



**KENAI  
PENINSULA**  
Homelessness Coalition

# **5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2022-2027**

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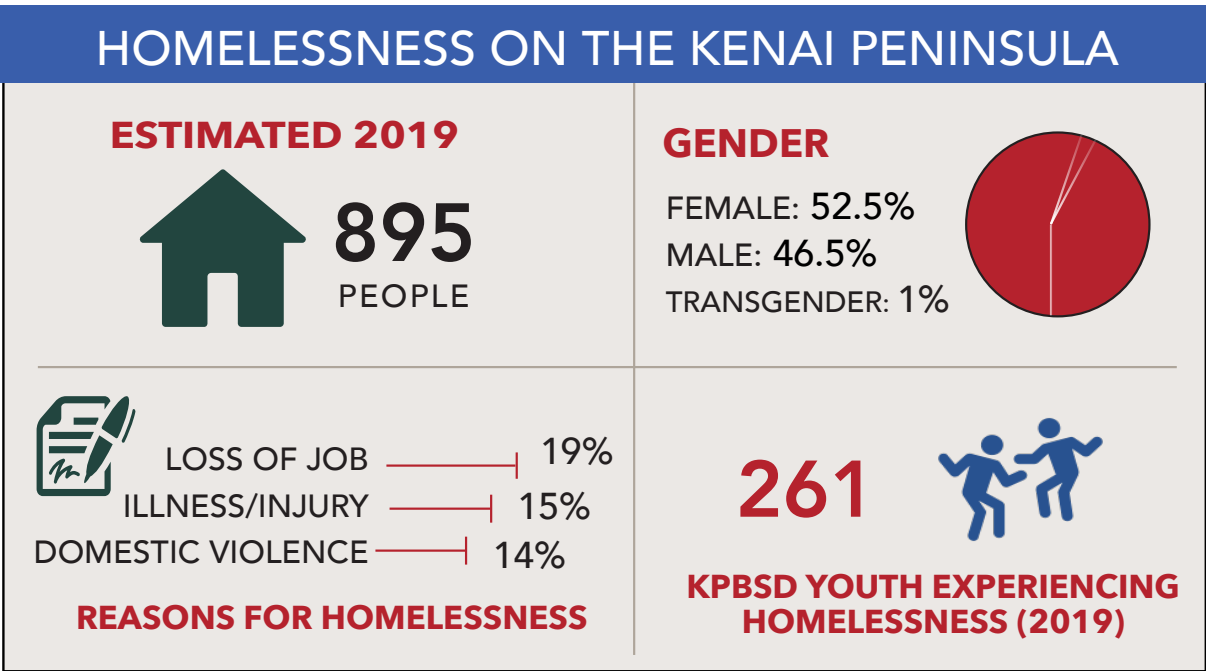
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, the Kenai Peninsula Homelessness Coalition (Coalition) developed a five-year strategic plan to address homelessness. The Coalition examined existing data on homelessness for the Kenai Peninsula, engaged with those working to end homelessness in other Alaskan communities and learned from their experiences, and sought alignment with existing local, statewide, and national strategic plans. The Coalition prioritized public input by hosting a robust community engagement process to inform this plan.

As the Coalition transitions into the implementation phase, five priority areas of focus will serve as a roadmap:

-  Data
-  Housing & Facilities
-  Education & Awareness
-  Transportation
-  Governance & Implementation

Finally, the plan identifies a path forward through an annual workplan process to ensure effective implementation through clear roles and responsibilities and coordination.



# PLAN AT-A-GLANCE

## PRIORITY AREA - DATA

*Timely and accurate data is essential to making strategic decisions on housing, facilities, and homelessness services.*

## STRATEGIES

1. **DATA COLLECTION** Evaluate and consider the best alternatives for improving the data collection and analysis on homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.
2. **DATA GAPS** Identify gaps in data collection on the Kenai Peninsula and design strategies to better gather data across systems and agencies.
3. **DATA SHARING** Coordinate a robust process for shared data collection.
4. **LONG-TERM PLANNING** Build long-term sustainable capacity to support data collection and coordination.
5. **DATA MESSAGING** Leverage the data to communicate the story of homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.



**MISSION:**  
To help  
individuals and families  
experiencing homelessness  
achieve stability.

## PRIORITY AREA - HOUSING & FACILITIES

*Apply Built for Zero approach to creating and sustaining a coordinated system of housing and services across the Kenai Peninsula.*

## STRATEGIES

1. **EMERGENCY/COLD-WEATHER SHELTER** Prioritize an emergency/cold-weather shelter facility.
2. **CONTINUUM OF HOUSING SOLUTIONS** Address the continuum of housing needs, including prevention, emergency shelter, transitional, and permanent housing.
3. **YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS** Evaluate and consider the reasons behind youth homelessness and identify strategic actions to meet their specific housing needs.
4. **DATA-INFORMED PLANNING** Establish data-informed size and capacity goals for housing, programs and facilities.
5. **INVENTORY** Conduct an inventory of available properties, facilities, and housing options on the Kenai Peninsula.
6. **ADDRESS BARRIERS** Identify ways to address barriers to federal, state, and local licensing requirements for a wider array of properties and facilities.
7. **FUNDING STRATEGIES** Develop collaborative funding strategies, including an inventory of available grants and low-income housing opportunities.
8. **CAPACITY** Secure funding and support for local capacity-building, including the hiring of a housing and data coordinator.



## PRIORITY AREA - EDUCATION & AWARENESS

*Increased awareness of homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula can combat the stigma and engage the larger community in finding solutions.*

### STRATEGIES

1. **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN** Coordinate a robust communications strategy using existing channels and established organizations to highlight stories of success and solutions to homelessness using local print media, radio, and social media.
2. **MESSAGING** Use messaging that is clear, consistent, and compelling.
3. **STORIES** Share the data, as well as personal experiences and anecdotes, to address the stigma associated with those experiencing homelessness on Kenai Peninsula.
4. **RELATIONSHIPS** Leverage partnerships to build positive relationships with the larger community, policy makers, funding institutions, faith-based organizations, other coalitions and groups working on homelessness.

