



# Mid-Columbia's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness

*In Hood River County, Wasco County,  
& Sherman County*

*Prepared by the Mid-Columbia Ten Year  
Housing Committee Members*



## **Executive Summary**

The goal of this plan is to address the serious, largely invisible, debilitating conditions of homelessness as it relates to the citizens of Hood River, Wasco and Sherman counties and to propose ideas and a plan for mitigating it.

Individuals and organizations in Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties collaboratively drafted the Mid-Columbia 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, under the guidance of Oregon's Housing and Community Services, with input from local and regional citizens and nonprofit groups dedicated to serving vulnerable, low-income people.

Most homelessness in the Mid-Columbia region is hidden and can be easy to overlook. Some of our community's homeless live in cars, travel trailers or tents. Others are victims of violence and are temporarily lodged in domestic violence shelters. Some must leave the community, pulling their children out of school and finding temporary refuge in shelters across the river in Washington State or in Portland. Others are "doubled up" with family or friends and cannot stay long. Some are young adults who have aged out of the foster care system. Some are veterans, who gave of themselves for their country, returning home to find scarce jobs and few affordable housing options. Some recently-homeless citizens struggled for years to maintain their homes but ultimately lost them because of aging, long-term unemployment or debilitating health conditions. These people are members of our community. They are friends, family members, neighbors, employees, and co-workers. They are homeless, and as a community, we must collaborate to address their needs.

Homelessness is not pretty. Homelessness can become a trap. It can also lead to increasing debilitation, and to increasing crime. Homelessness typically invokes prejudice, isolation, fear, and shame. Homelessness impacts everyone, and it is bad for our local economy. Within Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties, tourism is a large industry. However, behind the face of tourism, there is a hidden population of people who are struggling: People who cannot find, afford, or qualify for housing, and many of these people are the backbone of the tourism industry. We, the creators of this plan, believe it is crucial that we implement on a local level programs and services that can effectively combat homelessness.

Nationally as well as locally we see that there is a direct link between homelessness, addiction and mental illness. Therefore any plan to end or prevent homelessness must include a plan to ensure our citizens have access to mental health care, physical health care, and addictions recovery services.

There is no emergency shelter for the homeless in Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties. Warming centers, operated by caring volunteers and open during the coldest months of the year in Wasco and Hood River counties, attempt to fill that gap. But warming centers alone are not enough. Moreover shelters while helpful are not a solution to homelessness. This is evidenced by larger communities and cities whose shelters stay full throughout the year with the same families unable to transition beyond that shelter environment.

We currently have no shelter for runaway/homeless youth. This is a problem. Runaway youth are some of the most vulnerable members of our homeless community, falling into the clutches of sex traffickers and other exploiters often within 48 hours of landing on the streets, according to recent studies.

We suggest that in our area several big factors contribute to homelessness. They are: A shortage of affordable housing; a dearth of living wage jobs; limited public transportation options for commuting to and from work; rigid management screening practices that prevent those most needy from accessing the most affordable living arrangements. Because of the above conditions and more, people lucky enough to have secured affordable housing have little ability or motivation to progress beyond it.

Federal housing funders require communities to draft plans to address homelessness so that resources are used effectively. The Mid-Columbia 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness focuses on identifying and filling in the gaps in our local continuum of care so that our most vulnerable citizens have both incentive and opportunity to reach and maintain independence and housing stability.

In short, this plan briefly describes the current situation and offers initial steps and ideas for mitigating both the problem and its root causes. It is a living, working document that ought to be regularly updated by community members.



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# What Is Homelessness?

Homelessness can be defined as *being without a safe, stable, and permanent place to live that is fit for human habitation.*<sup>1</sup> Within various communities, homelessness acquires different characteristics, and as a result, the definition of homelessness may vary from community to community. As citizens of Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties, we recognize that homelessness in our communities goes beyond the Federal (HUD) definition which states that a person must be sleeping outside, sleeping in a place not meant for habitation, or sleeping in an emergency shelter bed. Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties do not have shelters or tent villages. We consider the following situations and scenarios examples of homelessness in Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties.

- Camping out in a tent, due to inability to afford something more permanent
- “Doubled up” or sharing the housing of other persons (without being on the lease), thereby jeopardizing the housing of all involved
- Fleeing domestic violence (including mental, physical, sexual violence)
- Living with person(s) who is/are using drugs and/or alcohol and lacking the resources to secure alternative housing, thereby jeopardizing one’s own safety, health and sobriety
- “Doubled up” with people who are engaged in criminal activity and thereby jeopardizing one’s own safety and compliance with parole or probation
- Living temporarily in a room, motel, or hotel on an emergency voucher and lacking the personal resources to continue the arrangement or move out into permanent housing
- Living in camp trailers, motor homes, or other temporary housing without access to plumbing, electricity, or heat
- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program
- “Graduating” from the need/ability to remain in a hospital or skilled nursing facility and lacking the resources for moving out into something permanent.
- Children or vulnerable adults who have been removed from or must leave a family or other caregiver’s home and are awaiting foster care placement
- Sleeping in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a sleeping place for humans such as cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, and any other similar settings
- Facing impending eviction and lacking the resources and support networks needed to stay or to obtain stable housing
- Facing discharge from an institution such as a jail, prison, substance abuse treatment facility, domestic violence shelter, or mental health facility and lacking the resources and support networks needed to obtain permanent housing after discharge

We have recognized in our area a trend of increased unemployment, higher rents, higher utilities, reduced subsidies, and more families reporting that they cannot find stable, affordable housing. This plan hopes to address not only homelessness but also its root causes, including shortage of affordable housing with reasonable access to employment centers.

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<sup>1</sup> Oregon’s Ending Homelessness Advisory Council

## What is Affordable Housing?

The term “affordable housing” can refer to housing, either rented or purchased, that has been deemed affordable for those with a median household income.

But this definition alone leaves many citizens *out in the cold*.

A more practicable guideline or definition for housing affordability is *a housing cost that does not exceed 30% of a household's gross income*. When the monthly carrying costs of a home exceed 30–35% of household income, then the housing is considered unaffordable for that household. People who live in affordable housing can not only afford their housing but also other basic needs.

Nearly half of the renters in Oregon are unable to afford a two-bedroom apartment at market rates. In the 2009-10 school year, at least one child in almost every classroom in Oregon experienced homelessness. A worker earning a minimum wage in Oregon had to work more than ten hours a day, seven days a week to afford a two bedroom apartment.

## Why is building more affordable housing in our communities a solution for the Mid-Columbia Region?

There is a significant shortage of affordable housing in the Mid-Columbia Region, a shortage that is forcing people into the types of homeless situations outlined above. This shortage of housing has been repeatedly affirmed by regional forums, survey responses, and conversations with local citizens and leaders. This shortage of affordable housing is a crucial point to address, because without stable housing, families cannot provide their children with the home they need to be successful in school and eventually become productive citizens. Without stable housing, the region will not be able to retain a strong workforce.

We have investigated our region’s affordable housing needs through various means and as a result have identified two key barriers to developing affordable housing:

- **High cost of land**
- **Lack of financing for projects**

There is a strong housing market in the Gorge for both owner-occupied and vacation rental housing, and as a result, many have been priced out of the means available to many of our local citizens. Furthermore, it is proving difficult to find financing for projects, especially after the housing bubble.

