



AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOUSELESSNESS IN 2022

A Snapshot from Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman Counties



Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative Partners



THE MID-COLUMBIA HOUSELESS COLLABORATIVE

Coordinating regional efforts to prevent and end houselessness



The Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative (MCHC) was convened in 2022 by Mid-Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC) and Washington Gorge Action Programs (WAGAP) to better **coordinate the region's efforts to prevent and end houselessness.**



The Collaborative involves nearly 40 members, including health, housing, and social service agencies, local city and county governments, culturally responsive service providers, and people with lived experience of houselessness. Members of the Collaborative come from the Mid-Columbia region of Klickitat and Skamania counties in Washington and Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties in Oregon.

The Collaborative works to reduce houselessness by **expanding housing capacity and ensuring supportive services are provided in culturally affirming ways that uphold human dignity.** More information about the Collaborative, and a list of its member organizations, can be found at www.midcolumbiahouselesscollaborative.org.

This snapshot has been compiled for elected officials, community leaders, and the public. It is meant to share the impact of houselessness on our region, and on our friends and neighbors who are living here unhoused. Most importantly, it **highlights the progress being made—and three key actions members of our community can take to help prevent and end houselessness.**

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THE CRISIS



HOUSING SHORTAGES & HOUSELESSNESS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

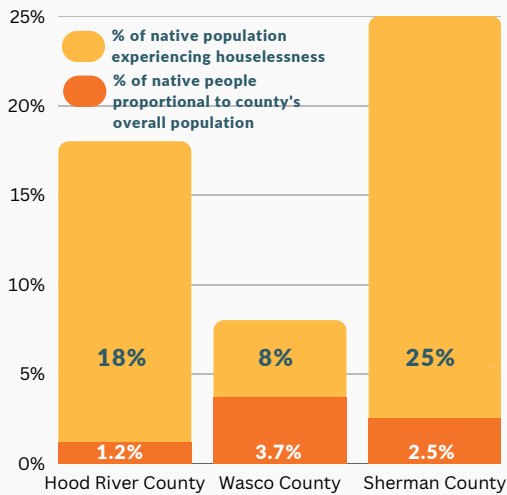
The Mid-Columbia region, along with much of the Pacific NW, is currently **facing one of the most severe affordable housing crises in history**. Rates of housing insecurity and houselessness are rising. Housing supply lags while demand grows, and rents have skyrocketed.

The region also has high rates of houselessness due to rising rents and a lack of affordable housing. **People experiencing houselessness often need supportive services and help navigating resources to successfully access and maintain housing long-term.**

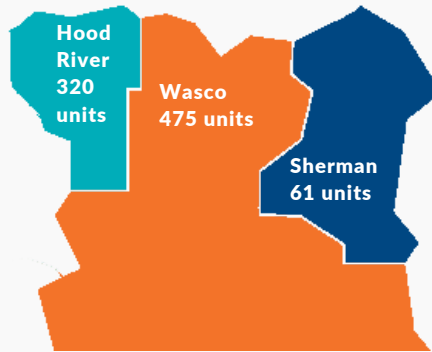
The affordable housing crisis underscores existing racial and ethnic disparities.

In Oregon, Native Americans experience chronic homelessness at almost four times the rate of other racial and ethnic groups.

Percentage of Native Population Experiencing Houselessness by County



Affordable Housing Need by County for Households Below 30% Area Median Income Regional Total 856 Units



Data From Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2018

Intervention	Cost	Per
Hospital Stay	\$1,324	Night
Emergency Room	\$500	Average visit
County Jail	\$125	Night
Permanent Supportive Housing	\$59-64	Night

26 Units for Every 100 Families

For every 100 extremely low-income households in Oregon, there are only 26 housing units that are affordable to them.

Stable and affordable housing was the single greatest concern identified by stakeholders through the 2022 Columbia Gorge Regional Community Health Needs Assessment.