## PRIORITY AREA - TRANSPORTATION

*A robust, strategic, and coordinated transportation system on the Kenai Peninsula would provide increased access to resources and services for those experiencing homelessness.*

### STRATEGIES

1. **COORDINATION** Identify ways that transportation across Kenai Peninsula communities can be better coordinated and made more accessible.

2. **FUNDING AND RESOURCES** Expand access to transportation through a coordinated funding strategy to address the specific geographic needs of those experiencing homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.
3. **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FOR FACILITIES** Include transportation strategies and partnership options in facility development planning.
4. **LONG-TERM** Ensure that there are systems of transportation for people experiencing homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula that are consistent, reliable, and sustainable over the longer-term.

## PRIORITY AREA - GOVERNANCE & IMPLEMENTATION

*An aligned and coordinated approach would ensure the transparent and accountable implementation of the strategic plan for homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.*

### STRATEGIES

1. **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION** Implement the strategic plan through the Kenai Peninsula Homelessness Coalition.
2. **DECISION-MAKING** Establish a formal organizational process to carry out the work of the plan and consider key decisions collaboratively through the Coalition.
3. **PARTNERSHIPS** Expand KPHC participation to include strategic local and regional partnerships.
4. **LONG TERM** Evaluate and consider the best alternatives for the governance of programs and facilities for homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.

# INTRODUCTION

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## WHY IS THIS PLAN NEEDED?

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The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Homelessness Coalition is to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness achieve stability. To accomplish this mission, the Coalition, an organization of agencies, individuals, advocates, non-profits, and service providers, has developed a five-year strategic plan to help our communities implement data-driven strategies. Homelessness is often ignored, stigmatized, or simply invisible. This is especially true in places like the Kenai Peninsula where the population is widely dispersed and there is no centralized “downtown” or area where those experiencing homelessness gather.

Through this plan, the Coalition aims to change the narrative and address the stigma around homelessness through focused efforts, cooperation, and sharing the stories of those in the community experiencing homelessness. A further hope of this plan is to identify collaborative and strategic ways for the many organizations dedicated to homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula to support families and individuals as they transition from homelessness to stability. In pursuit of this mission, the Coalition has developed a plan that identifies priority areas, strategies associated with these priority areas, and action plans to guide implementation.

## WHERE HAVE WE BEEN?

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Before charting a plan forward it is important to honor previous work and understand lessons learned. Homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula is not a new issue and in looking back, there are a number of community members, faith leaders, service organizations, government agencies, and non-profits that have provided services and shown their dedication to addressing homelessness over the years. Coalition members developed the following timeline documenting some of these major milestones in the story of homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.



Shelter facility in Nikiski; opened December 2021

# TIMELINE

## Homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula

### Continuum of Care

Service providers came to the table to acknowledge the problem



Pre-1990



Calvary Life Fellowship & Alpha House founded on Kenai Peninsula

Mid 1990's

"HEALTHY COMMUNITIES" meetings; Kenai Peninsula Housing Initiatives (KPHI) formed

Early 2000's



### Love, Inc. founded

Growing realization: a number of families in community in crisis

First Point-in-Time Count (PIT) on Peninsula



2003

Friendship Mission founded

Foraker Group technical assistance

2007

2005



- ISER Study
- Applied Block Grant
- Pre-Development

Family Hope Center Merit Inn Opens **5 beds**



2008

INCREASE IN SEASONAL HOUSING SHORTAGES

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT (2012 - 2019)

2012

2010

- Coordination of Care Summit
- AHFC MOU processes

- KPBSD - Students in Transition Program

Nuk'it'un (Kenai) sober living facility founded

2015



- January 2015 - tiny house habitation project
- Journey Home Youth Candlelight Vigil

2016

Soldotna Freedom House founded

2013 Merit Inn closes

2017

- Coordinated Re-Entry Program
- Balance of State Approval

Shelter Development Work Group



2018

2019



Winter 2019: 3 individuals experienced amputations  
\*At least one death

Diamond Willow Transitional Living (2018)

2020

Kenai Peninsula Homelessness Coalition (KPHC) Strategic Planning Process

2021



- COVID-19 PANDEMIC
- NEW OPPORTUNITIES & FUNDING SOURCES

## HOW WAS THE PLAN DEVELOPED?

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As a first step in the plan's development, an overarching framework was established by the Coalition. The plan framework defined the components of the plan and will continue to provide the roadmap for implementation.

STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK	
<b>Mission</b>	To help individuals and families experiencing homelessness achieve stability.
<b>Priority Areas</b>	A set of strategies where focused effort is needed to reduce homelessness.
<b>Strategies</b>	A coordinated set of actions designed to achieve success in the priority areas.
<b>Actions</b>	Specific steps to carry out strategies. Actions for each strategy are updated through annual action plans.
<b>Lead</b>	Those who will carry out the work through annual action plans.

## ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER PLANS

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The Coalition examined existing data on homelessness for the Kenai Peninsula to better understand the scope of the problem. The Coalition reviewed strategic plans from other locations and engaged with leaders in other communities to understand and learn from their experiences. To ensure alignment with existing local and regional priorities, the current Kenai Peninsula Borough Strategic Plan was reviewed, as well as national and statewide plans aimed at ending homelessness. The information gathered through this process was considered during the data analysis and the public engagement processes conducted by the Coalition.

