Community Service Gaps

The Fairbanks Housing & Homeless Coalition (FHHC) needs your help! We are preparing for our annual strategic planning and need input from the Fairbanks community. Please take a few minutes to help us identify service gaps in the community. We will use this information to determine our next projects. Together we can end homelessness in Fairbanks.

1 Please prioritize which service areas the FHHC should focus on for the next year.

1 Supportive Services (behavioral health services, employment services, case management) 2.72
2 Emergency Shelter (day shelter, expanded shelter for specific populations) 3.24
3 Homelessness Prevention & Diversion 3.41
4 Rapid Re-Housing (short term assistance and support to stabilize people in private market rentals) 3.8
5 Transitional Housing (supportive housing with a duration of one to two years) 3.87
6 Permanent Supportive Housing (supportive housing with an indefinite duration) 3.96
2 What do you feel is the greatest barrier to ending homelessness in Fairbanks and what project would help the community mitigate the barrier?

Safety of homeless women

I'm too new in town to really have a sense of how to answer that. But maybe rent subsidies or raising minimum wage could help because the costs of rental are very high, and whatever is semi-affordable is often a neglected property.

A great barrier to ending homelessness in Fairbanks is the widely-perceived notion that people are homeless due to their own poor choices, and that it is the homeless person's problem and not the community's problem. Or it is downtown Fairbanks' problem and not the problem of somebody who works and lives outside of downtown. A helpful project might be to educate the broader community on facts about how widespread homelessness is, why it happens in the Fairbanks area, and who it happens to. Further, the community could be educated on how the mitigation of homelessness benefits a community at large. And I as a downtown Fairbanks resident would love to know more about what services do exist and how I can contribute to or support these services.

Enabling drinking and drug among the homeless problems via free food handouts, ESP, hospital stays not billing drunks, and no real long term solutions for homelessness

The mindset that we have to choose between 1-6 above, rather recognizing that they are all pieces of the puzzle, and that the puzzle is only solved when they are each in their place. That, and apathy, thinking someone else, some other agency, some other governmental entity, will do it, or should do it. No true recognition by the community that homelessness is a symptom of a community's lack of overall health and wellness.

Outdated thinking and misappropriation of public funds. People experiencing a lack of housing deserve respect and support, it is more effective to invest in housing our neighbors and providing social services than it is to pay for the consequences of not doing so. Defund the police and prioritize housing and holistic health programs. Proactively address the internal and external challenges at an individual level with compassion and dignity rather than waiting to address crime, medical emergencies, and loss of life.

I know a lot of the homeless population in town have an alcohol problem. Instead of taking these people to the drunk tank, there should be a place that helps them sober up safely that isn't jail.

Lack of health including mental health and social services for people in poverty, lack of living wage jobs for people with limited education and training, lack of services for people living with addictions

Not enough housing to support homeless people, not enough awareness of homeless help

Drug and alcohol abuse along with a complete lack of behavioral health care are massive issues contributing to homelessness in Fairbanks, a situation which is further compounded by a lack of affordable, safe housing. There is also no incentive for some people to leave this lifestyle, namely, for a small group of disruptive homeless who are most visible. These individuals face no consequences for breaking the law and disrupting businesses and individuals throughout town. This small percentage of homeless individuals negatively impacts public opinion regarding the homeless members of our community, making life more difficult for others who are trying to improve their situation. While they are also the visible face of a homelessness in Fairbanks and those who garner the most from social services, their behavior overshadows a larger homeless problem that includes families, teenagers, children, and individual adults, many of whom are working individuals that live paycheck to paycheck but are unable to consistently pay rent. These are law abiding citizens who have often faced challenging circumstances and are in need of assistance. These individuals and families are often an overlooked component of homelessness in Fairbanks, which includes a number of people who live out of their cars, including many college students, who simply can't afford rent. Ending the revolving door of the criminal justice system and there being consequences for those who break the law actually would make it safer for those homeless who are trying to improve their situation. When possible, having people who receive services on a long term basis also contribute to bettering the community in a visible way, possibly through community service programs, might also change public perception and it would also provide them with some stake in the community. I'm not suggesting this be forced in all cases, but where appropriate. The recycling program that used to exist was a great program for
Affordable housing

Constructive interpersonal communication and conflict negotiation skills. Substance addiction treatment.

