As outlined in the plan, the Confederate Tribe of the Grand Ronde have two micro-shelters for tribal members in Grand Ronde. A challenge in this partnership has been distance - the Confederate Tribe of the Grand Ronde is in the outskirts of Rural Polk County - pretty isolated from the other cities in Rural Polk County. By being present in this community on a monthly basis to provide support for the immediate needs of those in the community, FCO hopes to strengthen this partnership.

### CONNECTIONS TO PERMANENT HOUSING

The rural Polk County 5-year strategic plan outlines strategies to connect residents to permanent housing. Most of them are specific to rapid rehousing and include the following:

- Support the Rapid Rehousing projects funded by the state’s Emergency Order funding to rapidly rehouse ~75 Polk County Households by 1/31/2024
- Support the Rapid Rehousing project funded by YHDP for young adults 18-24
- Support Rapid Rehousing projects in 2024-2027
- Deliver wrap-around services to those in rapid rehousing programs

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- Facilitate people exiting homelessness in getting and using a voucher
- Communicate regularly with landlords to facilitate rapid rehousing
- Seek to add Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) in rural Polk County

We are making progress with rapid rehousing but also encountering some hurdles. Sable House (service provider supporting survivors of DV) received Emergency Order funding with a goal of connecting 20 households with rapid rehousing in 2023. Once the funding was awarded, they were prepared to hit the ground running and have already met their goal. MWVCAA (Community Action) is partnering with FCO with a goal of connecting 50 households with rapid rehousing in 2023. It took some months to lay the foundation for this work but it is now up and running. As of 10/13/23, 6 households have been successfully connected to rapid rehousing and about 25 are in the queue. The team is encountering a major challenge in the lack of available affordable rentals.

A noteworthy success is with landlord communication. In June 2023, we began hosting quarterly landlord luncheons. Fostering communication and building relationships with local landlords has played a key role in our rehousing successes.

### CONCLUSION

One key lesson learned is that preventing and addressing homelessness is complex. Our plan has 3 foundations and 3 solutions. They each have multiple parts and elements. They all are interrelated. We had conversations about streamlining or simplifying but making progress on a complex challenge will require a multi-faceted solution. And making progress on a complex challenge in a way that honors individual choices and individual goals will require options and choice. When the board sat down to choose its name, we discussed a variety of options and a variety of acronyms. We landed on PATHS which stands for “Partners Aligned Toward Housing Solutions.” We liked the acronym PATHS because it is plural. We are not creating a plan for a single path that everyone must trod. But rather we are creating solutions with a variety of paths with choices and options. Where we have resources to offer various prevention solutions and various housing solutions and people can choose depending on their needs and goals. So our lesson is this is complex and the solution is not “one path fits all.”

Ediger Hall is a success we’d like to highlight and a model we’d recommend to other rural communities. A church in Dallas had a stand-alone building on its property. It was an old schoolhouse that they’d used for a variety of purposes over the years. They decided to make it a

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single-family home where they could house one family at a time. With some renovations, it became a 3 bedroom, 2 bath home with a lovely kitchen, laundry room and a fenced backyard. PATHS was prepared to help cover the costs, but labor was donated and United Way contributed the needed funds totaling \$50,000. The Polk County Family & Community Outreach team places an appropriate family there and provides needed services such as housing navigation and case management. The church congregation provides friendship and support and stands ready to help with items like meals or diapers. The first family (a mom who had graduated from Dallas High School and her 3 kids) moved in this summer with a housing voucher in hand but nowhere to go. After 6 weeks, they moved into their own place. Now a new family has moved in. It is a beautiful partnership between faith-based leaders, county employees, and community members.

### APPENDICES

- A. Organizational Charts**
- B. Timeline for major project deliverables**
- C. Polk County PATHS MOU**
- D. Rural Polk County 5-year Strategic Plan**

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### A. Organizational Charts

<b>P.A.T.H.S. (Partners Aligned Towards Housing Solutions)</b>			
<b>Board Chair</b> Commissioner Jeremy Gordon			
<b>Board Vice Chair</b> Kenna West – City of Independence			
<b>Voting Member</b> Michael Chery – Tribal Council of Confederate Tribes of Grand Ronde	<b>Voting Member</b> Brian Latta – City Manager of Dallas	<b>Voting Member</b> Amy Houghtaling – Falls City City Council	<b>Voting Member</b> Jennifer Lief – Polk County Behavioral Health
<b>Voting Member</b> Mardette Cook – Code Enforcement of Willamina	<b>Voting Member</b> Ashley Hamilton – CPO Mid- Willamette Valley Community Action Agency	<b>Voting Member</b> Marty Wine – City Manager of Monmouth	
<b>Staff Support</b> Marianne Bradshaw - Consultant	<b>Staff Support</b> Brent DeMoe – Director of Polk FCO	<b>Staff Support</b> Ryan Pollard – Homeless Prevention & Outreach Coordinator of Polk FCO	<b>Staff Support</b> Grace Akin – Homeless Prevention & Outreach Resource Connector of Polk FCO
<b>Staff Support</b> Stephanie Gilbert – Program Manager of Polk FCO			

<b>Polk County Family &amp; Community Outreach – Homeless Prevention &amp; Outreach</b>	
<b>Director</b> Brent DeMoe	
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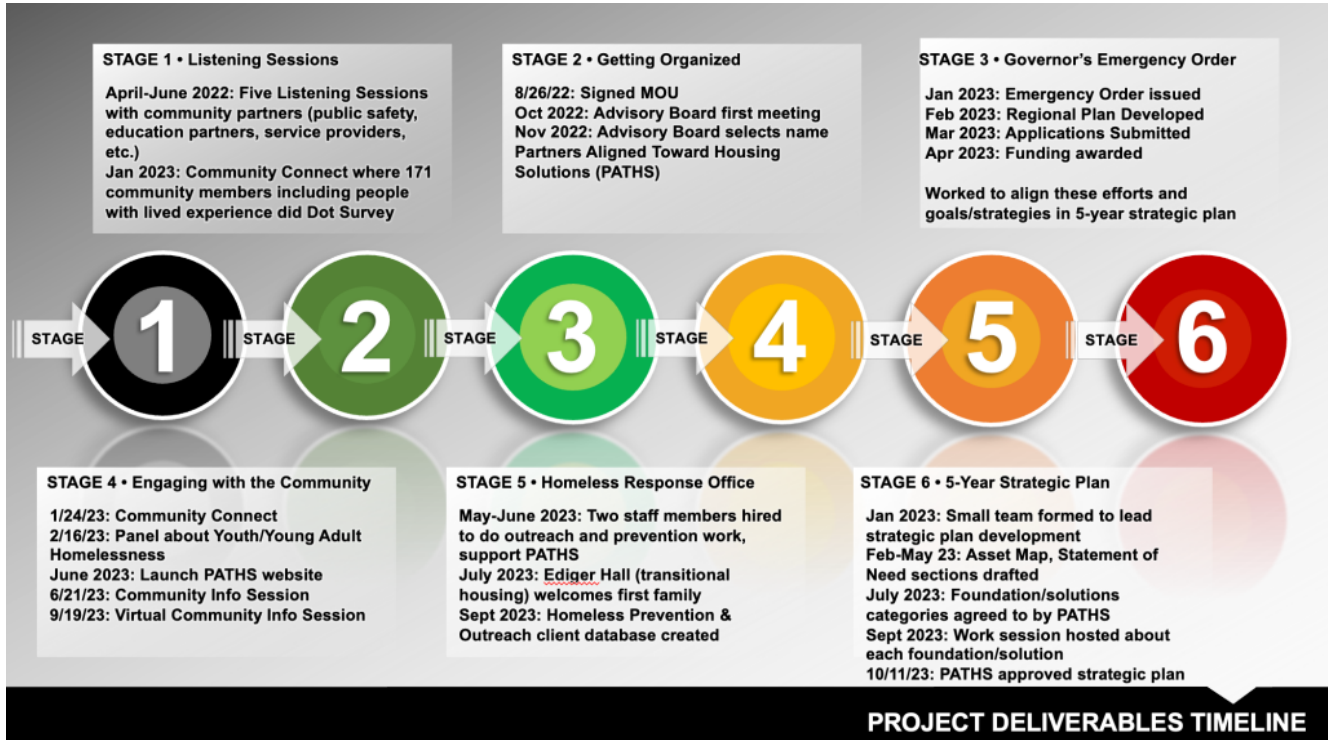


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### B. Timeline of Project Deliverables



## **Memorandum of Understanding Establishing the Polk County Coordinated Homeless Response System**

WHEREAS, House Bill 4123 (2022) provides grants to local governments to create and establish a coordinated homeless response system, office, and advisory board; and

WHEREAS, Polk County, with input from the other parties to this Agreement, has applied for and received a grant (“the Grant”) to create a coordinated homeless response system, office and advisory board; and

WHEREAS, County, city, tribal members, and non-profit entities participating in this project are required to create an agreement establishing a coordinated homeless response system, office, and advisory board that has representation from all participating entities and establishes participating entities’ roles to support the coordinated homeless response system; an Advisory Board now therefore,

IT IS AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

- 1. Effective Date:** This Agreement shall take effect on August 26, 2022, or whenever all participating entities sign this Agreement, whichever occurs last.
- 2. Participating Entities:** The following entities are Parties to and Participating Entities in this Agreement: the cities of Dallas, Monmouth, Independence, Willamina, and Falls City; the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; the Mid-Valley Community Action Agency; and Polk County.
- 3. Purpose:** The purpose of this Agreement is to establish a coordinated homeless response system that consists of a coordinated homeless response office (“Response Office”) with a centralized point of contact; establish an advisory board comprised of individuals appointed to the advisory board by each Participating Entity; establish roles for each Participating Entity to support the coordinated homeless response office; and coordinate with any local continuum of care receiving funding under 24 C.F.R. part 578.
- 4. The Grant Recipient and Administrative Agency:** Polk County Advisory Board shall be known as the Grant recipient, administer the Polk County Homeless Response System (“Response System”), and establish a Response Office and central point of contact. Any employees or contractors retained for the Response System or Response Office shall be employees or contractors of Polk County Advisory Board (“Advisory Board”).
- 5. Advisory Board Composition:** The Advisory Board (“Advisory Board”) shall have eight-members consisting of one representative, each, from the Participating Entities. The Participating Entities shall independently select a representative from their entity to serve on the Advisory Board. These representatives shall be either an employee or elected official from each Participating Entity.
- 6. The Advisory Roles and Responsibility:** The Advisory Board shall be an advisory body to the Polk County Board of Commissioners. The role of the Advisory Board shall be to:

- a. Establish specific roles for each Participating Entity to support the Advisory Board and Response Office.
- b. Provide input regarding the operations of the Response System.
- c. Review and approve the Polk County Homelessness Strategic Plan and review and make recommendations to the coordinated homeless response system annual budget.
- d. Within one year of receiving the Grant, develop and adopt a five-year strategic plan that identifies and sets goals for addressing:
  - i. Funding to support the ongoing operations of the Response System;
  - ii. Increasing or streamlining resources and support to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness within the Participating Entities;
  - iii. Incorporating national best practices for ending homelessness;
  - iv. Eliminating racial disparities within homeless services within the service area; and
  - v. Creating pathways to permanent and supportive housing that is affordable to local populations experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- e. No later than November 15, 2023, and September 15, 2024, provide the reports required by House Bill 4123 (2022).

- 7. The Advisory Board Chair and Vice Chair:** The Advisory Board shall elect a Chair and a Vice Chair in accordance with its bylaws. The Chair shall establish the agenda for Advisory Board meetings and convene all necessary meetings. The Vice Chair shall perform the Chair's responsibilities when the Chair is absent.
- 8. Advisory Board Decisions:** Each of the eight Advisory Board members shall have one vote. A quorum shall consist of five or more Advisory Board members. Decisions shall require the approval of five or more Advisory Board members. Advisory Board members may attend meetings in person or electronically as permitted by Oregon laws.
- 9. Bylaws:** The Advisory Board shall establish bylaws to govern elections of Advisory Board officers; appointment of Advisory Board members; Advisory Board meeting procedures; and other matters the Advisory Board deems appropriate.
- 10. Advisory Board, Term, and Termination:** This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts which, when combined, shall constitute the entire agreement. This Agreement shall terminate on January 1, 2025. If a Participating Entity wishes to withdraw from this Agreement and Polk County's Homeless Response System, it may do so by a majority vote of its governing body. In the event a Participating Entity's governing body elects to withdraw from this Agreement, the remaining Participating Entities may renegotiate the terms of this Agreement as needed.

- 11. Mutual Indemnity:** To the extent permitted by the Oregon Constitution and by the Oregon Tort Claims Act, each Party to this Agreement shall indemnify the other Parties against liability for damage to life or property arising from the indemnifying Party's own activities under this Agreement, provided that a Party will not be required to indemnify other Parties for any such liability arising out of the wrongful acts of employees or agents of the other Parties.
- 12. Compliance with HB 4123 and Grant Agreement.** All actions of the Advisory Board and the participating entities in carrying out this Agreement will be in compliance with the provisions of HB 4123 and any administrative rules, orders or regulations adopted thereunder, and with the Grant Agreement as well as all other applicable provisions of law.
- 13. Amendment:** This Agreement may only be amended by a writing approved by a majority of the Participating Entities' governing bodies.

**The Parties agree to all the terms of this Intergovernmental Agreement by signing below:**

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City of Falls City

\_\_\_\_\_  
City of Monmouth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

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City of Independence

  
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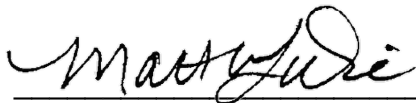
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Polk County



***RURAL POLK COUNTY***

# ***5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN***

***2023-2027***

**TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS  
HOMELESSNESS**

***PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2023***



# ***Contact Information***

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This plan was created by the Polk County Family & Community Outreach Department with input from the partners who represent the PATHS Committee and service providers in rural Polk County.

**FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PLAN, PLEASE CONTACT THE  
POLK COUNTY FAMILY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIRECTOR,  
BRENT DEMOE AT: [DEMOE.BRENT@CO.POLK.OR.US](mailto:DEMOE.BRENT@CO.POLK.OR.US)**



# ***Message from PATHS Board Chair***

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Polk County PATHS (Partners Aligned Toward Housing Solutions) is a local partnership between the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the cities of Dallas, Monmouth, Independence, Falls City, and Willamina, Polk County, and the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency. Together, we established a rural homelessness response office within Polk County Family and Community Outreach and worked in collaboration to develop this 5-year strategic plan to prevent and solve homelessness for rural Polk County households.

