



# DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING SERVICES



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT





Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington, Adolf "Val" Valfre, and Director of Housing Services Komi Kalevor celebrate the ground breaking of the Valfre at Avenida 26, an Affordable Housing Bond apartment and town house building that will serve families with a wide variety of needs.

Like all communities across the country, Washington County experienced significant challenges throughout 2021. Housing instability and homelessness hit our region hard, with many individuals and families doubling up in homes, living in RVs or shelters, or sleeping in cars or outside. These challenges were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, the Department of Housing Services met this challenge by incorporating new and game changing funding from the federal, state, and regional levels into new and existing housing and homeless programs.

Some highlights include expanding our housing vouchers for people experiencing homelessness by 70% since 2020, opening our waitlist for the Housing Choice Voucher program using a lottery system to ensure equitable access to rental assistance, starting a multi-year renovation project of our Housing Authority properties that will preserve the affordability of these units for years to come, and offering lifesaving winter shelter despite COVID restrictions.

In just the last four years our metro region passed both the Affordable Housing Bond and Supportive Housing Services measure, dramatically increasing funding for housing and services for people experiencing homelessness in our community. As the lead department for both initiatives, we ramped up our capacity exponentially to implement new programs and meet ambitious goals. Already, we can see the impact of both measures across the region. We opened our first Affordable Housing Bond project, the Viewfinder, in December 2021 to veterans, families, and individuals transitioning out of homelessness with case management funded by the VA and Supportive Housing Services. We have an additional three Housing Bond apartment buildings under construction – the Aloha Inn Permanent Supportive Housing, the Valfre at Avenida 26, and Terrace Glen (our largest building, with 144 homes total). We added over 100 bridge shelter beds across Washington County to help folks find stability and safety in their housing journey. We started 2021 with 40 employees and an annual budget just over 65 million and we're ending 2021 with 73 positions and an approximately \$130 million budget – double what we started with.

These accomplishments are just the tip of the iceberg as staff work diligently behind the scenes to build the infrastructure and provide the coordination to make these programs a reality. All of this happened while many employees managed moving to remote work, families with children attending virtual school from home, and serving our community while maintaining safety for all. We are proud of the dedication our staff have demonstrated over the last year and know that dedication will continue into the new year.

We kicked off 2022 by joining the federal House America initiative, which recognizes our continued efforts to provide housing to the most vulnerable members of our community. Washington County is the first jurisdiction in Oregon to join this ambitious initiative. We continue to intentionally prioritize our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We've demonstrated this commitment in concrete ways, such as developing an equitable service provider selection process, which led to contracting with five culturally-specific organizations. We've also hired a Housing Justice Coordinator and a Community Engagement Coordinator, focused on helping us and our partnering agencies to apply an equity lens to all we do and there is more to come! Housing is a fundamental need, and we will continue to examine our practices and build on this work to ensure housing is accessible, affordable, and attainable to everyone in Washington County.

Sincerely,

*Kathryn Harrington*

Kathryn Harrington  
Chair  
Washington County

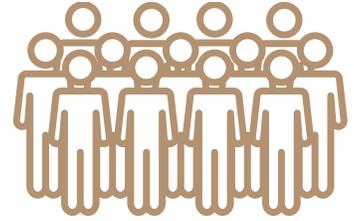
*Komi Kalevor*

Komi Kalevor  
Department of Housing Services Director  
Washington County

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# HOUSING SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS

**AT LEAST 598 HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS** in Washington County according to 2021 PIT. The Point in Time (PIT) Count is a federally required count of all the people experiencing homelessness on a single night.



## SHELTERS

Shelters provide emergency housing so that people have a safe place to sleep and keep their belongings while they are connected to services and stable housing that ends their homelessness.



**101 year-round shelter beds added** in 2021 with our Bridge Shelter program

**Received \$6.15 million in state Project Turnkey funding** to purchase shelter location in Hillsboro



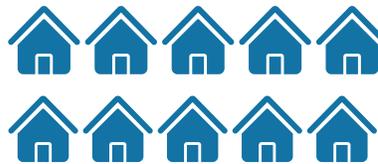
**187 winter shelter beds added** from November to March

## PROVIDING A CONTINUUM OF CARE

Thanks to the Washington County Public Safety Levy, we expanded homeless services to provide youth and family shelters with Employment Specialist and Housing Navigation staffing and expand trauma-related support services and housing for survivors of domestic violence.