As of January 2022, there were 269 people experiencing houselessness throughout Wasco, Hood River, and Sherman counties. This represents a 50% increase in the region's houseless population over the past 2 years

The Corporation for Supportive Housing estimates a **need for 14,353 supportive housing units in Oregon**, including 4,148 units for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

Our regional work underscores this need; **almost half of MCCAC's shelter guests since July 2021 identified as chronically houseless at the time of intake.**



THE SOLUTION



RAPID RE-HOUSING

Rapid re-housing (RRH) is a primary, evidence-based solution for ending homelessness that provides short-term rental assistance and coordinated services with the following goals: help homeless people get back into housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and stay housed.

Local Case Study:

Impacts of Mid-Columbia Community Action Council's 2022 Rapid Rehousing Program (RRH)

MCCAC implemented evidence-based interventions like landlord incentives, security deposit, rent assistance, and ongoing case management.

64 Local Homeless Families Stabilized in Secure Local Housing in 2022.

MCCAC's RRH infused \$230,000 into the Mid-Columbia region's economy through partnering with 38 local rental property managers—more than half of whom are "Mom-and-Pop" landlords.



64 Formerly Homeless Families Now In Local Stable Housing



AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND COORDINATED SERVICES

Enhancing the region's supply of affordable housing through the construction of new units and the preservation of existing ones is a key piece of the puzzle for decreasing homelessness. Additionally, coordinated services that help people facing complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy, and dignity are a proven solution to homelessness, especially for the most vulnerable and chronically homeless people.



Partners of the Homeless Collaborative are committed to achieving equity in our work by ensuring access to affordable housing for traditionally underserved communities. Elevating and coordinating culturally specific and culturally responsive services is also critical to this work, and to addressing existing racial and ethnic disparities that result in disproportionate barriers to housing.

Local Case Study:

Bridges to Health is a program of the Columbia Gorge Health Council with a network of Community Health Workers providing care coordination through community partnerships.

Between 2021-2022, Bridges to Health served 925 clients and identified 2,855 client needs with the highest needs being in the areas of food, housing, and transportation.



THE SOLUTION



LOCAL PARTNERS' ONGOING COMMITMENT TO THIS WORK

In 2022, Mid-Columbia Community Action Council secured Project Turnkey 2.0 funding in coordination with key service partners such as the Oregon Human Development Corporation and Mid-Columbia Center for Living.

The funding will dramatically increase the number of transitional housing and shelter beds in the Mid-Columbia region through the purchase and conversion of an old motel. Beginning in 2023, this project will provide access to safe, accessible housing for houseless clients from Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties. The project will ensure client needs are met through **coordination with culturally responsive and behavioral health-focused partners** who will be on site regularly to provide rapid rehousing assistance and other services.

A small sample of our project partners:



Coordinated work of the Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative includes an **adopted 5-year strategic plan with priorities in the areas of shelter, services, housing, and advocacy.** Housing priorities are focused on increasing the local supply of affordable housing by 262 units by 2027, including by coordinating to support the completion of:

- Rand Road in Hood River County – 90 units
- Chenoweth Loop in Wasco County – 75 units
- White Salmon Assisted Living in Klickitat County – 52 units
- Wishram Heights in Klickitat County – 45 units



Wishram Heights

The Wishram Heights affordable housing development is a project of the Yakama Nation Housing Authority and Nch'i Wana Housing for tribal members living on both sides of the Columbia River.

Wishram Heights, **with 46 housing units and a community center**, is dedicated to meeting the need for affordable housing for tribal members living in the Columbia Gorge area. This project is in active development, with seven homes already completed and currently occupied. The remaining homes are scheduled for completion mid- to late-2023.

THREE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO PREVENT AND END HOUSELESSNESS



AT THE STATE LEVEL:

Support investments in houseless services and capital funding

Find out how to contact your state legislators and voice your support for the proposal by visiting <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/findyourlegislator/leg-districts.html>.