This has been important and timely work as housing affordability, housing availability, and other challenges are felt by an increasing number of Polk County residents. Our neighbors are spending more of their income on housing as average rents and home prices have increased dramatically since 2016, and especially since 2020. There are simply fewer affordable housing options for people who fall on hard times and less opportunity to achieve home ownership. And as a county commissioner, I hear a call to action from community members, county departments, and local partners.

Struggling community members could include the check-out person at the grocery store, the people you volunteer to serve at the local food bank, your favorite barista making your coffee in the morning, or your child's classmate. These are our community members and neighbors. For these reasons, it is critical that we connect with people who face housing challenges as soon as possible during a housing emergency and provide a pathway back to housing and self-sufficiency while being connected with appropriate supportive services. This will prevent prolonged trauma and hardship for these households and prevent more elaborate and expensive interventions in the future while improving the quality of life for all of us.

The growing homelessness challenge in our community is not a challenge we can ignore, and it is one that is best addressed when we center our efforts around data informed decision making, collaboration, and equal access to services. Our rural communities have too often been overlooked as areas of concern and I am happy to report that we have resources at our disposal to truly move the needle and leverage the incredible partnerships long established in Polk County.


I am so proud to live in a community with so many service providers, dedicated leaders, community members, and faith-based organizations who are working together to address these challenges every day.

**JEREMY GORDON**  
Polk County Commissioner  
PATHS Board Chair



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# INTRODUCTION



Rural Polk County is pleased to be a Rural Homelessness Coordination Pilot (funded by House Bill 4123 in 2022). The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Polk County, Monmouth, Dallas, Independence, Willamina, and Falls City are committed to working together in a shared, strengths-based manner to address housing and homelessness issues in our region. Coordination of rural homelessness efforts will continue between Marion/Polk through the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance.

Rural areas of Polk County are encompassed by a diverse population of roughly 56,000 residents. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde include 5,400 enrolled tribal members located mainly in Polk and Yamhill counties, and membership expands throughout its ancestral lands. Demographic racial and economic intersections within rural Polk County will require localized, representative governance and intentional strategic planning to adequately address the unique nature of rural housing scarcity, homelessness prevention, and approaches to transitioning people to permanent housing.

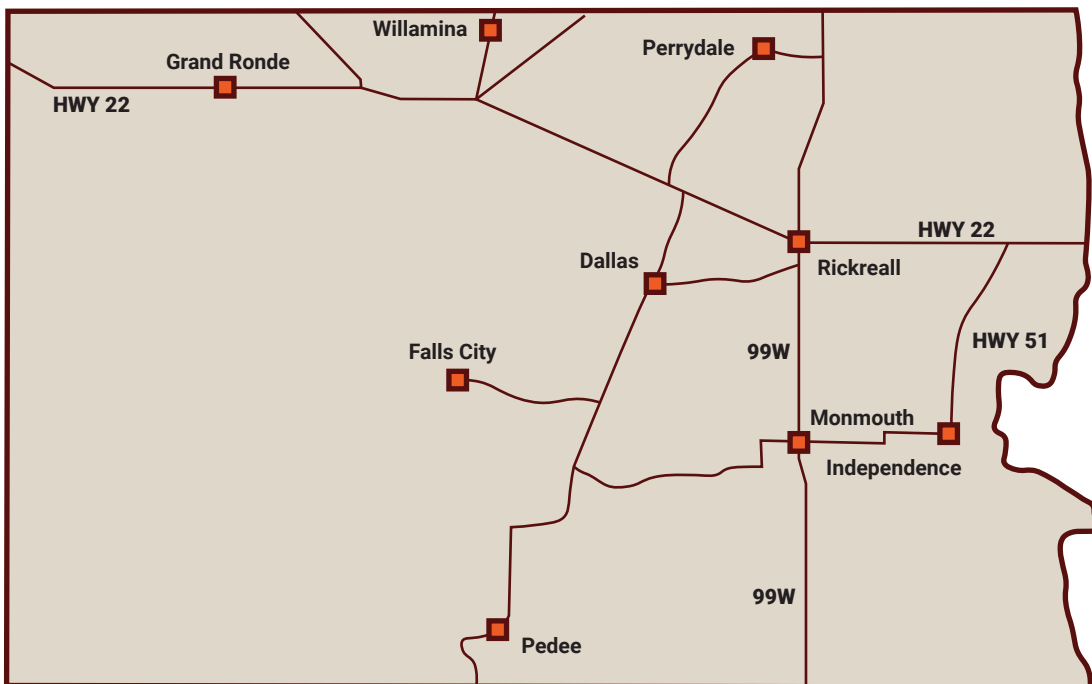
The nature of rural poverty presents unique challenges and opportunities for meaningful interventions. For example, Falls City suffers from the highest rate of youth homelessness in the state, and 20% of preschoolers in Grand Ronde are homeless. However, there is a strong and growing commitment to addressing local challenges in each of our partner jurisdictions. Planning for the coordination of services across agencies and geographic areas, transportation barriers, addiction resources, and more sheltering have been identified as a collective need. The resiliency of institutional ecosystems in rural areas suffers compared to our urban neighbors, but there is strength in our relationships, community connectivity, and resourcefulness amidst scarcity.

**PARTNERS ALIGNED TOWARD HOUSING SOLUTIONS (PATHS) ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** An advisory committee, called Partners Aligned Toward Housing Solutions (PATHS), first met in October 2022. Members are from Polk County, the cities of Dallas, Falls City, Independence, Monmouth and Willamina and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, Polk County and any other interested parties. These partners coordinated efforts across communities to begin work on developing this 5-year strategic plan to prevent and address homelessness in rural Polk County.

**“RURAL POLK COUNTY” REGION:** “Rural Polk County” throughout this project and this strategic plan refers to all of Polk County, excluding West Salem, and including Grand Ronde and all of Willamina.

**RURAL POLK COUNTY OR PATHS SERVICE AREA = MOST OF POLK COUNTY  
- WEST SALEM + ALL OF GRAND RONDE + ALL OF WILLAMINA**

Partners in rural Polk County convened to discuss preventing and addressing homelessness in rural areas. It quickly became evident that addressing homelessness in rural areas requires a vastly different approach than in urban areas. Partners across the region, including the City of Salem, agreed that the rural Polk County strategy would not directly include West Salem/urban areas. The main reason for this is the difference in approaches. West Salem is included in the efforts of the City of Salem and also the Marion-Polk regional response. The PATHS Service Area includes most of Polk County. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde are full participants. Also, all of Willamina, which straddles the border of Polk and Yamhill Counties, is included in the service area and is a full participant. This map shows the geographic region referred to as “rural Polk County” and that makes up the PATHS service area:



MAP OF RURAL POLK COUNTY

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## NEEDS:

About 53,000 people call rural Polk County home. The population growth and increasing cost of rent over the past several years make it difficult for an increasing number of residents to find housing and to stay housed. Thousands of rural Polk County households receive assistance from the Oregon Department of Human Services. Hundreds of households received direct financial assistance to prevent homelessness from Polk County Family & Community Outreach in the 2022-23 fiscal year. Homelessness in rural Polk County is increasing. In the 2022-23 warming season (Nov-March), 183 unique individuals stayed at least one night at a Polk Warming Center which is more than 4 times as many people as the previous year.

## ASSETS:

Service Providers, city governments, county departments and faith based leaders have already been working hard day in and day out to support residents and address needs for housing initiatives. There is a great deal already in place and in the pipeline to address these needs.

## GOALS:

We have goals to expand programs that are working and goals to develop plans to fill the gaps. The Rural Polk County Strategic Plan to Prevent and Address Homelessness is built around six pillars: three foundations (collaboration, data, and equity) and three solutions (prevention, homelessness response, and supply of affordable housing). All of these are necessary parts of preventing and addressing homelessness. The foundational priorities will shape all actions taken as part of the solutions so that all actions will be collaborative, data-informed, and equitable.





# STATEMENT OF NEED

Housing affordability and homelessness are important issues in rural Polk County. A variety of measures indicate a need for increased homelessness prevention, homelessness response, and supply of affordable housing. In order to quantify the need, key data is shared here about the following topics:

1. Population & Demographics
2. Homelessness prevention
3. Homelessness and homelessness response
4. Housing data

## POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2020, per the US Census, there were nearly 53,000 people in 14,855 households living in rural Polk County. This includes the communities of Dallas, Falls City, Grand Ronde, Monmouth and Willamina.

	POPULATION	HOUSEHOLDS
Dallas	16,854	6,612
Falls City	1,051	563
Grand Ronde	2,010	511
Independence	9,828	2,971
Monmouth	11,110	3,346
Willamina	2,239	852
Other	9,879	5,335
Rural Polk	52,971	14,855

(SOURCE: 2020 CENSUS)

Polk County (in total) has experienced steady and noteworthy population growth, which has included growth in rural communities. Over the past 5 years (2018 to 2023), Polk County was the third fastest growing county in Oregon (behind Deschutes and Crook Counties). In those years, the population of all of Polk County increased by 7.07%. The population growth rate for the same time period exceeded the county average in Dallas (9.50%) and Independence (9.88%).

## POPULATION GROWTH IN POLK COUNTY

	2018	2020	2023	5YR INCREASE
<b>Polk County</b>	85,027	87,433	91,042	7.07%
<b>Dallas</b>	16,400	16,954	17,966	9.50%
<b>Falls City</b>	1,030	1,060	1,084	5.24%
<b>Independence</b>	9,600	10,015	10,549	9.88%
<b>Monmouth</b>	10,800	10,924	11,224	3.92%
<b>Willamina</b>	2,170	2,249	2,288	5.44%

(SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, US CENSUS)

Rural Polk County is home to individuals with diverse identities. It is home to a higher percentage of people who identify as Hispanic/Latinx (particularly in Independence and Monmouth) and people who identify as American Indian/Alaskan Native (particularly in Grand Ronde and Willamina) than the state of Oregon as a whole:



	STATE OF OREGON	POLK COUNTY COMMUNITIES WITH NOTEWORTHY REPRESENTATION
<b>% Hispanic/Latinx</b>	14%	Independence: 34% Monmouth: 19%
<b>% American Indian/Alaskan Native</b>	3%	Grand Ronde: 38% Willamina: 12%

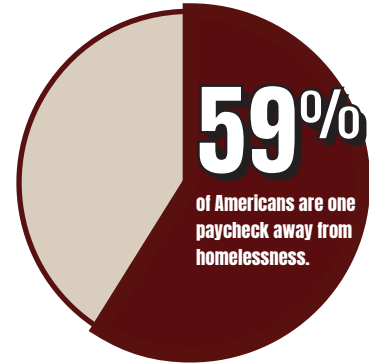
(SOURCE: 2020 CENSUS)

**THE STUDENT POPULATION AT WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY IN MONMOUTH IS INCREASINGLY DIVERSE.**

Among a student population of nearly 5,000:

- 20% indicate they are Hispanic/Latinx
- 24% identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community
- 5% identify as a gender other than singularly male or female

(Source: 2021 Western Oregon University survey among student body)



**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**

A national survey by Charles Schwab found that 59% of Americans are one paycheck away from homelessness. (<https://content.schwab.com/web/retail/public/about-schwab/Charles-Schwab-2019-Modern-Wealth-Survey-findings-0519-9JBP.pdf> pg. 7)

Homelessness and poverty are interrelated: when economic instability increases, so does the risk of homelessness. In rural Polk County, median household incomes are below the state of Oregon overall and below Polk County overall. Over 20% of residents in Falls City, Grand Ronde, and Monmouth are living in poverty. The result is that many people struggle to stay housed.

**MEDIAN INCOMES AND POVERTY IN RURAL POLK COUNTY**

	<b>MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2021)</b>	<b>% PERSONS IN POVERTY (2021)</b>
<b>Oregon</b>	\$70,084	12.2%
<b>Polk County</b>	\$70,238	12.1%
<b>Dallas</b>	\$60,511	14.5%
<b>Falls City</b>	\$37,969	28.6%
<b>Grand Ronde</b>	\$27,465	29%
<b>Independence</b>	\$65,019	9.5%
<b>Monmouth</b>	\$54,310	23.4%
<b>Willamina</b>	\$49,773	15.9%

(SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, US CENSUS BUREAU)

## ASSISTANCE FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES

Low Income households can qualify for assistance. These benefits help families with medical care, food, and childcare. They can help families make ends meet and stay housed. These services include:

- ERDC: Employment Related Day Care
- SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

The number of families who qualify for benefits based on low income levels in rural Polk County helps to also quantify those who are at a greater risk of unstable housing and homelessness.

## HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING ODHS SERVICES (ERDC, MEDICAL, SNAP, TANF) SEPT 2023

CITY	ZIP CODE	HOUSEHOLDS
Dallas	97338	4,549
Falls City	97344	420
Grand Ronde	97347	683
Independence	97351	2,794
Monmouth	97361	2,952
Rickreall	97371	124
Willamina	97396	114
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,636</b>

(SOURCE: ODHS OFFICE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY)

## RENT/UTILITIES ASSISTANCE - POLK COUNTY FCO

Some people find themselves in an acute situation where they are on the cusp of losing their housing. Some have received an eviction notice and some know it is coming soon if something does not change. In order to quantify the current number of households

in rural Polk County who are at imminent risk of losing their housing, it is helpful to look at the number of households who reached out for this type of assistance. When someone comes to one of the resource centers, an intake is completed. This intake gathers information about the situation and the needs and then the team determines how to help. The funding for this assistance came from a variety of sources including Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA), the cities of Monmouth and Independence, Family Promise, West Valley Housing Authority, Polk County Service Integrations, Dallas Community Foundation, Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub, Inc., The Salvation Army, Dallas Ministerial Foundation, and Oregon Community Foundation.



Polk County Family & Community Outreach (FCO) met 158 requests for direct financial assistance in fiscal year 2021-22 and 628 requests in 2022-23:

### **DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM POLK COUNTY FCO BY CITY**

	<b>2021-22</b>		<b>2022-23</b>	
	<b>REQUESTS</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>REQUESTS</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Dallas</b>	63	\$149,529.00	193	\$223,405.45
<b>Falls City</b>	4	\$8,340.00	11	\$10,024.28
<b>Independence</b>	37	\$141,138.00	124	\$220,408.46
<b>Monmouth</b>	45	\$146,626.00	283	\$292,652.12
<b>Other</b>	9	\$19,213.00	17	\$12,125.30
<b>Rural Polk Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>\$464,846.00</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>\$758,615.61</b>

(SOURCE: POLK COUNTY FAMILY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH, ANNUAL REPORTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021-22 AND 2022-23)



In 2022-23, most of the requests were for rental assistance. The second most common category of requests is assistance with utilities:

## DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM POLK COUNTY FCO BY TYPE

	2022-23 FISCAL YEAR # OF RURAL POLK HOUSEHOLDS SERVED	2022-23 FISCAL YEAR \$ ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO RURAL POLK HOUSEHOLDS
Rent/Deposit Assistance	405	\$479,968
Utilities/other Assistance	196	\$272,161
Birth Certificates/IDs	15	\$678
Transportation	12	\$5,808
<b>Total</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>\$758,615</b>

(SOURCE: POLK COUNTY FAMILY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH)

## POLK COUNTY FAMILY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH (FCO): HOMELESS OUTREACH & PREVENTION PROGRAM

Polk County FCO has a resource center in Dallas and one in Monmouth where community members can access a variety of services and supports, many of which assist households to remain self-sufficient and housed. The FCO Outreach & Prevention Program works with families and individuals in a variety of unstable housing situations. As of 9/1/23, 110 individuals who are at imminent risk of homelessness are on the FCO caseload. This includes 18 households of 2 or more people with 36 minor children. In many cases, these folks have been served an eviction notice.

