

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 2/17/22, 2PM**

## **What is Partnership for Zero?**

Partnership for Zero is a united effort to focus and coordinate resources in targeted geographic areas in order to dramatically reduce unsheltered homelessness. An extraordinary collaboration across government, philanthropy, business, and people with lived experience of homelessness, Partnership for Zero will first launch in Downtown Seattle (and later this year in a set of regional communities) so that the lessons learned in these initial areas can inform expansion of the model to other parts of the county.

The project will be led by the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) and supported by We Are In, a coalition of business, philanthropy, advocates, service providers, and housed and unhoused King County residents who are uniting resources to create the infrastructure — including workforce, data capacity, high-acuity services, and supports for housing and shelter providers — necessary to end homelessness across King County. Funders of the project include: Ballmer Group, who has contributed a lead gift, as well as Alaska Airlines, Amazon, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Champion Foundation, Costco, Expedia Group, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, JP Morgan Chase Pacific Northwest, Kaiser Permanente Washington, Madrona Venture Group, Microsoft Philanthropies, Nordstrom, PATH, Puget Sound Energy, Raikes Foundation, REI, Russell Investments, Schultz Family Foundation, Seattle Foundation, Starbucks, Ste. Michelle Wine Estates, Symetra, T-Mobile, Weyerhaeuser, and Zillow Group.

### **OPERATIONAL GOALS**

Starting with the premise that housing is a basic human need and every human deserves a safe place to live, the goal of Partnership for Zero is to focus and coordinate resources in a targeted geographic area in order to put people experiencing unsheltered homelessness on a path to permanent housing. Once this is accomplished, the KCRHA will maintain the infrastructure necessary to rapidly assist new individuals experiencing homelessness in target areas. Partnership for Zero will provide the region with a model that can be quickly and effectively scaled, with additional resources, to other communities across King County.

### **PARTNERSHIP FOR ZERO APPROACH**

The Partnership for Zero approach is based on an emergency management framework that prioritizes system integration and coordinated resource deployment. This strategy will build infrastructure and add capacity to the system in order to deliver comprehensive services and housing or shelter for those experiencing unsheltered homelessness in target areas, helping to revitalize our communities and providing all residents an opportunity to thrive.

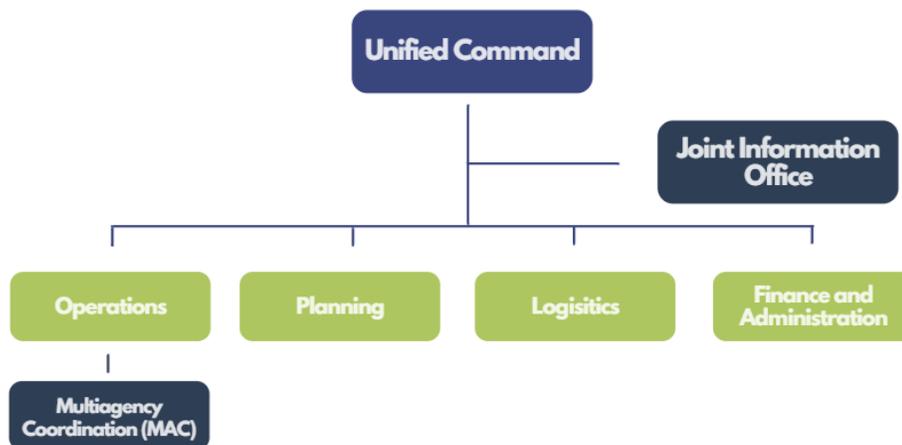
The Partnership for Zero model will be deployed in five phases:

**Phase 1: Coordinating Ramp Up: Development of a Unified Command Center**

An emergency management operation embraces the premise that, in order to address a crisis, there must be a coordinated and targeted activation of resources. The first phase of Partnership for Zero is the creation of a Unified Command Center that will coordinate and streamline response and use of resources in target areas, allowing us to treat this emergency like an emergency.