## Unfortunately, Housing Alone Is Not Enough

Because of this, we also identified the following needed resources for our region:

- **Better access to medical care** for people who, lacking health insurance, are falling through the cracks. Many of our area citizens do not qualify for public health insurance and therefore cannot get treatment or medicine for their healthcare needs.
- **Better access to psychiatric care** including psychiatric case management for everyone who needs it.
- **Better access to addictions recovery programs** for people with and without health insurance who want to get and stay clean and sober.
- **More short- and medium-term transitional housing options** to interrupt a person's or family's homelessness and assist with eliminating the causes that created it
- **Transitional programs that employ a housing-first model of care.** These allow for a 'come as you are' approach to housing those most needy, and they support participants along a spectrum of care with eventual graduation to permanent, stable housing.
- **Oxford Houses.** An "Oxford House" is a community-based drug-free housing model that is democratically-run and self-supporting.
- **'Felony-friendly' employers and landlords,** especially landlords offering affordable rentals
- **Affordable, accessible adult foster homes** for vulnerable, aging adults
- **A runaway and homeless youth shelter,** to help keep our youth from entering Portland and other larger city street populations where they can inevitably fall victim to sex and labor trafficking operations. In 2011, a third of homeless youth were approached by sex traffickers within the first 48 hours of being on the street.
- **Better access to disability advocacy,** someone trained and skilled at assisting our most vulnerable, zero-income citizens with successful applications for Social Security Disability and/or Supplemental Security Income
- **Increased and more accessible home repair and weatherization programs.** This is vital to maintaining safe, affordable housing and will reduce heating bills and increase the likelihood that residents finding housing without assistance will be safe and comfortable.
- **Transitional housing opportunities** to support residents as they move from literal homelessness into permanent, stable housing.
- **Increased opportunities for low-income and workforce residents to secure affordable housing.** Through investment in projects to support these groups, the region will be able to support the needs of our residents and improve the economic outlook for the Mid-Columbia.
- **More senior housing and assisted living units** This will support the aging population in our region and allow them to continue to contribute to the community as they age.

## More about the “Homeless” Situation

The National Alliance to End Homelessness provides some sobering statistics regarding homelessness and jobs. Their discoveries apply to our local citizens as well as to people across the US. In a 2011 press release the Alliance reported the following statistics:

- Working poor people are more likely to experience **severe housing cost burden**. In 2008, *37.6 percent of the working poor population* spent more than 50 percent of their monthly income on rent compared to just *3.8 percent of the general working population*.
- Working poor people are more likely to be **doubled up** than the general working population. In 2008, an estimated *7.8 percent of the working poor population* is doubled up with family or friends as compared to *less than 6.5 percent of the general working population*.
- Working poor people are more **tenuously tied to the workforce**. On average, the working poor population works *46.2 weeks per year* compared to the general working population's *49.1 weeks per year*.
- The occupations that **employ working poor people are volatile**. In 2008, the top five occupations for working poor people were: *cashiers, waiters or waitresses, cooks, maids/housekeeping staff, and retail salespersons*. These industries are particularly vulnerable to seasonal or economic change. Workers in these five occupations worked an average of *30.6 hours per week* compared to the *national average of 40.1 hours*.

These factors -- job loss, sudden and significant decrease of income, housing cost burden, and doubled up living arrangements-- are all precursors to homelessness and, as the data demonstrates, are common experiences among working poor people.

Nan Roman, president of the Alliance, said, “As the economy struggles to recover, unemployment, underemployment, and poverty threaten working poor people with the prospect of homelessness. It is imperative that we take action to prevent this from happening. The federal stimulus investment in the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) has been extremely successful to date. We must continue to provide the necessary resources to stabilize and ensure housing for working poor people so that the legacy of this challenging economy is not a new generation of homeless people.”

To call this a tall order is to grossly underestimate the magnitude of the housing problem as it relates to income and housing costs in our three-county region. Historically, Hood River County's housing costs have been far higher than Wasco County's. Consequently, many of Hood River County's homeless end up migrating east to The Dalles, or west to Portland. Such migrations disrupt children's educational experiences and separate families and friends, contributing to a community's discontinuity.

Meanwhile, the economic recession has affected more than the availability of jobs in our three counties. Foreclosures have caused more home owning families to end up in rental properties, thereby increasing demand and competition for the limited number of affordable units. Landlords in such housing climates need only rent to the so-called “cream of the crop.” This makes it harder than ever for vulnerable citizens to get into and maintain affordable housing options.

Also, landlords struggling to maintain rental housing and pay mortgages against the foundering economy, are raising rents in all counties as they increase screening criteria for rental housing.

We know housing gives people an opportunity to build better lives. Our communities are better and stronger when everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home. The following Oregon Housing Alliance data illustrates the issues across our three counties.

According to the 2010 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, homelessness increased 1.1% nationally between 2009 and 2010. There are a number of ways that homelessness is recorded. For example, there is a “sheltered” homeless count and an “unsheltered” homeless count: the former counts people living in shelters and transitional housing projects; the latter, people who are homeless but not in a shelter or transitional housing project. Between 2009 and 2010, the sheltered homeless count remained the same while the unsheltered homeless count increased 2.8%. In January 2010, one of the coldest months of the year, approximately 80,000 families in the United States were homeless.

These national numbers provide a framework for examining the homeless situation within Oregon. In Oregon, homelessness has followed national trends and has increased in the past two years.

In Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties, 15% of 49,324 people (or 7,564 people) live at or below the federal poverty level. Mid-Columbia Housing Authority (MCHA) provides the following overview:

<b>County</b>	<b>Current Subsidized Housing Units</b>	<b>Number of people on Wait List as of 1/8/13</b>	<b>MCHA estimate of housing units needed</b>
Hood River	254	72 families	300 - 400
Sherman	12	11 families	20 - 30
Wasco	230	252 families	300 - 400

Some people are not eligible for subsidized housing because of bad credit, criminal history, etc. and are therefore not included on the MCHA estimate. The Department of Human Services (DHS) provides SNAP (food stamps) and TANF (cash payments) to many low income residents, and they estimate the following housing needs:

Hood River 20 units of housing for single mothers with small children.

Sherman 5 units of housing needed for single parents with small children.

Wasco 20 units of housing for single parents with small children.

Ideally these could be pod type units with small living units that have a common area for tenants to meet and provide support to each other, like shared rides to work, shared daycare for those who work outside the home.

People become homeless for a variety of reasons including unemployment, underemployment, economic downturns, mental illness, addiction, domestic violence, and abusive relationships. According to a January 2011 Point –in-Time (PIT) Count, a count that records the number of homeless at a particular point in time, unemployment was reported as the chief cause of homelessness followed closely by underemployment and inability to afford rent.

In January 2012 there were 194 people identified as homeless in Hood River County and 330 in Wasco County. In total 524 people were counted as homeless in 2012, including 13 families with children who reported as literally homeless. In the 2011 count, 481 people were identified as homeless. From 2011 to 2012 there was an 8% increase in homelessness in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

In that same count, Sherman County identified 11 people as homeless despite its small population. We should keep in mind that the Point-in-time Homeless count (PIT) does not capture the full picture of homelessness in the Mid-Columbia. Keeping in mind the full list of conditions that we consider to be homeless, there are many more homeless families here, most of whom go unreported. To give but one example, in 2012 Mid-Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC) used state and federal homeless prevention funds to purchase propane for a gentleman in Sherman County who was living in a camper trailer without plumbing or lights. We are certain that there are other homeless individuals and families in Sherman County, just as we suspect that there are more homeless individuals and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties than the PIT recorded.