## CASELOAD FOR POLK COUNTY FCO (AS OF 9/1/23):

IMMINENT RISK	
<b>Family Data (18)</b>	
Children (Under 18)	36
Adults	19
<b>Individual Data</b>	
Adults w/o Children	55
<b>Total Individuals (Unduplicated)</b>	<b>110</b>

(SOURCE: POLK COUNTY FAMILY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH)

## HOMELESSNESS AND HOMELESS RESPONSE

How many people are experiencing homelessness in rural Polk County? Although this question is straightforward to ask, it is complex to answer. While some individuals experience chronic homelessness, others cycle in and out of homelessness. And others endure it for a single episode often following a crisis. People facing homelessness often move frequently between couches, motels, shelters, cars, and locations, rather than staying in one living arrangement. Given the varied and fluid experiences of homelessness, it can be difficult to quantify. Data from service providers, the school districts' McKinney-Vento program, and the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count all contribute to understanding the situation. Currently, no single data set can present a full picture. But work is in place to improve that. Polk County Family & Community Outreach (FCO) has adopted the Point-in-Time survey questions as part of their ongoing intake interview. Also, across the county, there are partnerships in the works to take down silos and collaborate both with data and also with services.

**HERE'S DATA FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS, THE MCKINNEY-VENTO PROGRAM, AND THE POINT-IN-TIME (PIT) COUNT TO HELP QUANTIFY HOMELESSNESS IN RURAL POLK COUNTY:**

### **POLK COUNTY FAMILY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH (FCO): HOMELESS OUTREACH & PREVENTION PROGRAM**

Polk County FCO has a resource center in Dallas and one in Monmouth where community members can access a variety of services and supports. FCO employs two full-time outreach workers who connect with people who are experiencing homelessness and people who are at imminent risk of losing their housing. Across the county, the outreach team goes out into the streets and parks. They respond to requests from community members and businesses as well as referrals from local service providers. They sit down with folks who come into one of the resource centers looking for housing supports. It can take time to develop relationships and to find solutions, and they work to connect individuals and families to resources.

The FCO Outreach & Prevention Program works with families and individuals in a variety of unstable housing situations. In addition to the families and individuals at imminent risk of losing their housing, this program serves people who are currently experiencing literal homelessness. This includes sleeping in a park, on the street, in a car, or in an RV without hook-ups. As of 9/1/23, 62 individuals who are experiencing literal homelessness are on the FCO caseload. This includes 10 households of 2 or more people with 28 minor children.

## CASELOAD FOR POLK COUNTY FCO (AS OF 9/1/23):

LITERAL HOMELESS	
<b>Family Data (10)</b>	
<b>Children (Under 18)</b>	28
<b>Adults</b>	12
<b>Individual Data</b>	
<b>Adults w/o Children</b>	22
<b>Total Individuals (Unduplicated)</b>	62

\*Family data represents 10 families experiencing literal homelessness

(SOURCE: POLK COUNTY FAMILY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH)

This means that 127 individuals in 90 households from rural Polk County are currently on a list waiting and hoping for a safe and stable place to sleep. These are families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness, who have a relationship with service providers, and who have asked for assistance.

## MID-WILLAMETTE VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY (MWVCAA): COORDINATED ENTRY

There are 127 individuals in 90 households from rural Polk County in Coordinated Entry for the period 7/1/22 and 6/30/23. An individual who needs housing is entered into Coordinated Entry by Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA) through a guided process with an intake interview where people provide information about themselves, their housing status, and their situation. MWVCAA conducts intake interviews one day per week at the Academy Building in Dallas. Rural Polk residents are welcome to complete their intake process at Marion County locations. Once people are entered into Coordinated Entry, they are placed on a housing list prioritized according to vulnerabilities and risk factors.

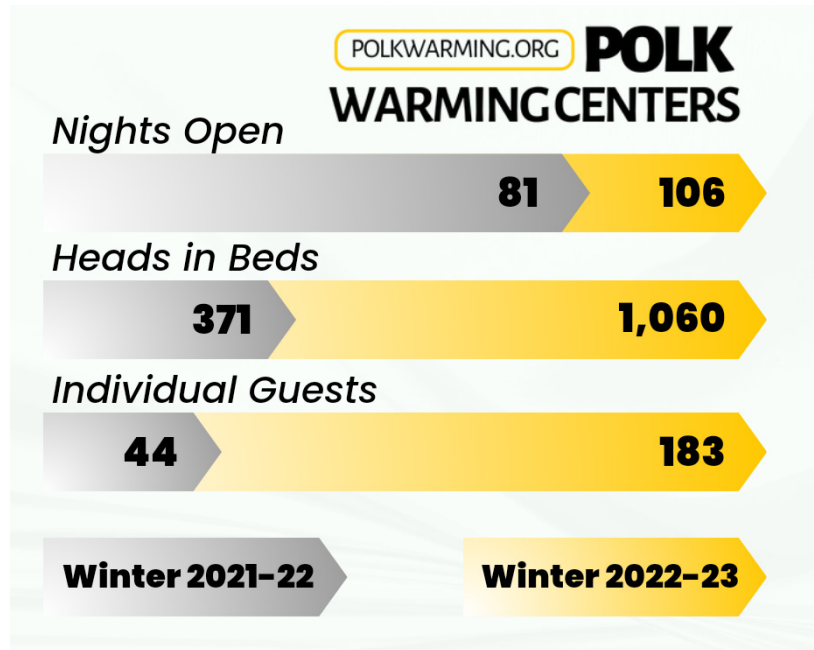


<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL POLK COUNTY 7/1/22 TO 6/30/23</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>HOUSING STATUS</b>	
Unsheltered Households (Place not meant for Habitation)	55
Emergency Shelter/Hotel/Safe Haven	15
Unstable Housing	3
Other	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>BY CITY</b>	
Dallas	63
Falls City	1
Grand Ronde	0
Independence	17
Monmouth	6
Perrydale	2
Willamina	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>SPECIAL POPULATION</b>	
Total Chronically Homeless Households	8
Total # Homeless Family Households	27
Total Family Households - Unsheltered	18
Total Veteran Households - Unsheltered	6

(SOURCE: MWVCAA)

## POLK WARMING CENTERS

Polk County FCO has been operating warming centers funded by MWVCAA for the past five years in partnership with local churches. During the warming season (November - March), Polk Warming Centers are open 7pm-7am on certain nights. One location rotates to different churches in Dallas/ Independence/ Monmouth. A second Warming Center opened in Falls City, new in the 2022-23 warming season. In the 2021-22 season, Polk Warming Centers were open 81 nights, served 44 unique guests, and provided 371 nights of shelter. In the 2022-23 season, Polk Warming Centers were open 106 nights, served 183 unique guests, and provided 1,060 nights of shelter.



(SOURCE: POLK WARMING CENTERS)

## MCKINNEY-VENTO PROGRAM: STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

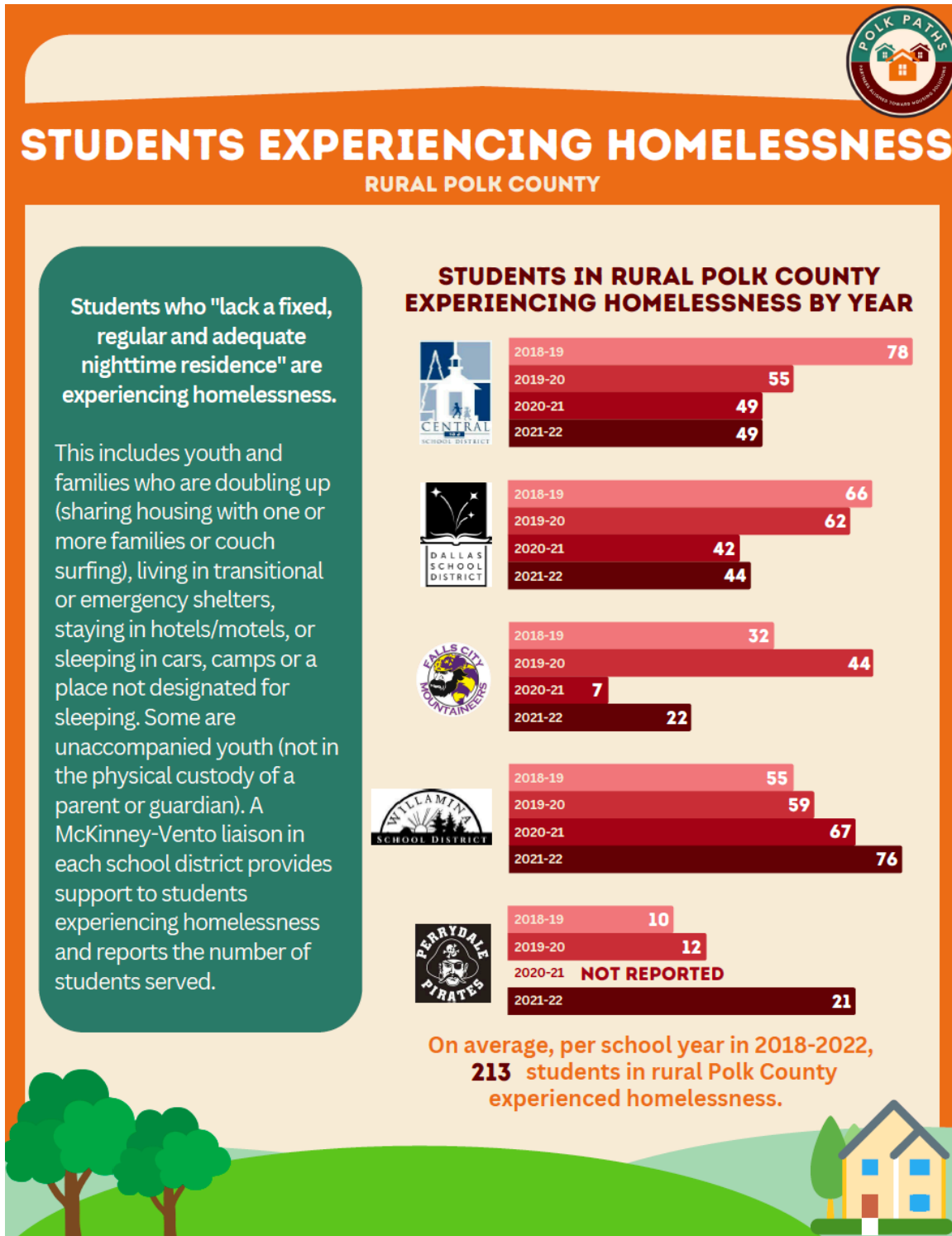
Per school year, 213 students experienced homelessness in rural Polk County on average for the school years 2018-2022. 191 of them experienced homelessness with their families and 19 of them were unaccompanied youth.

These data are gathered and reported by the McKinney-Vento liaisons in each school district and are posted on the Oregon Department of Education website. The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal act that helps students experiencing homelessness by decreasing barriers in education. Each school district has a McKinney-Vento liaison who works with students and families in the district who are experiencing homelessness.

The McKinney-Vento program defines homelessness as “lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.” This can include students who are living in transitional housing/shelters, hotels/motels, doubling up or couch surfing and unsheltered.

In rural Polk County, the majority of students who have been served by the McKinney-Vento program are doubling up or couch surfing. This means they are staying with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship. In 2021-22, about one quarter (24.6%) of the students were experiencing unsheltered homelessness. This includes

staying in cars, parks, camps, RVs without hook-ups, or bus stations. This is a higher percentage than in previous years. It is also a higher percentage than in Salem-Keizer schools that year (8% unsheltered).



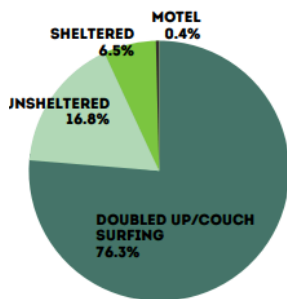


# LIVING SITUATIONS OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

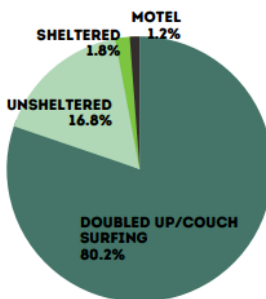
RURAL POLK COUNTY

## WHERE ARE THEY SLEEPING?

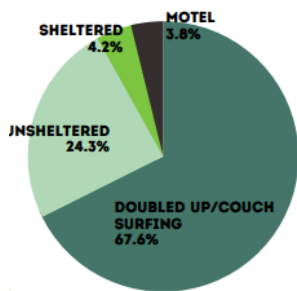
### 2019-2020



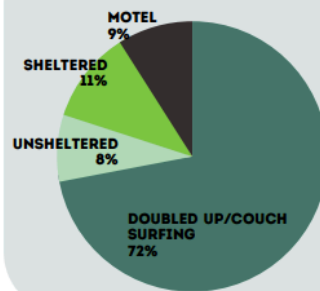
### 2020-2021



### 2021-2022



### COMPARE TO SALEM-KEIZER 2021-2022

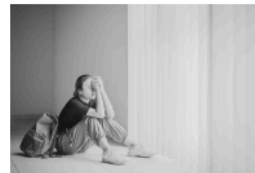


## WHO ARE THEY WITH?

191 STUDENTS EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS WITH THEIR FAMILY



22 STUDENTS EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS AS UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH



(On average, per school year, in 2018-2022 in rural Polk County.)