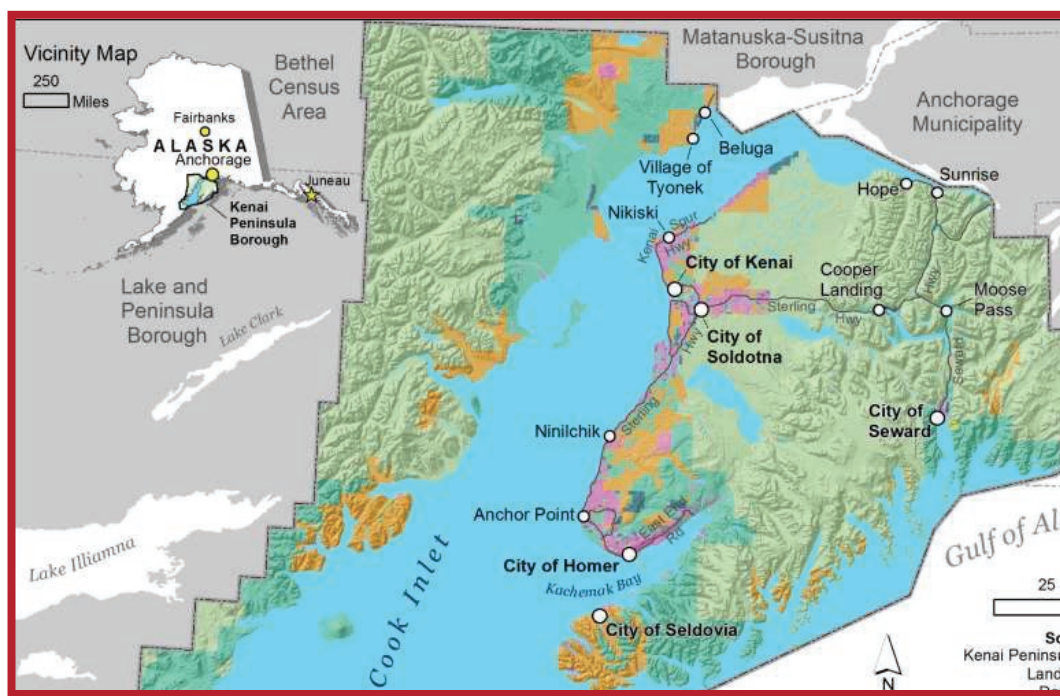


## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

After several Coalition work sessions and seven versions of a draft plan document, the Coalition then sought public input. The public input process resulted in significant engagement by community members across the Kenai Peninsula.

Taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic, during the fall of 2021, four public virtual meetings were held with community members, service providers, agency representatives, and others interested in addressing homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula. Anyone on the Kenai Peninsula was welcome to participate, with the discussions focused on the Southern, Central, and Eastern peninsula areas, with one session for the entire peninsula. Over 90 people attended these meetings, where the draft strategic plan was reviewed and public input into the plan was collected and incorporated into the final plan document.

### Kenai Peninsula Borough



In addition, over 70 individuals responded to an online survey resulting in nearly 1000 public comments submitted. Several people participated in more than one community meeting, and some participated in both the survey and a meeting.

The Coalition created a dedicated website ([www.kenaipeninsulahomeless.org](http://www.kenaipeninsulahomeless.org)) where the public meetings were advertised, the survey link was posted, and where those interested could sign up for a listserv to be updated on future events and opportunities. The draft version of the strategic plan was also posted on the website and the public was encouraged to provide feedback.



20+

**Coalition strategic planning meetings  
and work sessions**

4  
**Regional  
community  
discussions**



70  
**Online  
survey  
responses**



~93

**Total attendance at  
virtual community  
discussions**

47



**Substantive plan edits**

8

**Plan drafts**

400+

**Visitors to new  
KPHC website in  
first 30 days**



74

**KPHC email list  
serv sign-ups**

# DATA ANALYSIS

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## PAST DATA CHALLENGES

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In 2007, the only comprehensive review of the data on homelessness for the Kenai Peninsula to date was completed by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. At that time, the definition of homelessness was different, and data collection was limited. Since that report, many aspects of homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula have changed, and the methods to track and record families and individuals experiencing homelessness have grown more robust and centralized. Despite these improvements, there are still wide gaps in both the availability and consistency of data on homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula. This is one of the priority areas identified in the plan.

To develop a five-year strategic plan, updated data points were needed to understand and design strategies to address these needs. The Coalition collected data from several different sources around the Kenai Peninsula and conducted a preliminary review and analysis of the available information. The following highlights are drawn from 2019 available data on homelessness for the Kenai Peninsula at the time of the strategic plan. This data sets the stage for the priority areas, strategies, and actions that follow.

## DEFINING HOMELESSNESS

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To address homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula and begin to understand the scope of the situation locally, it is helpful to also understand the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of "homeless" since much of the data that was reviewed utilized these parameters. According to HUD, the definition includes four broad categories of homelessness:

- People using emergency shelter, transitional housing, places not meant for human habitation.
- People who are losing their primary nighttime residence.
- Families who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state.
- People who are fleeing or attempting to flee dangerous or violent situations.

Another important definition to understand is "chronically homeless." HUD defines this as everything mentioned in the above definition, as well as having a "disabling condition."

When collecting data on homelessness for the Kenai Peninsula, many service providers are required to use this definition and to report data collected to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). There are many agencies, non-profits, and service providers across the Kenai Peninsula who have been collecting and reporting this data to AKHMIS through annual Point in Time counts and Project Homeless Connect.



## *What is the Alaska Homeless Management Information System?*

The Alaska Homeless Management Information System (AKHMIS) is the central database for homeless services in Alaska. AKHMIS collects client, program, and system-level data. Aggregated, anonymous data from AKHMIS is used to generate reports for federal, state, and local funders. Client-level data is used to help connect individuals experiencing homelessness to the best resources to meet their needs. The effective implementation of AKHMIS benefits homeless and near-homeless persons, homeless service providers, agency heads, public policymakers, and the community as a whole as data can be used for both individual and system-wide process improvement.

<https://aceh.org/alaska-homeless-management-information-system/>



### **PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT**

*Project Homeless Connect is typically a one-day event offered by the Kenai Peninsula Continuum of Care. The aim is to offer local resources that someone experiencing homelessness, or near-homelessness, might need. In a typical event, volunteers spend hours guiding attendees of all ages to stations throughout one venue, allowing each individual to get what most residents consider basic necessities: haircuts, animal care via veterinarians, massages, warm clothing, eyeglasses, substance use help, mental care, and more. Vendors and volunteers collaborate to find short and long-term solutions for each individual.*

