

Health and Homelessness Strategy

Introduction

On taking office, the LaFrance Administration immediately began building a comprehensive, coordinated, and compassionate strategy to address homelessness.

Through a public health lens focused on harm reduction and prevention, we can improve the health and safety of the entire community — including those experiencing homelessness — with immediate action and long-term solutions.

Root causes of homelessness include mental illness, substance misuse, financial hardship, personal and generational trauma, and barriers to (or absence of) affordable housing. As we face another winter, nearly 500 people are living without shelter in our community.

The good news? That's fewer people living unsheltered than a year ago. Public, private, and nonprofit partners are bringing new resources to the table. We are operating with better data and a more precise understanding than ever before. The public is committed to being part of the solution: We've heard from businesses and community members (housed and unhoused) that high rates of drug misuse, overdoses, camping along trails and in public spaces, and the impact of crime make Anchorage feel less safe for all. Addressing homelessness and improving public safety go hand-in-hand in making our community a better place.

Our strategy does not reinvent the wheel. We're building on efforts and agreements already underway. We know progress will come from working closely with health, housing, law enforcement, behavioral health, social services, faith communities and other community partners, as well as the private sector and housed and un-housed residents.

As we implement our plan, we'll continue to adjust and revise our approach as conditions change. We will continue to create pathways to health and stability for people while mitigating the impact of homelessness on neighborhoods, public spaces, and local business.

Guiding Principles

Existing plans and lessons provide a starting point for the LaFrance Administration's approach to Health and Homelessness. We've learned:

- It takes adequate year-round, very low-barrier shelter of different types, as well as system navigation and support for people to enter and retain housing.
- We must simultaneously address those in crisis today while preventing trauma that pushes people into crisis tomorrow.
- Anchorage needs new and rehabilitated housing, especially for households below 110% of the Area Median Income.
- Data sharing, coordination of services, housing, and employment are critical to get the right support to the right person when needed.
- Funding must be leveraged on all sides, including public and private funds from multiple sources.
- Sharing leadership, partnership, and mutual accountability to co-create solutions, implement practical plans, and report results, is 100% necessary. We can't succeed without it.

ACTION

Our strategy includes:

- Create adequate year-round shelter and transitional housing.
- Establish reliable navigation, rental support, and services for people moving from shelter to housing.
- Improve access to behavioral health services and physical healthcare.
- Reduce racial disparities in access to shelter and housing.

RESULTS

In three years, success will mean:

- Significant reduction in unsheltered homelessness.
- Fewer families experiencing homelessness.
- Higher quality of life and business confidence city-wide.
- All Anchorage residents have equitable access to health and safety.

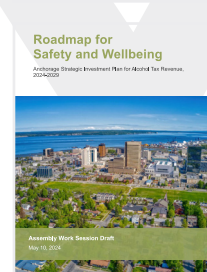


1. Significantly reduce unsheltered homelessness through low-barrier shelter and connections to housing

2. Increase access to behavioral and physical healthcare services

3. Add new housing and increase access to existing housing

4. Harness community partnerships, funding, and data to reduce systemic contributors to homelessness



This strategy builds on conclusions drawn from previous work by our partners, including:

1. *Anchored Home Plan;*
2. *Roadmap for Safety and Wellbeing;*
3. *MOA Housing and Community Development Plan;*
4. *Housing Abundance Strategy*

100 Days Oct. 8, 2024

UNSHELTERED AND SHELTER

- Launch of HOPE (Homeless Outreach, Prevention, and Engagement) Team
- Increase outreach to camps before abatement
- Strengthen internal coordination between departments
- Work with Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness and other partners to coordinate shelter and housing resources for people moving from camps, prioritized by vulnerability
- Maintain 200 beds at E.56th Street
- Complete RFP process and execute contracts for 500 beds of non-congregate shelter before winter
- Establish a quarterly Behavioral Health provider workgroup
- Assess the behavioral health beds available in Anchorage today
- Support the establishment of a care coordination group for the highest utilizers of the Anchorage Crisis Collaborative

- HOPE Team continues outreach and engagement within camps
- Ongoing outreach to camps before abatement
- 400 people who were unsheltered move into congregate or non-congregate shelter
- Explore legal parking options
- Identify peer, transportation, and other navigation partners
- Identify and launch warming sites for November-February
- Maintain 200 beds at E.56th Street
- Launch 500 non-congregate beds
- Establish partnerships to increase movement from shelter to housing
- Identify additional low-density, under 50, population-specific low barrier shelter options

- Establish consistent low-barrier winter services, including:
 1. Congregate shelter
 2. Non-congregate shelter
 3. Case management
- Use Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data to work with Anchorage Health Department (AHD) and ACEH to monitor flow of movement from unshelteredness to shelter to housing, adjusting resources as needed
- Connect peer, transportation and navigation partners to people moving from camps
- Identify and launch legal parking sites available from May through October 15
- Maintain 200 beds at E.56th Street
- Maintain at least 50 non-congregate beds
- Launch additional low-density, low barrier, year-round shelter and transitional housing options (i.e., tiny homes, palette shelters, and other innovative options)

HEALTH

HOUSING

DATA, FUNDING, COORDINATION

- Develop an administration housing strategy that includes adding housing for low- and extremely low-income households
- Meet and re-establish relationship with the Homelessness Leadership Council
- Develop strong working relationships with:
 1. Assembly Housing and Homelessness Committee
 2. Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH)
 3. Other safety-net organizations
- Convene i-Team around homelessness data collection and reporting
- Apply to Bloomberg Philanthropy Collaboration Track
- Launch weekly updates to Assembly and the public
- Reengage the Housing, Homeless and Neighborhood Development (HHAND) Commission

- Coordinate with strategic partners to advocate for federal funds to build affordable housing that meets national HUD criteria
- Implement forthcoming Housing Strategy developed by the mayor's office

- Establish relationships with advocacy and funding partners, including:
 1. Alaska Healthcare and Hospital Association
 2. Alaska Behavioral Health Association
 3. Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
 4. Other business leaders
- Develop relationships with Tribal Health Organizations throughout Alaska

6 months Dec. 31, 2024

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- Identify additional low-density, under 50, population-specific low barrier shelter options
- Develop an active referral network to behavioral health services for people sheltered and unsheltered
- Maintain and monitor care coordination group for highest utilizers of the Anchorage Crisis Collaborative
- Increase connections with primary care and other health providers serving individuals with complex needs
- Strengthen collaboration across behavioral health crisis continuum, including Mobile Crisis Team (AFD) and Mobile Intervention Team (APD)

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- Use Title 21 to make the zoning code more usable and practical
- Increase the supply of housing units for low-income individuals and those experiencing homelessness
- Leverage public-private partnerships to build housing
- Increase housing voucher access

12 months June 30, 2025

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