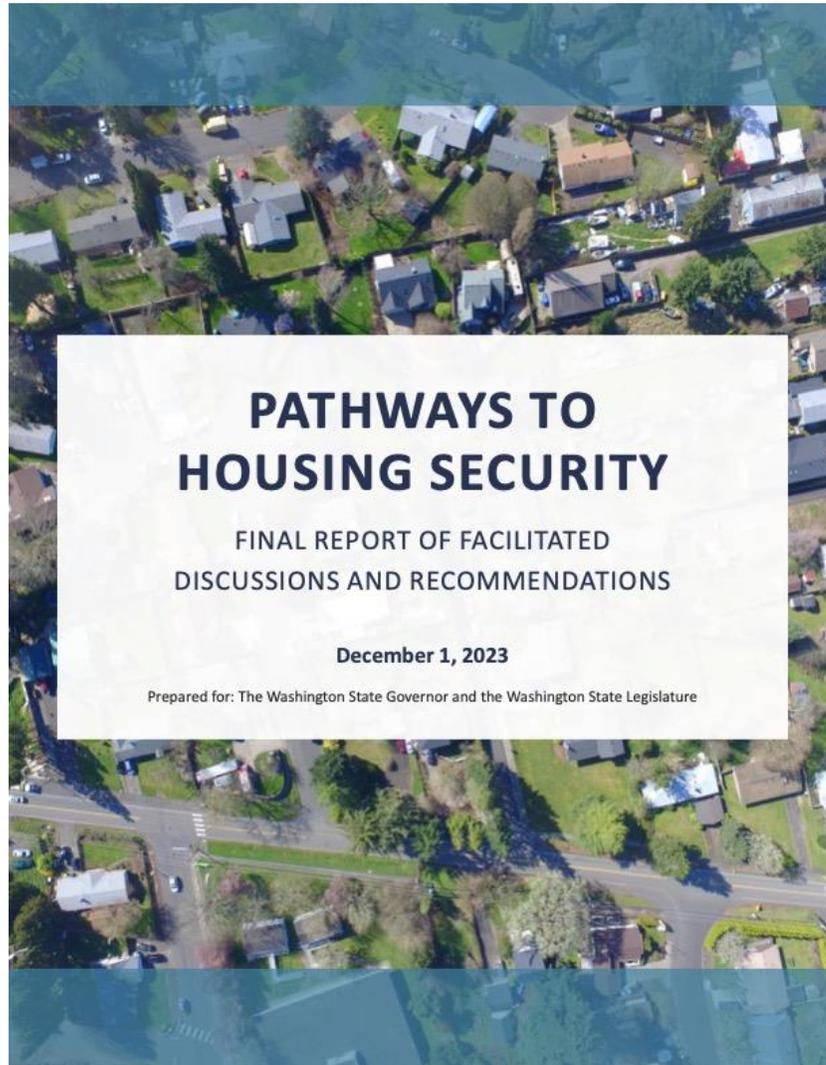


THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

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

REPORT OVERVIEW AND USE EXAMPLES

THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Project Origin and Purpose