Unified Command is typically used when more than one agency has incident jurisdiction. With Partnership for Zero, three separate bodies contain incident jurisdiction: the City of Seattle, King County, and the King County Regional Homeless Authority. In the Unified Command model, each jurisdiction maintains equal power to direct emergency management response activities that are carried out by the other units in the Unified Command Center, including the logistics, operations, and planning units, as seen in Figure 1. Together, the jurisdictions collaborate on key decisions related to planning, incident response objectives and resource allocation.

# UNIFIED COMMAND CENTER



**Figure 1.** Unified Command Organizational Structure.

The components of the Unified Command Center are informed by decades of literature about Emergency Management and National Incident Management Systems. The Unified Command overall coordinator will be KCRHA’s Director of Special Projects, Heidi Wiersma.

A brief description of each component is below:

- **Coordinating Body:** The coordinating body includes representatives from the Lived Experience Coalition, the King County Regional Homeless Authority, the King County Department of

Community and Human Services, and the City of Seattle. Representatives will be fully empowered and have decision making authority to allocate and prioritize resources. Participants in the coordinating body will be responsible for establishing daily and weekly objectives, developing plans and tactics for meeting those objectives, and directing the other units in the Unified Command center while supporting key decisions around the deployment of resources.

- **Joint Information Center (JIC):** The Joint Information Center will coordinate communications across jurisdictions. The JIC will play a key role in integrating information about incident response to ensure clear and consistent information. The JIC is also responsible for monitoring public affairs that could destabilize the operation. The JIC will be led by a representative from one of the jurisdictions who will serve as the public information officer, and will include communications and public affairs point people from all three jurisdictions.
- **Operations:** The operations unit will be responsible for developing and implementing strategies and tactics to achieve incident response objectives. The operations unit manages operations as directed by the Coordinating body, and informs the Coordinating body of resource gaps and other supports necessary to achieve incident response objectives. The Operations Unit will also contain a Multi Agency Coordinating Body (MAC). The MAC will include representatives from service providers and key stakeholders in the Downtown Core, such as the Seattle Chamber and the Downtown Seattle Association. MAC unit representatives should be empowered to prioritize and allocate private resources such as funding, property, or personnel. The MAC will have administrative support from KCRHA staff to ensure they successfully integrate into the other components of the Unified Command Center.
- **Planning:** Homelessness is a dynamic problem requiring an adaptive approach. The planning component of the Unified Command model is responsible for collecting and evaluating data to inform decisions made by the Coordinating body. Personnel in this section will play a key role in monitoring resource inventory and needs, preparing status reports, and sharing information about the incident and system response.
- **Logistics:** The logistics component of the Unified Command model is in charge of ground level coordination and development of resources. They also support the Operations and Planning unit by providing insight into resource needs and community feedback on incident response.

### ***Phase 2: Development of By-Name List***

A “By-Name List” includes granular, real time information about who is experiencing unsheltered homelessness in target areas and what they need to move to stability. This essential tool relies on relationships built by outreach workers and enables effective case planning and service matching.

### ***Phase 3: Case Planning and Resource Matching***

This phase comprises an assessment of what services and resources are needed to successfully support people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and get them on the path to stable, permanent housing. We will identify the gaps between available resources and population needs, and expand our infrastructure and capacity accordingly.

With funding from We Are In's business and private partners, KCRHA will hire and manage sufficient staff to do the hard work of caring for people. The workforce will include 15 trained incident responders and up to 30 peer navigators who can provide longitudinal support to get people to stable outcomes. Peer navigators have lived experience of homelessness and an understanding of how the system works and how to access resources, enabling them to establish the trust needed to help people move from homeless to housed.

#### ***Phase 4: Draw Down***

The majority of shelter and housing placements will occur during this phase, with outreach workers and peer navigators facilitating the movement of people into shelter or housing that matches their needs.

#### ***Phase 5: Hold Steady***

Once Phase 4 is complete, KCRHA will maintain the infrastructure necessary to immediately respond to new individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the target areas.

### **PROJECT DURATION, STAFFING, AND DEVELOPMENT**

#### ***Project Duration***

For each of Partnership for Zero's geographic targets — the first being Downtown Seattle — the model will include the five phases above. In Downtown, we expect to reach phase five in what could be as fast as 12 months, though we expect some variance in timeline due to command center development and project staffing, client needs, and the availability of appropriate resources. We are not setting a strict timeline and instead committing to doing whatever is necessary to implement this program successfully — we want to do this once, do it well, and make sure it's sustainable. Partners expect that there will be learning and adjustment over the course of the project and will operate with full transparency to keep the community updated.