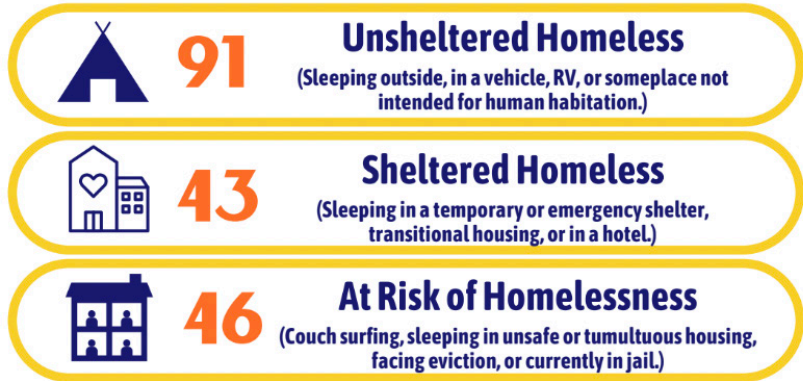
DATA REPORTED FOR THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR SHOWED 23% OF STUDENTS IN FALLS CITY EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS, THE HIGHEST RATE OF STUDENT HOMELESSNESS IN THE STATE OF OREGON THAT YEAR.



Data available on the Oregon Department of Education website: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/esea/mckinney-vento/pages/default.aspx>

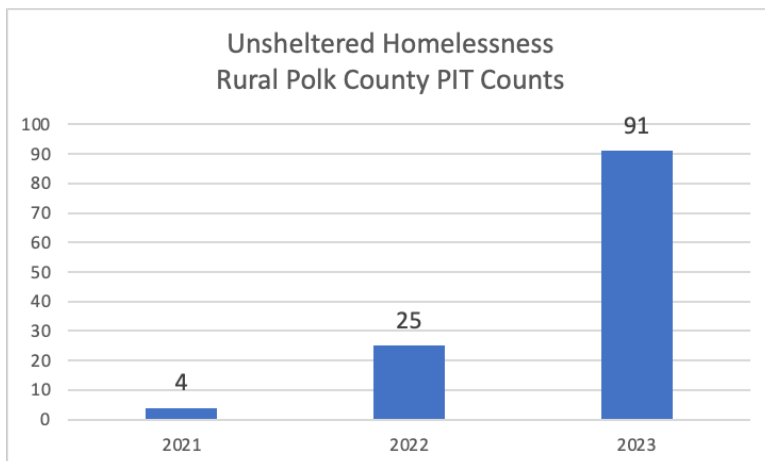
## POINT-IN-TIME (PIT) COUNT

Each year during the end of January, communities across the nation conduct a “Point-in-Time Count” per HUD’s direction in order to count the number of people in their communities who experienced homelessness on one particular night. While service providers and volunteers strive to connect with everyone experiencing homelessness, there is a general acceptance that PIT Count is not a complete count.



In 2023, individuals were asked where they slept on the night of Monday, January 23rd. In rural Polk County, the community interviewed 91 individuals who experienced unsheltered homelessness on that night. In addition, 43 individuals experienced sheltered homelessness in rural Polk County on 1/23/23. Another category for consideration is “hidden homelessness” or people who are couch surfing or doubled up; 46 individuals completed the survey who were couch surfing or doubled up on the night in question. So at least 180 persons experienced some type of homelessness in rural Polk County on that night. 84% of the unsheltered individuals had a tie to the community in which they were staying at the time.

**OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, PIT COUNT DATA SHOWS A MARKED INCREASE IN UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS IN RURAL POLK COUNTY.**



While homelessness has increased in rural Polk County, the large increase from 2022 to 2023 can be partially attributed to a change in methodology. The team hosted a major community event called the “Community Connect” on 1/24/23. Community members were invited to attend and access services and resources.



Service providers had the opportunity to host a table. Almost 300 people attended and about 50 PIT Count surveys were completed at the Community Connect event. Community partners and volunteers also proactively reached out throughout the week of 1/23/23 to connect with known community members experiencing housing instability.

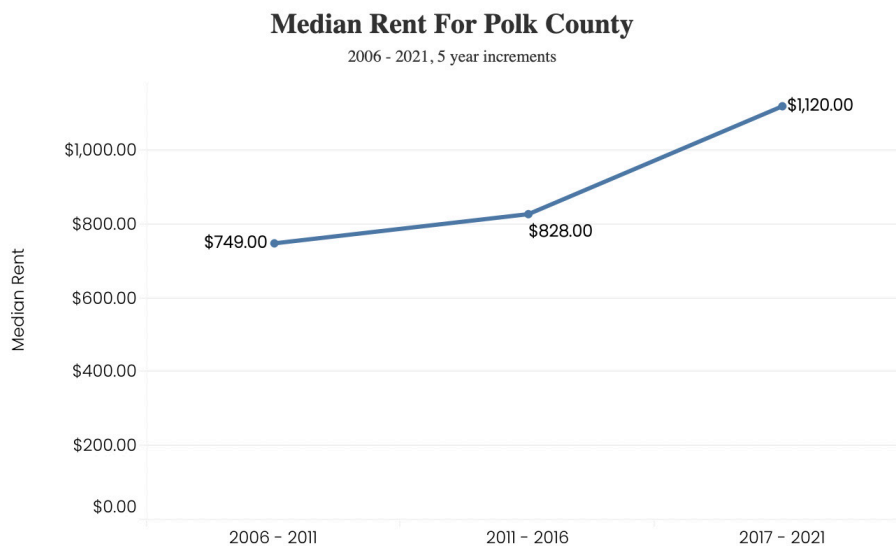
Since the 2023 PIT Count, Polk County FCO has added the PIT Count questions into its regular intake interview. So in rural Polk County, the understanding gained from PIT Count is ongoing.

## HOUSING

As the population has increased, the number of housing units has not kept pace. In rural Polk County, rents are high and vacancies are low. Housing has been identified as an important issue by community members across the county. In fact, in the 2021 “Oregon Voices” survey conducted by the Ford Foundation, one of the top 3 findings from Polk County is that, “Respondents are overwhelmingly concerned about the prevalence of homelessness and unaffordable housing in their communities.” (Source: <https://orvoices.org/>)

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) gathers and reports Housing Data by county. Their dashboard is available here and is the source for several Polk County break-outs below: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/oregon.housing.and.community.services/viz/CountyProfiles2023-OregonHousing/LandingPage>

## MEDIAN RENT



Polk County rents have been steadily increasing. The following chart shows median rents in 5-year increments. From 2006-2011 to 2011-2016, median rents increased 10% from \$729 to \$828. Then from 2011-2016 to 2017-2021, median rents jumped 35% from \$828 to \$1,120.

(SOURCE: OREGON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES)

While county level data over the past two decades gives helpful context, it is meaningful within that context to consider current rental costs in rural Polk County communities. The West Valley Housing Authority releases a weekly report with rental listings. The following tables tally the # of listing by number of bedrooms and by community to show average rents for July-September 2023.



## RENTAL LISTINGS: JULY-SEPT 2023 NUMBER OF BEDROOMS

	JULY 19, 2023		AUG 16, 2023		SEPT 20, 2023	
	# of Listings	Avg Rent	# of Listings	Avg Rent	# of Listings	Avg Rent
<b>Studio</b>	1	\$1,404.50	1	\$1,450.00	1	\$1,468.00
<b>1 Bedroom</b>	9	\$1,312.33	9	\$1,271.39	12	\$1,276.67
<b>2 Bedrooms</b>	21	\$1,401.64	15	\$1,382.60	13	\$1,483.65
<b>3 Bedrooms</b>	18	\$1,952.69	17	\$2,155.35	24	\$2,314.85
<b>4 Bedrooms</b>	7	\$2,435.00	10	\$2,540.00	7	\$2,571.43
<b>5 Bedrooms</b>	2	\$2,975.00	2	\$3,050.00	4	\$2,350.00
<b>Total Rural Polk</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>\$1,737.82</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>\$1,884.68</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>\$1,910.77</b>

(SOURCE: WEST VALLEY HOUSING AUTHORITY, RENTAL LISTINGS)

## RENTAL LISTINGS: JULY-SEPT 2023

### LOCATION OF RENTAL

	JULY 19, 2023		AUG 16, 2023		SEPT 20, 2023	
	# of Listings	Avg Rent	# of Listings	Avg Rent	# of Listings	Avg Rent
Dallas	13	\$1,706.73	18	\$1,828.19	15	\$2,026.77
Independence	20	\$1,739.90	21	\$1,903.14	18	\$1,992.25
Monmouth	23	\$1,749.48	13	\$2,026.85	24	\$1,857.29
Other	2	\$1,825.00	2	\$1,275.00	4	\$2,048.75
<b>Total Rural Polk</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>\$1,737.82</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>\$1,884.68</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>\$1,910.77</b>

(SOURCE: WEST VALLEY HOUSING AUTHORITY, RENTAL LISTINGS)

## IN 2023, FAIR MARKET RENTS (FMR) ARE AT LEVELS BELOW THE AVERAGE RENTAL COSTS FOR RURAL POLK COUNTY AS FOLLOWS:

### FEDERAL FY2023 FAIR MARKET RENTS & PAYMENT STANDARDS FOR THE SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM - EFFECTIVE 01/01/2023 -

	0-BEDROOM	1- BEDROOM	2-BEDROOM	3-BEDROOM	4-BEDROOM	5-BEDROOM	6-BEDROOM
<b>Fair Market Rents (FMRs)</b>	<b>\$924</b>	<b>\$978</b>	<b>\$1,245</b>	<b>\$1,769</b>	<b>\$2,037</b>	<b>\$2,343</b>	<b>\$2,649</b>
<b>Voucher Payment Standards</b>	<b>\$1,016</b>	<b>\$1,075</b>	<b>\$1,369</b>	<b>\$1,945</b>	<b>\$2,240</b>	<b>\$2,577</b>	<b>\$2,913</b>
	(110% of FMR)	(110% of FMR)	(110% of FMR)	(110% of FMR)	(110% of FMR)	(110% of FMR)	(110% of FMR)

ALL, INITIAL CONTRACT RENTS AND CONTRACT RENT INCREASES ARE BASED ON RENT REASONABLENESS, NOT THE MAXIMUM PAYMENT STANDARD AMOUNTS. Rent Reasonableness considers the high, medium, and low quality of a unit, locality of the unit, amenities, unit size, and unit type.

(SOURCE: WEST VALLEY HOUSING AUTHORITY)

For those who qualify for a housing choice voucher and have come up on the waitlist to receive it (after about 2 to 2 1/2 years), finding an available rental at or below the fair market rent is difficult. For example, the fair market rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in

Polk County is \$1,245. The average rent of 2-bedroom units available in July-Sept 2023 is \$1,422.63 with only a handful of units each month listing rent at or under the fair market rent.

For many, housing is not affordable. The hourly wage necessary to afford a 2 bedroom at the fair market rate of \$1,245 is \$23.94. The annual income needed to afford a 2 bedroom is \$49,800, meaning an individual would need 1.7 jobs (or 68 hours per week) earning minimum wage to afford the rent. To make things even more challenging, the average rental cost of 2-bedroom apartments listed for rent in rural Polk County in July-Sept of 2023 is higher than the fair market rent for the county.

(SOURCE: NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION'S 2023 REPORT [https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/Oregon\\_2023\\_OOR.pdf](https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/Oregon_2023_OOR.pdf))

## RENT BURDEN

One way that housing affordability is evaluated in a community is by measuring rent burden. If a renting household pays more than 50% of their income on rent + utilities, then they are classified as severely rent burdened. Each year, Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) is required to review all cities with a population of 10,000 or more and then identify and notify any cities that have over 25% of their renters experiencing severe rent burden. In the 2022 report, all communities with a population of over 10,000 people in rural Polk County exceeded that mark.

## OHCS 2022 REPORT ON RENT BURDEN

	% SEVERELY RENT BURDENED	# SEVERELY RENT BURDENED	# RENTAL HOUSEHOLDS	POPULATION
Dallas	30.9%	606	1,959	17,320
Independence	28.4%	376	1,324	10,081
Monmouth	33.0%	576	1,745	11,142

[https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/UP/Documents/Annual\\_Severe\\_Rent\\_Burden\\_Announcement.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/UP/Documents/Annual_Severe_Rent_Burden_Announcement.pdf)

Not only are rents expensive, but vacancy rates are low which increases the challenge of finding housing:

## RENTAL VACANCY RATES IN RURAL POLK COUNTY COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY	RENTAL VACANCY RATES
Dallas	Less than 1%
Independence	3.2% (housing vacancy, not just rental)
Monmouth	3%

(SOURCE: DALLAS = 2019 DALLAS HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS; INDEPENDENCE = HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS PROCESS; MONMOUTH = 2023 HOUSING PRODUCTION STRATEGY)

## SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS

Oregon Housing & Community Services (OHCS) gathers and reports data at the county level about income and rental units. This helps to quantify the number of additional units of affordable housing needed. For all of Polk County, there is a deficit of 585 rental units affordable to residents earning below 80% AMI (Area Median Income). For those earning 0-50% AMI, the deficit is much bigger (2,490 units).

ALL POLK COUNTY	RESIDENTS	AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS	DEFICITS/SURPLUS
Extremely Low Income (0-30% AMI)	2380	615	-1765
Very Low Income (30%-50% AMI)	1965	1240	-725
Low Income (50%-80% AMI)	2500	4405	1905
<b>Total</b>	<b>6845</b>	<b>6260</b>	<b>-585</b>

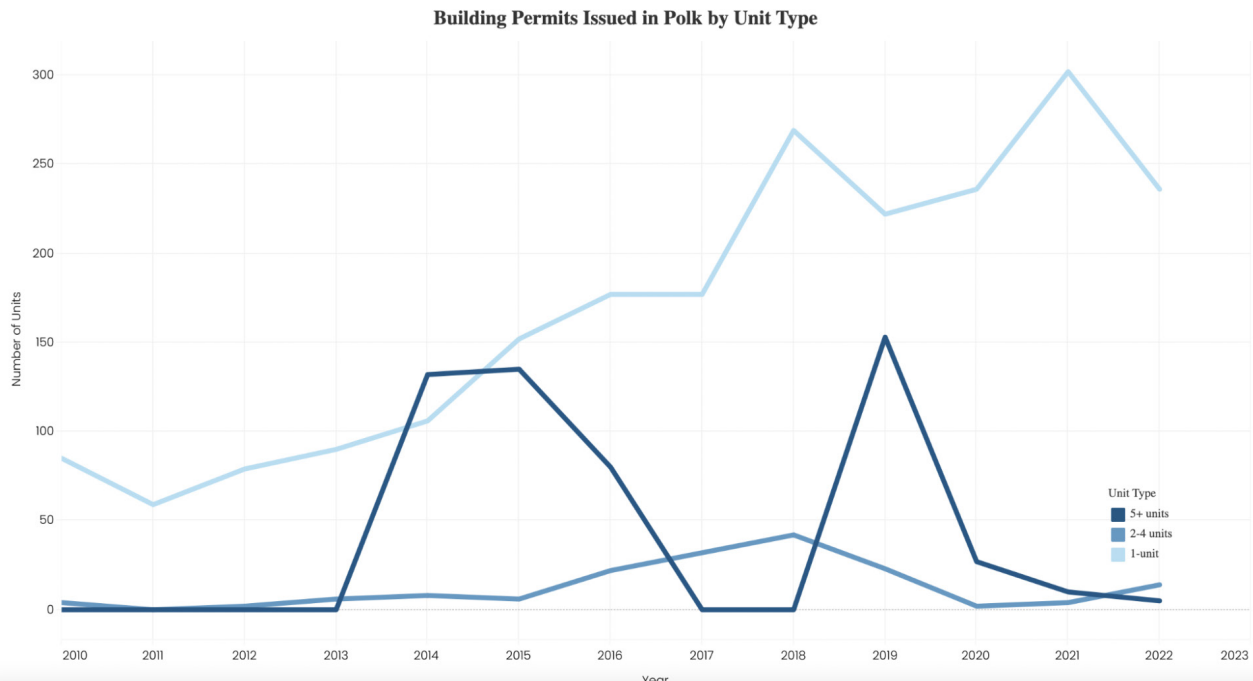
(SOURCE OHCS: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/oregon.housing.and.community.services/viz/CountyProfiles2023-OregonHousing/LandingPage>)

Without more granular data to allow a report specific to rural Polk County, an estimate of the deficit of affordable housing can be arrived at by assuming a “fair share” based on population. ~60% of the Polk County population lives in rural Polk County, so if 60% of the gap is also in rural Polk County, then the deficit for affordable housing is 351 units in rural Polk County. Again, the deficit for those earning 0-50% AMI is much bigger (1,494 units).