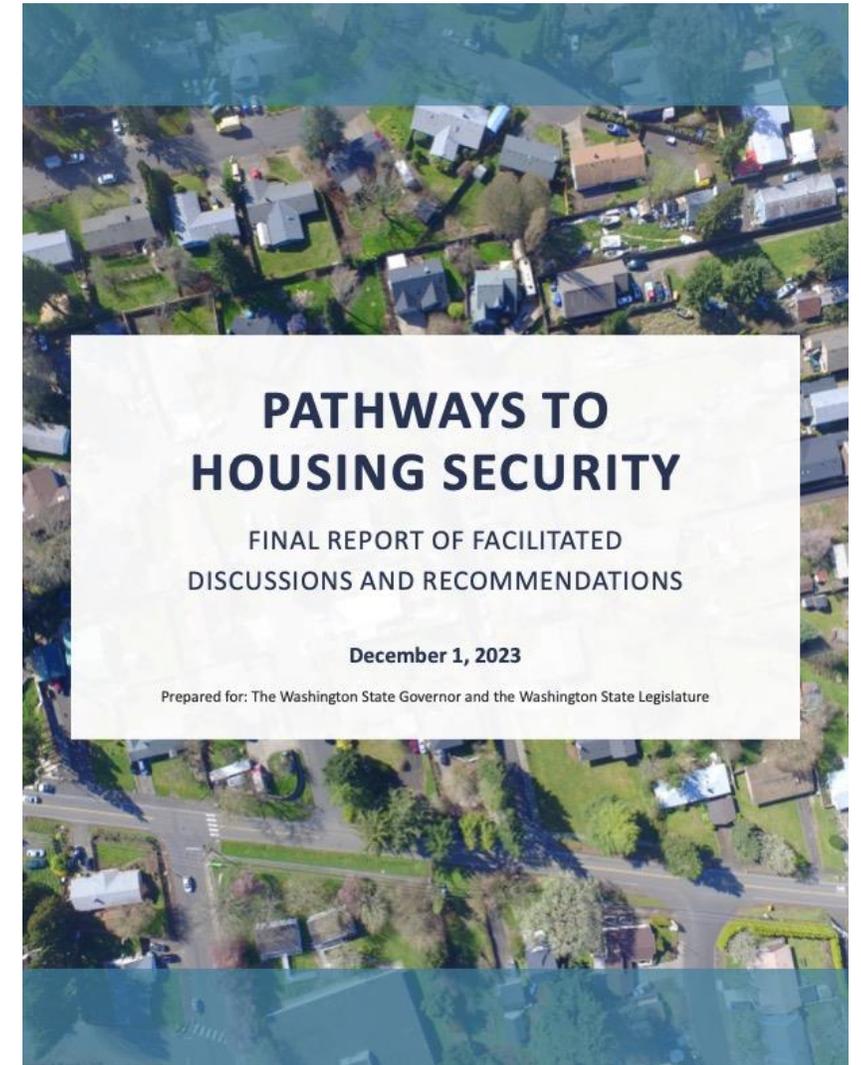
In 2021, the Washington State Legislature directed the William D. Ruckelshaus Center to identify principles, options, and recommendations for a long-term strategy to create pathways to housing security.

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 tailored actions within a comprehensive and adaptable strategy

A Long-term Strategy

Core Elements

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 comprehensive approach to housing security

Recommendations

Recommendations that can be developed into tailored actions for specific contexts

**Core
Element**

**Foundational
Themes**

Understanding the Multiple Factors that Contribute to
Homelessness and Housing Instability

Recognizing the Complexity of Housing Security

Matching the Response to the Need

Tending to the Apparent Conflicts in the Response

Strengthening State Partnerships
with Tribal Governments

Foundational Theme

Understanding Homelessness and Housing Instability

Multiple Factors Interact to Contribute to Housing Insecurity

Individual Factors are Embedded in Systemic Factors

Multiple Opportunities to Intervene

Interventions Depend on Each Other to Succeed

SUPPLY AND COST OF HOUSING

Access to and Stability In Housing

SYSTEMIC/STRUCTURAL FACTORS AND ACTIONS THAT ADDRESS THEM

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS; INCOME AND WEALTH INEQUALITY