Ending homelessness is not an easy task; the problems we are trying to solve reached this level because of years of inattention and underfunding. It requires time and focus to do it right, and this project is approaching the effort in a different way than what has been done before.

#### ***Project Staffing***

With funding from We Are In's business and private partners, KCRHA will hire and manage sufficient staff to do the hard work of caring for people. The workforce will include 15 trained incident responders and up to 30 peer navigators whose lived experience of homelessness and understanding of the system and how to access resources will provide the support needed to get people to stable outcomes.

#### ***Additional Program Development***

There is an identified gap in services for people experiencing homelessness who have significant, high-acuity health or behavioral health challenges and require a therapeutic environment to transition

into more stable forms of long-term care. We anticipate the need for additional capacity in this space, which requires the addition of approximately 150 shelter beds with high-acuity services.

## FAQS

- **What is Partnership for Zero?**

Partnership for Zero is a united effort to focus and coordinate resources in a targeted geographic area to dramatically reduce unsheltered homelessness. The goal of Partnership for Zero is to build a future where homelessness is rare overall and brief when it occurs, by combining resources and investing in targeted infrastructure and capacity to put every person who is experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the path toward permanent housing.

Starting with the premise that housing is a basic human need that everyone should have access to, Partnership for Zero is an extraordinary collaboration across the City of Seattle, King County, and a broad group of businesses, philanthropies, service providers and people with lived experience. Partnership for Zero will launch its initial demonstration project in Downtown Seattle and in a set of regional communities to be named soon, allowing partners to iterate and adjust the model before expanding across King County.

- **How was the Partnership for Zero strategy developed?**

The Partnership for Zero approach was developed by KCRHA leadership in collaboration with the Lived Experience Coalition, the City, the County, and We Are In — a coalition of philanthropies, businesses, service providers, advocates, and both housed and unhoused King County residents — and other community partners.

Ending homelessness is not an easy task; the problems we are trying to solve reached this level because of years of inattention and underfunding. It requires time and focus to do it right — people's lives depend on it — and this partnership is designed to work in a different way than what has been done before.

Partnership for Zero strategically focuses resources on a defined geographic area, treating this emergency like an emergency in order to make visible progress. By focusing resources, Partnership for Zero avoids the trap of spreading resources so thinly that everybody gets something but nobody gets enough to make a difference. Partnership for Zero ensures coordinated resource deployment and adaptive adjustment using real time information.

- **What makes Partnership for Zero's approach unique?**

There are several core tenets of the Partnership for Zero model that differentiate this approach from previous efforts to address homelessness in our region.

- **What is a Unified Command Center?**

The initial phase of Partnership for Zero establishes a Unified Command Center, a key component of an emergency management framework, which will coordinate and streamline the response to unsheltered homelessness in Downtown Seattle. The Unified Command Center includes representatives from the Lived Experience Coalition, the City of Seattle, King County, and the King County Regional Homeless Authority, who are empowered with equal responsibility to:

- Direct resources and access to housing and shelter options;
- Establish daily and weekly objectives and develop plans and tactics for meeting those objectives; and
- Communicate clearly and consistently to the public about progress.

An emergency management operation embraces the premise that, in order to successfully and efficiently address a crisis, there must be a coordinated and targeted activation of resources. The Unified Command Center will coordinate and streamline response and use of resources in target areas, allowing us to treat this emergency like an emergency. The Unified Command Center's overall coordinator will be KCRHA's Director of Special Projects, Heidi Wiersma.

- **What is a By-Name List?**

The second phase of Partnership for Zero will focus on the development of a "By-Name List," a comprehensive list of all the people experiencing homelessness in a designated area and their specific needs. A By-Name List is more than just a list of names — it includes granular, real time information about who is experiencing unsheltered homelessness and what they need to move to stability. This tool relies on relationships built by outreach workers and enables effective case planning and service matching.

KCRHA's By-Name data capacity is being developed with in-kind support from Microsoft. The tool is meant to replace duplicative, burdensome, and traumatizing intake sheets with secure records of clear, relevant, up-to-date information, similar to a medical history like a primary care "My Chart."