## Goals & Strategies

As stated earlier, this report attempts to highlight the worsening housing situation across our region, and develop a plan for fixing it. This next section outlines strategies to address and end homelessness. Our hope is that this plan will help Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman Counties develop services, practices, and housing units to meet the needs of county residents. Committee members designed the plan to address the unique needs of the three counties according to best practices and local input.

The following chart outlines the primary goals within the three counties, the strategies to reach the goals, the people or organizations responsible for implementing the strategies to reach the goals, and a reasonable timeline for each goal.

Goal	Strategy	Who	Timeline
1. Complete a regional plan to end homelessness in Hood River, Wasco, & Sherman Counties	Attend Regional training, convene planning group, hold community meetings, and draft plan	Committee Members	Draft completed September 2012 for community input
	Invite new and ongoing community partners to review and comment on the plan	Committee Members	Completed November 2012
	Expand Committee with representatives from each county to reflect the diversity and leadership of each. Key players include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o homeless and formerly homeless people</li> <li>o faith community</li> <li>o businesses</li> <li>o healthcare providers</li> <li>o law enforcement</li> <li>o veteran's services</li> <li>o jail representatives</li> <li>o addictions/recovery community</li> <li>o school districts (including homeless liaisons)</li> <li>o landlords and property management companies</li> </ul>	Committee Members and Boards of Commissioners	Quarterly meetings set starting January 2013  <i>Mid-Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC) will organize quarterly meetings</i>
	Have draft plan approved by each county's Board of Commissioners	Committee Members	February 2013
	Report progress on implementation of this plan	Committee Members	October 2013 <i>annual meetings</i>
2. Encourage all entities involved with serving the	Apply for state funds to implement a local data system	MCCAC	Completed January 1, 2013

Goal	Strategy	Who	Timeline
homeless to adopt a uniform data management system.			<i>MCCAC homeless information has been input into Service Point</i>
<i>MCCAC recommends the system adopted be Service Point since it is the most comprehensive and effective data system available.</i>	Identify homeless people in the state Point In Time (PIT) Homeless Count and improve the count's accuracy by involving more community members so no one is left behind.	All social service agencies, churches, schools, etc. led by MCCAC	January 2013
3. Maintain and expand a system of homelessness prevention programs	Provide training about existing homeless services (eligibility criteria, limitations, etc.)	MCCAC and Mid-Columbia Housing Authority (MCHA) will offer training at each quarterly meeting	Quarterly, starting in January 2013
4. Integrate statewide systemic changes to prevent homelessness and support the re-housed	Create a clear path to housing from state-run institutions, jail, foster care, mental health programs, and medical care facilities. Require state programs to include housing in exit plans prior to sending institutionalized people "home."	Governor Kitzhaber	June 30, 2013
	Track housing from institution exits and incorporate the tracking into the Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) and OIEB data systems	State agencies releasing clients, Coordinated Care Organization (CCO)	June 30, 2013
	Connect chronically ill to CCO homeless services	CCO, DHS, health departments, hospitals	June 2014
5. Develop effective targeting and outreach programs	Develop outreach system to "connect" with homeless	MCCAC	Completed
	Refer SSI eligible applicants to DHS and/or Mid-Columbia Center for Living (MCCFL)	DHS, MCCFL	On-going
6. Reduce the duration of homelessness	Develop incentives embedded into homeless assistance system	MCCAC, MCHA	On-going
7. Utilize community resources to quickly re-house the homeless	Build relationships with existing landlords to build options for subsidized housing	MCCAC, County Planning Departments	On-going
8. Coordinate and improve access to necessary documentation and services	Hold triage among agencies and groups serving the same low- and zero-income population, to ensure a comprehensive, supportive process. Poverty and homelessness are exhausting. How can we make it less so for the people we serve?	All agencies, medical providers, schools, etc. that are serving low-income people  Include MCCAC/homeless rep with CCO/ELC planning groups to incorporate homeless	Ongoing

Goal	Strategy	Who	Timeline
		resources into support services.	
<p>9. Create and ensure an adequate supply of permanent affordable housing</p> <p>By 2025, develop 500 regional affordable housing units: 200 in Hood River 50 in Sherman 250 in Wasco</p>	Increase integrated income affordable/workforce housing	Boards of Commissioners, Planning Departments, MCHA, MCCAC, City Councils, Ports	January 2015
	Develop Morrison Park affordable housing in HR	Hood River City Council, City Administrator, MCHA, HRC-BOC	June 2014 have a proposed plan developed?
	Develop CGCC affordable housing in HR	City Council, HR City Administrator	On-going
	Develop affordable housing in Wasco County	The Dalles City Council, The Dalles City Manager, Wasco BOC, MCHA, MCCAC	Perhaps a NORCOR housing project? 2015
	Develop affordable housing in Sherman County	Sherman County Court, MCHA, MCCAC	
<p>10. Assist and support homeless or low-income re-housed individuals in obtaining or increasing income</p>	Identify and develop a concentrated plan for removing barriers that people face to obtaining income, whether earned income or sustaining benefits income (SS, SSDI)	MCCAC, Health Departments, Hospitals, DHS, MCCFL, MCCOG, DHS Vocational Rehabilitation	April 2014
	Reinforce partnerships between homeless providers and employment developers, vocational rehabilitation providers, and disability advocates so that low-income people have better support systems for attaining and keeping jobs.		
	Recruit volunteers to become trained as disability advocates so that people eligible for SSI and SSDI can get it.		
	Develop referral system to ensure wrap-around services for SSI/SSDI qualified homeless	MCCAC, Health Departments, CCO, Hospitals, DHS,	June 2013

Goal	Strategy	Who	Timeline
		MCCFL, One Community Health, NDI, MCHA, MCCOG, State Employment Division.	

Type	Current	Need	Future	Cost
Warming Shelter	One is located in Hood River and one is located in The Dalles.	Having these shelters available has been filling a need, especially when it is extremely cold. More volunteers are needed.	Hood River would like to expand and acquire a permanent site.  Expand days and hours for the warming center in The Dalles.	A grant is being applied for to develop a permanent warming shelter in Hood River.  Not sure what cost would be\$???
Homeless Shelter and Homeless Youth Shelter	None exists at this time, other than the DV shelters, which only accommodate women and children victims of DV. Older male children are not allowed in the DV shelters currently. Likewise, adult male victims of violence have no shelter option.	These shelters are needed although Federal funding is not always available for shelter operations	Funding would likely have to come from private and public sources other than HUD.	\$???
Transitional Housing	The Hamilton in The Dalles 8 units  Wind River Combined Transitional, serves 7 households across three counties, 5 single-person and 2 families with children.	There is a definite need for additional units to help people transition to more permanent housing. Perhaps as many as 500 more units in the gorge area.	This is do-able if the land and or a building could be purchased at a reasonable price.	\$4 M ???