Employment and Earning Potential

SYSTEMS OF CARE AND SUPPORT

Co-Occurring Conditions

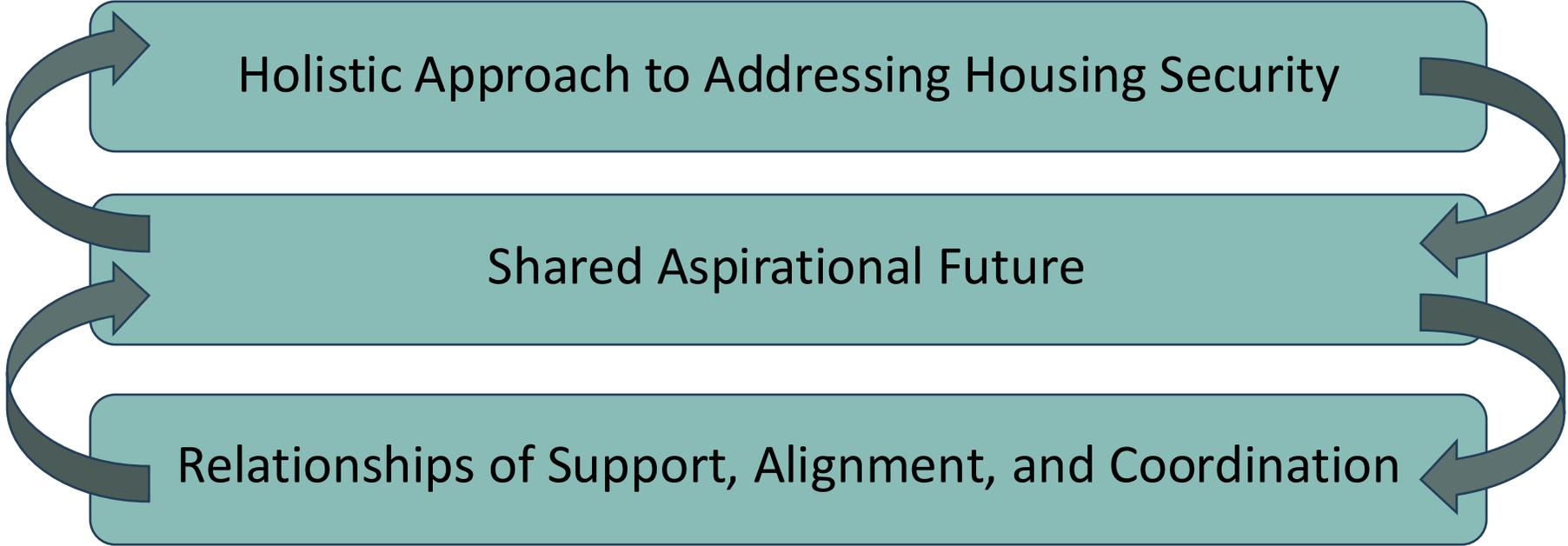
SYSTEMIC DISADVANTAGE AND MARGINALIZATION

Disparities

Factors that Amplify Vulnerability and Actions that Mitigate Them

**Core
Element**

**Conceptual
Shifts**



Core Element

Guiding Principles

Principles help align decisions and actions in a comprehensive approach to housing security by:

- Guiding ongoing decision making
- Aligning across sectors, roles, localities
- Navigating aspects that seem contradictory or adversarial
- Balancing flexibility with consistency
- Enabling periodic assessment and strategic accountability

Guiding Principle A: Foster productive narratives around housing security and homelessness.

Guiding Principle B: Mobilize a multi-sector response to advance housing security.

Guiding Principle C: Respond to the holistic and interdependent nature of housing security.

Guiding Principle D: Design the response to housing insecurity around what people and communities need to thrive.

Guiding Principle E: Undo the harm of structural racism and other forms of systemic disadvantage that produce housing inequity.

Guiding Principle F: Employ a sense of urgency about both meeting immediate needs and initiating steps for long-term progress.

Guiding Principle G: Amplify the influence of those most affected by homelessness and housing instability.

Guiding Principle H: Create conditions that reduce competition and facilitate cooperation.

Guiding Principle I: Address the inability of the housing market to meet housing needs.

Guiding Principle J: Sustain the response to housing insecurity through stability in infrastructure, relationships, and appropriately scaled resources.

Guiding Principle K: Prepare to adapt to changing circumstances, unanticipated disruptions, and new knowledge.

Set the Strategy Up for Success

- 1: Multiple Successes** Recognize multiple, co-existing ways of understanding success.
- 2: Clarity of Total Investment and Benefit** Capture and communicate the comprehensive investments that advance housing security, the benefits they yield, and for whom.
- 3: Experiential Expertise** Amplify the insights and expertise of those affected by homelessness and housing instability by supporting them to participate in making decisions about, implementing, and assessing the performance of laws, policies, programs, and services related to housing insecurity.

Respond to the Continuum of Housing Needs

4: Housing Options Expand the supply, variety, location, and quality of supported options and pathways for shelter, temporary, and longer-term housing, to better match people to their types and level of need and to their preferences.

