



# FACT SHEET

## HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Like many urban communities, Anchorage is grappling with homelessness and a housing shortage. The causes of homelessness are complex, and solutions require a great deal of community cooperation, funding and creativity. The good news is that our community has a plan to end and prevent homelessness, and we're making progress.

### **Anchored Home - Anchorage's plan to end and prevent homelessness**

The **Anchored Home** plan recognizes that ending and preventing homelessness requires a community-wide collaboration between nonprofits, faith communities, individuals, businesses and governmental agencies. Its creation in 2018 was an intensive effort with 75 organizations and 700 community members, including Anchorage Assembly members. **Anchored Home** identifies concrete actions to make homelessness a rare, brief and one-time event, emphasizing:

1. Promote Prevention & Diversion from homelessness
2. Grow the Housing & Support System
3. Improve Public Health & Safety
4. Increase Advocacy & Funding to bolster our efforts

### **The role of local government in housing and homelessness**

The role of local government in the **Anchored Home** plan is to support public health and safety by providing first responders, helping community partners add affordable housing to the market, ensuring adequate emergency shelter exists, and using tax incentives to leverage private investment in housing.

Emergency shelter is expensive and is intended to be short-term, so the Assembly is focusing on helping to create a coordinated continuum of services that includes emergency shelter, but also leans heavily on providing services and affordable housing to give people a ladder up towards self-sufficiency. Our community is already incurring many indirect costs related to homelessness, so rerouting that funding toward housing and prevention saves money and helps our houseless neighbors.

### **The Municipality's recent investments in homelessness prevention**

Since taking on a more active role in the community's homelessness prevention response in 2017, the Assembly has appropriated over \$100 million to support housing programs, with \$30M going to mortgage and rental relief during the pandemic and over \$50M going to rehabilitate rental units and fund nonprofit partners to build new housing units. Additionally, ongoing efforts to create an atmosphere conducive to development of affordable and attainable housing have resulted in multiple new tax incentives and comprehensive code changes.

The main funding sources for this work are the alcohol tax, which began in 2021, and federal COVID recovery funds delivered to the Municipality in 2020, 2021 and 2022. This major investment by the Municipality has leveraged additional millions of dollars in state, federal and private contributions.

## What is the Municipality doing about homelessness?

- **2015: Anchorage Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness** is created by Anchorage Health Department and the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness with guiding principle that housing is a basic human right and a goal to provide a strategic vision to address homelessness
- **2016: Assembly Committee on Homelessness formed** (later named Housing and Homelessness)
- **2016 and 2017:** Mayor Berkowitz and the Assembly **create municipal staff positions to focus on homeless services** and increase housing stock, using grants from the Alaska Mental Health Trust and Rasmuson Foundation (AR 2016-179 and AR 2017-211)
- **2017:** Municipality partners with health agencies to **open preventative health care and recovery support services** at Brother Francis Shelter. See [www.cssalaska.org/our-programs/brother-francis-shelter/medical-care-brother-francis-shelter/](http://www.cssalaska.org/our-programs/brother-francis-shelter/medical-care-brother-francis-shelter/)
- **2018:** Assembly members join 75 organizations and 700 community members to **create the Anchored Home** plan to solve homelessness; Assembly adopts plan in 2020 as the **municipality's guiding document for homeless response and appropriations** (AO 2020-338, As Amended)
- **June 12, 2018:** Assembly **declares policy of dispersed placement of homeless services and programs** to reduce burden on Fairview and Downtown neighborhoods and shift to smaller service locations citywide (AR 2018-167, As Amended)
- **November 2019:** Assembly approves **\$730,000 for shelter as part of the Anchorage Health Department budget**, marking the first time there is a recurring MOA operational funds for shelter
- **March 24, 2020:** Mayor Berkowitz and Assembly fund **\$5.4M for the Home for Good pilot program**, an intensive supportive housing initiative
- **April 2020:** Voters approve Proposition 13, authorizing a **5% sales tax on alcohol sales**, to create a steady funding stream for programs to prevent and address problems associated with substance misuse and the lack of mental and behavioral health services, including housing programs
- **Spring 2020:** COVID-19 hits and heightens the existing shortage of emergency shelters. The Municipality converts the **Sullivan and Boeke Arenas to emergency shelters**, creating 560 temporary spaces for adults, and contracts partners to open spaces for families with children
- **2020:** Assembly and Mayor Berkowitz utilize **\$37M in CARES Act funds on housing programs**, including rental and mortgage assistance, a new Covenant House facility, and rapid rehousing (AR 2020-221, As Amended, EO 2020-04(S1) and AR 2020-271(S), As Amended)
- **July 2020:** Mayor Berkowitz and Assembly authorize **\$22.5M in CARES Act funds and ML&P sale proceeds for acquisition** of Beans Café for downtown engagement center, Tudor Alaska Club for midtown shelter/engagement center, Golden Lion Hotel for treatment center, and America's Best Value Inn as housing/resource center. Alaska Club and Best Value Inn deals are not completed.
- **2020:** Anchorage Coalition on Homelessness partners **prioritize improving data reliability for planning and decision-making** in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the central database for homeless services; Assembly commits over \$300,000
- **2021:** First year of new **alcohol tax includes \$6.3M for housing**, including shelter operational costs, wrap-around services in the Home for Good program, and an MOA homelessness program manager

