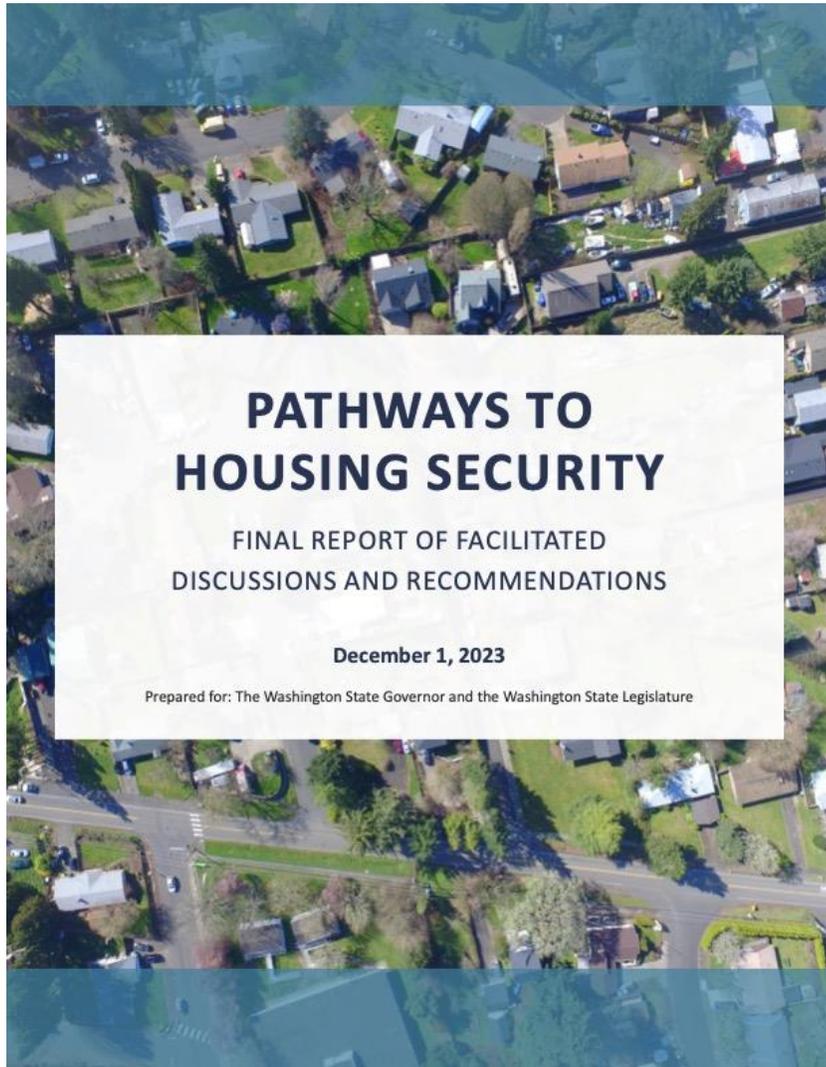


THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON



PATHWAYS TO HOUSING SECURITY

FINAL REPORT OF FACILITATED
DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

December 1, 2023

Prepared for: The Washington State Governor and the Washington State Legislature

KEY MESSAGES FOR LOCAL ACTION

THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Project Origin and Purpose

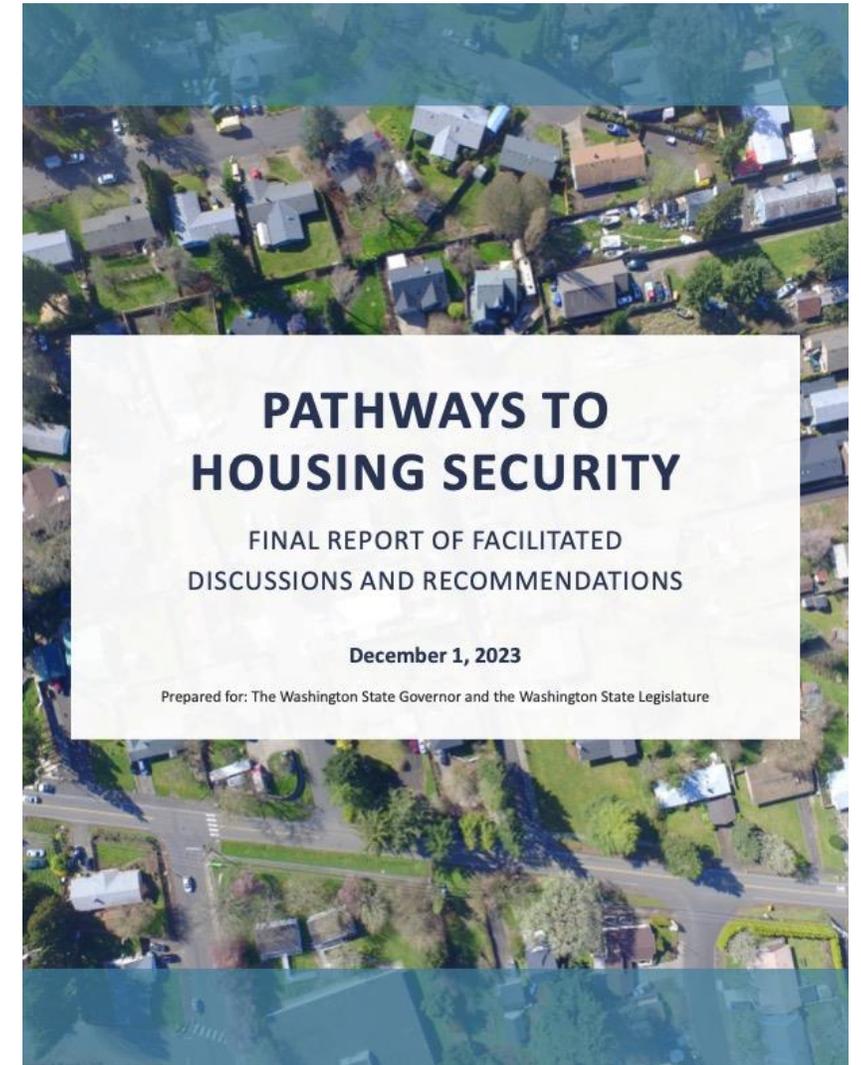
In 2021, the Washington State Legislature directed the William D. Ruckelshaus Center to identify principles, options, and recommendations for a long-term strategy to create pathways to housing security.