RURAL POLK COUNTY "FAIR SHARE" (60%)	RESIDENTS	AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS	DEFICITS/SURPLUS
Extremely Low Income (0-30% AMI)	1428	369	-1059
Very Low Income (30%-50% AMI)	1179	744	-435
Low Income (50%-80% AMI)	1500	2643	1143
<b>Total</b>	<b>4107</b>	<b>3756</b>	<b>-351</b>

The building permits already issued provide information on developments already underway. In Polk County, the vast majority of building permits issued are for single family houses. In 2022, permits for 236 units of single family houses were issued in contrast to permits for 5 units in 5+ unit buildings and 14 units in buildings with 2-4 units. Very little medium-density or high-density development is already in the works.

Rents are high, vacancies are low. In rural Polk County, there is a deficit of about 350 units of affordable housing. But the current pipeline of housing under construction is almost all single family homes.



(SOURCE: OHCS)

## DATA SUMMARY

### POPULATION

- About 53,000 people live in rural Polk County,
- Polk County is the 3rd fastest growing county in Oregon and rural communities are a major part of that growth

### PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

- Over 20% of residents in Falls City, Grand Ronde, and Monmouth live in poverty (compared to 12.2% in Oregon overall)
- In 2022-23, 634 households in rural Polk County received direct financial assistance to prevent losing their housing (such as for rent and/or utilities) in the amount of \$767,135
- As of 9/1/23, 110 individuals (from 72 households) on the FCO caseload are at imminent risk of losing their housing

### HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE

- 62 individuals (from 22 households) on FCO's caseload as of 9/1/23 who are in rural Polk County and who are experiencing literal homelessness
- 127 individuals (from 90 households) who are from rural Polk County currently in Coordinated Entry who have asked for assistance and are waiting for housing
- 183 unique individuals slept at a Polk County Warming Center in the 2022-23 warming season
- 213 students in rural Polk County experienced homelessness (per the McKinney-Vento definition which includes being doubled up or couch surfing out of economic necessity) on average per school year in the 2018-2022 school years. On average, 22 per year experienced homelessness as an unaccompanied minor. About 50 per year experienced unsheltered homelessness.
- 91 individuals were counted as part of the annual PIT Count experiencing unsheltered homelessness in rural Polk County in January 2023.

### HOUSING

- Rents are increasing (up 35% comparing 2011-2016 to 2017-2021)
- Rents are not affordable for many people. A single worker earning minimum wage would have to work 68 hours per week in order to afford rent at the fair market rate.



- If a renting household pays more than 50% of their income on rent + utilities, then it is classified as severely rent burdened. In Dallas, Independence and Monmouth, over 25% (benchmark requiring notification and action) of renting households are severely rent burdened.
- Vacancies are low (1-3% in rural Polk County)
- There is a deficit of about 350 units of affordable housing in rural Polk County
- Building permits issued in Polk County in 2020-2022 are almost all for single family homes, so the current construction will not alleviate the need for affordable medium-density or high-density housing



# MAPPING ASSETS & GAPS



As described above, in rural Polk County rents are high, vacancies are low, and homelessness is increasing. Service providers and government agencies are already working hard to help meet the community's needs. An important part of developing a strategic plan is to review the resources that are already in place and the great work that is already being done. That review in the PATHS service area reveals a landscape of local leaders and service providers who are working day in and day out to aid community members in need and who are making a major impact.

PATHS and partners have been working on goals and action items even as this action plan has been under development. Services already in place by 12/31/22 are included in this section; actions taken 1/1/23 or later are included below in the Goals section that follows.

## FOUNDATIONS

### (A) COLLABORATE AT ALL LEVELS:

Before this strategic plan was in the works, partners and agencies across rural Polk County were working in partnership. For example:

- Community partner meetings (April-June 2022):
  - Tribal/City Leadership Perspective (4/11/22)
  - Public Safety Perspective (4/25/22)
  - Service Providers Perspective (5/9/23 and 5/23/22)
  - School District and West Valley Housing Authority Perspective (6/6/22)
- Service Integration Team (SIT) meetings are held monthly in each of the 6 school districts in Polk County (Central, Dallas, Falls City, Perrydale, West Salem, Willamina). In the 2022-23 school year, 107 partner organizations participated in SIT, and 815 individuals were on the newsletter distribution list.
- PATHS (Partner Aligned Toward Housing Solutions) advisory board began meeting in October of 2022.

### GAPS (AS OF 1/1/23):

- Engagement with community members

- A community-facing website that includes information about homelessness, local data, and community news.

**(B) USE DATA AND EVIDENCE TO MAKE DECISIONS:**

Family & Community Outreach uses a system called Need Navigator to effectively track supports provided across service teams. MWVCAA (Community Action) is the lead agency for Coordinated Entry (CE) and the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) in Polk County.

**GAPS (AS OF 1/1/23):**

- Most rural Polk County providers are not using HMIS
- Continuum of Care (CoC) reports are all at the aggregate level for Marion + Polk County; opportunity is to split the data by geography to inform decisions at the local level

**(C) ELEVATE EQUITY:**

Most service providers consistently provide materials in English and Spanish. Many recruit diverse employees and offer increased compensation for bi-lingual and bi-cultural employees. There is also recruiting that explicitly values lived experience with homelessness.

**GAPS (AS OF 1/1/23):**

- CoC data shows minority racial/ethnic groups experiencing homelessness at a disproportionately high rate in our region. For example, 2020 Census data shows 2% of Marion-Polk residents identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous while 2022 PIT Count data for Marion + Polk shows 9% of the unsheltered homelessness population do.
- State and national data indicates members of the LGBTQIA+ community are over-represented among those experiencing homelessness. There’s an opportunity to gather local data.
- Opportunities for voices of lived experience to shape policy and decisions.

## SOLUTIONS

**(1) PREVENT HOMELESSNESS:**

Partner organizations throughout rural Polk County work everyday to provide basic needs, employment supports, housing supports, healthcare, etc. to help residents be self-sufficient. Preventing homelessness can include holistic programs that indirectly help people stay housed as well as interventions in response to imminent risk of homelessness.

## HOLISTIC:

These holistic efforts indirectly help community members remain housed. Some programs support individuals with their education and work and thereby increase their incomes. Other programs provide food or healthcare, which decrease the overall household expenses thereby making it easier to make rent.

Programs currently available in rural Polk County that provide holistic support and indirectly help prevent homelessness include:

- Education/Employment supports provided by CSC (Community Services Consortium), Job Corp, and Work Source.
- Polk County Behavioral Health provides behavioral health services to the Medicaid eligible residents and indigent population in Polk County. They provide services to individuals seeking assistance for issues related to mental health and/or substance use. In 2022, Polk County Behavioral Health served 3,652 unique individuals. In addition, the crisis team served 742 unique individuals.
- DHS: Fiscal Year from September 2022 - August 2023; DHS has enrolled 75 new clients into SNAP benefits.
- Northwest Human Services (NWHHS) operates the Total Health Community Clinic (THCC), located in Monmouth. As a Federally Qualified Community Health Center (FQCH), the focus is on serving low-income, homeless and uninsured or under-insured individuals and families. In Jan-Jun of 2022, 1,958 patients completed a visit with THCC. The majority of them (1,214, 62%) use Medicaid/CHIP. 71 (3.6%) were uninsured and 407 (21%) used Medicare. NWHHS also provides rent, mortgage, and utility assistance and they operate the Crisis & Information hotline.
- West Valley Housing Authority: Served 470 rural Polk County households in 2022. Housing choice vouchers provide ongoing funds for rent, allowing families and individuals to remain stably housed when rent would otherwise be unaffordable for them.
- Marion-Polk Food Share: In rural Polk County in 2022, Marion-Polk Food Share served 30,819 households, 41,309 meals, and 115,535 individuals
- Food Banks/Pantries open at the following locations and hours:



## FOOD BANKS/PANTRIES: SCHEDULE IN RURAL POLK COUNTY

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:00-10:00 AM					
10:00-11:00 AM		9-11:30 AM Mon/Ind	9-11 AM Dallas	9-11:30 AM Mon/Ind	9-11 AM Dallas
11:00-12:00 PM			10-2 PM Grand Ronde		10-2 PM Grand Ronde
12:00-1:00 PM					
1:00-2:00 PM	1-3 PM Dallas	1-3 PM Dallas		1-3 PM Dallas	
2:00-3:00 PM					
3:00-4:00 PM					
4:00-5:00 PM	4-6 PM Mon/Ind	4-6 PM Mon/Ind	4-6 PM Willamina		4-5 PM Falls City
5:00-6:00 PM					

### FOOD IS ALSO AVAILABLE AT:

- Food boxes also available from Polk County FCO
- Food for students provided by the Kindness Club in Dallas (sends food home for the weekends), the Gate in Monmouth/Independence, and school lunches
- James 2 Kitchen serves 300 meals/week in Dallas
- The ROCC (Recovery Outreach Community Center) serves meals every day at its day center in Dallas

### IMMINENT RISK:

When a household is at imminent risk of losing its housing, programs can provide direct financial assistance, most often for rent or utilities, to help them stay housed.

- Family & Community Outreach (FCO): In 2022-23 fiscal year, provided \$767,135 in direct financial support to 634 households in rural Polk County, primarily for rental assistance and utilities.
- Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA): Energy Services program served 113 households in rural Polk County in July-Nov 2022 with \$105,000 to support utilities. They also funded other prevention programs throughout the County.

### GAPS (AS OF 1/1/23):

- Food Insecurity: The food resources being provided are not enough to meet the need. The food distribution process is scattered and with spotty hours, making access difficult.
- Need for increased flexible barrier removal funds
- Opportunity to work with landlords to prevent evictions

## **(2) IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM:**

The homeless response system begins by connecting with people experiencing homelessness through outreach to give them access to resources and options for housing. Individuals may choose to stay in transitional housing where they have a short-term, safe and stable place to live. Rapid rehousing helps individuals settle into their own long-term housing.

### **OUTREACH: MEETING IMMEDIATE NEEDS FOR STABILIZATION AND RELATIONSHIPS**

In an urban setting, outreach workers can stop by large camps or shelters and connect with people experiencing homelessness. In rural settings, there are not as obvious places to go to do outreach. It can take time to develop a relationship of trust before people will talk about what they need with an outreach worker. Collaboration across partners is the most effective way to do outreach in rural settings.

- Family & Community Outreach (FCO) has two full-time case managers focused on street outreach.
- Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA) has two outreach workers who come to rural Polk County two days per week.
- Recovery Outreach Community Center (ROCC) does street outreach in rural Polk County one day per week. ROCC (Recovery Outreach Community Center): From opening in July 2022 to the end of 2022, the ROCC-Polk served 120 individuals. From Jan-July of 2023, they served 191 individuals.
- McKinney-Vento Liaisons and School-Based Mental Health Team do outreach through the schools
- Abby's House does outreach on the Western Oregon University campus
- Polk County Behavioral Health provides behavioral health services to the Medicaid eligible residents and indigent population in Polk County. As of 8/22/23, Polk County Behavioral Health had 2,052 patients enrolled, 3% of which identified as transient or homeless.
- Northwest Human Services (NWHS) operates the Total Health Community Clinic (THCC), located in Monmouth. As a Federally Qualified Community Health Center (FQCH), the focus is on serving low-income, homeless and uninsured or under-insured individuals and families. In Jan-Jun of 2022, 1,958 patients completed visits with THCC. 263 of them were noted as experiencing homelessness (and 19 of them as street homeless).

### **GAPS (AS OF 1/1/23):**

- Increased collaboration and communication across service providers
- Limited places intended/designed to camp/park overnight (i.e. bathrooms facilities, water, trash)

## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING/SHELTER: PROVIDING TEMPORARY SHELTER IN A SAFE AND STABLE PLACE

- **GALE'S LODGE** is transitional housing with 6 beds for male veterans, located in Dallas. In the fiscal year ending 6/30/22, 8 veterans from the Gale's Lodge program were placed in long-term, stable housing.
- **POLK COUNTY WARMING CENTERS** offer a safe, warm place for people to sleep. Every night where the temperature dips below freezing, they are open in both Falls City (at the community center) and in Dallas/Independence/Monmouth (location rotates every two weeks between churches). The Dallas/Independence/Monmouth location is also open every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights Nov-March regardless of weather. In the 2021-22 season, Polk Warming Centers were open 81 nights, served 44 unique guests, and provided 371 nights of shelter. In the 2022-23 season, Polk Warming Centers were open 106 nights, served 183 unique guests, and provided 1,060 nights of shelter.
- **SABLE HOUSE** serves survivors of domestic violence. They have a shelter and also offer hotel/motel vouchers. In 2022, they served 53 individuals in their shelter for a total of 1,466 shelter nights and 79 individuals in hotels for a total of 564 hotel nights.
- **POLK COUNTY PAROLE & PROBATION:** 4 temporary beds for corrections clients, maximum 30-day stay. Run by the Parole & Probation Office.

### GAPS (AS OF 1/1/23):

- Individuals experiencing homelessness in rural Polk County in 2022 had limited options to stay in their communities. For a short term place to stay, many had to go to Salem or Corvallis or McMinnville.
- Transitional housing options needed that are designed to meet needs of populations like youth, young adults, families, seniors.