	Turnover in these programs is very slow.			
Affordable Subsidized Housing	Approximately 500 units.	MCHA still determines they need an additional 800 for people on their waiting list.	Coordinate on building or obtaining 800 more units.	\$10M???
Affordable Housing, Workforce	Some workforce housing exists especially farmworker housing.	Employers continue to express concern about the lack of affordable housing for their workers.	500 units or more of workforce housing is needed to help with future employer needs.	\$10M???
Oxford House(s)	None yet	Great. The Oxford model is working very well in Portland and we need it here in our community too.	Up to 4 Oxford Houses in three counties, 2 for women/women and children and 2 for men.	0 \$ cost. Requires landlords willing to lease their home to a group of tenants who pay their own rent and utilities; who pledge to remain clean and sober and who hold each other accountable for all of the above.

## Appendix A: Demographics

### County Demographics

County	Population	% in Poverty	Renter Median Household Income	Owner Median Household Income	Homeless Households
Hood River	22,346	10%	\$31,266	63,502	204
Sherman	1,765	20%	\$42,969	\$40,729	?
Wasco	25,213	15%	\$29,583	\$48,955	277
OREGON	3,831,074	14%	\$30,535	\$63,443	22,116

### Average Incomes of Mid-Columbia County's Most Vulnerable Citizens

County	Annual income required to afford a 1-bedroom apartment	Average annual social security payment for retired workers	Average Annual SSI for the Disabled	Average Annual Pension for Veterans	Annual income of one worker earning Oregon's minimum wage \$8.80/hr
Hood River	\$23,360	\$13,384	\$8,088	\$11,820	\$18,304
Sherman	\$23,040	\$13,412	\$8,088	\$11,820	\$18,304
Wasco	\$21,680	\$13,489	\$8,088	\$11,820	\$18,304

### Average Incomes of Mid-Columbia County's Working Families

*Please keep in mind when viewing the incomes listed below that these figures imply a person is working 40 hours per week. The overwhelming majority of positions in the job categories listed below, along with many other job categories available to the people in our communities, do not offer full-time work. Indeed, a worker is lucky to get 27 hours/week average. So, take the annual salaries and reduce them by almost one-half and you have the more accurate picture of our area's working poor.*

County	Annual income required to afford a 2-bedroom apartment	Home Health Aide	Janitor	Retail Sales Clerk	Fast Food Cook
Hood River	\$29,080	\$22,170	\$23,486	\$24,992	
Sherman	\$26,600	\$22,170	\$23,486		\$19,748
Wasco	\$27,000	\$22,170	\$23,486	\$24,992	

### Average Home Price that Mid-Columbia Working Families Could Afford

County	Median Sale Price for a House	Teacher	Nurse	Construction Worker
Hood River	\$279,500	\$200,880	\$170,259	\$198,240
Sherman	\$169,900	\$170,268	\$143,680	\$113,803
Wasco	\$150,000	\$192,932	\$143,680	\$113,803

### Fair Market Rents

County	Studio	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom
Hood River (2013 rates)	\$671	\$701	\$831	\$1225	\$1335
Sherman (2012 rates)	\$425	\$498	\$601	\$814	\$953
Wasco	\$462	\$518	\$645	\$917	\$1,135

### Public Assistance

County	Units Funded by OHCS	Students on free/reduced lunches	Population receiving SNAP (food stamps)	Population receiving TANF (cash assistance)	Very Low income households (under 50% of median household income)
Hood River	73	58%	22%	2%	1,451
Sherman	0	55%	24%	3%	180
Wasco	6	57%	29%	4%	1,802

## Appendix B: Community Resources

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
<b>SOCIAL SERVICES</b>						
Mid-Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC)	One-time rent assistance for eviction prevention	All, though some funds require income limits and/or valid citizenship	State, federal and very small amount of private funds-status always fluctuates	x	x	x
	Employment-related needs such as gasoline, car insurance, work clothes, phone minutes, IDs, birth certificates or drivers license	Very limited, generally reserved for people enrolled in one or another transitional program with us	State the federal; small private -status always fluctuates	x	x	x
	Security deposit and/or first month's rent	Income limits etc. influence who and if we can help	State the federal; small private-status always fluctuates	x	x	x
	Hamilton Transitional Housing	Low income and very low income; homeless; clean and sober; must participate in case management; site-based housing owned by MCCAC, located at 1301 W. 2 <sup>nd</sup> St. The Dalles, but open to anyone coming from any of our other counties and/or also open to people from other states, if homeless in our 3-county area at the time of application	State, typically		x	
	Wind River Continuum of Care	Low income and very low income; homeless; clean and sober; must participate in case management; scattered site leasing in any of our three counties; limited by HUD FMR	Federal	x	x	x

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
		minus utility allowances				
	Advocacy and linkage	any	state	x	x	x
	Information and referral	any	state	x	x	x
	Outreach	Homeless and at-risk	Fed and state	x	x	x
DHS – Department of Human Services	Food Stamps	Financial and eligibility requirements	Federal	x	x	x
	TANF – (cash assistance)	Financial and eligibility requirements	State and Federal	x	x	x
	Medical (OHP – Oregon Health Plan)	Financial and eligibility requirements	State and Federal	x	x	x
	Referrals to housing agency, St. Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army, food banks, churches, community meals, HOPE, Haven & Helping Hands if applicable.					
<b>HEALTH CARE</b>						
PHRMH	Vouchers for Hotel Star, Groceries/Food, Gasoline, Bus Fare, etc.	Requestors must present at Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital Emergency Room between 2:00-4:00. They are interviewed by chaplains. Per policy, recipients can only receive up to \$75 of voucher value per year. Many recipients are from out-of-town, but primarily identify the Gorge communities as home. Gasoline is only provided with proof of DL and insurance.	Primarily through contributions of local churches. Some Hood River County Emergency Food and Shelter dollars. Salvation Army vouchers are integrated into the program. Significant in-kind from Providence staff.	x	x	
	Referrals to other community resources		Providence staff time is contributed in-kind			
	Use of Mobile Health Unit, staff person and	Uninsured, low-income guests of the Warming	Providence Hood River	x		

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
	medical supplies December through March (2012), in association with the Warming Shelter	Shelter and members of congregations identified by faith leaders in hosting churches.	Memorial Hospital provides these services as part of our Community Benefit			
	Laundry for Warming Shelter linens, sleeping bags	Guests of the HR Warming Shelter	PHRMH provides these services as part of our Community Benefit	x		
	Comprehensive Medical Services for homeless	Provided to all members of the population. Low-income and uninsured have generous qualifications for financial assistance. Most homeless would qualify for free or greatly reduced costs of care.	PHRMH provides these services as part of our Community Benefit	x		
One Community Health del Carino	Comprehensive Primary Medical Care	Everyone in our community, regardless of ability to pay.	Federally Qualifies Health Center	x	x	x
	Dental Care			x	x	
HRC Health Department	Oregon Housing Opportunities (OHOP)	People living with HIV/AIDS	Federal Ryan White Funding	x		
	Reproductive Health, Immunizations, School Health, STD services and TB, Acute and Communicable Disease	Program specific eligibility	State of Federal funding passed through OHA	x		
	Referral Services to assistance programs, social services	All	State of County General Funds	x		
	Case Management	Pregnant women, families with infants, children or children with special health needs and PLWHIV/AIDS	State funds, OHP, MAC	x		
Mid-	Celilo Garden supported	Must have Mental	Most of our	x	x	x

