



WALLA WALLA Alliance for the Homeless

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020–2022



MISSION: Our mission is to provide homeless people in Walla Walla with access to safe shelter, basic necessities, and the resources needed to transition to stable housing and self-reliance.



VISION: The Alliance envisions a community in which everyone has access to shelter, services and housing.

An open letter to our

The Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless is a young organization, founded just four years ago to recognize and resolve the unmet needs of people who are experiencing homelessness in the Walla Walla Valley. We have learned much during those years:

- ✓ There will always be people without housing—though the number has been increasing recently, primarily because incomes have not kept pace with the cost of housing.
- ✓ The vast majority of people who are homeless here are from the Walla Walla Valley. Every time we survey our clients, we find that at least 85% are from Walla Walla, have close relatives living here or are from the immediately surrounding counties. Those facing the challenges of living on the streets are simply most comfortable staying in the surroundings with which they are most familiar.
- ✓ Evidence shows that the Housing First model is the most effective way to combat homelessness. Housing First recognizes that a person must first move into stable housing, without barriers or conditions, before any underlying issues can be addressed. Once housed, individuals need wrap-around social services to help them solve those underlying issues and move toward a stable situation.
- ✓ There is no single magic solution that can eliminate homelessness. All homeless individuals face their own unique barriers to stable housing. Some are able to move quickly back into a productive life. Others, with disabilities or mental illness, will always need some support.



Housing First

Evidence shows that the Housing First model is the most effective way to combat homelessness. A person must first move into stable housing, without barriers or conditions, before any underlying issues can be addressed.

When we started, we didn't know anything about Housing First. We were simply trying our best to keep people alive and provide basic humanitarian support. We have learned by trial and error—by now over 25,000 hours of combined experience in the trenches.

Not surprisingly, our services rather quickly started to mimic the Housing First strategies. We manage the Sleep Center shelter, which has no conditions for entry other than that participants must obey the simple on-site rules. It provides homeless people with a

community

stable place to sleep and a safe place to store a few belongings. It's not quite "housing," but it comes as close as we can make it within our financial means. And, thanks to support from the community, we have added one-on-one wrap-around services this year to help clients find real housing and begin to solve their unique barriers. It's working.

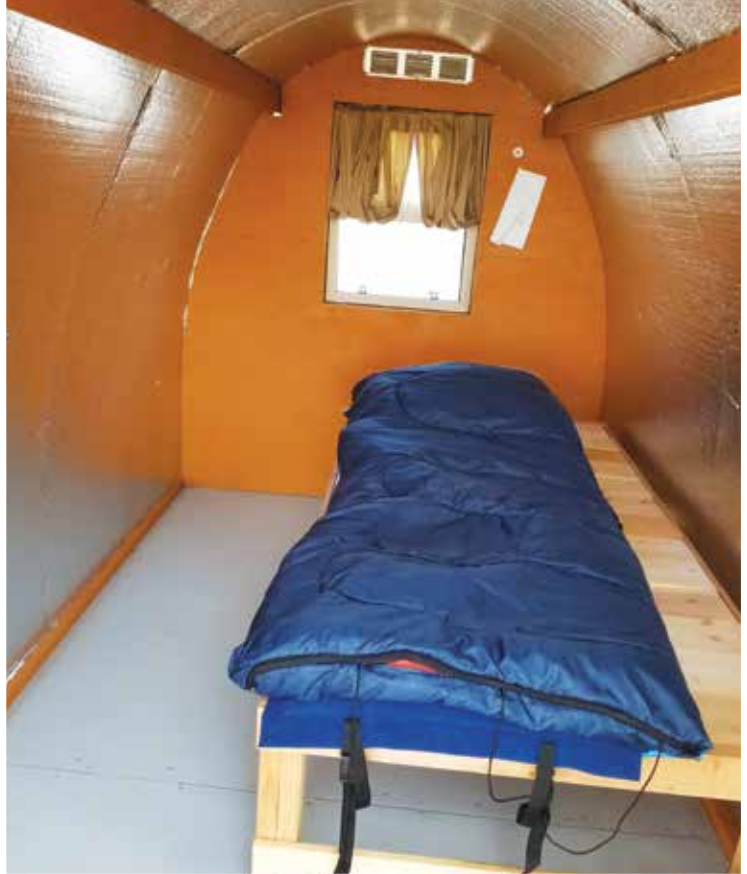
As an organization, we now need to take a hiatus from rapid growth to solidify our current programs, formalize our processes and plan for a sustainable future. This strategic plan is the result of six months of effort by the board of directors and key program leaders. It began with interviewing key stakeholders: city and county officials, board members, leaders of other social service agencies, and clients. We did a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organization. We reviewed and clarified our Mission, Vision and Values statements and our service model before engaging in intensive discussions of organizational goals and objectives. Finally, we developed specific action plans to guide us in achieving those objectives.