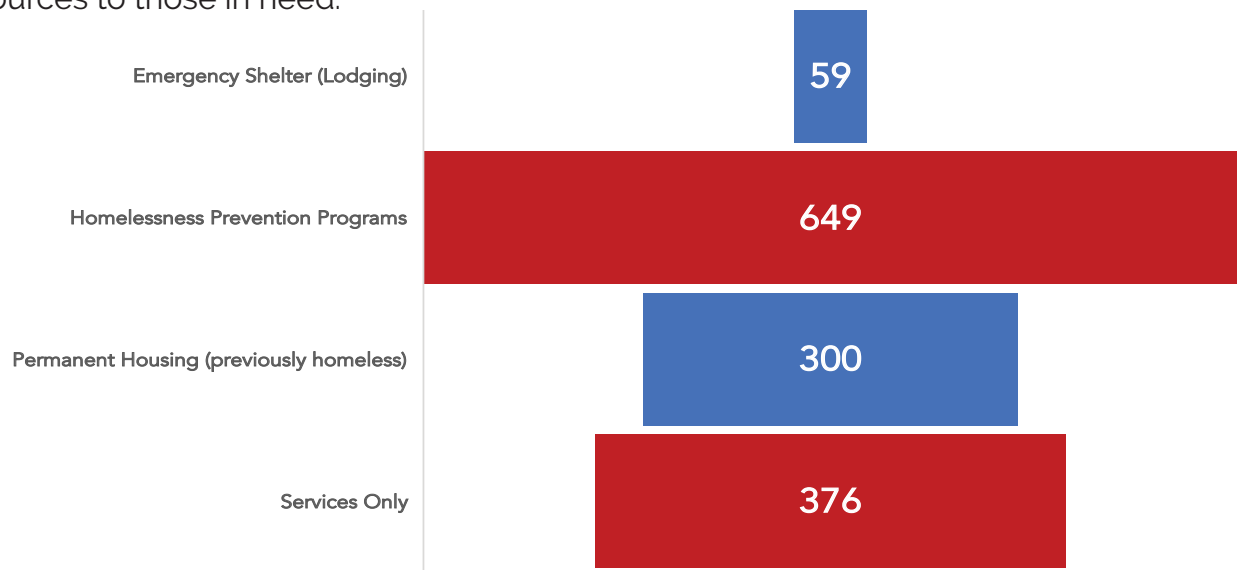
### **POINT-IN-TIME COUNT**

*A point-in-time count is an unduplicated count on a single night of the people in a community who are experiencing homelessness that includes both sheltered and unsheltered populations. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that communities receiving federal funds conduct a count of all sheltered people in the last week of January. The goal of the PIT is to count all people who are utilizing emergency shelter, transitional housing, or are unsheltered on a single day of the year. This information can assist policy makers to target resources in the fight to end homelessness and is used by US Congress to establish funding levels for homeless programs.*



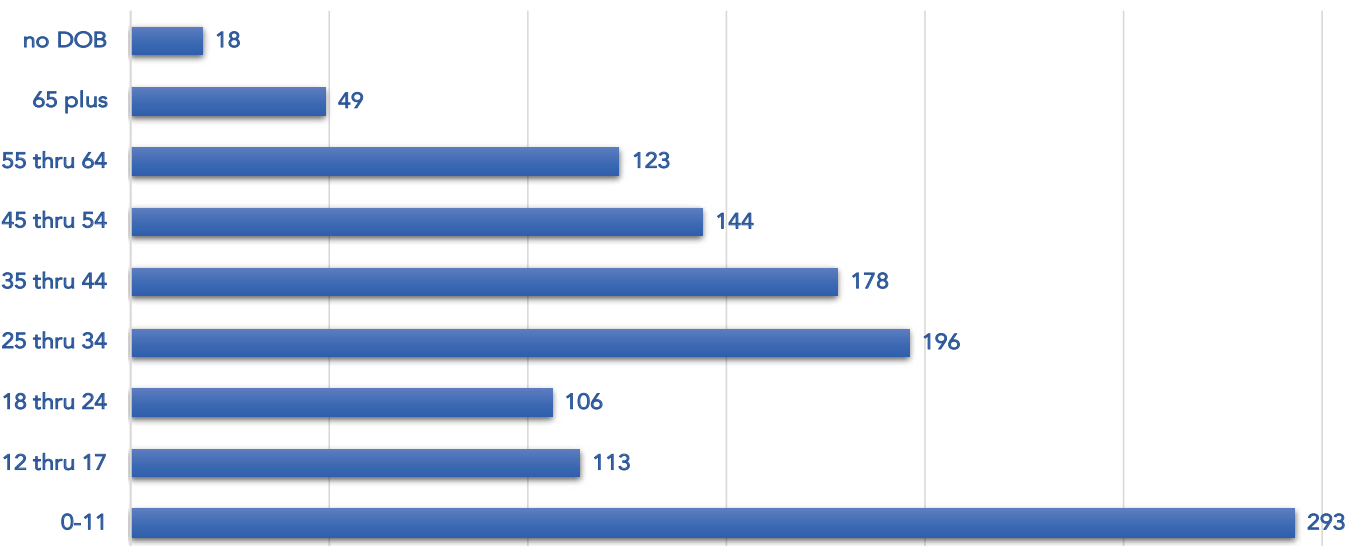
## SERVICE USERS ON THE KENAI PENINSULA 2019

This graphic shows data collected by AKHMIS indicating the number of individuals who utilized the different types of services provided, including homelessness prevention programs. There are limitations to this data as this count does not include other arrangements like living with friends or family, "couch surfing," or "doubled up" situations. In addition, the AKHMIS data does not account for homeless services organizations that do not participate in AKHMIS including domestic violence service providers. What can be concluded from these numbers is the importance of prevention services in interrupting the cycle of homelessness and providing resources to those in need.