Find Your State Legislator

LOCALLY:

Use your voice (write letters to the editor, give testimony at a public meeting, email your local elected officials, etc.) to support the completion of the affordable housing projects listed earlier in this report.

Advocate for the enhancement of local services that promote housing stabilization in our community, whether by contacting your elected officials, making a donation to one of the service providers involved in the Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative, or volunteering.

ONLINE:

Donate to one of the Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative's member organizations, which are listed on the Collaborative's website at: midcolumbiahouselesscollaborative.org.



Visit Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative

Meet the needs of houseless people in your community directly with Purposity.

Meeting the needs of our clients can happen with just a few clicks. To join us in this partnership, download the Purposity app or visit www.purposity.com/organization/mccac and follow Mid-Columbia Community Action Council, where you will see current needs of our clients listed.



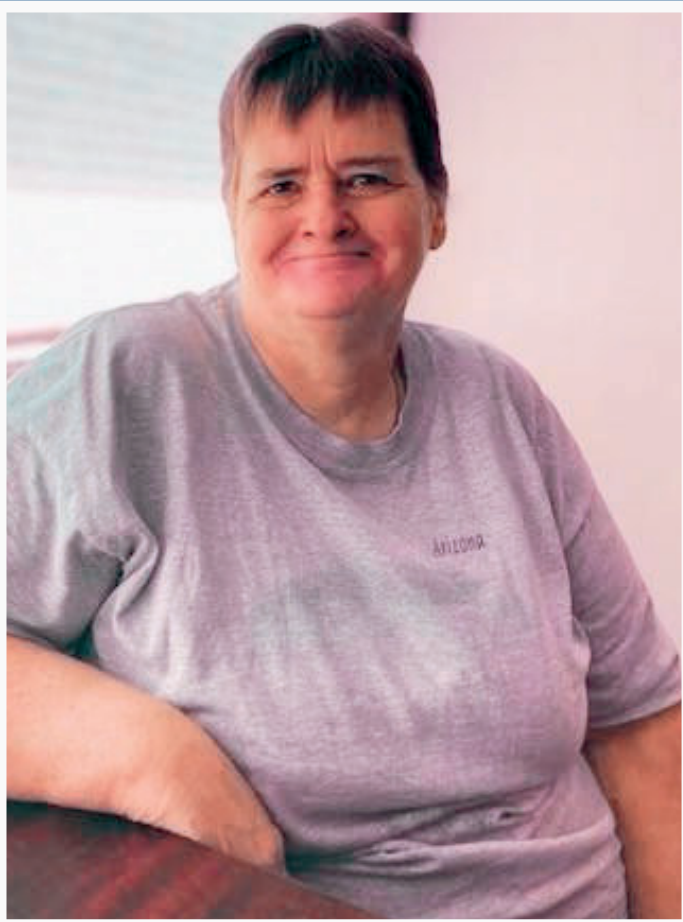
DEBRA'S STORY

OREGON 2022 - 2023

Debra was referred to Mid Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC) from FISH food bank while she was living in her car. When Debra contacted MCCAC, she presented with a terminal illness, so her housing case worker was able to provide Debra with a temporary stay in a hotel due to her medical condition. During her hotel stay, Debra began working with her MCCAC case worker on a housing voucher from Mid-Columbia Housing Authority, and applied for places to rent.

Rapid Rehousing supports were critical to Debra's successful placement in a 55 and older community in The Dalles. Debra's MCCAC case worker was able to use landlord incentive funding to negotiate with Debra's prospective landlord so they would lower the rent slightly. Without this tool, the rent would have been above the amount allowed by Debra's housing voucher, which was a critical component of her longer-term housing stabilization plan.

The supports Debra has received through her housing voucher and MCCAC's Rapid Rehousing program have allowed her to stabilize her monthly expenses, which has meant that she has been able to keep and maintain her vehicle. Debra has now been living in the 55 and older community for over a year.



