

Home for Good

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What makes Home for Good different from other projects?

A. First, Home for Good aims to address one of the most complex challenges Anchorage faces: helping to transition persistently homeless, disabled residents—who, today, often cycle through shelters, jails, and hospitals—into stable housing.

Second, we recognize that programs meant to solve this thorny problem don't always work. There are promising solutions from outside of Anchorage, but there's no guarantee that they'll succeed here. So we're doing something new: instead of paying for a set of services, the Municipality would agree to release funding only if the project is successful at getting people into long-term, stable housing.

Q. Given everything else that's happening, why do we need Home for Good?

A. Anchorage's homelessness response system serves 8,000 people each year. On any given night, over a thousand people lack a safe and stable place to live. Of those, a small minority experience persistent homelessness and cycle through emergency response systems. Unlike residents who may just need temporary economic assistance to get back on their feet, these roughly 350 individuals typically have disabling behavioral health conditions and need housing paired with robust support services (known as "supportive housing"). The Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness's *Gap Analysis and 2021 Community Priorities* identified the need for 700 additional supportive housing units in Anchorage. Home for Good is the only project on the horizon that will make a significant dent in addressing this community need.

Q. Even if these types of programs have worked elsewhere, how do we know it's a good fit for Anchorage?

A. Of course, it's impossible to know precisely how well supportive housing will work in our community, and we're clear-eyed about how hard this work is. But for the past year, Home for Good has run a pilot program in Anchorage and the results are extremely encouraging.

Of 21 housed participants, we've observed dramatic decreases in arrests, EMS transports, Anchorage Safety Center intakes, and shelter stays. As of June 30, only 2 participants had exited their leases, and they remain in the project while service providers work to return them to stable housing.



Home for Good FAQs

Q. How long has Home for Good been in development?

A. Home for Good has used the last four years to prepare for this moment. To kickstart its development, the U.S. Department of Justice and Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded United Way of Anchorage a demonstration grant in 2016. For the last year, a pilot has been operating successfully in the community.

In March 2020, the Assembly approved the backbone financial infrastructure for the project launch by establishing a Pay for Success funding vehicle and a \$4.5 million borrowing program. That laid the groundwork for the development of the Pay for Success contract among the Municipality, the United Way of Anchorage, and national nonprofit Social Finance, Inc. With the Assembly's approval of the contract, we can launch the 3-year, 150-unit project this fall.

Q. Where will people be housed?

A. Home for Good participants will be housed throughout the community. Nonprofit housing providers Hope Community Resources and RurAL CAP have been housing participants during the pilot, and conversations with other housing providers are ongoing. Finalization of the Municipality's purchase of America's Best Value may create additional options. Landlord engagement—supported by a housing mitigation fund and other incentives—is an important component of the project's success. This is all in keeping with Assembly Resolution 2018-167, which “declar[ed] a policy of dispersed placement in the Anchorage Bowl of services and programs for homeless persons.”

Q. How does Home for Good fit into Anchored Home?

A. Increasing access to supportive housing is a core component of the Anchored Home plan, the community's comprehensive plan to prevent and eliminate homelessness in Anchorage—developed by the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, the Municipality of Anchorage, and United Way of Anchorage. The Coalition's July 2020 update, *Gap Analysis and 2021 Community Priorities*, identified supportive housing as one of the most pressing community priorities. Home for Good is focused on housing persistently homeless Anchorage residents who have acute, co-occurring, complex behavioral and medical health challenges.

Home for Good FAQs

- Q. What responsibilities will be required of the people receiving Home for Good services?*
- A. Moving from persistent homelessness to stable housing requires commitment and responsibility. Individuals in Home for Good must want to achieve stable housing and must agree to participate. They will receive job training as appropriate and will be expected to contribute up to 30% of their income to pay for rent. Because most participants have significant behavioral health disabilities, the project adopts a “housing first” approach and engages a team of specialists to make sure participants have a real shot at success.
- Q. Who is providing services and what do those services include?*
- A. Home for Good is contracting with Alaska Behavioral Health and Southcentral Foundation to provide robust, wrap-around services in client homes and in outpatient settings as appropriate. Each participant has an individual treatment plan addressing everything from medical needs and behavioral health challenges, to reinforcing the everyday skills and habits of independent life that most people can take for granted. In short: Home for Good case management teams do whatever it takes to keep people stably housed, for good.
- Q. If the Municipality only pays for successful outcomes, what, exactly, are the targeted outcomes and how much will the Municipality pay?*
- A. The project’s goal is long-term, stable housing.
- Over \$2 million in startup funding for the project comes from philanthropy. Up to \$4.5 million in Municipality funds are released to sustain the project, but only to the extent that it successfully places and maintains individuals in stable housing. Funds are released to the project for each stable month achieved—for up to 24 months after enrollment—with carefully defined exceptions and exclusions for things like jail or hospital stays. The program will also measure reductions in use of crisis services such as shelter stays, emergency room visits, Safety Center intakes, and arrests.
- Q: Is the Municipality funding this on its own?*
- A. No. All told, the Municipality will fund up to \$4.5 million of the project’s budget, out of a total of \$12.75 million—seeing its funding matched 2:1 by federal and state government, philanthropic grants, and Medicaid and Indian Health Service reimbursement. But that’s only if the project reaches its most ambitious goals. If the project underperforms or under-enrolls, the Municipality may pay less, or nothing at all.

Home for Good FAQs

Q. What are the other sources of funding for this project?

A. The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Premera Blue Cross, Providence Alaska Foundation, and Rasmuson Foundation have together contributed \$2,000,000 to kickstart the 3-year project. Home for Good also expects to access up to \$5,000,000 by billing Medicaid, the Indian Health Service, and other tribal health funding streams; the team implementing this project will aggressively pursue those opportunities. Oversight is supported through a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice and Department of Housing and Urban Development. Finally, CARES Act funding awarded by the Alaska Community Foundation has allowed the project to respond to the Covid-19 crisis.

Q. Is this creating a new government program?

A. No. Home for Good works through a wide coalition of community partners: services delivered by Southcentral Foundation and Alaska Behavioral Health; independent, formal evaluation from NPC Research; technical assistance from the Corporation for Supportive Housing; funding from the Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Premera Blue Cross, Providence Alaska Foundation, and the Alaska Community Foundation; and program management from the United Way of Anchorage, Social Finance, Inc., and the Municipality of Anchorage. In its additional role as a funder, the Municipality ensures accountability by tying payments to successfully achieved outcomes.

Q. Home for Good has a three-year budget. What happens after the third year?

The biggest financial barriers to helping our target population achieve stable housing are frontloaded: it's expensive to identify the highest-needs people, to engage and enroll them in services, to stabilize them through intensive support services, and to fund housing until they can access a permanent voucher.

The project aims to connect every enrolled participant to a stable housing subsidy during the three-year period. Some will become stable enough to step down supportive services, or even to transition to other living arrangements. For those requiring ongoing support, we'll be in a better place to understand what's really needed. For the first time, Anchorage will have the experience and data necessary to show what a successful intervention requires at scale—and what it costs. The three years will include learning, evaluating, and adjusting throughout. This, in turn, will inform community decisions about how to proceed thereafter.