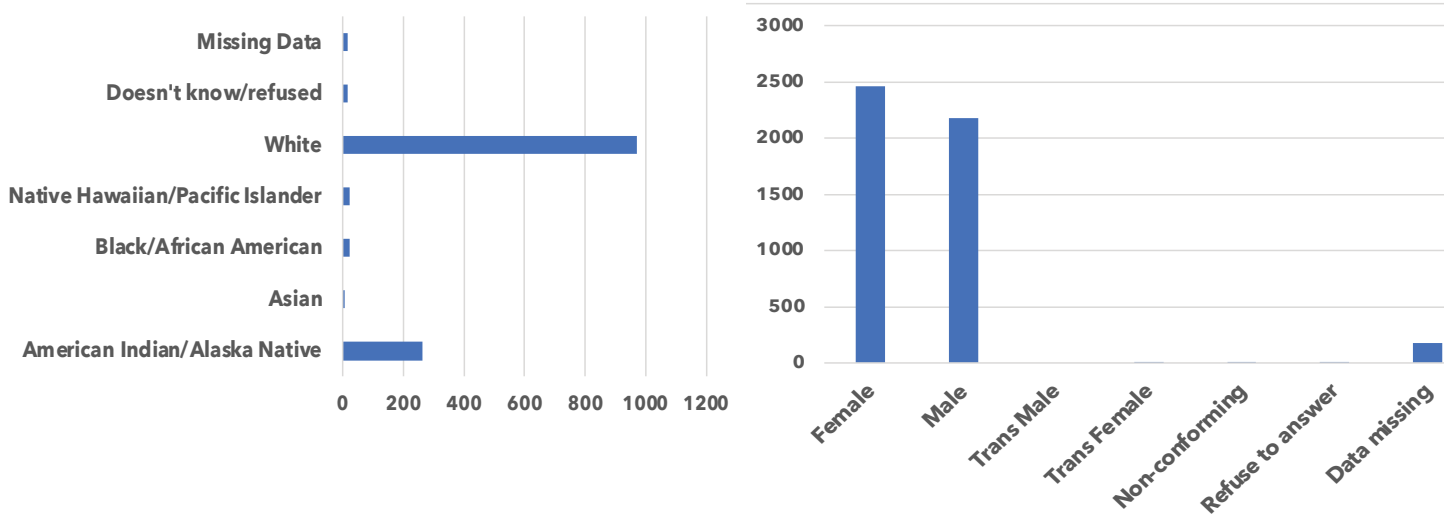


## AGE OF SERVICE USERS ON THE KENAI PENINSULA 2019

Demographics and information on living situations and reasons for homelessness suggest many of those experiencing homelessness on the Peninsula are predominantly young children and families.



## RACE AND GENDER OF SERVICE USERS ON THE KENAI PENINSULA 2019



## REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

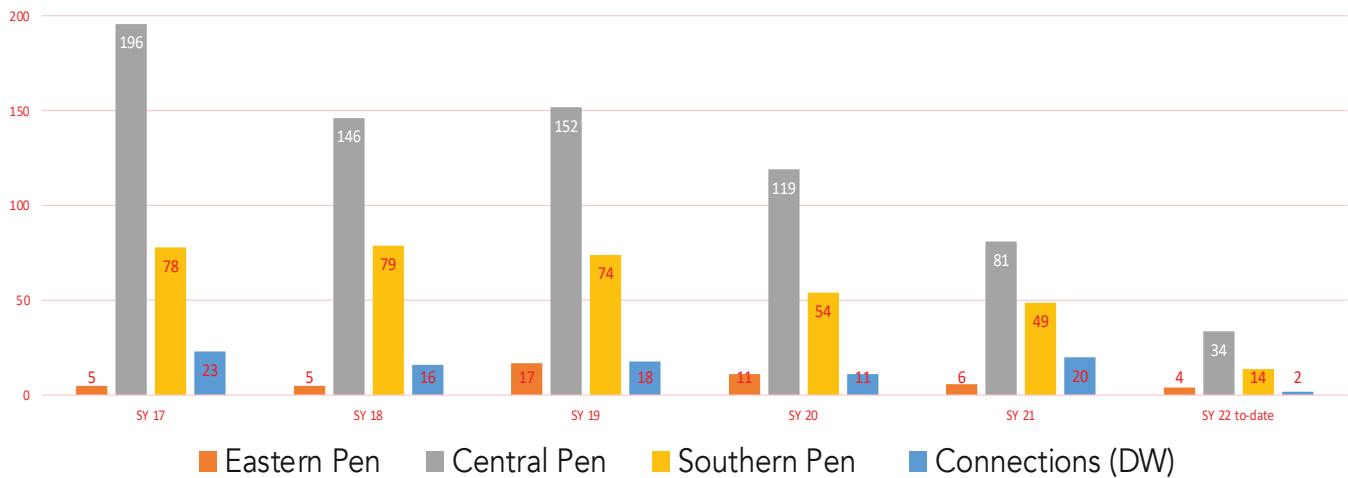
During the collection of demographic data at the Project Homeless Connect event in 2019, participants and service users were also asked about the reasons they were currently experiencing homelessness. As evidenced by the top response of "other," the results showed that there are a wide variety of reasons people experience homelessness. After "other," the top three reasons are loss of job, illness or injury, and domestic violence. These reasons don't reflect common assumptions held by many that addiction is the primary cause of homelessness.

*\*Other includes: landlord issues, problem with current housing, loss of benefits, lost home to fire, no work, home not habitable, death in family, property taxes, lack of funds, asked to move out, own choice, can't find work, not enough summer work, natural disaster (earthquake)*

Primary Reason	Percentage
Other*	21%
Loss of Job	19%
Illness / Injury	15%
Domestic Violence	14%
Substance Abuse	4%
Divorce	4%
N/A	4%
Lease Violation	3%
Jail / Prison Release	3%
Work hours cut	2%
Rent / Utility Increase	2%
Family Dispute	2%
Loss of Roommate	2%
Eviction	2%
New to Community	2%
Treatment Center Release	1%
Aged out Foster Care	0

## YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Data from the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District tells us how many youths were experiencing homelessness or who were "Youths in Transition." These numbers are in addition to the AKHMIS data, with very few duplicates estimated. The numbers are organized according to regions across the Kenai Peninsula. The number of youth experiencing homelessness is significant.



## TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

In addition to the aggregate and PIT data from AKHMIS, the Coalition also collected single data points from organizations, providers, facilities, agencies, and administrators. Most of these numbers are not included in the AKHMIS data, and while duplication is possible, it is estimated to be very low. Those who provided these data points emphasized that these numbers were likely an undercount. With that in mind, the Coalition estimated the number of those experiencing homelessness in 2019 to be approximately 895 individuals.