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES THAT HAVE PROMOTED DEBRA'S HOUSING STABILITY:

- MCCAC.COM
- MID-COLUMBIAHOUSINGAUTHORITY.ORG
- FISH-FOOD-BANK.COM
- COMMUNITY LANDLORD PARTERSHIPS



JEFF'S STORY

OREGON 2022 - 2023

Jeff was living out of a grocery cart in Hood River when he first met a case worker from Mid Columbia Community Action Council's (MCCAC) Supportive Services for Veteran Families program (SSVF). When he learned what supports SSVF could offer him, Jeff was excited. He said that he had been on the streets long enough, and it was time to get out of the cold. That same day, the case worker was able to get Jeff sheltered at a hotel.

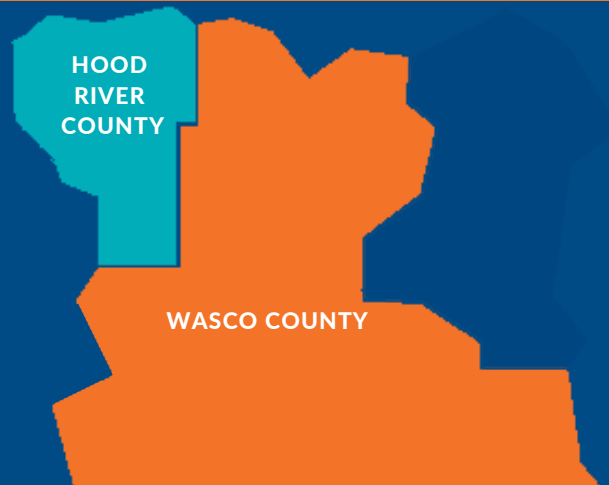
During his hotel stay, Jeff connected with a veteran's services health care navigator to address some health issues that had been pushed to the side due to his houseless situation. With support from the health care navigator, Jeff received referrals and transportation to the hospital in Portland where he had surgery.

Jeff stayed focused on his housing search and, with support from his veteran's services case worker, was able to successfully transition into long-term housing. SSVF was able to support this transition by covering Jeff's security deposit and several months' rent. Jeff now lives in his own apartment which he was able to furnish with help from his veteran's services caseworker and a fellow veteran who lives in his apartment complex. Jeff is grateful for the accomplishments he has made and the obstacles he has overcome. Jeff wants to share his story in hopes that it may help other veterans like himself.



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES THAT HAVE PROMOTED JEFF'S HOUSING STABILITY:

- [MCCAC.COM/VETERANS](https://mccac.com/veterans)
- VA HOSPITAL
- [MID-COLUMBIAHOUSINGAUTHORITY.COM](https://mid-columbiahousingauthority.com)



MIKE'S STORY

OREGON 2022 - 2023

Mike grew up in the Gorge. From childhood he struggled with a learning disability, mental health diagnosis, and childhood trauma. After his mother's death, Mike started living in his vehicle. He was on his own and began struggling to maintain his health and social needs. He developed a wound and infection in his left leg and due to the conditions of living in a vehicle his wound was not able to heal. After years of treatment the leg needed to be amputated.

While in rehabilitation, Mike learned about Bridges to Health from his provider at MCMC. He would be getting discharged soon and had nowhere to go. Mike was connected to a Bridges to Health Community Health Worker, Rena. She began learning more about Mike's story and that he was struggling with many things. He was not receiving social security disability because he did not know where to start. He needed an ID, access to regular transportation, food, rental assistance, mental health support, help navigating new medical needs, clothing and more.

Together, Mike and Rena were able to him get a new state ID and apply for social security disability. He was also able to get public transportation vouchers, a HUD housing voucher, SNAP food benefits, and new clothing. He also established care with a mental health provider and with a caregiver from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Mike was empowered and supported to take control of his health. He now lives in his own apartment and continues to struggle from time to time but is happier and healthier. Thanks to Rena and Bridges to Health his apartment is filled with typical home furnishings. Mike reported that "sleeping in a real bed is so comfortable and I have good dreams."