5: Supply of Affordable Housing Adopt strategies that align homelessness services and housing assistance with increasing the supply of affordable housing for rental and ownership. Allocate more funds to be used for operations and maintenance to preserve the current stock of subsidized and affordable housing.

6: Equitable Access to Housing As policies are implemented to increase the supply of affordable housing, ensure equitable access for those transitioning from homelessness and most at risk of housing instability.

7: Geographic Variability Accommodate the ways in which housing challenges manifest differently in different places.

8: Cooperation Across Jurisdictions Incentivize greater cooperation across geographic and political jurisdictions.

Respond Holistically to People's Needs

9: Coordinated Pathway Create a coordinated pathway system that cultivates operational connections among entities working on outreach, entry into the homelessness response system, placement in housing, and longer-term housing stability.

10: Holistic Eligibility Reconfigure eligibility criteria using a cross-sector, multifactorial, periodic assessment designed to help people access the supports they need over time to synergistically stabilize their housing, health, behavioral health, and socioeconomic circumstances.

11: Person-Centered Navigation Evolve current case management and care navigation efforts into a cross-sector navigation system that responds to the specific needs of individuals and households and follows them longitudinally as those needs evolve.

12: Circumstances of Precarious Housing Expand investments that stabilize individuals or households with circumstances of precarious housing.

Bolster Systems and Workforce Capacity and Stability

13: Diversity in Implementation Increase the diversity of and cooperation among organizations and entities in the public, nonprofit, and private sector with the potential to contribute to the response to housing insecurity.

14: Financial Stability of Implementers Foster the financial stability of those implementing the response to housing insecurity by offering a range of funding models to variety of grantees and partners.

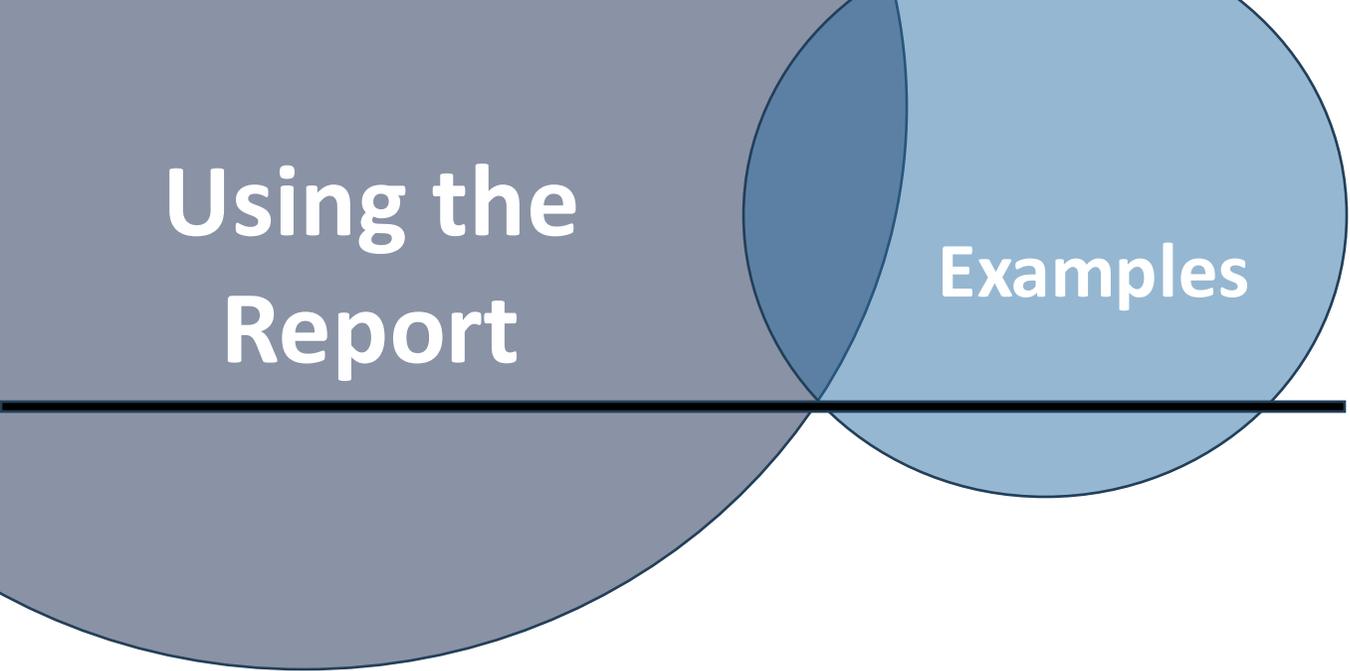
15: Working Conditions Improve working conditions and supports for the frontline workers who directly provide homeless services and housing assistance.