- **May 18, 2021:** Assembly and Acting Mayor Quinn-Davidson **dedicate \$7.9M of American Rescue Plan Act funds to housing**, including housing case managers, rental and property tax relief, rapid rehousing, and grants to organizations for new subsidized housing (AR 2021-167(S), As Amended)
- **June 22, 2021:** Assembly **establishes license requirement for shelters** as a quality assurance tool to protect vulnerable populations and surrounding neighborhoods (AO 2021-55(S-1), As Amended); amends code to allow a scattered-site approach to locating homeless services (AO 2021-54, As Amended)
- **July 27, 2021:** Assembly and Bronson Administration **enter a collaborative process for interim and long-term planning to address housing and homelessness**, which later becomes known as the *From Homeless to Stably Housed* project (AR 2021-256)
- **November 1, 2021:** Assembly and Bronson Administration **agree to move forward on plan** for Complex Care Shelter (formerly Sockeye Inn), Navigation Center/Shelter, substance misuse residential treatment, workforce & supportive housing (formerly The Guest House) and housing for special populations (couples, elders, women, & LGBTQ+) (AR 2021-350 As Amended)
- **December 7, 2021:** Assembly and Mayor Bronson **reallocate \$6M in CARES Act funds for the From Homeless to Stably Housed project** by granting \$2M to Alaska Community Foundation for a complex care facility (Sockeye Inn), \$1.2M for workforce/permanent supportive housing (the Guest House), and \$2.8M for a shelter and/or navigation center (AR 2021-116(S), As Amended)
- **2022: alcohol tax includes \$6.8M for housing**, including funds to construct a shelter and navigation center, fund emergency shelter operations, provide wrap-around services through the Home for Good Program and help landlords refurbish units to get more rental units on the market
- **March 15, 2022:** Assembly and Mayor Bronson grant \$1,067,500 in alcohol tax funds to Catholic Social Services to **operate a complex care facility** (Sockeye Inn) (AR 2022-76(S)) and approve \$800K for design or design/manufacture for an **adult shelter and/or navigation center** (AR 2022-72)
- **April 28, 2022:** Assembly and Mayor Bronson issue joint resolution in support of the proposed Navigation Center and low barrier shelter, using a "Housing First" model at Tudor and Elmore
- **May 10, 2022:** Assembly approves funding for Mayor Bronson's proposal **to construct an adult shelter and/or navigation center** by reappropriating \$4.M in CARES Act funding and \$1.3M in alcohol tax fund balance (AR 2022-111(S))
- **July 26, 2022:** Assembly allocates \$4.2M to **rehabilitate rental units, procure emergency sheltering for, provide family emergency shelter services, and expand outreach** to affected people (AR 2022-111(S), As Amended) and \$3.4 million in ARPA funds to complete the purchase of the Guest House for permanent supportive and workforce housing (AR 2022-222)