**RENT ASSISTANCE**

**296 households**



**10 homes set aside** for survivors of domestic violence

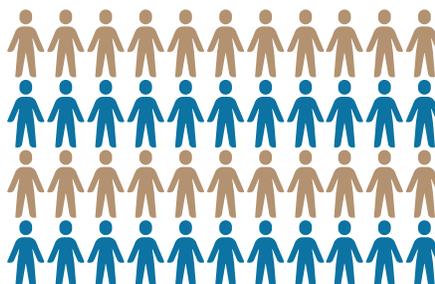
## CASE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Thanks to the Supportive Housing Services measure, we funded housing navigation for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. All funded organizations are culturally responsive. With this network of support, we can serve people experiencing prolonged homelessness with long-term wrap around supports and housing placement.

**17 TOTAL ORGANIZATIONS**



**Capacity to house 800 households**



**OVER 40 STAFF**



## ACHIEVING GEOGRAPHIC ACCESS AND EQUITY

The Rural Assistance in Transition from Homelessness program is on target to **provide 50 families and individuals with rent and utility assistance**, outreach services, intensive case management and healthcare coordination, housing navigation, and leverages housing programs.

### HOUSING VOUCHERS

Housing vouchers help families and individuals with limited monthly incomes find stable housing by filling the gap between what tenants can afford and what market-rate housing costs.



**3,177 TOTAL VOUCHERS**



**197 vouchers for veterans experiencing homelessness**  
(50 are NEW)

**7 vouchers for Foster Youth Initiative**



**267 for people experiencing homelessness**  
(165 are NEW)

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Our housing vouchers have been in high demand for many years, requiring long waitlists. In 2022, we will **issue 500 new Regional Long-Term Rent Assistance subsidies** as part of the Supportive Housing Services measure. These subsidies will serve chronically homeless individuals and families.



### CREATING AND MAINTAINING AFFORDABLE HOMES

The Housing Authority of Washington County owns affordable housing properties across Washington County.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING RENTAL UNITS

643 homes

332 homes being renovated



#### PUBLIC HOUSING



**INVESTING OVER \$40 MILLION IN RENOVATIONS**

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN 2021



**234 units under construction**  
(The Valfre at Avenida 26, Aloha Inn, Terrace Glen)



**81 units leasing**  
(The Viewfinder opened December 2021)

# CONTINUUM OF CARE AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SERVICES **PROGRAMS**

Our Supportive Housing Services (SHS) and Continuum of Care (CoC) programs provide life-saving and long-term services to some of the most vulnerable in our community, to help these members of our community find and maintain stable, affordable housing. This work is guided by A Road Home: Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness and the Local Implementation Plan for the Supportive Housing Services measure.

Both programs work with the Homeless Plan Advisory Committee, a group of volunteers that provide lived and professional experience guiding homeless programs. Staff completed in depth engagement with this group to accommodate significant changes to our homeless programs over the last year. The Department convenes a Housing and Supportive Services Network to perform countywide planning and coordination that provides equitable access to a range of affordable housing and services designed to assist families experiencing or at risk of homelessness to achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

## **ADDRESSING ENCAMPMENTS AND RURAL HOMELESSNESS**

There were many “firsts” over the last year as we worked to expand existing programs and develop new ones. One such first was creating the Encampment Management Program (EMP), an interdepartmental pilot program to address encampments across Washington County established in June 2021. Since then, the EMP has provided services to three different encampments, worked closely with outreach providers to help campers transition into shelters and permanent housing, and coordinated the clean-up of encampments as needed. This was done in close partnership with Health and Human Services and the Sheriff’s Office.



In 2021, we partnered to create local access to homeless services for people experiencing and at risk of homelessness in rural areas. The Rural Assistance in Transition from Homelessness program is on target to provide 50 families and individuals with rent and utility prevention assistance, homeless outreach services, intensive case management and healthcare coordination, housing navigation, and leverages an array of housing programs administered by the Department of Housing Services.



Jaime Valdez, Pamplin Media

## SHELTER SERVICES

We expanded shelter capacity from last year, despite COVID restrictions, adding 101 year-round beds in our Bridge Shelter program, and increasing winter-only capacity from 150 beds to 187 beds for individuals, families, and medically fragile individuals by combining funding from multiple sources. Year-round programs provide comprehensive and housing-based services whereas winter shelters provide life-saving shelter during the harshest winter months. All shelter programs partner with case managers who work with guests to help them make the transition to permanent housing. Our goal is to expand our shelter capacity with 250 year-round beds so that shelter programs are not limited to winter months and can better meet our community need. The SHS program met our Year 1 goal of 100 beds with the expansion of the Bridge Shelter program.