Stronger support services for homelessness prevention is lacking in the community. Wellness activities starting in adolescence and continuing into adulthood to promote self esteem.

Rental prices

A day shelter offering a safe environment and behavioral support along with long term housing.

Refusing people who are under the influence. Shelters that push religious agendas.

Getting them to accept the help, focused detox

Mental health and substance abuse. Need more service to support people to stay sober and clean so they can keep jobs.

Many of our local shelters have barriers that prevent people from accessing services - specifically sobriety requirements. Harm reduction programs, like Housing First, are PROVEN to work. I believe that if we stopped preventing people from accessing emergency housing (& subsequent transitional housing programs), there would be less people who were homeless.

Access to mental health and substance abuse services.

High cost of rent and utilities, and lack of small units for single people or couples. I believe Fairbanks lacks affordable studios and one bedroom units for people living on low incomes.

Detox center that is available for people with clothing and necessities a safe place for them to go to when in bad situations

1. Substance abuse. 2. Mental illness. 3. Agencies enabling unhealthy behavior. This often causes a gift between the person needing help and the friends and family members trying to help them.

Resources stretched for housing for mental health recipients. Need for more in home care once housing is received.

Enabling

Having services better address mental illness and chronic alcohol abuse. More than just the Emergency Service Patrol picking people up and taking them to the Sobering Center or Detox. Having audited programs for people to live at sober transitioning homes where they are to remain sober with healthcare available to them.

Desire of homeless population to participate. Sadly I have found from experience that some individuals prefer homelessness. In my opinion helping willing family members/friends to support some would be the most effective outreach.

Many homeless peoples face multiple adverse effects. Notably the native community as a result of generational Trauma. In an effort to cope with many adversities, there is a need in so many aspects. Mental health could maybe use some rooms available in addition to a flexible schedule while providing educational, mental health, employment, financial, and community support services. After that, there is a need for housing and assistance with programs that can help with furnishing and food etc.

Mental health care, more in patient, emergency mental health care

Lack of funding

The lack of affordable housing

The homeless population's desire to seek help.
Lack of housing, case management and of course, funds

Affordable housing

Racial apathy.

Cold weather plan, Warming Center/Day Shelter

Public (e.g., state, city, FNSB) funding for more affordable housing in FNSB.

insufficient number of available beds for specific population

Barriers include supportive services; providing resources to those who need them; available funding and community partners.

Affordable housing, housing that will work with crime backgrounds and evictions.

Lack of adequate mental health and addiction services. Provision of these services to meet emergency and long term needs.

Christianity. Too many services force religion on people who needs help, AND actively discriminate and make resources unsafe for LGBTQ people. All services NEED to be secular, religion pushes too many people out. Every service NEEDS to stop religious affiliation, especially when it comes to controlling the finances of service providers (for example, FYA should be able to hand out condoms).

The greatest barrier to ending homelessness in Fairbanks is the lack of behavioral health services. We need these services so that these people can become stable enough to get them off the streets.

Emergency shelter besides the Rescue Mission. Maybe one that is strict regarding intoxication and can house families together?

I feel that a better resourced mental health system would help...more permanent housing options

Mental health, and prioritizing ideas from the Native community on how to assist their populations economically, educationally, nutritionally, psychologically, and just as making them feel more at home with a greater sense of belonging and importance in Fairbanks.

More support for 18-24 year olds and getting them job skills, housing, life skills, transitional support, resources, education from short to long term, employment and support while on the job.

Affordable housing that has supportive services in place

Barriers: unemployment and mental health/Substance Abuse conditions. Project: Helping individuals seek help and stay in treatment, and a job fair

Behavioral health follow up post release from ANY facility

Cost of adequate housing

The lack of affordable and safe housing here in Fairbanks and North Pole, building more apartment complexes that are affordable could help

Rental screenings are often an issue.

I have no idea,

Drug use and mental illness

Access to housing and work within a reasonable distance. Work and education shuttle programs possibly?
I feel I am not well enough informed to intelligently name one thing, however, it seems that there is a need for enhanced mental health services leading to stabilization combined with opportunities to acquire relevant, marketable skills and real places to use those skills would help mitigate.