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES THAT HAVE PROMOTED MIKE'S HOUSING STABILITY:

- MCCAC.COM
- CGHEALTHCOUNCIL.ORG/BRIDGES-TO-HEALTH
- MCMC.NET
- MID-COLUMBIAHOUSINGAUTHORITY.COM
- WWW.ADRCOFOREGON.ORG



WASCO COUNTY

MARY'S STORY

WASHINGTON 2022 - 2023

Mary had a home that burned down several years ago. The home was not insured. That was the beginning of her most recent episode of houselessness. Mary had experience with chronic houselessness, evictions, and other barriers to housing like a criminal record. She was resilient and coped in ways she knew how.

Mary first came to Washington Gorge Action Programs (WAGAP) in December of 2021, accessing the warming shelter. Nights were cold. She was alone. She had spent her last little bit of money staying at a hotel to get a warm night's sleep. Over time, our warming shelter staff got to know Mary and earned her trust enough to share her experiences and needs.

She transitioned into WAGAP's emergency shelter when a bed opened and during her 2 months there, Mary took an active role in recovery and healing through counseling and the support of a community health worker. She was relentless in hunting for a permanent home.

WAGAP was able to work with a property management company that took Mary's application for housing into consideration despite the fact it was made clear she would never qualify for one of their rental properties on her own standing. WAGAP's housing programs covered move-in costs, deposits for utilities, and rent until her HUD housing voucher was awarded.

Mary moved into her new home and remains there to this day. She continues to engage in healing with her counselor and community health worker. She is living independently, engaging in community, and recently started working to supplement her disability income. She is thriving and keeps in touch with her "WAGAP family", proudly sharing the details of her new life.



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES THAT HAVE PROMOTED MARY'S HOUSING STABILITY:

- [WAGAP.ORG](https://www.wagap.org)
- [WAGAP.ORG/PATHWAYS](https://www.wagap.org/pathways)
- [MID-COLUMBIAHOUSINGAUTHORITY.COM](https://www.mid-columbiahousingauthority.com)
- COMMUNITY LANDLORD PARTNERSHIPS

SKAMANIA
COUNTY





AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOUSELESSNESS IN 2022

A Snapshot from Klickitat and Skamania Counties

Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative Partners



Mid-Columbia
**Community
Action Council**



City of Bingen



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The region also has high rates of houselessness due to rising rents and a lack of affordable housing. **People experiencing houselessness often need supportive services and help navigating resources to successfully access and maintain housing long-term.**

The affordable housing crisis underscores existing racial and ethnic disparities.

In Washington, Native Americans experience chronic homelessness at almost four times the rate of other racial and ethnic groups.

Skamania County Snapshot:

Nearly 1,100 cost-burdened households
Undersupply of rental units

Lack of multi-family housing units

Seasonal residents own 1 in 5 dwellings

Klickitat County Snapshot:

Housing = top priority of the community
Lack of multi-family housing units
Short-term rentals represent 1 in 5 homes
Projected housing demand = 2,259 units by 2050

Data From Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2018

Intervention	Cost	Per
Hospital Stay	\$1,324	Night
Emergency Room	\$500	Average visit
County Jail	\$125	Night
Permanent Supportive Housing	\$59-64	Night

The Corporation for Supportive Housing estimates a **need for 17,131 supportive housing units in Washington**, including 4,001 units for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

31 Units for Every 100 Families

For every 100 extremely low-income households in Washington, there are only 31 housing units that are affordable to them.

Stable and affordable housing was the single greatest concern identified by stakeholders through the 2022 Columbia Gorge Regional Community Health Needs Assessment.

As of January 2022, there were 35 people experiencing houselessness throughout Klickitat and Skamania counties. And statewide across the state of Washington, there was a 16% increase in people experiencing houselessness between 2020 and 2022.