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
Columbia Center for Living	housing if available as well as Court Royal supported housing.	Illness and want to participate in treatment.	funding is state funded, with some federal. Currently funding is unknown as we change from MHO to CCO for all programs listed.			
	Case management services to help with filling out applications, get to food bank, fill out food stamp applications, buy a tent, fill out section 8 application, show showering facilities, obtain representative payee if indicated, CM also includes referrals to other places, CAP, HUD, Food Bank, DSHS, warming shelters, St Vincent's meals, Salvation Army, Bread and Blessings, homeless shelter, DV shelter, referrals to chaplain services	Must be a MCCFL client to get Case Management services. Usually CM clients are SPMI; homelessness alone does not qualify for case management.		x	x	x
	Crisis Respite	Clients in mental health crisis must be screened by crisis worker or MCCFL staff for admission, limited to 30 days or less		x	x	x
	Hotel funding, limited short term	Usually a client who needs temporary break or a night or two between places, most likely enrolled with MCCFL or in MH crisis.		x	x	x
	Transportation funds limited	Usually a client who needs to access services		x	x	x

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
		to maintain during current life events can be to/from MH appointments or to services to assist with housing. Have funded transport for mentally ill clients stranded in the Gorge to the Portland area				
	Campground funding	MCCFL client who would decompensate without this assistance.		x	x	x
	AMHI funding	Can help pay rent but must be AMHI enrolled, meet commitment status or recent state hospital stay for mental illness		x	x	x
<b>NON-PROFITS</b>						
The Next Door, Inc.	Oregon Trail Youth Transitional Housing	Age 17-21, male and female, capacity 6	Federal Housing subsidy and youth contributions from earnings		x	
	Housing for homeless youth – operated by Columbia Cascade Housing & NDI	Can accommodate youth with a child; drug and alcohol-free setting; onsite property manager				
WINGS	Transitional housing for 4	Voluntary for 18-23 year old young men	Local & grants & work	x	x	
	life skills training;	“	Local & grants & work	x	x	
	Medical, dental & eyeglasses	“	W Providence & Lions	x	x	
	Mental health & drug & alcohol assessment & treatment	“	W MCCFL	x	x	
	Work & job training	“	Local & grants & work	x	x	
	Continuing education	“	In assoc with CGCC	x	x	
	Rx	“	Grant from	x	x	

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
			MCMC			
	Coming Sept.2012 7 permanent housing units	Permanent housing for chronically homeless	HUD Grant	x	x	
Helping Hands Against Violence	Shelter	Emergency shelter (30 day) for victims fleeing from DV, SA or Stalking	Federal non-competitive	x	x	x
	Food	Victims of DV, SA Stalking	(same)	x	x	x
	Advocacy	Victims (past or present) of DV, SA, Stalking	(same)	x	x	x
	Transitional Housing	Housing available for up to 6 months to help homeless women and children to become self-sufficient. Preference given to survivors coming out of our Emergency Shelter.	No funding, program ran from unrestricted fundraising funds	x	x	x
	Community Referral	none	none	x	x	x
Freedom House	Two Programs: The first, called Freedom House, offers three slots in a one-year transitional housing program for single women or women with children to 13 years of age.	Women seeking freedom from anything, including addiction, domestic violence, regardless of income	Donation-based; some small grants, including United way	x	x	x
	Marcie's House, 4 rooms in clean and sober housing	Women struggling with addiction and/or fleeing domestic violence, who have an income	Donation-based, and low rent from ladies living in house	x	x	x
	Both programs offer transitional housing, along with personal support that includes linkage to services; dental care; employment support; life skills; educational support, including GED prep and application for college financial aid, etc.	Programs/housing are located in The Dalles, but anyone from any of our three-county region is eligible to enroll				
	Program is (Christian)					

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
	faith, but would-be participants need not be Christian.					
<b>EDUCATION (EARLY CHILDHOOD / PRESCHOOLS / SCHOOLS)</b>						
Mid Columbia Children's Council (Head Start)	Resource Referral to Housing, Food, Health Care Resources in the Community. We provide child development, case management, health screenings and referrals for all families in our programs.	At least 90% of the families we serve are below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Homeless families are categorically eligible, so income is not a factor for them.	Our funding is through federal and state funding. Our current funding should continue into the next program year. Head Start funding has been stable, but not increasing with inflation. Oregon Pre-Kindergarten has changed over the last two years, but should be stable for the next year's funding.	x	x	
OCDC – Oregon Child Development Coalition (Migrant Head Start)	Formally, we can refer people to the local CAP office, etc. Informally, during our peak program in The Dalles, if a family arrives without housing (i.e. without a job), staff will call local orchardists to see if they have any openings.	Yes, we provide services (Head Start) to migrant and seasonal farm worker families. Basic requirements: under poverty level, over 50% of income from agriculture, for migrant services – also mandatory move within last 24 months.	Primary funding is federal Head Start funds. During the migrant programs, (June/July in Wasco & July-Oct in HR) also receive some CCD (state) funds for wrap-around childcare	x	x	
Hood River Early Intervention Program (at HRC School	Developmental screening and evaluation and specialized services for children suspected of having a developmental	Children ages 0-2, 3-5 years of age. There are no eligibility requirements for developmental	Hood River County School District	x		

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
District)	delay in: communication, problem solving, fine or gross motor, social emotional/behavioral skills. Facilitation of these services for children who are here temporarily who might be relocating to other areas.	screening and evaluation. Specific eligibility criteria must be met for specialized services provision.				
HRC School District	Free lunch and breakfast at school; purchase coats and warm clothing	Grade School children	State funding & local grants (clothing)	x		
Sherman County Early Intervention & Early Childhood Special Education	<p>Provides specialized services to children with disabilities, their families and other caregivers (such as child care and preschool teachers and other family members) to support the child's development. Services/plan are individualized and based upon the unique needs of the child and his or her family. A team of professionals and the child's parents develop the plan. This is a written plan and includes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child's disabilities and needs</li> <li>• Services for the child and family</li> <li>• Family outcomes related to the child's needs</li> <li>• Goals and objectives reflecting both the child's developmental and special</li> </ul>	<p>All children with developmental delays or disabilities from birth to kindergarten age.</p> <p>Children may be referred by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families</li> <li>• Child care providers</li> <li>• Preschools</li> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Physicians</li> <li>• Any community agency</li> </ul>	Federal and State funds		x	

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
	<p>education needs.</p> <p>The focus is to build the families capacity to meet the special needs of the child. This is accomplished by incorporating strategies for promoting the child's development into family and community daily activities. Family members, preschool teachers and caregivers are given strategies for teaching the child in situations where and when learning occurs every day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide family with specific information about the child's delay.</li> <li>• Incorporating the child's special needs into family routines.</li> <li>• Connecting the family to community resources, including classes</li> <li>• Coaching parents, family and caregivers on specific child skills.</li> </ul> <p>Screenings are provided at each of Sherman County's two preschools each fall and at ABC Huskies Day Care and Little Wheat's Day Care.</p>					
Sherman	Free and reduced meals	Must meet income	Federal		x	