Project Homepage:

<https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/current-projects/pathways-to-housing-security/>

Final Report and Supplemental Resources:

<https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/pathways-to-housing-security-report-resources/>



Report Scope
and Use

Long-Term
Strategy

Scope: Statewide, Long-term, Whole of Housing Security

Approach: Facilitated discussions with hundreds of participants with relevant knowledge and experience

Use: Guidance for a holistic and adaptable strategy with actions tailored to the needs of local communities

A Long-term Strategy

Core Elements in the Report

Foundational Themes

Themes that emerged from the information and insights provided by participants in facilitated discussions

Conceptual Shifts

New ways of thinking that can foster success in advancing housing security

Guiding Principles

Principles to help align decisions and actions in a holistic approach to housing security

Recommendations

Recommendations that can be developed into tailored actions for specific contexts



**A Long-term
Strategy**

**Key Messages
for Local Action**

Value Many Types of Knowledge

Who Does the Work Matters

Provide Varied Housing Options

Address Precarious Housing

Context Matters and So Does the Bigger Picture

Value Many Types of Knowledge

Key Messages

FINDINGS

- There is no single best way to solve the housing crisis – instead, many different and connected actions are needed
- Success comes in many forms, which requires a wide range of knowledge and experience
- Different types of knowledge provide insight into different but equally important aspects of the housing crisis
- The voices of those who are currently or formerly unhoused need to be amplified, especially to understand what's needed, what matters, and what works

GUIDANCE

- Actively support those most affected by housing instability and homelessness to participate in making decisions and assessing success
- Match the type of knowledge and expertise to what is needed for different parts of the housing response
- Build in ways to understand different views before making decisions
- Measure the extent to which different kinds of input are reflected in decisions made

Who Does the Work Matters

Key Messages

FINDINGS

- The housing crisis is exacerbated by hiring practices that can exclude qualified individuals because of their personal histories
- Excluded individuals are often well suited to do the work because of their personal experiences with the challenges being addressed

GUIDANCE

- Evaluate hiring practices to ensure that the qualifications are matched to the role and do not include criteria that are unnecessary or counterproductive
- Actively recruit job applicants from vulnerable populations including those who are currently and have been unhoused or unstably housed
- Embed training to support the continued success of a diverse workforce
- Reduce policies and practices that exclude vulnerable populations from being active partners
- Create pathways for organizations led by those who have been historically excluded to contribute to the response to housing insecurity

Provide Varied Housing Options

Key Messages

FINDINGS

- Every individual, family, and community has their own needs and preferences when it comes to housing
- In each community, a variety of options are needed along the road to housing security: meeting the immediate needs of those who are unhoused, offering temporary shelter and transitional housing, providing permanent supportive housing for those who need it, and ensuring housing affordability

GUIDANCE

- Diversify types of shelters, temporary, and permanent housing options
- Diversify the levels of support and the kinds of expectations in each type of housing
- Work with individuals/families to identify the housing option and supports that are best for their needs, even as they change over time
- Create flexible housing agreements that maintain both autonomy and accountability
- Measure both the number of units and whether they remain accessible and affordable over time
- Measure both placements and how well-matched they are to needs and preferences

Address Precarious Housing

Key Messages

FINDINGS

- Not enough attention is paid to assisting those who are close to becoming unhoused should they face unexpected expenses or changes in circumstances
- Helping people stay in their housing lessens the burden on the housing crisis response and prevents the harmful and costly effects of experiencing homelessness

GUIDANCE

- Meet needs before they become crises with waived or subsidized fees, mini grants, or interest free loans to help stabilize people on the verge of losing their housing
- Stabilize existing housing stock to maintain quality and affordability of available housing units
- Track stability in housing and prevention of homelessness as markers of success
- Create eligibility criteria that ramp down gradually to avoid an abrupt loss of assistance
- Coordinate goals and actions for stabilizing precarious housing within strategies and plans for both homelessness and affordable housing

Context Matters and So Does the Bigger Picture

Key Messages

FINDINGS

- Different geographies, services, and populations need different things, yet also depend on each other
- Success comes from strategies and actions that are well matched to the context while also connecting to the bigger picture

GUIDANCE

- Coordinate across jurisdictions, sectors, and services to support each other's work and avoid undermining each other
- Create ways to bridge the gaps between the ways systems are structured and the supports people need
- Value both the flexibility to tailor for context and the guidance and accountability that ensures quality and consistency
- Set goals and targets that make sense in context
- Ensure separate goals for reaching those hardest to serve

Report Resources

Available to Download

<https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/pathways-to-housing-security-report-resources/>

Final Report

Executive Summary

Report Overview and Use Examples

Key Messages for Local Action

Key Messages for Policymaking and Planning

Guiding Principles – Alignment Worksheet

Guiding Principles – Workshopping Activity

Recommendations – Implementation Worksheet

Recommendations – Community Mapping Activity