## RAPID REHOUSING: PROVIDING CASE MANAGEMENT AND HOUSING NAVIGATION FOR LONG TERM INDIVIDUAL HOUSING SOLUTIONS

- West Valley Housing Authority served 470 households in 2022, some received emergency vouchers
- Housing Stabilization Program (HSP) has funding available to families with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) who are experiencing homelessness.
- FCO staff help clients
  - To overcome barriers to housing such as obtaining vital records and resolving issues with past landlords
  - To apply for a housing voucher and understand their voucher once they receive it
  - To locate a qualifying unit and secure application fees and deposit assistance

### **GAPS (AS OF 1/1/23):**

- Need a program with funding to assist people exiting homelessness to get into housing and have support through that transition.

### **(3) INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING:**

Cities and communities participating in PATHS have taken steps to understand and address the housing needs in their communities. Here are actions taken in the recent past:

- Dallas: Completed a new Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) (2019) which showed deficits of 1 acre of high density residential and 20 acres of medium residential land supply needed over the 20 year planning horizon. Completed zone changes to add to these supplies of land.
- Falls City: Revised development code to increase housing density by reducing the minimum square footage of Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs), allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on properties, allow cottage clusters in residential zones. Approached Polk CDC, Community Action Agency, Habitat for Humanity and United Way to develop affordable housing on city owned land (2.3 AC in residential zone)
- Grand Ronde: Planning and preparation to stand up transitional housing
- Independence: Revised System Development Charge (SDC) structure to provide a reduction in SDCs for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs); Allowed attached houses in all residential zones by right; Reduced minimum lot sizes
- Monmouth: Updated Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) in 2020
- Willamina: Revamped the City Development Code to allow for cottage clusters in the city and also to allow for the building of housing with up to 3 attached units (an increase from two-unit townhomes)
- Polk Community Development Corporation (Polk CDC) is a non-profit organization with a mission to provide the low and moderate income residents of Polk County with opportunities for high-quality, affordable housing. At the conclusion of 2022, they were managing 182 units of affordable housing, all in rural Polk County.

### **GAPS (AS OF 1/1/23):**

- Significant deficit of housing units that are affordable for residents earning 0-50% of Area Median Income (AMI)
- PATHS is an advisory board and not a group of real estate developers or investors; limited tools to accomplish the goal of increasing the supply of affordable housing
- Need incentives for multi-family housing projects in the face of increased expenses related to building (materials, interest rates, etc.) and probability of greater profit with higher-end single-family homes

# GOALS & STRATEGIES

## GOALS/STRATEGIES

This strategic plan document has outlined the needs in rural Polk County and the work already being done (as of 12/31/22) to meet those needs. This section will use the following framework to list goals and action items targeted for 2023-2027 to fill the gaps between what is currently available and what is needed.

## FOUNDATIONS

A- Collaborate at all levels

- Partner with organizations
- Engage with the community

B- Use data and evidence to make decisions

C- Elevate equity





## A: COLLABORATE AT ALL LEVELS

### PARTNER WITH ORGANIZATIONS

STRATEGIES	ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<b>A.1 Foster communication between service providers.</b>	A.1.1 Continue to host Service Integration Team (SIT) Meetings and to send out the SIT newsletter.	Ongoing
	A.1.2 Gather input from service providers about successes and challenges in housing.	Partner survey Feb 2023, Annual
	A.1.3 Host an annual “Homelessness Update” meeting each spring and invite service providers, elected officials, etc.	First one held 4/20/23, Annual
<b>A.2 Break down silos across departments and agencies to better serve clients.</b>	A.2.1 Develop a process to honor client confidentiality while sharing information across partners.	May 2023
	A.2.2 Host by-name case conferencing to serve specific clients experiencing homelessness.	First one held 6/20/23, Monthly
	A.2.3 Add “On the spot” case conferencing to facilitate collaboration to meet immediate needs	Summer 2023, Ongoing
	A.2.4 Maintain contracts and partnerships with and between service organizations such as MWVCAA, NWHS, DHS, Behavioral Health, C@P, etc. Go beyond keeping each other informed to actively partner to serve clients together.	Ongoing
	A.2.5 Seek out partnerships across the service landscape with additional service providers (including those who may be small organizations or new to Polk County)	Ongoing
<b>A.3 Position PATHS as an effective advisory board</b>	A.3.1 Hold regular PATHS meetings	Ongoing
	A.3.2 Maintain PATHS membership with a voting member from each rural Polk Community	Ongoing
	A.3.3 Have at least one person with lived experience with homelessness as a voting PATHS Board member	Dec 2023
	A.3.4 Secure funding for staff support (beyond the funding from House Bill 4123)	Dec 2023

	A.3.5 Integrate PATHS voices into the local Continuum of Care	Ongoing
	A.3.6 Form PATHS workgroups	Fall 2023
	A.3.7 Revisit and revise this strategic plan annually so that it is a living document that serves the community's evolving needs.	Annually
<b>ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY</b>		
<b>A.4 Continuously engage community members with an eye to reduce the stigma and myths around homelessness</b>	A.4.1 Develop and publish a community facing PATHS website that provides information about homelessness, local providers, local news.	Website launched June 2023
	A.4.2 Host community meetings to provide information to community members about homelessness, service providers and programs.	First Community Info Summit 6/23/23, Webinar 9/19/23 Ongoing
	A.4.3 Host meetings/events for community members to hear directly from people with lived experience	Youth Panel 2/16/23, Storytelling event Fall 2023, Ongoing
	A.4.4 Create and share video content to platform stories of lived experience	First installment Fall 2023
<b>A.5 Bring together service providers, community members and people experiencing homelessness</b>	A.5.1 Host an annual Community Connect	Jan, annually



IT MAKES ME FEEL AWFUL TO READ THE COMMENTS PEOPLE POST AND THE ASSUMPTIONS PEOPLE MAKE ABOUT HOMELESSNESS. I WENT THROUGH ABOUT 8 YEARS OF MY LIFE IN CONSTANT UPHEAVAL. I WAS HOMELESS WHEN MY DAUGHTER WAS 3 AND AGAIN WHEN SHE WAS 8. I NEVER DID DRUGS, I WAS NOT AN ALCOHOLIC. I WAS WORKING TWO JOBS. WE JUST COULDN'T GET BACK ON OUR FEET. IT DESTROYS ME TO KNOW THAT THERE ARE FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY FACING THIS NOW AND THAT PEOPLE ARE PASSING JUDGMENT. THEY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND.

## B: USE DATA AND EVIDENCE TO MAKE DECISIONS

STRATEGIES	ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<b>B.1 Develop plans to report data split to show rural Polk County</b>	B.1.1 Partner with CoC data team to get regional reports to show a break out for rural Polk County (instead of just data in aggregate for both Marion + Polk counties)	2023
	B.1.2 Partner with MWVCAA to get reports broken out to show rural Polk County	2023
<b>B.2 Improve quality/ completeness of data gathering in rural Polk County</b>	B.2.1 Conduct rural Polk County PIT Count locally using methodology specific to rural communities and using local partners, contacts and volunteers	Every January
	B.2.2 Support a Rural Committee for PIT Count	Ongoing
	B.2.3 Match changes in race/ethnicity and gender questions coming to HMIS in rural Polk data gathering	Nov 2023
	B.2.4 Explore best practices to add a question regarding LGBTQIA+ identities	End 2023
<b>B.3 Integrate rural Polk County data into regional data</b>	B.3.1 Develop and implement a standardized set of definitions for terms like “homeless,” “prevention,” “chronically homeless,” etc. so that rural Polk County provider data sets are consistent.	2024
	B.3.2 Overcome barriers to link Need Navigator with HMIS	2024
	B.3.3 Provide training and overcome barriers so rural Polk County providers can utilize HMIS (i.e. Polk Warming Centers)	2024
	B.3.4 Add Polk County representatives to CoC data conversations, such as the HMIS users work group and the Performance & Evaluation team	Ongoing
<b>B.4 Develop a plan for data analysis/reporting with an equity lens</b>	B.4.1 Convene data leads at Polk County service providers to develop plan and overcome barriers	2024
<b>B.5 Report data broadly to community partners and community members</b>	B.5.1 Post local and recent data to the PATHS website.	Ongoing
	B.5.2 Develop a data dashboard to be housed on the PATHS website.	2024

## C: ELEVATE EQUITY

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline
<b>C.1 Increase understanding of the experiences and needs of members of marginalized groups as</b>	C.1.1 Partner with culturally specific organizations, starting with Latino and Native American communities	2023
	C.1.2 Expand outreach and services to migrants workers	2024
	C.1.3 Form a work group that includes individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+ to make recommendations on better serving the population	2024
<b>C.2 Amplify voices of lived experience</b>	C.2.1 Host meetings/events for community members to hear directly from people with lived experience (see A.4.2)	Youth Panel 2/16/23, Storytelling event Fall 2023
	C.2.2 Create video content to platform stories of lived experience (see A.4.4)	Start 2024
	C.2.3 Include voices of lived experience in the decision making conversations	Ongoing
<b>C.3 Develop a plan for data analysis/reporting with an equity lens</b>	C.3.1 Convene data leads at Polk County service providers to develop plan and overcome barriers (see B.4.1)	2024
<b>C.4 Then develop a plan to rectify any inequities identified</b>	C.4.1 Convene stakeholders to respond to any inequities identified and to develop a plan to address them.	2025
<b>C.5 Strive for geographic equity in providing services across the various communities in rural Polk County</b>	C.5.1 Develop solutions regarding prevention, homeless response, and affordable housing that are accessible to residents in all communities in the PATHS service area.	2027
<b>C.6 Support employment practices among service providers to honor diversity</b>	C.6.1 Encourage recruiting and hiring practices that value diversity and voices of lived experience.	Ongoing
	C.6.2 Bring training to rural Polk County service providers including a Service Integration Team meeting each year with a diversity/inclusion focus.	2024, Annual

# SOLUTIONS

## 1- PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

- Increase programs that offer holistic prevention
- Provide help in the face of imminent risk/eviction

## 2- IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM ACROSS THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

- Increase outreach and access to services
- Meet the need for transitional housing / emergency shelter
- Meet the need for rapid rehousing

## 3- INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

# 1: PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

1. PREVENT HOMELESSNESS		
INCREASE PROGRAMS THAT OFFER HOLISTIC PREVENTION PROVIDE HELP IN THE FACE OF IMMINENT RISK/EVICTION		
PREVENTION - HOLISTIC		
STRATEGIES	ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
1.1 Increase prevention education	1.1.1 Increase the number of budgeting classes, financial literacy classes, parenting classes, RentWell and other supports.	2024 and ongoing
1.2 Streamline access to a multitude of services that support individuals and families	1.2.1 Open new Polk Community Resource Center in Monmouth, a resource center housing multiple county services and 10-15 non-profit organizations with a goal to serve people in one stop (including: OHP, benefits, veterans service office, DHS, public health, MWVCAA, pediatric clinic, emergency financial assistance, community mailboxes, emergency food boxes, housing navigation, homeless prevention and outreach)	2024

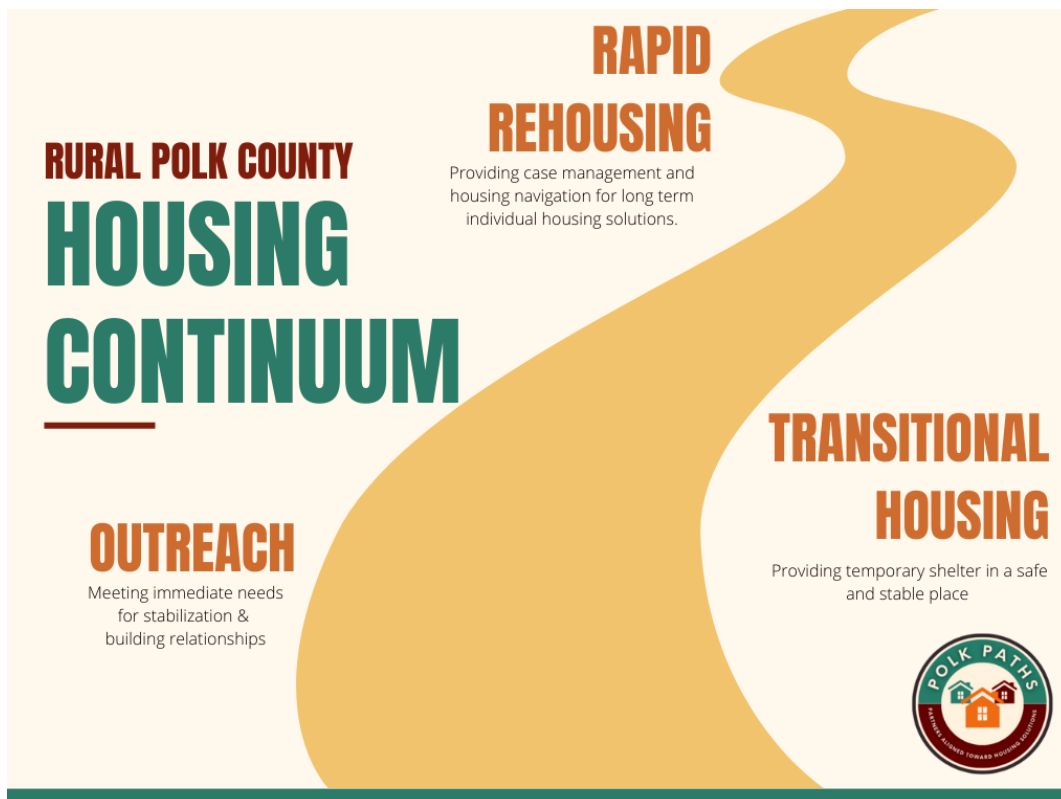


	1.2.2 Explore possible locations for additional resource center(s) in rural Polk County.	2024
<b>1.3 Increase availability of and access to services that support self-sufficiency</b>	1.3.1 Update and publish the Community Resources Guide listing organizations with contact info to help community members in categories such as: basic needs, employment supports, health and wellness, housing. In English and in Spanish.	Annual
	1.3.2 Address gaps in current efforts to end food insecurity by increasing the amount of food available and increasing the distribution hours.	2024
	1.3.3 Explore how to address gaps in employment supports (geographic location, hours, etc.)	2024
	1.3.4 Develop and publish a Community Resources Guide targeted to youth and young adults; update annually.	First one by end of 2023, then annual
	1.3.5 Increase the number of Resource Connector(s) on the school-based mental health team to help meet needs of students and families	Starting 2024-2025 school year
<b>1.4 Partner with areas' housing authorities to increase reach and impact</b>	1.4.1 Explore practices of other local housing authorities (housing navigators on staff, lottery instead of wait list, utilization of more voucher types, etc.)	2023
	1.4.2 Partner with West Valley Housing Authority to reach their goal of getting their lease up to 525 households. (In 2022, West Valley Housing Authority served 470 households; had funding for 525; and voucher allotment from HUD of 763).	525 by end 2024