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
County School District	(breakfast & lunch)	eligibility – parents fill out form				
	Free and reduced meals (breakfast & lunch)	Direct Service List from DHS - auto qualify	Federal		x	
	Free or reduced school/athletic fees	Based on receiving free or reduced meals	In-Kind from school district		x	
	Counseling Services	Any student based on need	School district		x	
New Parent Services and Families First, The Next Door, Inc.	Refer to housing-related services in the area (HUD, Helping Hands, HAVEN, warming shelters, etc.)	Healthy Start~Healthy Families: provide all services described. Eligibility for HS~HF limited to higher-risk first time parents, enrolling prenatally or before baby is 3 months old.	Mostly state general funds, supplemented with flex funds from HRCCCF, MCMC, PHRMH, CTFO, and fundraising. Funds 2.5 FTE home visitors. 2012-13 GF will be 15% less than 2011-12.	x	x	
	Assist with applications, enrollment, paperwork for linkages to services/assistance	Family Support & Connections: provide all services described. Eligibility restricted to families on TANF.	State-funded. Slight decrease for 2012-13. Funds .375 FTE home visitor/family advocate.	x	x	x
	Search for low-income rentals, drive person to look at rentals (throughout the Gorge), help them fill out applications	Expanded Home Visiting: provide all services described. Eligibility restricted to high-risk parents in Wasco County.	WCCCF flex funds. Funds .275 FTE home visitor. 2012-13 funds will be 15% less than 2011-12.		x	
	Assist with rental application fees and credit checks (i.e. pay for them when unable)					
<b>CHURCHES</b>						
HR Warming Shelter	Shelter for the night, bed & sleeping bag. Dinner	No requirements	Local, state, federal,	x	x	

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
	and Sandwich to go; shower passes; clothing vouchers; medical exam for uninsured		volunteers			
St. Mary's Catholic Church (HR)	We send people to the hospital for assistance.	We ask for identification and why they need the service.	We don't have any funding	x		
	We always provide them with food.					
	We sometimes provide them with bus tickets.					
1 <sup>st</sup> Baptist Church Grass Valley	Services are provided on a case by case basis. Have agreements with motel in Moro, Grass Valley Market and gas station in Grass Valley to provide 1 night motel stay, purchase a meal and fuel. Provide transportation to motel in Moro.	People who are stranded in the county, hitch hikers, people whose vehicles have been impounded or are broke down.	Church funds		x	
	Services for those residing in the community: (They do not have anything official that they provide on a regular basis – all is dependent upon need) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with electric bill</li> <li>• Groceries</li> <li>• Heating oil</li> </ul>	Identified through church members and pastor.	Deacons Fund - for community emergency needs		x	
Church of Christ	Services are provided on a case by case basis. 1 night motel stay, purchase a meal at the local café, purchase gas for their vehicle, (as a policy – do not give cash)	People who are stranded in the county, hitch hikers, people whose vehicles have been impounded.	Church funds		x	
	Services for those residing in the community: (They do not	Identified through church members and pastor.	Church funds		x	

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
	<p>have anything official that they provide on a regular basis – all is dependent upon need)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with electric bill</li> <li>• Groceries, etc.</li> <li>• Provide Transportation</li> </ul>					
FISH Food Bank	Emergency food assistance, provide a 5 to 7 day supply of food once a month.	Food is provided for all individuals in need of emergency food assistance that live in Hood River County, Mosier or are homeless. Proof of residence is required, unless they state they are homeless, and then none required. There is an income requirement (same as SNAP) however it is self reporting that they are at or below the income requirements, no proof required.	Funding is totally donations and a few small grants. No local, state or federal funding.	x		
Sherman County Food Bank	<p>Food Bank is available in the city of Wasco at the Methodist Church on the third Saturday of each month from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Supplies are picked up the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month in The Dalles. Average 40 lbs of food each month.</p> <p>Items available include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food – peanut butter, rice, beans, tuna, canned corn, green beans, etc.</li> <li>• Try to give out some type of meat each</li> </ul>	Federal Guidelines, but no one is turned away.	Donations – food drives – Husky Hygiene Hustle, Private county donations. USDA through Oregon Food Bank and Mid-Columbia Action Council		x	

Agency	Resource/Service Description	Population & Eligibility	Funding Source & Status	Hood River	Sherman	Wasco
	month along with fresh or frozen fruit or vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited personal care items available</li> <li>• Have given out turkeys at Thanksgiving and hams at Christmas</li> </ul>					
Moro Presbyterian Church	Services are provided on a case-by-case basis – usually 3-5 times per year. 1 night motel stay, purchase a meal at the local café, purchase groceries at local market, purchase gas (as a policy – do not give cash)	People who are stranded in the county, hitch hikers, people whose vehicles have been impounded.  Referral may come from local Sheriff's Office	Deacons fund		x	
	Services for those residing in the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with glasses purchase</li> <li>• Groceries, etc.</li> <li>• Have purchased a washing machine</li> <li>• Provide special offering at Christmas for local needy families</li> </ul>	Identified through church members and deacons committee.	Deacons fund and special offering at Christmas		x	
Sherman County Emergency Services	None, other than a trip to the hospital in the ambulance	None	None		x	

## **Appendix C: Mid-Columbia Community Action Council, Inc.**

Mid-Columbia Community Action Council inc. (MCCAC) has the following mission: "To alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in Wasco, Hood River and Sherman Counties."

The purpose of this Corporation is the promotion of self sufficiency in families and individuals within the low income economic range residing in the three county area, consisting of Wasco, Hood River and Sherman Counties in Oregon. MCCAC serves as a primary community leader in the effort to end homelessness as a cause and result of poverty. MCCAC attempts to:

1. Focus available Federal, State and local government and private resources.
2. Provide planning and program developing assistance.
3. Develop and implement innovative approaches to alleviate the causes and consequences of poverty.
4. Evaluate and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programs.
5. Encourage beneficiaries of such programs to take advantage of opportunities for employment and self advancement.
6. Stimulate the interest and meaningful participation of low income families and individuals.
7. Encourage a more active role by public officials, private, religious, charitable and neighborhood organizations, individual citizens and others able to provide employment and self advancement opportunities or otherwise influence the quality of services of concern to the poor.

With such a lofty mission and over thirty-five years of experience working with community members living in poverty, MCCAC identified the following gaps and needs in our three-county region:

1. No overnight shelters in our area. New warming centers were opened this winter in The Dalles and Hood River.
2. More short term transitional housing needed.
3. Housing for homeless coming out of Corrections facilities or for families who need to stay in the area because a family member is in a corrections facility here.
4. Housing for people with background issues – evictions on their records, criminal background issues (sex offenders), etc.
5. 100% of the affordable housing is already full, additional affordable housing is needed.
6. Low turnover rate in low-income housing keeps others from obtaining housing of this type. Example, some in Wy'east are still there after 18 years and haven't moved on to more permanent housing to open up a space for someone new needing an affordable place.
7. Domestic Violence shelters are always full or filled over-capacity and need more room.
8. Persons released from a medical facility or with medical issues often have no place to go.
9. Housing for Veterans, both short and long term.
10. Casa Vida - need \$ to help subsidize the tenants who are coming out of recovery and have no money to help with the rent.
11. Adequate pay and available jobs so people can afford their housing.
12. The high cost of housing and our area median income don't match up.
13. Homeless and runaway youth have little or no access to housing or jobs. Likewise teen parents after leaving high school find it tough to work or secure housing.