Domestic Violence	207
Temporary Housing (Recovery/mental health)	21
Permanent Housing (previously homeless)	300
Emergency Lodging	59
Services (hotel vouchers)	10
Youth experiencing homelessness	261
Unsheltered	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>895</b>

## DATA THEMES

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In order to understand the scope of homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula and inform this strategic plan, the Coalition analyzed available data from sources across the region. Collecting and combining the data sources demonstrated a clear need for a more centralized, collaborative, and comprehensive data collection system. Important themes emerged as the Coalition heard from the public and analyzed the data. These include:

- There is a need for improved data collection system coordinating with HMIS.
- There is a need for more hospital, law enforcement and tribal program data.
- Continue strong prevention programming, there are significant numbers of people at-risk.
- Chronic homelessness figures are low, however definition should be understood.
- A range of reasons contribute to homelessness, leading causes are loss of job, or illness/injury, and domestic violence.
- Emergency lodging vouchers are a high-cost solution.
- Emergency cold weather shelter is supported.
- A more thorough understanding is needed of informal arrangements, "doubled up," and "couch surfing" situations.
- Most people experiencing homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula are youth and families.

While this data is limited, the estimated number of 895 people gives the Coalition a starting point from which to develop the strategic plan for 2022 to 2027. This estimate also demonstrates that the problem of homelessness among individuals and families is growing. In 2007 ISER estimated that between 400-500 people on the Kenai Peninsula experience homelessness per year; the 2019 estimate is close to 900. The data overview demonstrates that there is a clear need for services, supports, housing, and prevention programming on the Kenai Peninsula. The strategic long-range plan to address homelessness will guide this important work.



# FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

## PRIORITY AREA - DATA



*Timely and accurate data is essential to making strategic decisions on housing, facilities, and homelessness services.*

## STRATEGIES

**1. DATA COLLECTION** Evaluate and consider the best alternatives for improving the data collection and analysis on homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.

### ACTIONS

- a. Analyze and evaluate how similar communities are collecting data.
- b. Consider improving collection and management methods using new and advanced technologies.
- c. Design and implement new data collection strategies based on best practices research and identified data gaps.

**2. DATA GAPS** Identify gaps in data collection on the Kenai Peninsula and design strategies to better gather data across systems and agencies.

### ACTIONS

- a. Work with coalition partners to first identify all data collection systems, then implement strategies to pull all data systems together (HMIS, DVIMS, CDVSA) for a more compre-

hensive view of homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.

- b. Identify methods to better understand and collect data on practices like “couch surfing” and/or “doubling up” housing situations.

**3. DATA SHARING** Coordinate a robust process for shared data collection.

### ACTIONS

- a. Work with partners to expand access to HMIS data and better educate stakeholders on how to use, collect, and understand data from both HMIS and data that is not reported through HMIS.
- b. Evaluate and consider new and innovative technologies to collect, manage, and share data on homelessness, on the Kenai Peninsula.
- c. Prioritize the development of a more coordinated intake process across systems and services.

**4. LONG-TERM PLANNING** Build long-term sustainable capacity to support data collection and coordination.

### ACTIONS

- a. Work with Kenai Peninsula Borough to hire housing coordinator to coordinate data collection and data sharing for the Kenai Peninsula.
- b. Establish a transition plan for this responsibility after year three of support.

**5. DATA MESSAGING** Leverage the data to communi-

cate the story of homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.

### ACTIONS

- a. Use stories and data to demonstrate the “cost of the status quo” and use insights to better educate the community and policy makers on the homelessness problem on the Kenai Peninsula.

## PRIORITY AREA - HOUSING & FACILITIES



*Apply Built for Zero approach to creating and sustaining a coordinated system of housing and services on the Kenai Peninsula.*

## STRATEGIES

**1. EMERGENCY/COLD-WEATHER SHELTER** Prioritize an emergency/cold-weather shelter facility.

**2. CONTINUUM OF HOUSING SOLUTIONS** Address the continuum of housing needs including preven-

tion, emergency shelter, transitional, and permanent housing.

### ACTIONS

- a. Consider all possible strategies for meeting needs both locally and regionally.
- b. Coordinate system development.

## 3. YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Evaluate and consider the reasons behind youth homelessness and identify strategic actions to meet their specific housing needs.

### ACTIONS

- a. Analyze and evaluate what other similar communities are doing to address youth homelessness.
- b. Use data to understand the scope of youth housing needs on the Kenai Peninsula.

**4. DATA-INFORMED PLANNING** Establish data-informed size and capacity goals for housing, programs and facilities.

### ACTIONS

- a. Consider known data as a factor when determining size and capacity of new development.
- b. As new data becomes available, allow for system flexibility to meet shifting needs.

**5. INVENTORY** Conduct an inventory of available properties, facilities, and housing options on the Kenai Peninsula.

### ACTIONS

- a. Engage realtors, developers, and other partners in efforts to conduct an inventory.
- b. Share available inventory with coalition partners to assist with planning and development.

## Built for Zero:

**A movement of over 80 communities working to measurably end homelessness, one population at a time. Led by the nonprofit Community Solutions, Built for Zero is a methodology, a movement, and proof of what is possible. Communities in Built for Zero embrace a data-driven strategy to reach functional zero, a state where local systems are actively reducing and ending homelessness so it remains rare and brief for a population.**

**Learn more:**  
**<https://www.joinbuiltforzero.org/our-approach/>**

**6. ADDRESS BARRIERS** Identify ways to address barriers to federal, state, and local licensing requirements for a wider array of properties and facilities.

**ACTIONS**

- a. Identify barriers in facility permitting process through stakeholder interviews and discussions.
- b. Consult with local authorities to better understand Fire Marshall codes, relevant policies, sprinkler systems and egress, and retrofit requirements.
- c. Identify ways to ensure that insurance and liability issues in project and program planning activities are understood and addressed.
- d. Leverage volunteers with expertise to help provide resources and technical assistance to programs wishing to provide shelter options.
- e. Identify targeted small funding opportunities to address licensing barriers to increase available shelter options.

**7. FUNDING STRATEGIES** Develop collaborative funding strategies, including an inventory of available grants and low-income housing opportunities.

**ACTIONS**

- a. Identify grants and funding sources such as individual donations, private foundations, federal, state, city, borough and other funding sources.
- b. Compile, centralize, share, and inventory funding opportunities.
- c. Develop a funding strategy and support Kenai Peninsula partners in their funding strategies.
- d. Explore low-income housing incentives as part of any funding strategy.