16: Core Competencies Establish universal core competencies in culturally responsive, anti-racist, and trauma-informed practices for providers, administrators, and leaders across sectors, and regularly provide the training needed to put those competencies into practice.

Foster Accountability, Manage Performance, and Adapt Over Time

17: Alignment of Policymaking Assess laws and policies in all areas of government for the potential to affect housing security and assess housing laws and policies for their potential to affect interrelated goals in other areas.

18: Knowledge Management Framework Develop a comprehensive framework for the role of knowledge and learning in the State's efforts to advance housing security, including performance monitoring, focused evaluation, a prioritized research agenda, and avenues for knowledge sharing.



Using the
Report

Examples

Alignment to the Guiding Principles

Examples of questions to consider and opportunities for action that illustrate alignment with the report's guiding principles.

Alignment to Guiding Principles

Assess Alignment

How aligned are current or proposed actions, such as policies, strategies, plans, programs, or services?

Opportunities to Align More Deeply

- *What could change in how you carry out your core functions?*
- *What could change in your internal policies, practices, and structures?*
- *What could change in how you communicate?*
- *What could change in how you track and assess what you do?*
- *What else could you change?*

- Guiding Principle A:** Foster productive narratives around housing security and homelessness.
- Guiding Principle B:** Mobilize a multi-sector response to advance housing security.
- Guiding Principle C:** Respond to the holistic and interdependent nature of housing security.
- Guiding Principle D:** Design the response to housing insecurity around what people and communities need to thrive.
- Guiding Principle E:** Undo the harm of structural racism and other forms of systemic disadvantage that produce housing inequity.
- Guiding Principle F:** Employ a sense of urgency about both meeting immediate needs and initiating steps for long-term progress.
- Guiding Principle G:** Amplify the influence of those most affected by homelessness and housing instability.
- Guiding Principle H:** Create conditions that reduce competition and facilitate cooperation.
- Guiding Principle I:** Address the inability of the housing market to meet housing needs.
- Guiding Principle J:** Sustain the response to housing insecurity through stability in infrastructure, relationships, and appropriately scaled resources.
- Guiding Principle K:** Prepare to adapt to changing circumstances, unanticipated disruptions, and new knowledge.

Guiding Principle A: Foster productive narratives around housing security and homelessness.

Questions to Consider

What narratives do you currently foster about homelessness and housing instability?

What narratives would be productive to goals for housing security?

What could you do to foster those narratives?

Opportunities to Affect Narratives

- Communications
- Programs and Services
- Funding
- Accountability
- Learning
- Decision-making

Recommendations

- 1. Recognize Multiple Ways of Understanding Success**
- 2: Clarify Total Investment and Benefit**
- 3. Draw on Experiential Expertise**
- 13. Diversify Implementation**
- 17. Align Policymaking**

Related Guiding Principles

G: Amplify the influence of those most affected.

C: Respond to the holistic and interdependent nature of housing security.

H: Create conditions that reduce competition and facilitate cooperation.

K: Prepare to adapt to changing circumstances.

Guiding Principle E: Undo the harm of structural racism and other systemic disadvantages that produce inequity.

Questions to Consider

To what extent do decisions about housing reflect input from those most affected?

What kinds of experiential expertise are currently missing for key aspects of the response?

How could you track whether you are mitigating ways that expanding housing supply could make inequities worse?