14. Rent is often close to or even higher than people's monthly incomes.
15. Federal HUD Section 8 voucher program is full and has a large waiting list.
16. Federal HOME-TBA program funding has been reduced.
17. MCCAC's Funding for rent assistance has been greatly reduced this past year.
18. Young men and women who are coming out of foster care with no place to go; more transitional housing is needed.

## Appendix D: Best Practices

The National Alliance to End Homelessness lists four key elements that are necessary for an effective plan to end homelessness:

1. **Plan for Outcomes:** Currently, homelessness is treated as an acute disease. When an actual symptom arises, a service, program, or organization can step in and treat the current symptom without giving much thought to the underlying disease. To successfully end the issue of homelessness, programs and systems must be designed with that end in mind. With the adoption of the Housing First paradigm, services, agencies, and programs must plan for the outcome of that person remaining housed permanently and structure services and assistance to support and maintain the re-housed individual. And the Continuum of Care providers must also tailor their services to represent and support the long-term goal of permanent housing and ending homelessness.
2. **Close the Front Door:** To end homelessness, it is essential to focus on preventing those at risk of homelessness from becoming homeless. Homelessness prevention programs must be streamlined and information more widely distributed regarding tools available to help individuals and families maintain their housing. Outreach is also an essential tool to making sure that barriers to information and access are removed.
3. **Open the Back Door:** For those who have lost housing, it is essential that they be re-housed rapidly. The longer a person or family remains homeless, the greater the need for services and the greater the likelihood that they will cease to be a transitionally or episodically homeless person and become chronically homeless.
4. **Build the Infrastructure:** The purposeful dismantling of the system of institutions and services which supported the poor has led to the rise of homelessness as an issue today. To successfully end homelessness, something approximating this system must be recreated at a community level with innovative and flexible partnerships between public, private, non-profit, and faith-based entities to prevent homelessness among the at-risk currently housed as well as re-housing those experiencing homelessness and offer the support and services necessary for them to maintain their housing.

The Alliance also outlines ten components necessary for a successful plan to end homelessness. They cover the most important strategies for success: prevention, re-housing options, access to housing and services, and efficient use of data.

1. **Create and implement a 10-Year plan to end homelessness:** This document is an attempt to do just that. It is by nature a work in progress and will evolve with time and as we become better at implementing strategies of mitigation, as funding streams change, and as new programs get up and running. A community plan for ending homelessness requires buy-in from all levels of the community. Homelessness is a community problem, and its solution must involve everyone for maximum effectiveness.
2. **Adopt a uniform management system:** The recommendation here is that all agencies adopt Service Point as their data collection system and that HUD-required HMISD data is gathered for all clients receiving housing program funds. The challenge to this is getting agencies that do not receive HUD money to nonetheless enter their data into Service Point/ HMIS. There is a licensure cost, but no monetary incentive. IDEA:

MCCAC pays for Service Point licensure and could perhaps agree to take on the responsibility of data entry for other community agencies (including faith-based) and programs serving the homeless who do not get HUD funds. This is a question only our director and fiscal could resolve. The state of Oregon may have funds available to help agencies purchase the Service Point licenses and pay for training and data entry. It is likely that MCCAC will be the direct grantee for state-funded HMIS activity costs, and it may be possible for MCCAC to share the resource with other entities (acting as sub-grantees), to best ensure accurate data on homelessness and homeless program enrollment/clients is gathered by the entire community.

3. **Establish a system of homelessness prevention programs:** As with most things, the most economical and efficient way to end homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Consider enacting programs and policies that will do just that. Many existing social programs connect vulnerable populations with emergency services, temporary cash assistance, and case management. Consider ways to integrate with these existing systems or adopt your own.
4. **Integrate systematic changes to prevent homelessness and support the re-housed:** Many people who fall into homelessness do so after release from state-run institutions, including jail and the foster care system. Still others come to homelessness from mental health programs and other medical care facilities. By creating a clear path to housing from those institutions -- in the form of case management, access to services, or housing assistance programs -- we can reduce the role that state-run institutions play in creating homelessness.
5. **Develop targeting and effective outreach programs:** An important role in ending homelessness is outreach to people experiencing homelessness. A key ingredient to this outreach is the ability to connect the homeless population to housing and services. When considering outreach efforts, it's important to understand that many people living on the streets exhibit mental illness, substance addiction, and other negative behavior patterns. As such, it's important to consider low-demand housing that does not mandate sobriety or treatment.
6. **Reduce the duration of homelessness:** A successful homeless assistance program not only works to end homelessness, but minimizes the length of stay in shelter and reduces repeat homeless episodes. In order to do this, assistance programs must align resources to ensure that families and individuals have access to the services necessary to achieve independence as quickly as possible. This often requires immediate access to housing, home-based case management, and incentives embedded into the homeless assistance system to promote these outcomes.
7. **Utilize community resources to quickly re-house the homeless:** Navigating the housing market, especially on behalf of clients with lower incomes and higher needs, is a difficult task. A successful homeless assistance program has housing staff that help with just that. Housing locators search local housing markets and build relationships with landlords. Successful program components include incentives to landlords to rent to homeless households, creative uses of housing vouchers and subsidies to help homeless individuals and families afford their rental unit, and links to resources to help clients maintain their housing.

8. **Coordinate and improve access to necessary documentation and services:** Services are actually more accessible than they sound – many of them already exist in the community. By and large, homeless individuals can access mainstream programs, including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, and other existing federal assistance programs. Connecting families and individuals exiting homelessness to these programs is imperative to ensuring their continued independence.
9. **Create and ensure an adequate supply of permanent affordable housing:** At its root, homelessness is the result of the inability to afford and maintain housing. Remember that any plan to end homelessness must incorporate an investment in creating affordable housing. This includes supportive housing, which is permanent housing coupled with supportive services. This is often used for the chronically homeless population - that is, people experiencing long-term or repeated homelessness who also have mental or physical disabilities.
10. **Assist people to obtain earned income or sustained benefits income, thereby enabling them to attain or maintain housing:** In order to maintain housing, people exiting homelessness must have income. Cash assistance programs are available through federal and state government, and career-based employment services can help formerly homeless people build the skills necessary to increase their income. Mainstream services, including the Workforce Investment Act, should be used for this purpose.

## Appendix D: Testimonies

*The data provided above helps the reader understand housing issues in the Mid-Columbia Region, but actually stories about local residents and how a little goes a long way personalizes our shared goal of ending homelessness*

When Mr. D. entered the Mid-Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC) office last year in frosty mid-December, it was his oxygen tank that preceded him through the doorway. One week earlier, this quiet-spoken, articulate Veteran had been sleeping in a dark, unheated shed, his life's belongings in a knapsack. Next thing, he was in the hospital emergency room, unable to breathe on his own. Doctors examined the stately, 57-year-old man who was too weak to stand and diagnosed pneumonia. They administered antibiotics, in the process uncovering what would turn out to be chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and fibrosis of the lungs. When Mr. D's condition stabilized, the hospital sent him down the hill with a prescription for pulmonary therapy and a long phone list of resources for the medically disabled. They also directed him to MCCAC for help with housing. *Mr. D. could NOT, the doctors and nurses emphasized, continue living in that shed. At the very least, he would need a heated place, and an electric outlet for the breathing equipment he would now require for life.* Through advocacy and partnering with a variety of local and state entities -- plus a modest housing grant from the federal department of Housing and Urban Development -- Mr. D.'s life and health could begin to improve. Today, just two months later, Mr. D. has a warm, permanent place to call home. A comfy bed, telephone, refrigerator, and microwave oven make up some of his household furnishings. Meals on Wheels deliver hot, fresh dinners every day of the week. Mr. D. applied for social security disability benefits and will soon have a steady income, based on his work history before becoming disabled. He will also likely be eligible for services through the VA Medical clinic. Meanwhile, Mr. D. was approved for Oregon's medical insurance for disabled adults, which means he can see doctors and therapists as needed, and travel freely to health care facilities here in The Dalles and in the Portland area.