I think it’s untreated trauma and resulting substance use. Community needs to work on making mental health services more accessible.

Affordable housing, finding/building housing that would allow single people to afford a unit on a lower income.

Money

Most residents do not interact with homeless people on a regular basis other than to see them begging at stores or hanging around the Library and bus depot. More outreach would be a good thing, both for the homeless folks and to bring awareness to the rest of the community

Lack of community support services, smaller case loads for Guardians, and lack of housing for mentally ill. More funds from the State are needed.

Those that have mental issues and drug users

Affordable, safe housing

Addiction/mental health

Behavioral health services coupled with help for substance abuse. Avenue for entry to PSH or RRH for these individuals...Crisis Now conversations were hopeful.

Communicating with the people at their level. Some sort of program that can house and get them through their addiction/mental health issues. Probably something like housing first but different. Mental Health is probably biggest issue. Warming Center/Day Shelter and any agency that can get the PATH Grant or similar grant.

There are not enough emergency or rapid response services. I believe a comprehensive community outreach with educational program(s) is needed along with strong community involvement and support. In addition local leadership awareness and commitment to solving the issue.

The City Council is the biggest barrier and the non-action from the council to recognize the problem and make strategic decisions that address the core issues of homelessness: mental illness, sexual abuse, substance abuse, etc. The best thing is to elect people who care and are willing to do difficult community organizing to actually help this population.

Mental health and substance abuse is the biggest part of being homeless and if we can figure out how to help the people that have been put on the back burner for so long I feel like we will be able to do something about homelessness

I think we should have a shelter for people with Mental Health issues that find the Rescue Mission overwhelming. 24 hour admission maybe like the warming center where people can just sleep for awhile and take a shower.

Available housing

mental health services are lacking in this community

I think one of the greatest barriers is that not enough people care. There are a lot of people in this community that perceive the issue to be something that law enforcement, community planning, or the mayors themselves need to take care of. While I am in full support of them taking ownership in the ways they could be better in their roles, developing action plans to contribute to homelessness prevention and diversion, and work together... this is not the way homelessness is treated in other communities. Its a COMMUNITY WIDE effort. Honestly, if more people in this community connected with a sense of ownership for their/our spaces, I think that more people would also be able to see the small differences that they can make to help with this homelessness crisis in our Fairbanks. I just want more connectedness between Fairbanksans and Fairbanks. I think the turnover in our population prevents many from trying to form a bond with this city/borough, requiring a few people to do all of the shouldering for "burdens" (agh!) like the homeless population. "Not my problem" mentality - yet its a problem for them when they are walking around downtown in the evening "feeling unsafe".
Mental health treatment - lots of people have no self esteem, or a case manager that sticks with you through the hardest things, someone in your boat cheering you on, call them "life skills coaches"?

Mental health issues and addictions, provide better treatment facilities

Wellness and Prevention and Behavioral Health and Child Abuse and Neglect

Limited housing, too many barriers for people with criminal histories for housing and employment

Poorly treated or untreated mental health issues/Supportive services

Wrap around case management that crosses health, mental health, addiction, employment and other needs

Mental health services and support

We need a low barrier emergency shelter in Fairbanks - #2

mental and behavioral health

We have a lack of mental health services and an ACT/ICM team would help.

### 3 Please rate Fairbanks' current homelessness prevention and diversion capacity

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4 Please rate Fairbanks' current Rapid Re-Housing capacity

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5 Please rate Fairbanks' current supportive housing capacity

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6 Please rate Fairbanks' behavioral health services for people with a housing barrier

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Standard Deviation: 6.57
Weighted Average: 2.68 / 10

7 Please rate Fairbanks' employment services for people with a housing barrier

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Standard Deviation: 5.45
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Please rate Fairbanks’ senior housing capacity

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Significant Service Gap - Fully Meets Demand

Please rate Fairbanks’ street / encampment outreach capacity

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Significant Service Gap - Fully Meets Demand
In downtown Fairbanks especially, I often see people who appear to be homeless, inebriated, in poor health, or women/youth who are on the streets and un-protected. This is especially disturbing if people are passed out, fighting with one another, bleeding, or screaming obscenities - these scenarios are not uncommon. These problems shouldn't be merely swept under the rug. What can individuals from the community do to help in these situations? What services are available to help those in crisis or in need? Thanks for all you do.