Opportunities to Undo Harm

- Funding Decisions
- Programs and Services
- Hiring Criteria
- Accountability Frameworks
- Policy Development

Recommendations

3. Experiential Expertise

6. Equitable Access

13. Diversified

Implementation

16. Core Competencies

Related Guiding Principles

G: Amplify the influence of those most affected by housing insecurity.

A: Foster productive narratives.

D: Design the response around what people and communities need.

Guiding Principle F: Employ a sense of urgency about both meeting immediate needs and initiating steps for long-term progress.

Questions to Consider

How does your planning connect actions to short-term outcomes?
To long-term outcomes?

How do you promote affordability for both current housing and new housing supply?

How do you communicate long-term needs for affordable housing in relationship to the acute homelessness crisis?

How will adding new housing supply affect disparities?

Opportunities to Address the Short and Long Term

- Policy Development
- Accountability Frameworks
- Communications
- Uncover Shared Interests Masked by Conflict

Recommendations

- 4: Housing Options**
- 5: Affordable Housing**
- 12. Precarious Housing**
- 6. Equitable Access**
- 1. Multiple Successes**
- 17. Align Policymaking**

Related Guiding Principles

- H:** Create conditions that reduce competition and facilitate cooperation.
- I:** Address the inability of the housing market to meet housing needs.
- A:** Foster productive narratives.
- E:** Undo the harm of systemic disadvantages that produce inequity.

Guiding Principle H: Create conditions that reduce competition and facilitate cooperation.

Questions to Consider

- What could you do to actively reduce competition?
- What kind of cooperation is most useful?
- What would help discern whether to start a new initiative or augment an existing one?
- What would incentivize useful cooperation?
- How could you track competition and cooperation?
- How could you include multiple ways of understanding success?

Opportunities to Reduce Competition

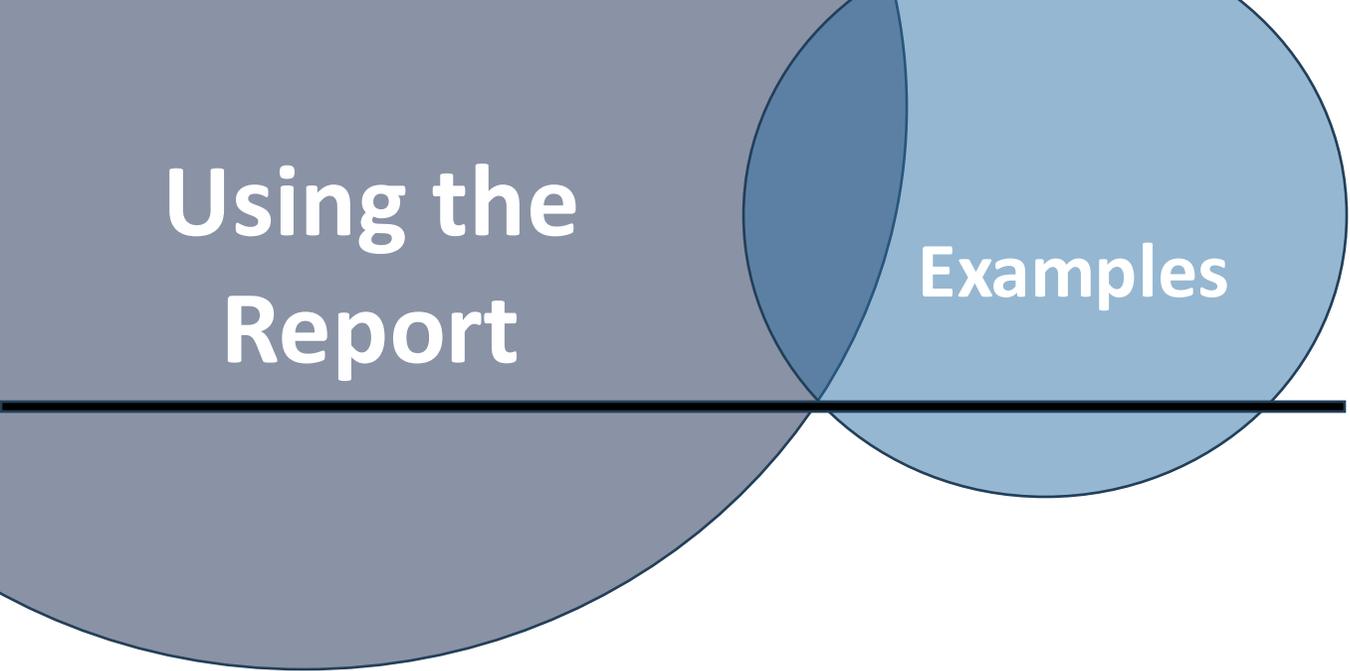
- Programs and Services
- Policy Development
- Funding Criteria
- Accountability Frameworks
- Uncover Shared Interests Masked by Conflict