B. was a homemaker for 17 years, nurturing her husband, raising her daughters, keeping their home and yard beautiful, and cooking balanced, nutritious meals. But her marriage ended, and now B. is a single mom attending college and in her senior year of a bachelor program. She is also currently unemployed, receives a very small child support payment, and is actively seeking work. When B.'s Oregon U/C benefits ended, she was at a loss for how to pay rent. Luckily, both daughters had part-time jobs and were very willing to contribute toward the household bills. A little time passed, and things were stabilized briefly. Then, B.'s landlord informed her he was losing the house she rented from him due to a bank foreclosure. The family would need to move. But to where? With what money? B.'s oldest daughter graduated high school and moved in with a friend. Shortly after that B. and her younger daughter joined them, thereby jeopardizing the rental safety of the entire group. No longer literally homeless, B and her children joined the ranks of yet another unstable population: the 'doubled up.' B. was determined not to become just another statistic. She went to MCCAC requesting help. When Housing Authority had HOME-TBA vouchers to give out, B. rushed to the office to complete paperwork. In less than a week, B. was approved for HOME-TBA. B. now has a voucher and is looking for an apartment for herself and her youngest daughter. She is still unemployed, and hopes to graduate from college sometime this fall. The HOME-TBA program will enable B. and her family to find and keep housing, despite the lack of jobs and the dismal economy.

K. is a young, single mom who lives in a subsidized housing complex in the Mid-Columbia Region. A master at budgeting, K. expertly juggles rent, car insurance, phone and utility bills against her small income from a local supermarket. Indeed, in the five years she has been a tenant of her complex, K. never paid rent late, her landlord said. But last month, through a fluke related to fewer job hours and automatic payment deductions via Bill Pay, K.'s bank account was overdrawn. The resulting fees sent K.'s delicate budget into a spiral. Grasping her toddler with one hand, and clutching the first 72-hour-notice of her life with the other hand, K. turned to MCCAC with the hope she would find help. A case worker met with K., went over her budget, and then called her landlord, who confirmed K. is a responsible tenant with a solid payment history. It made sense to use United Way funds to prevent eviction and preserve K.'s affordable housing. They wrote a voucher for \$304. K.'s landlord then recertified her rent, which, based on K.'s more recent income, increased her subsidy to \$436/month, dropping her own rent portion to \$224 starting September. Few would dispute the idea that hard working people deserve a roof over their heads and that little children should not have to camp on the street. But what about the economics of such assistance-- in business terms, the so-called Return on Investment that results from a small payment like K. received? If K. had lost her housing, it is likely she would also not have kept her job. Loss of the job would have resulted in K. and her daughter falling back onto public assistance benefits, with an increase in food stamps by some \$200/month and a TANF grant of approximately \$400/month. The \$16 investment in case management, along with \$304 United Way grant funds (total \$320) salvaged roughly \$10,000 in K.'s earned income for one year, plus \$5,200 in K.'s rent subsidy for that year, avoiding K. having to draw \$7,000 in public benefits (estimated TANF plus food stamps for one year). Overall return on investment of \$320 was approximately \$22,200. And K. is a taxpayer, so figure that in, along with the Earned Income Tax Credit benefits she'll get and use to support her family. We always hear about trickle-down economics, but what about the trickle up? When low-income, working families get a break, they spend more money on consumer goods, pay more bills more often, keep up on more financial commitments and generally function as more productive, viable citizens, modeling solid, traditional American values to their children, while helping to keep homeowners and store owners in business.

MCCAC staff is privileged to share first-hand in the toils, sorrows, joys and triumphs of low-income people. So many of their stories engender great hope, and put life in perspective. Today I opened an envelope containing a money order for \$325. It was October rent from one of our Hamilton Transitional tenants. At surface, the \$325 may sound reasonable, even low. But this previously homeless family of three, a mom, dad and little baby, live entirely on a \$432 TANF check, plus food stamps. Dad, who is just a few credits shy of a BA from the university, has been searching for a job for more than a year. He combs the newspaper ads daily, keeps an active registration with the Oregon Department of Employment's I-Match database, and participates in the local jobs program, riding his bicycle three times a week to the Mid-Columbia Council of Governments (MCCOG) office for classes on interviewing, resume writing and job search tactics. From the Hamilton apartment complex, located at the edge of the "west side" of town, the bike ride to and from MCCOG is more than 5 miles. Quite often, Mom may be seen pushing her baby carriage along the busy arterial, past Taco Bell and Subway and McDonalds and O'Reilly Auto Parts, on her way to the grocery store. The family has a landline telephone; uses the library's Internet service and accesses the food banks when their food stamps run out. In a year, their HUD Section 8 voucher might kick in. For now, they pay more than 75 percent of their income for rent.

D. was in eviction status when he first entered MCCAC doors last January. After a layoff and months of looking, he'd finally landed a commission-based job selling Charter telephone and Internet service door-to-door. Sadly, few people in our rural community were buying new cable packages, and the job was not yielding much pay. D. had to pick between paying child support or paying his rent. D.'s daughter stays with him every weekend and every other holiday, so D. chose rent, thereby avoiding homelessness. Time went by, and in March 2011 D. was again in eviction status. MCCAC used EHA funds to pay one month's rent but the economy didn't recover, and D.'s wages remained low. Meanwhile, Child Support Enforcement suspended D.'s license, due to nonpayment. Fast forward to November/December 2011: D. got a bicycle, and found a new part-time job at a local burger establishment. Child Support Enforcement now garnishes \$169 of his \$368 paycheck twice a month. He is again behind on rent, and worries that his daughter will have nowhere to visit her father. We met with D. to see if anything could be done to prevent a third eviction notice. The case worker and D. looked at CSED's website and D. educated himself on his rights as the child support obligor. He discovered his payment was much higher than the on-line calculator said it should be, and he read about what he could do to possibly adjust it. After some phone calls, Child Support officials agreed to re-issue D.'s license. MCCAC will use United Way funds to pay D.'s \$75 license reinstatement fee. Meanwhile, D. is requesting an adjustment to the garnishments. If D.'s child support payment can be lowered by even \$100, it will enable him to remain in good standing with his landlord. D. is also eligible for a LIHEAP payment, which will credit his electric bill, saving money he can therefore use toward rent. D. is not out of the woods yet, but through the past year of struggles he has managed to establish a relationship of trust with the landlord, and the landlord is being patient. D. is just one of many hard-working, taxpaying fathers affected by the current economic crisis. His story exemplifies the power of advocacy and partnerships to effect change and prevent homelessness, while empowering people to become their own best advocates.