Travel barriers too (i.e. someone comes to Fairbanks and is then stuck due to lack of funds to fly back to villages)

Lack of affordable housing, inadequate supports for navigating the systems necessary to seek housing support, barriers to employment, differentiation between men and women in access to services, lack of safety and respect deters homeless individuals from staying at the Rescue Mission even when they need to, inadequate outreach and access to substance abuse treatment, especially for youth who are homeless.

Safe quality housing, physical & mental healthcare, reliable transportation, non-police response to people experiencing socioeconomic trauma.

I don't feel there are enough mental health facilities in this town especially considering how high the suicide rate is in Alaska.

Mental health services are a mess. Jail and the hospital are not the way to address mental illness for people who don't earn a living wage. Not all homeless people are mentally ill, but the mentally ill are the ones with the least equipped to deal with poverty and homelessness. Substance dependency is a close second, but there is more possibility of change for those who struggle with addictions, steep though the possibility of change may be. The COVID-19 pandemic brings home the fact to all of us that there are not sufficient public bathrooms in Fairbanks, much less places to shelter or live.

Lack of awareness

I don't know what half of these questions even refer to, so I would say there is a lack of communication regarding programs that may exist. I have no clue what much of the terminology you are using represents, making it hard to respond to the survey. These are technical terms, which may be familiar to those who work within the system, but to the average person "supportive housing capacity" or "encampment outreach capacity" are not familiar concepts. Obviously, one has to do with encampments, but beyond that, I have no idea what it entails. And it will not let me uncheck my initial response!

Homeless Youth and dedicated homeless individuals with mental health issues

Substance abuse and mental health treatment. Communication skills workshops.

I haven't seen a street outreach encampment.

We need free Covid testing that accommodates people without a car. Drive-through= must have a car (or get a ride and potentially expose that person)

Grant funding not properly allocated. Lack of programs for homeless and housing rental prices are astronomical

Coordinations

Safe permanent housing that is nondenominational and doesn't require the occupant do anything except be seen by doctors and mental health professionals

Mental health and substance abuse treatment with active aftercare.
There is nowhere in this town that unhoused LGBTQ folks feel safe & too few resources for people struggling with addiction. No one gets sober on the streets, yet the primary shelter in this town requires sobriety - harm reduction programs work. Our unhoused LGBTQ friends don’t feel safe at their current local option & most remain unsheltered rather than go there. We need fewer barriers to service for our most vulnerable community members.

Access to services (behavioral and mental health, safe place to be during the day, sober center, and access to funds to prevent housing (more then just a one time assistance in a life time).

Lack of consistency in care (high turnover in caring or client service positions, esp. due to low pay or toxic work environments) unstable grant funding or ineffective use of grant funds, lack of involvement or buy in from Native Corporations, racial stereotypes against Alaska Natives in our community, lack of safe places for people under the influence who need a place to stay, lack of information provided to the general community about resources and shelter options.

Volunteers feeding the hungry checking on the homeless or reaching out when possible.

I see that in some areas too much help is given which removes the incentive for healthier choices and furthers the downward spiral. I wish more effort was put into health needs to include substance abuse treatment and mental health care. I wish more effort was put into engaging people in productive activities. I wish that the programs had higher expectations and minimum requirements. My close childhood friend has told me about how great life is with free money and housing and that he parties without worry. Before, he relied on the kindness of friends and relatives. We held him accountable, we paid him to help with chores or took him to work. We encouraged him to improve his situation. Now that the government is involved, we have lost all hope and he no longer speaks to his parents or children. When I talk with him and his friends, they make it sound as if they are accountable to no one, and they do what they like. I feel like we have lost him to drugs and alcohol even though he still lives. I guess we really lost him to the system.

Mental health seems to rate with alcohol/addiction/financial reasons a person becomes homeless.

Mental health and addiction services

I feel that there are plenty of quick fix solutions to help people stay off the street for the night. There are big gaps in addressing mental illness and chronic alcohol abuse as factors for homelessness though. The sober living homes right now aren’t requiring people to stay sober so it just creates a flawed system. I don’t pretend to have any or all of the answers to help address that issue. I think it would be nice to see some of the money being used for CSP and other similar programs go towards outreach programs that help people get sober and stay sober and find work.