Shelter is only a temporary solution to unsheltered homelessness and doesn't work for everyone who experiences housing instability.

## HOUSING CASE MANAGERS AND RENT ASSISTANCE

This is why our programs also focus on root solutions to homelessness with supportive wrap-around services and rent assistance to ensure permanent housing stability. Both programs provide an array of client-centered services for homeless youth, families and individuals in transitional and permanent housing using a Housing First model.

The Washington County Public Safety Levy expands homeless services to provide youth and family shelters with new Employment Specialist and Housing Navigation staffing that increases access to job skills training, employment, and affordable housing. Additionally, the Levy will expand the success of the 'Sojourner's House' to provide trauma-related support services and housing for survivors of domestic violence.

With new resources, our programs also expanded housing case management in partnership with 17 community based and culturally specific organizations. These partners are hiring case managers to work individually with each household to help them overcome barriers to housing, and then move into new housing. New housing workers partner with our existing homeless services providers including outreach workers, shelter workers, and community connect assessors to help people connect to housing solutions as soon as possible.

The final ingredient to this successful transition is rent assistance. Due to the high demand for housing choice vouchers, part of the funding for Supportive Housing Services goes to **Regional Long-term Rent Assistance (RLRA) with a goal of placing 500 households in permanent, affordable housing by June 30, 2022.** This is a brand new program, but already we have seen individuals transition into housing (see Darryn's story). These funds supplement a variety of other housing vouchers captured in the housing voucher section of this report.

## EASTERSEALS OREGON HELPS DARRYN FIND PERMANENT HOUSING

Carol Salter had passed by Darryn, who experienced homelessness for two years, every day during her morning commute. As the director of EasterSeals Oregon she wanted to help him find a safe place to sleep at night, but resources were limited. Then, EasterSeals Oregon received funding for a housing case management and RLRA vouchers. With the support of a case manager dedicated to helping him find a place to move and rent assistance Darryn was able to move into permanent housing in January 2022.



“ I knew eventually I had to get back on my feet somehow. You know, I've been surviving, but now I'm ready to start living. This is my first step, staying here.

See the full story [here!](#)

# HOUSING VOUCHERS

The Housing Choice Voucher program is Washington County's largest affordable housing program, providing rent assistance to low-income families who are leasing units of their choice throughout our community. We administer 3,441 vouchers for households who qualify for assistance, including special program vouchers that serve veterans, people with disabilities, and youth aging out of foster care.

In 2021, we opened our waitlist for the voucher program, inviting households in need of assistance to submit their information. We know there is always more need in the community for housing assistance and creating a new waitlist for families gives us the opportunity to serve additional households. In just ten days, we received more than 3,200 submissions for the list. Through a lottery process designed with equity in mind, we selected 2,000 names to create our new voucher waitlist. This smaller waitlist will allow us to move more nimbly with updated client contact information and will allow us to reopen the waitlist sooner as vouchers become available.

By coordinating with the Regional Long-term Rent Assistance (RLRA) funds, we can offer an expanded range of rental subsidies to meet a wide variety from client needs. Vouchers and rental subsidies are set aside for different populations including veterans experiencing homelessness, individuals and families experiencing homelessness, extremely low-income families, and extremely low-income seniors living on fixed incomes. For many families a housing voucher or rental subsidy is a game changer towards achieving long term stability.



## DORA MOVES INTO NEW APARTMENT!

Dora's housing journey has been long and challenging. She lost one apartment after her mom passed away. "When I told my landlord she died, they evicted me even though we had already been living there for a year." She spent nights sleeping outside until she got a van but explains, "I was afraid to park and leave the van because it was stolen in the past. It was scary being in the van by myself with my kitty."

At the Hillsboro Bridge Shelter, guests work with housing case managers to find housing. With the support of dedicated case managers at Greater Good Northwest, the stability of bridge shelter, and staff working behind the scenes to match Dora with a housing voucher she moved into her very own apartment in November 2021.

“ I already love my apartment though I haven't seen it. There is an ice machine in the freezer. I'm in heaven! Plus, the apartment is on the first floor.

# HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTIES

The Housing Authority owns and manages multiple properties in Washington County, ensuring that hundreds of families have access to affordable, safe, and secure housing options. Many of our properties serve larger families and are located in communities throughout the County. Our staff is working closely with HUD to determine the best options for improving and maximizing our portfolio so we can ensure this important resource continues to serve households. The affordable housing portfolio will be receiving a major upgrade with an estimated **\$45.7 million in rehab at five (5) different properties** in Tigard, Aloha and Forest Grove. The renovations will address capital needs at the properties and improve the overall livability for our residents. The properties will also be updated to convert some units into fully accessible units for residents with mobility impairments.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOND PROGRAM

In November 2018, Metro region voters approved the Regional Affordable Housing Bond. Washington County received an allocation of more than **\$116.5 million** to develop regulated affordable housing across our community. In 2020, the Housing Authority finalized plans for ten developments, representing 812 new affordable units in the community. The projects include a mix of bedroom sizes and are strategically located throughout Washington County with consideration toward geographic dispersal, access to public transit and high opportunity areas. At least 136 of the units will be Permanent Supportive Housing, designed to serve highly vulnerable people with complex health needs and a history of homelessness.



Viewfinder Housing Bond project located in Tigard

The first of these projects to begin construction was the Viewfinder, which broke ground in July 2020. Located in the Tigard Triangle area, the neighborhood features shops, restaurants and parks within walking distance. The property includes 81 units of one-, two- and three-bedrooms, all affordable to low income families. The building features community rooms, a rooftop courtyard, and art from three local artists installed throughout the building, including a piece by Native American artist Stef Littlebird Fogel, to honor and acknowledge the land on which the project rests.

We're proud to share that construction finished in December 2021, and families have begun to move into their new apartments.

The Valfre at Avenida 26 broke ground in September 2021. The Valfre is in Forest Grove and is a redevelopment of an old concrete plant, located near an elementary school and walkable downtown community. This property includes 36 units, all affordable to low income families and scheduled for completion in Summer 2022. Other projects breaking ground and under construction are the Aloha Inn Permanent Supportive Housing (currently operating as a bridge shelter) and our biggest affordable housing project, Terrace Glen, with 144 units.



Tour of the Beaverton Mary Ann project



Terrace Glen Groundbreaking Turkey Drive Celebration

# FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Part of our mission is to ensure the families in our programs have the opportunity to thrive and meet their personal goals. The Family Self-Sufficiency program is one way the authority supports our voucher participants and public housing residents. This five-year, voluntary program helps families progress toward economic independence by offering education, planning and community support. In 2021, the FSS program supported 62 households as they moved through their individualized goals.

One of those participants was Sarah, a single mother of two, who joined the FSS program after moving to Oregon. Before moving to Oregon, Sarah had started a career as a certified nursing assistant. Unfortunately, Oregon did not recognize her out-of-state credential, making it difficult for her to continue in her career path.

With career coaching through the Family Self Sufficiency program and Health Careers NW, Sarah got the support she needed to finalize her Oregon nursing credentials in 2017. But she didn't stop there. In June of 2021, Sarah graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and is now working as a registered nurse at a local hospital. She is earning \$70,000 a year and working toward buying a home.



“ Completing five trainings and five credential programs while raising two kids wasn't easy. I'm really grateful to everyone who stood by me on this journey, including my Health Careers NW career coach and my FSS coordinator!

# BECOMING A MOVING TO WORK AGENCY

The Department of Housing Services continues to look ahead, embracing change and innovation when it best serves our community. In October 2021, we officially executed our agreement with HUD (Department of Housing & Urban Development) to become a **Moving to Work agency, one of only 100 housing authorities in the country with this designation.** Our Moving to Work flexibility will give us the opportunity to be thoughtful in program design for our HUD funded programs, and to propose changes to regulations when it best serves our local community. We are committed to continuing to engage our community partners as well as our residents and participants as we explore these changes and working collaboratively with our incredible staff to grow together.

## AND THAT'S A WRAP!

We extend our thanks to all who accompany, advise, and support us on this journey including the Washington County Board of Commissioners, the Housing Authority Board of Directors, and our Housing Advisory Committee.

For more questions about the programs detailed in this report contact Public Affairs Administrator Emily Roots at [Emily\\_Roots@co.washington.or.us](mailto:Emily_Roots@co.washington.or.us).