**8. CAPACITY** Secure funding and support for local capacity-building, including the hiring of a housing and data coordinator.

**ACTIONS**

- a. Engage with cities and borough in the implementation of housing development.
- b. Leverage other key staff positions to help coordinate strategic plan implementation activities.
- c. Identify long-term support needs on the Kenai Peninsula.

**PRIORITY AREA - EDUCATION & AWARENESS**



*Increased awareness of homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula can combat the stigma and engage the larger community in finding solutions.*

**STRATEGIES**

**1. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN** Coordinate a robust communications strategy using existing channels and established organizations to highlight stories of success and solutions to homelessness using local print media, radio, and social media.

**ACTIONS**

- a. Finalize all branding (logo, materials, etc.)
- b. Define target audience, conduct market research on their perceptions, and learn how they get their information.
- c. Develop a concise data summary and context-

tual overview so it is available to highlight when talking about the strategic plan.

- d. Consistently provide testimony into public record at city council and borough assembly meetings. Repeat at various public forums.
- e. Use data from other locations to show how programs can be successful.
- f. Share stories in printed materials such as flyers.
- g. Achieve consensus on messaging, then initiate regular updates on radio and in newspaper.
- h. Social media – once branding finalized, consider best approach to advertise meetings; provide updates and share stories and data.

**2. MESSAGING** Use messaging that is clear, consistent, and compelling.

#### **ACTIONS**

- a. Develop elevator speech to clarify message.
- b. Host workshops for advocates to practice their elevator speeches.
- c. Agree on a consistent message when audiences ask: “what can we do?”

**3. STORIES** Share data, as well as personal experiences and anecdotes, to tell the stories and address the stigma associated with those experiencing homelessness on Kenai Peninsula.

#### **ACTIONS**

- a. Assist interested people in sharing their stories regularly on public radio/local radio..
- b. Start to collect recordings of those willing to share their stories of homelessness.

**4. RELATIONSHIPS** Leverage partnerships to build positive relationships with the larger community, policy makers, funding institutions, faith-based organizations, other coalitions and groups working on homelessness.

#### **ACTIONS**

- a. Build positive relationships with policymakers by meeting with them and keeping them updated and involved.
- b. Engage with members and organizations from the faith community and keep them informed.
- c. Invite community groups to coalition and public meetings.
- d. Have spokesperson at partner meetings to encourage collaboration and consideration of those who are experiencing homelessness.

### **PRIORITY AREA - TRANSPORTATION**



*A robust, strategic, and coordinated transportation system on the Kenai Peninsula would provide increased access to resources and services for those experiencing homelessness.*

### **STRATEGIES**

**1. COORDINATION** Identify ways that transportation across Kenai Peninsula communities can be better coordinated and made more accessible.

#### **ACTIONS**

- a. Conduct a needs assessment and better understand where limited transport options



are impacting access to services.

- b. Inventory existing transportation options across the Kenai Peninsula.
- c. Create a centralized database accessible to the public that maps all routes and schedules of available transportation.
- d. Consider technology as a tool in coordinating and communicating transportation options throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

**2. FUNDING AND RESOURCES** Expand access to transportation through a coordinated funding strategy to address the specific geographic needs of those experiencing homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.

#### ACTIONS

- a. Provide access to resources and education so that stakeholders can better understand which federal, state, and local funding sources support transportation planning.
- b. Leverage partnerships among coalition members, stakeholders, and the community to coordinate funding strategies.

**3. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FOR FACILITIES** Include transportation strategies and partnership options in facility development planning.

#### ACTIONS

- a. Convene key transportation experts on the Kenai Peninsula to assist in individual project transportation plans to increase accessibility.

**4. LONG-TERM** Ensure that there are systems of transportation for people experiencing homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula that are consistent, reliable, and sustainable over the longer-term.

#### ACTIONS

- a. Coordinate with already existing transportation planning efforts to establish a seat at the table to address homelessness transportation needs on the Kenai Peninsula.
- b. Assign a liaison on behalf of the Coalition to participate in transportation planning discussions and share information back to the Coalition on how to best advocate.

### PRIORITY AREA - GOVERNANCE & IMPLEMENTATION



*An aligned and coordinated approach would ensure the transparent and accountable implementation of the strategic plan for homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.*

## STRATEGIES

**1. STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION** Implement the strategic plan through the Kenai Peninsula Homelessness Coalition.

#### ACTIONS

- a. Create annual calendar of activities including all Coalition and workgroup meetings.
- b. Develop annual workplan using strategic plan framework.
- c. Establish roles and responsibilities (organizational & individual) for developing and implementing annual workplans.

**2. DECISION-MAKING** Establish a formal organizational process to carry out the work of the plan and consider key decisions collaboratively through the Coalition.

#### **ACTIONS**

- a. Establish working groups or committees within the Coalition to carry out work in the priority areas.
- b. Develop an organizational structure to guide the Coalition's work.
- c. Agree on a decision-making method at the Coalition level and at the workgroup level to guide the work of the Coalition.

**3. PARTNERSHIPS** Expand KPHC participation to include strategic local and regional partnerships.

#### **ACTIONS**

- a. Map stakeholders and identify who should be at the table.

- b. Identify funding gaps by considering where the Coalition may not be utilizing funding collaboratively.

- c. Develop a strategy to work with the school board, local city councils, borough assembly, and state legislature to include advocacy, alignment with existing strategic plans, and ways to leverage funding opportunities.

**4. LONG TERM** Evaluate and consider the best alternatives for the governance of programs and facilities for homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula.

#### **ACTIONS**

- a. Develop a funding strategy to support the Coalition's work with a timeline for the next 5 years.
- b. Work with Coalition members and funders to hire a housing coordinator who could provide administrative support as well as work on data coordination and long-term plan implementation.



# CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

## A ROADMAP

The priorities, strategies and actions outlined in this plan establish a roadmap to helping individuals and families experiencing homelessness achieve stability. This plan was a collaborative effort that convened a sizeable and diverse group of local stakeholders interested in reducing homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula. In the development of this plan the Kenai Peninsula Homelessness Coalition engaged the community and sought input and feedback from the public as well as those who have extensive experience working in the field. The result is this robust strategic plan to address homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula with priority areas, strategies to address these priorities, and action plans to guide implementation.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Much of the work contained in this plan is dependent on the support of volunteers, funders, service providers, faith leaders, policymakers, taxpayers, and many others. Coalition members will commit to engaging the community and those interested in working to reduce homelessness during each step of the plan.

## TAKE ACTION!

This strategic plan document will be in place for a period of five years. Implementation is scheduled to begin in early 2022. To volunteer for implementation activities, please visit: [kenaipeninsulahomeless.org](https://kenaipeninsulahomeless.org) and follow the instructions to join the Coalition.



# CONTINUUM OF HOUSING SOLUTIONS

**EMERGENCY SHELTER (ES)** - Any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements. ES is also "any facility with overnight sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless."

**TRANSITIONAL HOUSING (TH)** - Transitional housing is designed to provide individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing. Transitional housing may be used to cover the costs of up to 24 months of housing with accompanying supportive services. Program participants must have a lease (or sublease) or occupancy agreement in place when residing in transitional housing.

**PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (PSH)** - Permanent housing, with no time limit, provided to clients who were experiencing homelessness when accepted into the project. This housing comes with supportive services and clients are required to have a disabling condition to qualify for these project types. Additionally, most PSH project types are dedicated to serve clients experiencing chronic homelessness.

**PERMANENT HOUSING, NO DISABILITY REQUIRED or OTHER PERMANENT HOUSING (OPH)** - Permanent housing, with no time limit, provided to clients who were experiencing homelessness when accepted into the project. This housing is not dedicated to clients with a disabling condition.

**SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (SS)** - Services provided to clients, independent of housing. Most of these project types are case management services that are provided separate from, or in conjunction with, shelter or longer-term housing.

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION (HP)** - Services provided to clients who are at-risk of experiencing homelessness, but not yet experiencing literal homelessness.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Programs of HUD 2020. <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/Main/documents/HUDPrograms2020.pdf>



# GLOSSARY

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**Built for Zero:** A movement of over 80 communities working to measurably end homelessness, one population at a time. Led by the nonprofit Community Solutions, Built for Zero is a methodology, a movement, and proof of what is possible. Communities in Built for Zero embrace a data-driven strategy to reach functional zero, a state where local systems are actively reducing and ending homelessness so it remains rare and brief for a population. *Built for Zero - The Approach* <https://www.joinbuiltforzero.org/our-approach/>

**Coordinated Entry:** Coordinated Entry is a triage process intended to quickly connect individuals experiencing homelessness to necessary resources. Coordinated Entry is a federally mandated program that takes into consideration that communities rarely have enough resources in the community for all in need. Its aim is threefold: to prioritize the most vulnerable for the limited services that exist; streamline the experience for both those requesting assistance and service providers; provide data, allowing for informed decisions regarding the structure of current services as well as the need for new services.

**Continuum of Care (CoC):** The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is designed to promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. The program provides funding for efforts by non-profit providers and state and local governments to quickly rehouse individuals and families experiencing homelessness while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to individuals, families, and communities that is caused by homelessness. The CoC Program also promotes access to mainstream programs and optimizes self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

**Doubled-up:** "Doubled up" refers to an individual or family who is unable to maintain independent housing and is forced to stay with friends or family members, often in overcrowded conditions. This can include "couch surfing." The federal McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness, [...] includes students living doubled up. *Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness - FAQ* <https://www.icphusa.org/faq/>

**Emergency Shelter (ES):** Any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements. ES is also "any facility with over- night sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless."

**Homelessness:** While it is defined in several ways by various federal departments, the Department of Housing and Urban Development defines homelessness as people who fit any of these criteria:

- Live in a place not meant for human habitation or shelter.
- Families that have children or unaccompanied youth that have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 60 or more days.
- Families that have children or unaccompanied youth that have had two or more moves in the last 60 days, and who are likely to continue to be unstably housed because of disability or

- multiple other barriers to employment.
- Individuals who are likely to lose their housing within two weeks.

**Housing First:** Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness, and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. Housing First is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing. Individuals do not need to meet certain criteria such as sobriety or having a job to qualify. Housing is followed by provision of additional supports and services as needed.

**Kenai Peninsula Homelessness Coalition (KPHC):** The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Homelessness Coalition is to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness achieve stability. To accomplish this mission, the Coalition, an organization of agencies, individuals, advocates, non-profits, and service providers, has developed a five-year strategic plan to help communities implement data-driven strategies. KPHC supports the work of the CoC as well as expanded work through a membership that includes all organizations helping address homelessness on the Kenai Peninsula beyond those receiving HUD funding or those that fall under AKHMIS.

**Permanent Supportive/Supported Housing:** Provides long-term housing and supportive services to families and people with disabilities to help keep people in housing. Supportive services may include:

- Case management
- Mental health care
- Educational services
- Support groups
- Life skills training

**Point In Time (PIT) Count:** A point-in-time count is an unduplicated count on a single night of the people in a community who are experiencing homelessness that includes both sheltered and unsheltered populations. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that communities receiving federal funds annually conduct a count of all sheltered people in the last week of January. The goal of the PIT is to count all people who are utilizing emergency shelter, transitional housing, or are unsheltered on a single day of the year. This information can assist policy makers to target resources in the fight to end homelessness and is used by US Congress to establish funding levels for homeless programs.

**Project Homeless Connect:** Project Homeless Connect is typically a one-day event offered by the Kenai Peninsula Continuum of Care. The aim is to offer local resources that someone experiencing homelessness, or near-homelessness, might need. In a typical event, volunteers spend hours guiding attendees of all ages to stations throughout one venue, allowing each individual to get what most residents consider basic necessities: haircuts, animal care via veterinarians, massages, warm clothing, eyeglasses, substance use help, mental care, and more. Vendors and volunteers collaborate to find short and long-term solutions for each individual.

**Transitional Housing (TH):** A federally funded program that provides a supportive, yet temporary type of accommodation that is meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing by offering structure, supervision, support, life skills, education, etc.

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