



United Way of Anchorage

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Innovative project to reduce homeless in Anchorage shows success; Aims to house 150 individuals by October 2022.

ANCHORAGE, AK – Home for Good, the innovative public-private partnership to reduce persistent homelessness in Anchorage, is officially moving from short-term pilot program to a 3-year venture, thanks to more than twenty nonprofit, government, and philanthropic organizations.

Led by the Municipality of Anchorage, United Way of Anchorage, and national nonprofit Social Finance, the project will soon house 150 individuals who currently use a disproportionate amount of emergency services. This also marks the first project in Alaska to use the innovative “Pay for Success” financing mechanism, which requires the project to achieve successful outcomes to unlock funding from the Municipality. The project is currently scaling up to enroll 100 people by October 2021.

“Home for Good uses a modern, private sector attitude to solve a complex public problem,” said Clark Halvorson, President and CEO of United Way of Anchorage. “Its focus is on data and outcomes which unites almost two dozen organizations to achieve a shared goal.”

Home for Good aims to improve housing stability for its participants by refocusing resources on a proven intervention called “supportive housing,” which combines affordable housing with wraparound support services that include medical and behavioral health care, job training, and intensive case management. Involved in a more stable environment, Home for Good participants develop habits and skills of independent living. Supportive services will be delivered by Alaska Behavioral Health and Southcentral Foundation, with technical assistance from the Corporation for Supportive Housing.

Unlike projects that may seek to quickly rehouse people who need minimal assistance, Home for Good focuses on individuals with long term behavioral health and medical needs who experience persistent homelessness, frequently use emergency medical services, and cycle through shelters and the criminal justice system. Of the approximately 1,000 people experiencing homelessness on a given night in Anchorage,

approximately 350 meet these criteria. Utilizing these emergency services costs an average of \$47,000 per year per individual, but ultimately fails to address the complex underlying conditions that perpetuate the cycle.

Home for Good will bring supportive housing to scale—and is thus a central strategy in Anchorage’s efforts to reduce adult homelessness. The Anchored Home Strategic Action Plan and the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness’s Gap Analysis both identify supportive housing as a top priority.

In late September, the Anchorage Assembly authorized the Municipality to enter a Pay for Success contract, which requires the project to demonstrate success before accessing municipal funding. The project will initially be funded through a combination of federal, state, and philanthropic grants. The Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Providence Health and Services Alaska, and Premera Blue Cross of Alaska together contributed \$3 million to run the pilot and scale up during the initial stage of the project. A third-party evaluator will analyze whether the project successfully keeps participants stably housed, and if those benchmarks are achieved, it will unlock Municipal payments, which will be used to continue funding the program. If at any point the project starts to underperform, payments from the Municipality may be reduced or altogether withheld. National nonprofit, Social Finance, assisted with the design and financial structuring of the project.

Moving to a long-term venture reflects the success of the yearlong pilot, which began in July 2019. By June 30, 2020, of 21 people housed, 19 remained in stable housing—a rate of 90 percent. Pilot participants experienced 85% fewer arrests, 85% fewer Safety Center intakes, 63% fewer stays in shelter, and 44% fewer emergency medical service trips. “The pilot’s data demonstrates that Home for Good works. And it is urgently needed,” said Eric Glatt, United Way’s Home for Good project director. “With winter now upon us, and in the midst of an unprecedented healthcare crisis, the need for stable, supportive housing for Anchorage’s persistently homeless, disabled residents is as pressing as ever.”

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United Way of Anchorage is a community of donors, advocates, volunteers, and partners working together to improve the health, education, and financial stability of every person in our community. LIVE UNITED.