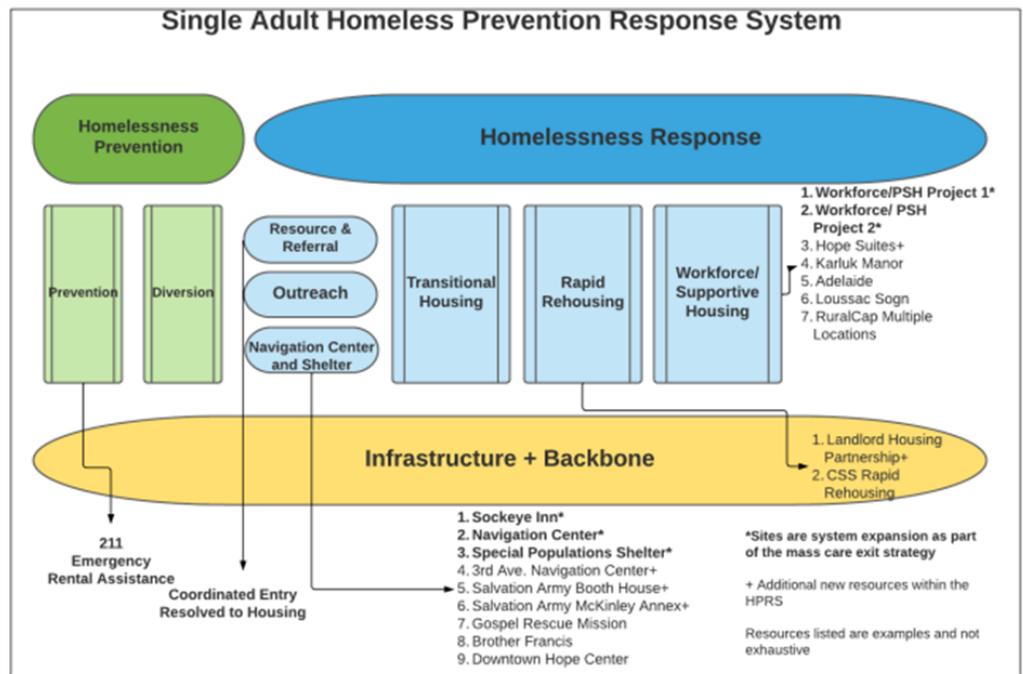


- **August 9, 2022:** Assembly **allocates \$22.1M of American Rescue Plan Act funds to housing projects**, such as the purchase of a hotel to increase affordable housing, construction of subsidized housing, and programs to help people stay housed (AR 2022-178(S), As Amended)
- **August 17, 2022:** Assembly **authorizes Emergency Shelter Task Force** led by Anchorage Coalition to End Homeless to develop an emergency shelter plan for the upcoming winter to be in compliance with municipal law (AMC 16.120) to have a plan when weather goes below 45F (AR 2022-252)
- **September 25, 2022:** Assembly approves funding for Bronson Administration **to implement the recommendations of the Emergency Shelter Task Force** through Dec 31, 2022:
  - Increase capacity at Brother Francis Shelter, 20 individuals (previously funded through alcohol tax revenue in (AR 2022-221(S)).
  - Increase capacity at Covenant House, 25 individuals (\$200,000, alcohol tax)
  - Semi-congregate sheltering at Bean’s Café, 40 individuals (\$306,000, alcohol tax)
  - Non-congregate use of former Golden Lion as housing, 120 individuals (\$427,000, alcohol tax to Henning, Inc. to provide services)
  - Congregate shelter at Sullivan Arena, 150 individuals (\$1.5M, alcohol tax to Henning for services)

## Looking ahead

The *From Homeless to Stably Housed* project opened two new facilities that will greatly benefit the community—the Complex Care Facility (former Sockeye Inn) and permanent supportive and workforce housing at the Guest House. Additionally, the Assembly approved federal recovery funding in August for a variety of housing projects, including additional hotel conversions and subsidized housing construction, as well as a continuation of the United Way landlord housing partnership, a new Community Resource Center through Shiloh Community Development, and the re-homing veterans project through the Eagle River Elks Lodge #2682.

It is the hope that as more of these resources open up, the demand for emergency shelters will decrease and the emergency shelter and navigation center that the Mayor and Assembly are working to bring online this winter will be able to fully address the community's emergency shelter needs.



## Additional Resources

- 2018 Anchored Home Plan: [aceh.org/anchored-home](http://aceh.org/anchored-home)
- Legislation passed by the Assembly: [www.muni.org/departments/assembly/pages/publicportalassemblydocuments](http://www.muni.org/departments/assembly/pages/publicportalassemblydocuments)
- Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness: [aceh.org](http://aceh.org)