Governor Inslee, Senators, and Representatives:

The William D. Ruckelshaus Center (Center), in partnership with Washington State University's Division of Governmental Studies and Services (DGSS), is pleased to submit the third and final reporting on activities specified in Section 6 of Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1277.

The purpose set forth by the Legislature was to:

- explore and identify trends affecting and policies guiding the housing and services provided to individuals and families who are, or at risk of, homelessness in Washington State; and
- facilitate meetings and discussions to develop options and recommendations for a long-term strategy and implementation steps to improve services and outcomes for persons at risk of or experiencing homelessness and to develop pathways to permanent housing solutions.

In the past year, the Ruckelshaus Center designed and convened a series of discussions and workshops among individuals representing varied roles, sectors, and geographies with experience or knowledge of homelessness and housing stability related policies and services. Those conversations revealed foundational components and conceptual shifts to serve as the groundwork for a long-term strategy for advancing housing security. That groundwork, in turn, informed the set of guiding principles and recommendations, which provide a scaffold for decision-making across sectors – government, philanthropic, service providers, and others – including ways to guide investment decisions and ways to assess whether those investments are contributing to desired results.

In parallel to these efforts, DGSS presents information on factors affecting the rates homelessness in the "Status of Fact-Finding – Year 3" report. That analysis highlights key factors that affected the rates of homelessness from 2016 to 2020 across counties, as well as an overview of service evaluations—which highlight the importance of aligning resources with the unique needs of people.

As we enter the final months of this project, we are thinking about opportunities for dissemination and conversations about moving forward. We are also thinking about additional information gathering, data analysis, and ways of reporting out emerging themes, guiding principles, and recommendations from this work.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve the State of Washington.

Sincerely,

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PATHWAYS TO HOUSING SECURITY

Overview of Reporting: 2021- 2023

The first of three requested reports, delivered in **December 2021 – Pathways to Housing Security**, laid the foundation for this undertaking. The first report summarized the historical chronology of housing and homelessness in the United States; presented the social, economic, political, and ideological forces that have influenced housing intervention policy; provided an overview of recent trends in homelessness and housing assistance in Washington state; synthesized patterns and themes from initial stakeholder discussions; and laid out a framework for carrying out the remaining work.

The second reporting, delivered in two parts, described progress towards the ultimate objective of informing a long-term strategy to improve housing security in Washington state:

December 2022 – Status of Fact Finding, produced by DGSS, provides a brief update on the current status of homelessness in Washington State, findings from a systematic review of the empirical literature on root causes of homelessness across the U.S. more generally, with attention to how these causes may vary by state, and a summary of the current scope of publicly funded housing assistance intervention strategies in Washington, by county, Continuum of Care, population density, and funding source.

December 2022 – Status of Facilitated Discussions, produced by the Center, provides an overview of the context and approach for the facilitated discussions, followed by key emerging themes. These themes focus on what engagement, with whom, and around which areas of concerns and opportunities would be most useful in subsequent facilitated discussions.

This third, and final, reporting is also presented in two parts:

December 2023: Status of Fact-Finding, prepared by DGSS, provides an update on the status of homelessness in Washington state, changes in rates from 2013 to 2022, and presents an analysis of the conditions that impact homelessness in Washington State using publicly available county level data from the Washington's State Department of Commerce and the U.S. Census American Community Survey.

December 2023: Final Report of Facilitated Discussions and Recommendations, prepared by the Center, presents a summary of facilitated discussions among participants with knowledge of and experience related to housing and homelessness related services and policies across geographies, sectors, and roles. Themes emerging from early discussions informed the development of emerging options, opportunities, and concerns. Further facilitated discussions helped articulate guiding principles, refined emerging options into recommendations, including ways to guide investment decisions and ways to assess whether those investments are contributing to the desired results.

The following table presents a crosswalk of the legislative tasks articulated in Section 6, HB1277, and where reporting on those tasks is emphasized.