**RESOLVE IMMINENT RISK: PREVENT HOMELESSNESS FOR 120 HOUSEHOLDS IN 2023 FACING EVICTION AND PLAN FOR 100 PER YEAR 2024-2027 (AS NEEDED PER ANNUAL REVIEW)**

STRATEGIES	ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<b>1.5 Administer funding already secured for prevention</b>	1.5.1 FCO to administer funding totaling \$1.5 million provided for this fiscal year by MWVCAA, city of Independence, city of Monmouth, West Valley Housing Authority, DHS, ODHS, and small non-profits (Family Promise, etc.) for prevention efforts such as rental assistance, utility assistance, housing navigation, application and deposit assistance, barrier removal, etc.	2023-24
	1.5.2 Support the administration of Executive Order (EO) funding for preventing homelessness. EO funding provided \$593,947 to Polk County with the goal of preventing homelessness for 200 households which have been served an eviction notice or are at-risk of eviction. Rural Polk County’s fair share is ~60% so that’s ~\$350,000 and ~120 households. (See 1.8.1)	By Jan 2024
<b>1.6 Secure funding for prevention efforts in future years</b>	1.6.1 Seek out funding streams, apply for grants, etc.	2025-2027
<b>1.7 Support programs of partners (Behavioral Health, FCO, MWVCAA, NWHS, Polk CDC, Sable House) across rural Polk to meet the need for housing-focused emergency financial assistance</b>	1.7.1 Secure and administer funding for additional rental assistance	2024-2027
	1.7.2 Secure and administer funding for additional utility/energy assistance	2024-2027
	1.7.3 Secure and administer funding for weatherization and repairs to make housing units habitable	2024-2027
	1.7.4 Secure and administer funding for barrier removal	2024-2027
	1.7.5 Track demographics of households receiving financial assistance in order to identify priority populations for outreach	Ongoing

<b>1.8 Decrease evictions</b>	1.8.1 Support the administration of Executive Order (EO) funding for preventing homelessness. EO funding provided \$593,947 to Polk County with the goal of preventing homelessness for 200 households which have been served an eviction notice or are at-risk of eviction. Rural Polk County's fair share is ~60% so that's ~\$350,000 and ~120 households. (See 1.5.2)	2023
	1.8.2 Build relationships with local landlords, including holding quarterly meetings, to foster collaboration to prevent evictions.	First meeting June 2023, quarterly
	1.8.3 Support Oregon Health Authority's proposal to prevent homelessness using Medicaid by providing six months of rent to those at risk of losing their housing, starting Nov 1, 2024. Help build awareness and help eligible rural Polk residents access this benefit.	Nov 2024-2027





**THERE'S A LOT OF HOMELESS IN RURAL POLK COUNTY. BUT WE ARE SO FAR AWAY FROM EVERYTHING SO IT FEELS LIKE THERE ISN'T HELP. GET OUT THERE. BE IN THE COMMUNITIES. GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT HELP THAT IS AVAILABLE.**



## **2: IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM**

### **2: IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM ACROSS THE HOUSING CONTINUUM**

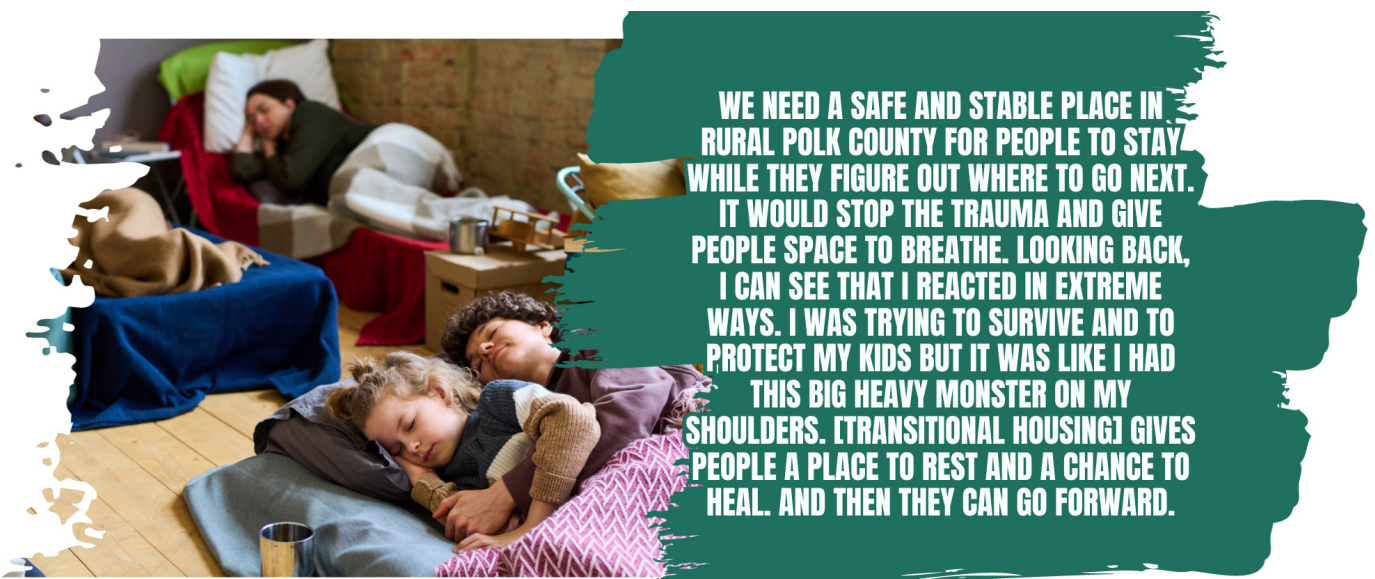
**OUTREACH  
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING  
RAPID REHOUSING**

**OUTREACH: INCREASE OUTREACH AND ACCESS TO SERVICES (INCLUDING CASE MANAGEMENT, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, ADDICTION RECOVERY, MEDICAL/ DENTAL, EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS, BASIC NEEDS LIKE FOOD/CLOTHING/ HYGIENE, ETC.)**

<b>STRATEGIES</b>	<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
<b>2.1 Increase outreach capacity and outreach collaboration</b>	2.1.1 Secure funding for additional outreach workers, including a bilingual/ bicultural outreach worker	Ongoing
	2.1.2 Hold monthly outreach team meetings to facilitate collaboration between FCO, ROCC, MWVCAA, HOME with a commitment to geographic coverage	Begin 2024 and then ongoing
	2.1.3 Host by-name case conferencing to serve specific clients experiencing homelessness. (See A.2.2)	First one held 6/20/23, Monthly
	2.1.4 Add "On the spot" case conferencing to facilitate collaboration to meet immediate needs (See A.2.3)	Summer 2023, Ongoing

	2.1.5 Add outreach specific to youth/ young adults as part of MWVCAA-HOME’s YHDP funded “hub” project.	2023
<b>2.2 Streamline resources and services</b>	2.2.1 Open new Polk Community Resource Center in Monmouth – co-location resource center housing multiple county services and 10-15 non-profit organizations with a goal to serve people in one stop (including: OHP, benefits, veterans service office, DHS, public health, MWVCAA, pediatric clinic, emergency financial assistance, community mailboxes, emergency food boxes, housing navigation, homeless prevention and outreach)	Jan 2024
	2.2.2 Explore an additional location in rural Polk County for a wellness and resource center such as Falls City, Perrydale, and Willamina	2024
<b>2.3 Increase availability of services</b>	2.3.1 Address geographic gaps in availability of services (including food, behavioral health, addiction recovery, and healthcare)	2024-2027
	2.3.2 Address gaps in current efforts to end food insecurity by increasing the amount of food coming to rural Polk County and increasing the distribution hours as needed	2024-2027
	2.3.3 Explore opportunities to increase access to behavioral health supports with partners such as Polk County Behavioral Health	2024
	2.3.4 Explore opportunities to increase access to addiction recovery services with partners including Polk County Behavioral Health and Bridgeway	2024
	2.3.5 Explore opportunities to increase access to healthcare services with partners including Northwest Human Services and Salem Health	2024

<b>2.4 Overcome transportation barriers for individuals/families accessing services</b>	2.4.1 Convene stakeholders (including Salem Health’s program Connections) to develop plan to increase transportation options for healthcare appointments	2024
	2.4.2 Support the renewal of the funding for the Monmouth-Independence Trolley	2025
<b>2.5 Create safe place for unsheltered to sleep overnight</b>	2.5.1 Share strategies around compliance with case law about homeless camping affecting jurisdictional regulation of homelessness	2023
	2.5.2 Explore the development of a “Safe Park” program offering place(s) where people who are sleeping in their cars or RVs can safely park	2024
	2.5.3 Explore PATHS subcommittee regarding code enforcement/law enforcement for information sharing, education and coordination.	2024
	2.5.4 Educate outreach teams and equip them to provide information to clients and the public	Ongoing



**TRANSITIONAL HOUSING: MEET THE NEED FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING / SHELTER BY ADDING 80 BEDS IN 2023 WITH A TARGET OF 50 BEDS (TO BE ADJUSTED PER ANNUAL DATA REVIEW INCLUDING DATA FROM LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AND PIT COUNT DATA) PER YEAR 2024-2027**

STRATEGIES	ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<b>2.6 Add transitional housing / shelter for tribal members and their families</b>	2.6.1 Open two micro shelter sites in Grand Ronde (Site 1: 10 units measuring 10x10; Site 2: 15 units measuring 10x15) with a total of 50 beds	Feb & April 2023
	2.6.2 Open Warriors of Hope DV homes with 20 beds	June & July 2023
<b>2.7 Add transitional housing / shelter for families</b>	2.7.1 Open Ediger Hall at Dallas Alliance Church with funding assistance from the United Way, offering temporary housing to one family at a time, with case management provided by FCO (3 bedrooms, ~6 beds)	June 2023
	2.7.2 Stand up Church @ the Park transitional housing with 40 beds for families and individuals 18+ using \$1.57 million of EO funding (see 2.9.1)	Jan 2024
	2.7.3 Develop a plan for additional transitional housing for families, as needed	2024-2027
<b>2.8 Add transitional housing / shelter for youth (ages 18 and under)</b>	2.8.1 Open the YHDP House funded in part by YHDP, for youth ages 14-18 (5 beds)	Fall 2023
<b>2.9 Add transitional housing / shelter for adults 18+</b>	2.9.1 Stand up Church @ the Park transitional housing with 40 beds for families and individuals 18+ using \$1.57 million of EO funding (see 2.7.2)	Jan 2024
	2.9.2 Partner with Polk County Community Corrections and Polk County Behavioral Health to develop a plan to stand up transitional housing / shelter for Justice-Involved Individuals as set out as the #1 priority goal in the March 2023 "Sequential Intercept Model Mapping Report"	2024-2027

	2.9.3 Explore the need and options to stand up transitional housing / shelter for Young Adults (ages 18-24)	2024-2027
	2.9.4 Develop a plan for additional transitional housing for veterans as needed	2024-2027
	2.9.5 Explore the need and options to stand up transitional housing / shelter for Seniors (ages 55+)	2024-2027
<b>2.10 Expand the Warming Center program to other geographies in the county</b>	2.10.1 Open a Warming Center in Willamina for the 2023-24 season	Winter 2023
<b>2.11 Roll out new transitional housing / shelter in a way that elevates equity</b>	2.11.1 Consider geographic equity in the plans for transitional housing with a goal to have something in each of the PATHS communities by the end of this 5-year plan	2023-2027
	2.11.2 Work with partners running transitional housing / shelter to provide a safe and stable place to stay for people of all gender identities and all sexual orientations.	Ongoing
	2.11.3 Work with partners running transitional housing / shelter to provide a safe and stable place to stay for people of all races/ethnicities.	Ongoing

<b>RAPID REHOUSING: MEET THE NEED FOR RAPID REHOUSING WITH A TARGET OF 75 HOUSEHOLDS IN 2023 AND A TARGET (TO BE ADJUSTED PER ANNUAL DATA REVIEW) OF 50 HOUSEHOLDS PER YEAR IN 2024-2027</b>		
<b>STRATEGIES</b>	<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
<b>2.12 Support the Rapid Rehousing Projects funded by the state's Emergency Order funding to rapidly rehouse ~75 Polk County households by 1/31/2024</b>	2.12.1 Support MWVCAA rapid rehousing project; MWVCAA awarded \$1,056,067 with goal of serving 50 households (all in Polk County)	2023
	2.12.2 Support Sable House rapid rehousing project; Sable House awarded \$410,850 with goal of serving 20 households (all survivors of domestic violence in Polk County)	2023

	2.12.3 Support Salem Housing Authority rapid rehousing project; Salem Housing Authority awarded \$454,586 with goal of serving 65 households (in Marion-Polk, so assume about 10 will be in Polk).	2023
<b>2.13 Support the Rapid Rehousing project funded by YHDP for young adults 18-24</b>	2.13.1 Support the Rapid Rehousing project funded by YHDP for young adults 18-24 with the goal of housing 8 young adults per year	2023-2027
<b>2.14 Support Rapid Rehousing projects 2024-2027</b>	2.14.1 Sustain rapid rehousing projects in 2.12 and 2.13 beyond current funding windows	2024-2027
	2.14.2 Partner with Polk County Community Corrections and Polk County Behavioral Health to develop a plan rehousing for Justice-Involved Individuals as set out as the #5 priority goal in the March 2023 “Sequential Intercept Model Mapping Report”	2024
	2.14.3 Explore the needs and options for rapid rehousing for other priority populations (veterans, families, seniors, etc).	2025-2027
<b>2.15 Deliver wrap-around services to those in rapid rehousing programs</b>	2.15.1 MWVCAA to develop and roll out training called “Rapid Rehousing Case Manager Academy” to set standards for home visits, motivational interviews, etc.	2024
	2.15.2 Foster connections between case managers and local service providers in rural Polk County	Ongoing
<b>2.16 Facilitate people exiting homelessness in getting and using a housing voucher</b>	2.16.1 Explore with the area’s housing authorities the possibility of adding a priority for people exiting homelessness.	2023
	2.16.2 Explore possibility to “buy down rent” for people exiting homelessness so that more units are available for voucher use.	2024-2027
<b>2.17 Communicate regularly with landlords to facilitate rapid rehousing</b>	2.17.1 Build relationships with local landlords, including holding quarterly meetings, to foster collaboration to support rapid rehousing.	First meeting June 2023, quarterly

### 3: INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In rural Polk County, there is a need for additional affordable housing units. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines affordable housing as housing where the occupant is paying no more than 30% of gross income for housing costs, including utilities.

