



PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Continuum of Care

Our mission is to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation and the coordination of integrated responses.

2019 Priority Issues

Homelessness Services - Increase Funding and Improve Funding Stability

Add \$15 million to the base budget to provide a stable and secure funding source for proven-effective homelessness programs. Year after year PIC returns to the legislature to request funding for homelessness services programs, never knowing how much will be appropriated to fulfill these critical needs. The programs suffer from insufficient funding and certainty, hindering long-term planning.

Outreach: Without outreach services, we could not connect people to the proven effective programs such as Housing First that bring them out of homelessness. Outreach teams connect those on the streets—youth, families, kupuna, adults, and people suffering from mental illness—to all available housing options: Emergency Shelters, Transitional Shelters, Housing First, Rapid Rehousing with rent stipends, and/or treatment (i.e., substance use). For many chronically homeless mentally ill persons, it can take 50 or more individual outreach contacts spread out over several months or even years to build up trust and move them off the streets. Outreach teams may also do wound care, distribute hygiene kits or snacks, and offer to obtain identification documents.

Rapid Rehousing: Rapid rehousing is designed to help individuals and families exit homelessness quickly and return to permanent housing by providing, rental stipends, assistance in finding housing, and case management services.

Housing First: Housing First targets chronically homeless individuals and families with disabling conditions (mental health, substance use, and physical disabilities). It provides subsidized housing, case management services, and other support services. State and City-funded Housing First programs served 231 clients, both individuals and families, in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, with 96.7% being stably housed as of that date. Housing First saves the state approximately \$59,000 in health care costs per client per year, a net savings of \$28,000 per client per year after factoring in Housing First program expenses.

LEAD: LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) is a pre-booking diversion program that grants police officers the discretionary authority to redirect low-level offenders – typically drug-involved and homeless - to case managers if they choose to do so. Twenty-eight percent of Hawaii's unsheltered homeless individuals identify as having substance use disorders. A pilot project funded by the Legislature in 2017 is showing promise in breaking the ineffective, destructive, and expensive revolving cycle of arrest, incarceration, release, and back to addiction and the streets. In 2018, the program was expanded from Oahu to Maui and Hawai'i Island.

Family Assessment Center: The Family Assessment Center (FAC) in Kakaako has had tremendous success. In its first year, the FAC housed 91% or 54 of the homeless families it served within 81 days, with 100% of those families remaining housed. The much-needed capacity provided by the FAC in Kakaako is also needed on neighbor islands and in other areas of Oahu, and the 2018 legislature appropriated funding for an additional FAC on a neighbor island. With over 600 homeless families in the state as of the 2018 Point in Time Count, disregarding opportunities to fund proven programs and additional shelter capacity is not an option.

Low-Income Housing Funding, Prioritizing Permanent Supportive Housing

Appropriate \$200 million for low-income housing, with \$75 million going toward Permanent Supportive Housing. Even with an efficient system for delivering services to people experiencing homelessness and connecting them with housing, there is simply not enough housing to meet the need. The 2018 legislature made a serious investment in addressing Hawai'i's housing crisis by appropriating \$200 million for low-income housing. That amount must become a new baseline if Hawai'i is going to gain ground on the housing crisis.

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Low-income housing appropriations should prioritize *chronic homelessness*. For the 1,700 people in Hawai'i experiencing chronic homelessness, it costs significantly less to provide them with permanent housing and treatment than it does to treat them on the street. By investing \$75 million a year for ten years, we can housing everyone experiencing chronic homelessness in Hawai'i while saving \$3 billion in medical and other costs associated with chronic homelessness.

In addition to focusing on chronic homelessness, we need to continue to create low-income housing so desperately needed for Hawai'i's struggling families. Forty-seven percent of housing demand is for Hawai'i households making under \$45,000 a year. Investing \$125 million in the Rental Housing Revolving Fund will help build the housing Hawai'i's residents need.

Rental Assistance and Homelessness Prevention Funding

CSHI: CSHI (Coordinated Statewide Homelessness Initiative) provides a one-time cash infusion for people on the cusp of homelessness. In just eighteen months of operation in 2017, at a total cost of \$3.7 million, CSHI helped 4,944 individuals retain housing or obtain a housing placement. The program is credited as playing a significant role in a 25% reduction in evictions on Oahu. According to judges, property managers, and eviction attorneys, the program had a dramatic and immediate effect on the prevention of evictions. PIC supports a \$1.5 million appropriation for this program, the same amount as appropriated in 2018.

Short-Term Rental Assistance Pilot Program for Families: Many homeless families are working and have failed to secure housing simply because their wages are not enough to cover Hawai'i's exorbitant housing costs. The gap for families earning minimum wage and affording a fair market rental is over twenty-five dollars per hour. A Short-Term Rental Assistance Pilot Program for Families that provides time-limited rental assistance of up to \$500, coupled with financial case management and financial products like matched savings accounts, could launch families teetering on the edge of homelessness on a trajectory toward economic stability. PIC supports a \$800,000 appropriation for this pilot program.

Long-Term Rental Assistance Pilot Program for Kupuna: Skyrocketing housing costs are an especially serious threat to Hawai'i's kupuna living on fixed incomes. A Long-Term Rental Assistance Pilot Program for Kupuna can address the needs of this especially vulnerable population. The program would provide rental assistance of up to \$1,000 per month, such that Kupuna in the program would pay 50% of their income toward rent. PIC supports a \$1.5 million appropriation for this pilot program.

Mental Health Treatment with Assisted Case Management

The existing tools for addressing homelessness are ineffective for some people who are homeless as a result of severe mental illness/substance abuse (e.g., people experiencing psychosis, who are unable to make informed decisions regarding treatment, are not responsive to outreach, are cycling in and out of hospitals and jails, and are posing a threat to their own health). Under the Assisted Community Treatment (ACT) Act, a judge can order community treatment for these individuals, but in the five years since its passage, ACT has been infrequently used due to various barriers. PIC supports legislative changes, including:

1. tweaking/resubmitting HB2021 (a pilot program providing shelter and mental health treatment for persons under ACT or Guardianship orders, giving them time to stabilize);
2. clarifying that the Office of Public Guardian has the right to consent to treatment that includes psychiatric medication; and
3. providing funding for dedicated Attorney General, dedicated Family Court Judge, and dedicated position in the Office of Public Guardian for ACT cases, thereby establishing an "ACT team" similar to other jurisdictions with successful ACT programs.