Recommendations

- 10. Holistic Eligibility**
- 13. Diversified Implementation**
- 8. Cooperation Across Jurisdictions**
- 17. Aligned Policymaking**

Related Guiding Principles

- C:** Respond to the holistic and interdependent nature of housing security.
- F:** Employ a sense of urgency about both immediate needs and initiating steps for long-term progress.
- A:** Foster productive narratives.
- K:** Prepare to adapt to changing circumstances.



Using the
Report

Examples

Implementing Recommendations

Examples of questions to consider and opportunities for action that illustrate implementation of the report's recommendations.

Areas of Recommendation

Set the Strategy Up
for Success

Respond to the
Continuum of Housing
Needs

Respond Holistically
to People's Needs

Bolster Systems and
Workforce Capacity
and Stability

Foster Accountability,
Manage Performance,
and Adapt Over Time

Implementing Recommendations

Opportunities for Action

Core Functions What changes to how you carry out your core functions would contribute to implementing this recommendation?

Internal Operations What practices or policies within how you work would contribute to implementing this recommendation?

Relationships Who are you not currently connected to? What benefit could come from being better connected? How could you connect?

Measurement What would you want to track that you aren't already tracking? How could you measure that?

Learning What practices or models or examples would you like to learn from?

Narratives What narratives would help this recommendation be implemented successfully? What could you do to foster those narratives?

Collective Action Who could you partner with to advocate for change?

Recommendation 4: Housing Options Expand the supply, variety, location, and quality of supported options and pathways.

Recommendation 5: Affordable Housing Align homelessness services and housing assistance with increasing the supply of affordable housing for rental and ownership.

Recommendation 6: Equitable Access As housing supply expands, ensure equitable access for those transitioning from homelessness and most at risk of housing instability.

Questions to Consider

How can the focus be maintained on both increasing the supply of affordable housing and meeting acute needs of people currently without shelter?

How will those most in need access and afford new housing supply?

Could decisions that are good for expanding housing supply undermine options for emergency or temporary shelter?

How can progress be fostered and tracked along the continuum of housing needs?

Potential Actions

- Acknowledge immediate needs and longer-term efforts both require a sense of urgency
- Talk about what is needed in mutually beneficial ways
- Explicitly review alignment between homelessness plans and affordable housing plans
- Build relationships across those working on different parts of the housing continuum
- Track progress along the housing continuum (*rec 17*)

Recommendation 12: Precarious Housing Expand investments that stabilize individuals or households with circumstances of precarious housing.

Questions to Consider

How could you recognize and respond to early warning signs of housing instability?

How can funding be flexible to respond to specific circumstances that put housing stability at risk?

How can strategies for expanding affordable housing incorporate stabilizing the current housing stock?

What supports can you make available to employees who experience or are at risk of precarious housing?

Potential Actions

- Bridging grants or loans for unanticipated expenses
- Strengthen relationships among systems to anticipate when shared clients may face destabilizing events (*recs 9, 10, 11*)
- HR policies to support rather than penalize when signs of insecurity affect performance
- Comprehensive strategies to mitigate negative impacts of eviction for both tenants and property owners
- Invest in maintaining current housing stock
- Measure averted homelessness (*rec 18*)
- Track housing stability (*recs 3, 18*)
- Coordinate precarious housing as part of homelessness plans and affordable housing plans (*rec 17*)

Recommendation 7: Geographic Variability

Accommodate the ways in which housing challenges manifest differently in different places.

Recommendation 8: Cooperation Across Jurisdictions Incentivize greater cooperation across geographic and political jurisdictions.