The summary plans described on the following pages focus on ensuring that the appropriate infrastructure is in place. This will allow us to continue to take innovative steps in the work to end homelessness. Each of the summary plans is backed by detailed action plans (not included herein) to guide us during our implementation.

We give thanks to the Sherwood Trust for funding this effort and to Louise Bourassa for her leadership and facilitation skills, without which this plan would not have been possible.

Sincerely,

The board of directors



The Sleep Center

14,922

nights of safe sleep provided

261

unique clients served—141 clients (54%) stayed more than a week

More than 85%

are from Walla Walla County

Ages range from

18–72



July 2015: The Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless was incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

2015–2016: Homeless people were increasingly visible in the downtown business district, sometimes lying on sidewalks or in doorways. Shop owners were concerned that this was not compatible with a growing tourist market and asked the City of Walla Walla to pass a no-camping ordinance. In so doing, the city was required to establish a legal place where homeless people could be. A temporary construction fence was assembled at the base of the Memorial Golf Course as that designated place. However, without any authority from the city to enforce rules, the Alliance was unable to take effective action in managing what was essentially a homeless camp.

Winter 2016–2017: This was a brutal winter: temperatures below zero, heavy snow, strong winds. The Alliance rallied community donations of tents, sleeping bags and clothing to keep folks alive. It was obvious that tents were totally inadequate shelter in these conditions.

Making progress

For the four months in 2019 that on-site wrap-around services were offered, 40% of Sleep Center clients engaged in services. Of those:

11% have been housed

56% reported mental health issues

58% reported physical disabilities

18% are chronically homeless



Spring 2017: Both the city and the Alliance were unwilling to go through another winter like the previous one. The city found a site for a temporary camp. The Alliance built Conestoga huts, which are weatherproof, are insulated and have lockable doors, but have no electricity or heating. The city provided overnight security and gave the Alliance authority to enforce rules in the camp. The huts and the management processes worked well.

April 2019: The city finished preparing a permanent site for the Sleep Center at 15th and W. Rees. The entire camp was moved in one day, thanks to crews from Hayden Homes! The new site has two buildings that provide office and meeting space, plus flush toilets and showers for residents.

June 2019: The Exit Homelessness program gained funding for on-site case management and peer support to help clients move to more stable situations. Meeting clients on-site, one-on-one, proved to be highly successful.

July 2019: We began the mobile shower service, bringing better hygiene to those who are not living at the Sleep Center. Showers are now more available to anyone who is homeless, even if they are living in their car or on the street.

 **1,229** showers provided by the mobile shower and on-site showers at the Sleep Center

47% requested a physical health referral

23% requested a referral for substance abuse help

15% do not have health insurance

The Sleep Center
The Sleep Center provides shelter in personal huts. It is low-barrier, stable, provides a small amount of storage for belongings, is safe—and clients know where they will sleep each night. The Exit Homelessness program delivers the wrap-around services component.

Goal 1 Governance:

» Increase the number of members of the board of directors, optimize the board's talent pool, and organize the board to support the growth and sustainability of the Alliance's mission and impact.

Objectives:

- + Increase diversity of the board to reflect the Walla Walla community and Alliance client demographics.
- + Add to board capacity by using a skills matrix to identify and fill gaps.
- + Ensure that key structural components for board governance are in place and meet nonprofit standards and regulations.

Goal 2 Talent Development:

» Develop and support an effective staff and volunteer team.

Objectives:

- + Maintain an organizational structure that identifies key directive, staff and volunteer roles.
- + Recruit, train and assign volunteers to distinct roles outlined in job descriptions.
- + Hire an executive director (.5 FTE) by June 2020.
- + Enhance infrastructure to support staff salary payment/benefits requirements, performance evaluation, training and development.
- + Increase volunteer pool by 10% per year for next three years.
- + Codify volunteer recruitment, screening, training, support and recognition processes.
- + Strengthen the staff and volunteer training program.

Goal 3 Service Model Refinement:

» Enhance the service model to ensure alignment with client needs, congruence with Walla Walla's continuum of care and known best practices.