Cross walk of Legislative Tasks and Reporting on Section 6, HB1277

Legislative Tasks	Reporting on Section 6, HB1277
(2)(a), examine "trends affecting, and policies guiding, the housing and services provided to individuals and families who are or at risk of homelessness[;]"	**December 2021**,[1] p. 5-13, provides historic context of the policies, definitions, and approaches to programs and services for individuals experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability. **December 2022 – Status of Discussions**,[2] p. 4-8, presents an overview of the policy landscape, including legislative trends. **December 2022 – Status of Fact-Finding**,[3] p. 22-31, presents housing assistance interventions in Washington, including variations by county, population density, Continuum of Care, HMIS project type, and funding source.
(2)(c)(i), facilitated discussions to identify participant "concerns, barriers, opportunities, and desired principles for a long-term strategy to improve outcomes and services for persons at risk or experiencing homelessness and develop pathways to permanent housing solutions[;]"	**December 2021,** p. 20-22, presents an overview of emerging themes on concerns and opportunities for a state strategy for housing security. **December 2022 – Status of Facilitated Discussions,** p. 12-19, presents an update on emerging concerns, barriers, opportunities, desired principles, as well as fundamental questions to be explored in the development of a long-term state approach to housing security.

[1] December 2021 – Pathways to Housing Security. Available online: https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2180/2021/12/Pathways-to-Housing-Security-Report-FINAL.pdf
[2] December 2022 – Status of Discussions. Available online: https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2180/2022/12/Housing-Security_Stakeholder-Discussions_Year-2-Report_Revised-12.23.22.pdf
[3] December 2022 – Status of Fact-finding. Available online: https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2180/2022/12/Housing-Security_Fact-Finding_Year-2-Report_Revised-12.23.2022.pdf

Cross walk of Legislative Tasks and Reporting on Section 6, HB1277

(2)(c)(ii), fact-finding and facilitated discussions among participants to "identify root causes of housing instability and homelessness within Washington State." This task should include consideration of geographic and demographic variations, as well as "identify statutory and regulatory issues that impede efforts to address root causes[;]"	**December 2021,**[4] p. 4; 10-14, presents national and state trends on the total numbers of individuals and households experiencing homelessness, including demographic information. **December 2021,** p. 14-19, provides a literature review on root causes of homelessness and housing instability. **December 2022 – Status of Facilitated Discussions**,[5] p. 19-25, presents emerging themes on how participants perceive the multiple, co-occurring contributing factors to housing insecurity and homelessness. **December 2022 – Status of Fact-Finding,**[6] p. 4-7, presents an update on the trends of individuals and households meeting definitions of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, as well as ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. **December 2022 – Status of Fact-Finding,** p. 9-22, presents an expanded literature review of structural factors and individual vulnerabilities contributing to experiences of homelessness and housing instability. **December 2023 – Status of Fact-Finding,** p. 11-22, presents publicly available data exploring factors that impact homelessness statewide and by county for select measures. **December 2023 – Status of Fact-Finding,**[7] p. 22-25, presents results of bivariate and multivariate analysis of causes of homelessness in Washington Counties.

[4] December 2021 – Pathways to Housing Security. Available online: https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2180/2021/12/Pathways-to-Housing-Security-Report-FINAL.pdf
[5] December 2022 – Status of Discussions. Available online: https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2180/2022/12/Housing-Security_Stakeholder-Discussions_Year-2-Report_Revised-12.23.22.pdf
[6] December 2022 – Status of Fact-finding. Available online: https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2180/2022/12/Housing-Security_Fact-Finding_Year-2-Report_Revised-12.23.2022.pdf
[7] Available online: https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/projects/current-projects/pathways-to-housing-security/december-2023-final-reporting/

Cross walk of Legislative Tasks and Reporting on Section 6, HB1277

(2)(d), facilitated discussions among participants for "the purposes of identifying options and recommendations to develop and implement a long-term strategy to improve the outcomes and service[s] for persons at risk or experiencing homelessness and develop pathways to permanent housing solutions, including the manner and amount in which the state funds homelessness housing and services and performance measures that must be achieved to receive state funding."	**December 2022 – Status of Facilitated Discussions,** p. iii-iv; 16-25, presents a summary of conversations that informed the design of a series of facilitated conversations and workshops in 2023 around emerging options across six emerging themes. **December 2023 – Final Report of Facilitated Discussions and Recommendations,**[8] presents a cumulative reporting on legislative tasks and elements of a long-term strategy to improve outcomes and services and develop ways to housing security. Elements of such a strategy include Foundational Themes and Conceptual Shifts that lay the groundwork for a long-term state effort towards advancing housing security. That groundwork, in turn, informed the development of Guiding Principles and Recommendations and Actions. Guiding Principles help align decisions and actions to the goal of advancing housing security across sectors and roles. Recommendations and Actions provide guidance for entities to take action, including ways to guide investment decisions and to assess whether those investments are contributing to desired results.

[8] Available online: https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/projects/current-projects/pathways-to-housing-security/december-2023-final-reporting/