See above.

People need help with getting back on their feet and support to be self sufficient but also empathetic to their loved reality.

Mental health clinicians, counselors and case managers

Lack of funding means lack of available spaces.

Affordable housing that doesn’t take forever for a person to get into.

Not enough money and not enough services to meet the multiple needs

social services for those in need

There is little actual hands-on involvement by the community, outside of the professional organizations that work on these issues.

Housing for Mental Health, Assisted Living Housing

Comprehensive housing solutions for at-risk youth and women (especially women with children).

senior housing

Housing and mental health services are the biggest gaps I see on a daily basis.
Housing and mental health services are the biggest gaps I see on a daily basis.

People just needs homes, no questions asked, no strings attached.

Behavioral health is a huge service gap I see in the community

Weak community mental health system.....housing.....

Mental health, cultural awareness/inclusion, and public health that is more conscious of Native needs.

18-24 year olds

Intra community engagements, neighborhood organizations with representatives; fix from the inside out.

adequate low cost housing, behavioral health services, health care services

Lack of mental health services and substance abuse treatment especially for those experiencing homelessness

Meth prevention and treatment is huge and the use is rampant.

Addictions

Drug rehabilitation, mental illness counseling, job skills taught

Warm temporary and transitional housing overall.

I need to educate myself. I feel unable to rate most of these categories based upon true knowledge. One gap I am aware of is a safe place during the day when shelters are not available. The library serves this purpose for many but with COVID closures, it was evident that there were not other daytime options to fill this need.

Addictions & mental health service, as well as transportation for those seeking to utilize services.

Affordable transportation, affordable housing for low income w/out assistance

Homeless people in the Winter

One big gap is for seniors with behavioral and addiction issues. They are preyed upon by others even in supported housing. There needs to be a safe place for them.

Supportive housing environment for the mentally ill who need guidance, medication reminders, jobs, and other supports that promote success and health.

Lazy officials in positions of office who talk to much and do so little. Money being redirected to those who lie about their situations just to take advantage of the system.

Lack of housing options for sexual offenders

Long-term Supportive Housing and Elderly Housing

More need for continued case management for those suffering from mental illness after housed, more beds in Assisted Living for extremely vulnerable homeless individuals, faster turnaround for in home care for vulnerable seniors

Transportation.

Housing for people that have Co occurring problems. Lack of a cold weather plan.
A lack of mental and behavioral health services. A lack of inclusive shelters. A lack of supportive services.

Public facilities for a transient population, sanitary stations, especially during COVID; access to housing without religious or substance criteria.

We fall short following up on the people that we talk to and the people that get into their own place. It's like after they get in somewhere they are not going to need any additional support and for some that may be the case for others they will need additional support services.

We are starting the encampment outreach but we need more services especially mental health. When starting the Warming Center/Encampment we were told that 50 people were homeless and we had 126 unduplicated individuals indicating homelessness during April/May. Mental Health services are lacking especially now that all services are delivered through telehealth. Most homeless do not have access.

Lack of resources for individuals with substance abuse problems.

there needs to be more done with mental health for these communities.

I think the public education sector of homelessness prevention and diversion is something huge that we're missing. I could be wrong... but I subscribe to these newsletters, read the paper, listen to KUAC, and am what many would consider an active member of our community. It wasn't until I was at a conference recently when I learned about all of the things Anchorage (I know - it sucks to be Fairbanks and compared to Anchorage, and I KNOW we're doing our best in a lot of ways here) is doing... it got me thinking about what we're missing. I think the public education component on homelessness could really connect the dots for people who view it as a burden that is not their problem.

I've seen a lot of local homeless people having problems getting their IDs replaced. It's always a relative that they have to go through, that they dont talk to anymore. But in order to get a job they need ID. It should be easier for people to get

Prevention

Housing and re-entry programs

Mental health services for all, not only those experiencing homelessness

Easily accessible community behavioral health services (both in terms of enrolling in their services as well as finding their building off Peger Rd)

Lack of knowledge, poor communication. Many services are overwhelmed and understaffed which leads to unreturned phone calls and poor attitudes amongst staff.