Objectives:

- + Further codify policies and procedures for client entrance and stay at Sleep Center.
- + Expand and formalize collaboration with service partners using Memoranda of Understanding or other agreements.
- + Establish standards of practice for Exit Homelessness case management.
- + Establish policies and procedures for basic necessities: mobile shower, laundry program, mailboxes.
- + Use best practices for Exit Homelessness case management.

Goal 4 Fundraising and Sustainability:

» Broaden fundraising, communication and partnership structures that ensure the sustainability of organizational operations, the Sleep Center, Exit Homelessness and the provision of basic necessities.

Objectives:

- + Increase fundraising to support a half-time executive director, paid Exit Homelessness staff, general operations and a modest operating reserve.
- + Establish mechanisms and marketing for automated monthly donations.
- + Develop the capacity to secure and manage public funding for eligible services.
- + Implement a communications plan to inform citizens of the positive impact of the Alliance on the health and welfare of the Walla Walla community.
- + Expand the Alliance's coalition of citizens, local government, faith communities, businesses and service partners through collaborations, increased volunteer opportunities and partnerships.
- + Increase grant funding in alignment with the Alliance's mission by 20% annually.
- + Identify signature funding event. Increase net proceeds from the event by 10% annually.

Goal 5 Sleep Center Facilities and Function:

» Enhance the look and function of the Sleep Center.

Objectives:

- + Upgrade offices and facilities for functional support services.
- + Develop community garden and shade/green spaces.
- + Increase client participation in facility maintenance and upgrades.
- + Advance opportunities for volunteer support and participation.

Goal 6 Pathways to Permanent Housing:

» Remain responsive to opportunities to promote stable housing options for people who experience homelessness.

Objectives:

- + Support opportunities that lead to more affordable housing options, especially for those who experience the greatest barriers to stable housing.
- + Participate fully in the planning and advocating for affordable housing in Walla Walla County.

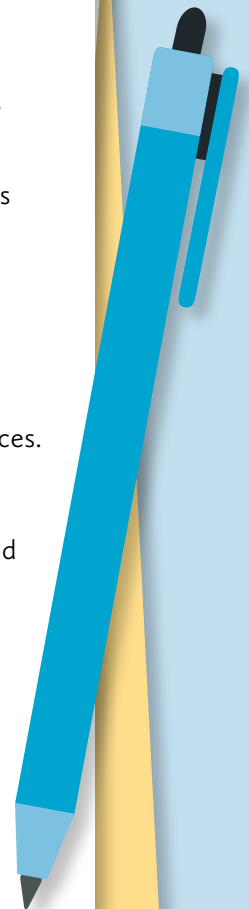


Photo courtesy of the Union-Bulletin



Exit Homelessness program

Our team of social workers, peer specialists and volunteers meets clients where they are, without passing judgment, to gain their trust and assess their situation, challenges and potential. These services are unique to each client.

We help them decide how they want to change and what steps they need to take to reach their goal. We become their coach and mentor, encouraging them as they work to overcome their individual challenges.

We can help clients:

- + Get their ID, Social Security card, bus passes, cellphones, mailing addresses and food stamps.
- + Qualify for and find housing.
- + Obtain the benefits they qualify for.
- + With resumes and job searching.

How to help

Volunteer

To find out how you can volunteer, call **541.203.0122** and leave your name and a message.

Want to donate items?

Please bring donations to the Sleep Center at 15th and W. Rees between 6 and 10 p.m.

Items needed:

Food

Coffee
Coffee creamer
Instant oatmeal
Instant soups like Ramen noodles, cup-a-soup, etc.
Sugar

Clothing

Gloves
Rain ponchos
Socks
Warm coats (L and XL sizes)

Bedding

Blankets
Sleeping bags
Washable pillows

Toiletries

Body wash
Conditioner
Razors
Shampoo
Shaving cream
Toothbrushes
Toothpaste

Other

Batteries: AA and AAA
Cold medicine
Hand warmers

You can also donate funds:

Visit **w2ah.org**.

2019

24 clients obtained housing

11 clients found jobs



Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless

P.O. Box 3431
Walla Walla, WA 99362
message phone: **541.203.0122**
info@w2ah.org

Sleep Center

1181 W. Rees Ave.
(corner of 15th and W. Rees)
509.520.0316
sleepingcenter@w2ah.org

Exit Homelessness

1181 W. Rees Ave.
509.596.1114
exithomelessness@gmail.com