Questions to Consider

What needs to be local and flexible?

What needs to be consistent across localities?

What needs to be communicated regionally? What needs to be coordinated? What would benefit from collaborative implementation?

Potential Actions

- Identify and support options for different ways to accomplish statewide objectives
- Assess progress based on context-specific objectives
- Build relationships across jurisdictions
- Establish regional entities that assist in the coordination of cross-jurisdictional efforts.
- Track cross-jurisdictional effects of policies (*rec 18*)

Recommendation 9: Coordinated Pathway System

Cultivate operational connections among outreach, entry into the homelessness response system, placement in housing, and longer-term housing stability.

Recommendation 11: Person-Centered Navigation

Evolve a cross-sector navigation system that responds to specific needs and follows longitudinally as needs evolve.

Recommendation 10: Holistic Eligibility Reconfigure eligibility criteria to help people access the supports they need over time.

Questions to Consider

What new relationships would facilitate coordinated pathways?

What internal changes could better connect you with other systems?

Who do you have shared interests with that you might not realize?

Whose efforts might you be inadvertently competing with?

What do you need to learn about other systems and services?

Potential Actions

- Reduce duplicative eligibility determination and enrollment
- Facilitate and track completion of referrals
- Support flexibility to address specific circumstances
- Extend housing assistance eligibility to replace binary thresholds with gradual transitions
- Extend duration and continuity of navigation
- Deploy culturally-sensitive, trauma-informed navigators (*rec 16*)
- Re-evaluate hiring criteria to include experiential expertise (*rec 3*)
- Track pathways longitudinally (*recs 3, 18*)
- Provide infrastructure for coordination
- Assess policies and practices for unintended consequences for other systems (*rec 17*)

Recommendation 17: Alignment of Policymaking Assess laws and policies in all areas of government for their potential to affect interrelated goals in other areas.

Questions to Consider

- What other sectors will be affected by the actions you want to take?
- What sectors do you need to rely on to succeed?
- What barriers are you inadvertently contributing to?
- What new relationships would be helpful?
- In what areas might you develop and advance policies jointly with others?

Potential Actions

- Assess for both mutual benefit and unintended consequences
- Seek opportunities for cooperative rather than competitive resource allocation
- Align procedures and operations when feasible
- Support time and resources for coordination
- Integrate communications about related policies
- Align housing policies closely with poverty reduction strategies

Recommendation 3: Experiential Expertise Support those affected by housing insecurity and homelessness to participate in decision making, implementation, and assessment.

Questions to Consider

What perspectives are needed to fully understand:

What is needed?

What is currently being done?

How well things are working?

What else is possible?

What processes would help gather, value, and integrate those diverse perspectives?

What knowledge do you hold that others need? How could that knowledge be shared?

Potential Actions

- Identify gaps in perspectives (also recs 1, 17)
- Seek new relationships for input, collaboration, and amplification
- Create accessible avenues and robust processes for input
- Match types of expertise to needs and questions
- Track the extent to which decisions reflect diverse input
- Build a portfolio of learning (also rec 18)

Recommendation 18: Knowledge Management Develop a comprehensive framework, including performance monitoring, focused evaluation, a prioritized research agenda, and avenues for knowledge sharing.

Questions to Consider

What do you need to know to assess your efforts?

What information that you already collect provides that knowledge?

What more would you need to gather?

How could you feasibly fold that into your current operations?

What kind of additional support would you need?

What important perspectives are needed to fully understand whether things are working? How could you include those perspective?

What knowledge do you hold that others need? How could that knowledge be shared?

Potential Actions

- Build a portfolio of measurement and learning beyond performance metrics (*recs 1 and 2*)
- Match measurement to purpose and questions
- Assess stability of results
- Draw on diverse and complementary sources of knowledge, including the expertise of experience (*rec 3*)
- Connect research and practice
- Invite new perspectives into assessment and decision making

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 Policymaking and Planning

Key Messages for Local Action

Guiding Principles – Alignment Worksheet

Guiding Principles – Workshopping Activity

Recommendations – Implementation Worksheet

Recommendations – Community Mapping Activity