THE SOLUTION

RAPID RE-HOUSING



Rapid re-housing is a primary, evidence-based solution for ending homelessness that provides short-term rental assistance and coordinated services with the following goals: help houseless people get back into housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and stay housed.

Local Case Study:

Impacts of Washington Gorge Action Programs (WAGAP) Rapid Rehousing Program (RRH)

WAGAP implements evidence-based interventions like landlord incentives, security deposit, rent assistance, and ongoing case management.

Of community members who receive rapid rehousing supports with Washington Gorge Action Program, 67% exit to permanent housing and less than 5% return to homelessness.

WAGAP's rapid rehousing programs cost on average just \$40 per household to provide these supports.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND COORDINATED SERVICES



Enhancing the region's supply of affordable housing through the construction of new units and the preservation of existing ones is a key piece of the puzzle for decreasing homelessness. Additionally, coordinated services that help people facing complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy, and dignity are a proven solution to homelessness, especially for the most vulnerable and chronically homeless people.



Partners of the Homeless Collaborative are committed to achieving equity in our work by ensuring access to affordable housing for traditionally underserved communities. Elevating and coordinating culturally specific and culturally responsive services is also critical to this work, and to addressing existing racial and ethnic disparities that result in disproportionate barriers to housing.

Local Case Study:

At WAGAP, Community Health Workers are immediately matched to all persons who receive shelter services. This partnership helps get client needs met and helps clients move into permanent housing more successfully.

Community Health Workers help clients connect with a variety of services, including housing vouchers with Mid-Columbia Housing Authority, disability and/or social security assistance, and employment search supports.



THE SOLUTION



LOCAL PARTNERS' ONGOING COMMITMENT TO THIS WORK

Skamania County and the **City of Stevenson** are working together to adjust local development codes so that zoning and utilities infrastructure can be aligned for additional housing development moving forward.

The City of White Salmon has adopted housing goals including to establish, support and maintain a diverse housing stock as part of their comprehensive plan and has also adopted ordinances to preserve current affordable housing represented by mobile home parks.

Columbia Cascade Housing Corp. is actively involved in acquiring and rehabilitating **Rhine Village Apartments**, an existing affordable housing development in Bingen that is in jeopardy of converting to market.

A small sample of our project partners:



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- Wishram Heights in Klickitat County – 45 units
- Rand Road in Hood River County – 90 units
- Westgate Market in Wasco County – 75 units



Wishram Heights

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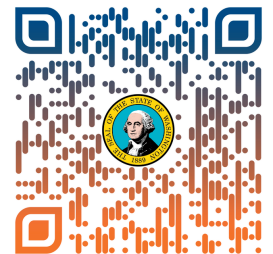
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THREE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO PREVENT AND END HOUSELESSNESS



AT THE STATE LEVEL:

Support passage of Governor Jay Inslee's Budget Housing Proposal and the referendum that will allow legislators to front-load \$4 billion of affordable housing construction over the next six years, supporting the construction of an additional 5,300 housing units in 2023-2025, and an additional 19,000 units by 2031.



Find Your State Legislator

Find out how to contact your state legislators and voice your support for the proposal by visiting <https://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>.

LOCALLY:

Use your voice (write letters to the editor, give testimony at a public meeting, email your local elected officials, etc.) to support the completion of the affordable housing projects listed earlier in this report.

Advocate for the enhancement of local services that promote housing stabilization in our community, whether by contacting your elected officials, making a donation to one of the service providers involved in the Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative, or volunteering.

ONLINE:

Donate to one of the Mid-Columbia Houseless Collaborative's member organizations, which are listed on the Collaborative's website at: midcolumbiahouselesscollaborative.org.



Meet the needs of houseless people in your community by supporting the programs of Washington Gorge Action Programs.

Your gift to WAGAP will help people meet their basic needs so they can focus on getting back on their feet. You can choose a one-time gift or donate monthly at <https://www.wagap.org/donate>