(<https://archives.hud.gov/local/nv/goodstories/2006-04-06glos.cfm>)

PATHS is an advisory board; not a group of developers nor real estate investors. The need for additional affordable housing is clear, and it is one that PATHS has limited tools to solve. Increasing the supply of affordable housing will take money, land, and time. PATHS communities are taking short-term and long-term actions to decrease barriers to adding affordable housing. In housing needs analyses and production strategies, cities are also seeking to address adding more units that are affordable at all income ranges. That relies in large part on housing rehab funds, private/non-profit development of housing, and other measures not in the control of the public sector to increase supply of units. Action items here include working with partners and exploring options like Permanent Supportive Housing and cottage clusters.

SOLUTIONS GOAL 3: INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING		
GOAL: OPEN 100 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS BY THE END OF 2027. ADD AN ADDITIONAL 100 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS TO THE HOUSING PRODUCTION PIPELINE BY THE END OF 2027.		
STRATEGIES	ACTION ITEMS	TIMELINE
<b>3.1 Support near-term efforts (2023) in each community to add affordable housing units.</b>	3.1.1 Dallas: · In regards to cottage clusters, the planning commission is recommending an increase in the per lot maximum from 4-6 to up to 12 cottages per lot, consistent with density allowances. · Changing affordable housing metrics to make it more enticing for developers to choose the affordable housing option, · Reviewing housing variety standards.	2023
	3.1.2 Falls City: Working on securing funding for a Housing Needs Analysis (HNA); Changed ordinances to allow for cottage clusters and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).	2023

	3.1.3 Grand Ronde: Purchase Sheridan Inn property (20 rooms) for programming and housing for tribal members with behavioral health diagnoses.	2023
	3.1.4 Independence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Conducting Housing Needs Analysis (HNA), results expected August 2023.</li> <li>· Created a Vertical Housing Zone which provides tax incentives to developers to build housing above commercial properties</li> <li>· Reduced the parking space requirements</li> <li>· Kicked-off a new grant funded project to review a large area of Independence holistically and with an eye toward missing middle housing options, walkable, bikeable, public transportation, to provide additional opportunities for mixed types of housing</li> </ul>	2023
	3.1.5 Monmouth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Zoning code changed in 2023 to remove barriers to affordable housing development (e.g. reduce parking requirements, increase density, reduce lot sizes, increase range of allowed housing types, streamline review procedures)</li> </ul>	2023
	3.1.6 Willamina: Hosted four “Community Conversation” meetings about Homelessness; Engaged City Council in two work sessions about House Bill 3115.	2023
<b>3.2 Support long-term (2024-2027) efforts in each community to add affordable housing units.</b>	3.2.1 Dallas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Developing mixed use zone code provisions, supporting middle and affordable housing unit development.</li> <li>· Supporting the redevelopment of the former mill site property as a mixed use development.</li> <li>· Supporting the development of the La Creole master planned area, including high density and mixed use land.</li> </ul>	2024-2027



	3.2.2 Falls City: Continue to work with regional partners to develop new affordable housing developments	2024-2027
	3.2.3 Grand Ronde: Renovate and open Sheridan Inn property (20 rooms) for programming and housing for tribal members with behavioral health diagnoses.	2024-2027
	3.2.4 Independence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Applied for a grant to proceed with a Housing Production Strategy</li> <li>· Applied for a grant to assess infill opportunities</li> <li>· System Development Charge reductions for accessory dwelling units (ADU)</li> </ul>	2024-2027
	3.2.5 Monmouth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Implement high priority HPS strategies: Rezone land for high density (multi-family) housing</li> <li>Public-Private Partnerships to create more affordable housing</li> <li>Systems Development Charge exemptions or reductions</li> <li>UGB adjustment</li> <li>Public outreach and education</li> </ul>	2024-2027
	3.2.6 Willamina: Consider opportunities to decrease barriers to add affordable housing	2024-2027
<b>3.3 Work with partner organizations who are adding units of affordable housing</b>	3.3.1 Support Polk CDC's opening 10 units of veterans housing at 458 Hart Land in Dallas	2023
	3.3.2 Support Polk CDC's plans to open 100-120 new affordable housing units at new developments such as: 845 Ellendale (~20 units), 520 Hankel St (5-20 units), 179 Washington St (57 units), Carson Commons (20 units, includes 9 YHDP units reserved for young adults)	2024-2027

	3.3.3 Partner with Polk CDC as they pursue opportunities to add additional units of affordable housing in the pipeline by the end of 2027	End 2027
	3.3.4 Explore feasibility for specialty housing programs for hard-to-house populations.	Ongoing
<b>3.4 Seek to add Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) in rural Polk County</b>	3.4.1 Research Permanent Supportive Housing in Oregon and understand best practices.	2023
	3.4.2 Explore potential partners (such as Polk County Behavioral Health and MWVCAA and the housing authorities) and funding for PSH	2024
<b>3.5 Explore adding cottage clusters</b>	3.5.1 Converse with churches and other large landowners in rural Polk County about the possibility of siting cottage clusters on their land.	Ongoing
	3.5.2 Meet with United Way to understand the cottage cluster project in Salem and explore the possibility of a similar project in rural Polk County.	2024
<b>3.6 Coordinate rural regional efforts with legislative initiatives</b>	3.6.1 Bring rural perspective to the legislature through lobbying and advocacy.	Ongoing

# ***CONCLUSION***

Rural Polk County is taking action to prevent and solve homelessness. PATHS (Partners Aligned Toward Housing Solutions) has set goals building on the foundations of collaboration, data and evidence, and equity. Partners will work together to prevent homelessness, increase the effectiveness of the homeless responses system, and increase the supply of affordable housing.



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: LISTENING SESSIONS

Listening sessions were held with a variety of community partners and voices of lived experience to lay the foundation for this plan.

GROUP	PRESENTERS
<b>4/11/22</b> <b>Tribal/City Leadership Perspective</b>	Dana Ainan (Social Services Department, Grand Ronde), Kenna West (City Manager, Willamina), Marty Wine (City Manager, Monmouth), Amy Houghtaling (Council President, Falls City), TJ Bailey (Mayor, Falls City), Brian Latta (City Manager, Dallas)
<b>4/25/22</b> <b>Public Safety Perspective</b>	Sergeant Todd Fenk (Polk County Sheriff's Office), Jodi Merritt (Polk County Community Corrections Director), Aaron Felton (Polk County District Attorney), Ben Stange (Chief, Polk County Fire District 1), AJ Foscoli (City Manager, Falls City), Derek Trombla (Community Support and Code Enforcement Officer, Willamina), Charlie Mitchell (Economic & Community Development Director, Dallas), Sergeant David King (Dallas Police Department), Lieutenant Matt Olafson (Monmouth Police Department), Chief Lyle Gilbert (Independence Police Department), Jake McKnight (Grand Ronde Police Chief), Steve Warden (Grand Ronde Chief of Emergency Management)
<b>5/9/22</b> <b>Service Providers Perspective</b>	Trisha Vickers (Northwest Human Services, Jennifer Broadus/Jennifer Von Derahe/Denyc Boles (West Valley Hospital), Breezy Aguirre and Robert Marshall (Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency)

GROUP	PRESENTERS
<b>5/23/22</b> <b>Service Providers Perspective (cont.)</b>	Kerry Hammerschmith (Polk County Behavioral Health), Ben Smith (Polk County Resource Center), Family Promise (TJ Putman), Dana Goodale (Polk County School Based Mental Health Program)
<b>6/6/22</b> <b>School District and West Valley Housing Authority Perspective</b>	Ryan Sticka (McKinney/Vento Liaison, Dallas School District), Amy Houghtaling (Falls City School District), Ana Gil (McKinney/Vento Liaison, Central School District, Lynne Shore (McKinney/Vento Liaison, Willamina School District), Tammy Luker (Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator, West Valley Housing Authority)
<b>1/24/23</b> <b>Community Members including Voices of Lived Experience Perspective, Community Connect</b>	Dot survey conducted to invite conversation among attendees at the Community Connect around the following questions: “How serious of a problem do you think homelessness is in Polk County?” And “Which of the following resources would be helpful to you?” 171 people (community members including voices of lived experience, service providers, elected officials, etc.) participated in the dot survey and the conversations.

## APPENDIX B: ACRONYM LIST

<b>ADU</b>	Accessory Dwelling Unit
<b>AMI</b>	Area Median Income
<b>BIPOC</b>	Black, Indigenous and People of Color
<b>C@P</b>	Church @ the Park
<b>CE</b>	Coordinated Entry
<b>CHIP</b>	Children’s Health Insurance Program
<b>COC</b>	Continuum of Care
<b>CSC</b>	Community Services Consortium
<b>CTGR</b>	Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Human Services
<b>DV</b>	Domestic Violence
<b>EDU</b>	Equivalent Dwelling Unit
<b>EO</b>	Emergency Order



<b>ERDC</b>	Employment Related Day Care
<b>FCO</b>	Family & Community Outreach (Polk County Department)
<b>FMR</b>	Fair Market Rents
<b>FQCH</b>	Federally Qualified Community Health Center
<b>HB</b>	House Bill
<b>HMIS</b>	Homelessness Management Information System
<b>HNA</b>	Housing Needs Analysis
<b>HPS</b>	Housing Production Strategy
<b>HUD</b>	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
<b>HYS</b>	Home Youth Services (a program of MWVCAA)
<b>LGBTQIA+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual
<b>MWVCAA</b>	Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency
<b>NWHS</b>	Northwest Human Services
<b>OHA</b>	Oregon Health Authority
<b>OHCS</b>	Oregon Housing & Community Services
<b>OHP</b>	Oregon Health Plan
<b>PIT</b>	Point-In-Time (annual count of people experiencing homelessness)
<b>PATHS</b>	Partners Aligned Toward Housing Solutions
<b>PCBH</b>	Polk County Behavioral Health
<b>POLK CDC</b>	Polk Community Development Corporation
<b>PSH</b>	Permanent Supportive Housing
<b>ROCC</b>	Recovery Outreach Community Center
<b>RRH</b>	Rapid Rehousing
<b>RV</b>	Recreational Vehicle
<b>SIT</b>	Service Integration Team
<b>SHA</b>	Salem Housing Authority
<b>SNAP</b>	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
<b>TANF</b>	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
<b>TH</b>	Transitional Housing
<b>THCC</b>	Total Health Community Clinic (NWHC medical clinic in Monmouth)
<b>WIC</b>	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
<b>WOU</b>	Western Oregon University
<b>WVHA</b>	West Valley Housing Authority
<b>YHDP</b>	Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

## APPENDIX C: DEFINITIONS

### HOMELESSNESS and TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS

#### FROM HUD (UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT):

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-esg-homeless-eligibility/four-categories/>

Within the homeless definition there are four categories of homelessness:

#### CATEGORY 1: LITERALLY HOMELESS

Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; or
- Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or
- Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

Literally Homeless includes unsheltered and sheltered homeless which HUD defines as follows:

**UNSHeltered Homeless:** individuals and families with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

**Sheltered Homeless:** individuals and families living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide a temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals).

#### CATEGORY 2: IMMINENT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:

- Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
- No subsequent residence has been identified; and
- The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

### **CATEGORY 3: HOMELESS UNDER OTHER FEDERAL STATUTES**

Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with Category 3 children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

- Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;
- Have not had a lease, ownership interest in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;
- Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; and
- Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers

### **CATEGORY 4: FLEEING/ATTEMPTING TO FLEE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Any individual or family who:

- Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence;
- Has no other residence; and
- Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing

### **CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS**

- A homeless individual with a disability as defined in section 401(9) of the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360(9)), who:
  - Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, and
  - Has been homeless and living as described for at least 12 months\* or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions included at least 7 consecutive nights of not living as described.
- An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility for less, including jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria of this definition before entering that facility\*\*; or
- A family with an adult head of household (or, if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria of this definition, including



a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

### **AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS**

An individual or family who:

- Has an annual income below 30 percent of Median Family Income (MFI) for the area, as determined by HUD;
- Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, (e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks), immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the “homeless” definition in this section; and
- Meets one of the following conditions:
  1. Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
  2. Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
  3. Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;
  4. Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
  5. Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;
  6. Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or
  7. Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient’s approved consolidated plan.

### **FROM THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT**

<https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/>

### **THE MCKINNEY-VENTO DEFINITION OF HOMELESS**

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (per Title IX, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act) defines homeless as follows:

The term “homeless children and youths”–

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and

(B) includes–

(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;\*

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2) (C));

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

## **OTHER KEY TERMS: HOMELESSNESS AND TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS**

**COUCH-SURF:** to stay overnight with a series of hosts who typically provide basic accommodations (such as a couch to sleep on) at no cost

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/couch-surf>

**DOUBLED UP:** Temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason

<https://www.oregonsd.org/Page/5371>

## **TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS**

(Note: HUD defines Chronic Homelessness. The others are used by service providers and advocates but are not part of federal policy statements)

<https://rednoseday.org/news/what-are-four-types-homelessness>

<https://www.caringworksinc.org/did-you-know-there-are-four-types-of-homelessness/>

**CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS (SEE HUD DEFINITION ABOVE):** Continuously homeless for more than a year, or has had at least 4 episodes of homelessness in the previous 3 years. People experiencing chronic homelessness tend to be older and are often struggling with complex health issues, disabilities, mental illness, or addiction.

**EPIODIC HOMELESSNESS:** Experiencing repeat episodes of homelessness but do not meet the definition of chronic homelessness. May have a seasonal job. May be struggling with health issues or addiction.

**TRANSITIONAL HOMELESSNESS:** A state of homelessness that's a result of a major life change or catastrophic event. These life changes might be job loss, a health condition, divorce, domestic abuse, a substance use disorder, or personal or family crisis, among many others, resulting in people losing their homes.

**HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS:** Those who are temporarily staying with friends of family. They are doubled up or couch surfing. They have no guarantee that they will be able to stay long-term and no immediate way to find a home. This type of homelessness often goes unrecorded.

## **HOUSING / SHELTERS AND TYPES OF HOUSING / SHELTERS**

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** Housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities.

Emergency Shelter: any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless.

**PERMANENT HOUSING (PH):** A community-based housing model, the purpose of which is to provide housing without a designated length of stay. Includes Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Rehousing (RRH).

**PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (PSH):** Permanent housing in which housing assistance (e.g., long-term leasing or rental assistance) and supportive services are provided to assist households with at least one member (adult or child) with a disability in achieving housing stability.

**RAPID REHOUSING (RRH):** Permanent housing that provides short-term (up to three months) and medium-term (4-24 months) tenant-based rental assistance and supportive services to households experiencing homelessness.

**TRANSITIONAL HOUSING (TH):** Temporary housing with supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the goal of interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing. TH projects can cover housing costs and accompanying supportive services for program participants for up to 24 months.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-program-components/coc-program-components-overview/>  
[https://archives.huduser.gov/portal/glossary/glossary\\_all.html](https://archives.huduser.gov/portal/glossary/glossary_all.html)