- **What is Peer Navigation?**

A majority of the shelter and housing placements will take place during the third phase of Partnership for Zero with the help of peer navigators. Peer outreach or navigation has proven effective and essential in getting folks on the path to permanent housing. Peer navigators provide individualized, trusted support to people experiencing homelessness, acting as an advocate and an ally to help people move from homeless to housed. Peer Navigators have lived experience of homelessness and an understanding of how the system works and how to access resources. Navigating multiple social service systems can be challenging. It is not enough to have resources available — we must actively work to ensure that folks are getting the resources they need.

With funding from We Are In's business and private partners, KCRHA will hire and manage sufficient staff to do the hard work of caring for people. The workforce will include 15 trained

incident responders and up to 30 peer navigators who can provide longitudinal support to get people to stable outcomes.

Here is a hypothetical example of how peer navigation works: A 52 year-old man is experiencing homelessness in Downtown Seattle. He's diabetic, has a dog, is currently employed, and lives out of his car. Because he moves from location to location, he might be harder to find from week to week. Because he has a dog, he doesn't want to go to a shelter that won't allow him to keep his pet. Because he has diabetes, he should have access to regular medical care that can prevent more serious health problems. A peer navigator would get to know him by name, build a relationship to better understand his needs, and be able to reach him if he has to move his car. The peer navigator would understand that he has limited ability to meet or access services during the work day, and would also know that he needs a place that will let him keep his dog. When an appropriate housing opportunity arises, the peer navigator would be able to connect him with that opportunity immediately and would stay in touch after placement to act as a coach and ally who can support him in accessing services.

- **How were Partnership for Zero's initial focus areas selected?**

Limited resources require strategic decisions about how to make the greatest impact in the areas of greatest need. Because Downtown Seattle currently holds the largest concentration of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, focusing resources on Downtown will make a real difference in many people's lives. As we implement and adjust the model in the downtown core, the lessons learned will also prepare us to expand the model to other parts of the region.

Homelessness affects all of our regional communities, but it shows up differently than it does in the downtown core. To ensure that the model can work across diverse sub-regions, Partnership for Zero will also launch in a set of sub-regional cities to be named soon.

- **Will Partnership for Zero expand to other areas of King County?**

Yes. There will be an additional community in King County, outside of Seattle, announced later this year. KCRHA and its partners will work with the initial Partnership for Zero communities to adjust and improve the model, learning lessons so that we can bring it to other communities in King County.

- **How will Partnership for Zero provide shelter and housing to everyone in need?**

The Partnership for Zero model enables us to break down silos, consolidate our approach, and work together to provide shelter and housing for everyone in need. The City and County retain responsibility for housing, zoning and development, so KCRHA will work with them to assess what resources are needed to successfully place people experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the path to stable, permanent housing. We will identify the gaps between available resources and population needs and expand our infrastructure and capacity accordingly. We will then be able to provide folks experiencing homelessness with available shelter or permanent housing

that matches their needs and then maintain the infrastructure necessary to quickly respond to new incidences of homelessness.

- **What is the timeline for Partnership for Zero?**

For each of Partnership for Zero’s geographic targets — the first being Downtown Seattle — the model will include five phases. In Downtown, we expect to reach phase five in what could be as fast as 12 months, though we expect some variance in timeline due to command center development and project staffing, client needs, and the availability of appropriate resources. We are not setting a strict timeline and instead committing to doing whatever is necessary to implement this program successfully — we want to do this once, do it well, and make sure it’s sustainable. Partners expect that there will be learning and adjustment over the course of the project and will operate with full transparency to keep the community updated.

- **Will Partnership for Zero provide behavioral health services in addition to housing?**

Yes. Outreach workers, incident responders and peer navigators will be prepared to support people with complex behavioral health issues or co-occurring disorders. We anticipate the need for additional capacity in this space, including the addition of approximately 150 shelter beds with high-acuity services.

- **Who is in charge of Partnership for Zero?**

The King County Regional Homelessness Authority is leading the deployment of Partnership for Zero. The Unified Command Center will be managed by KCRHA’s Director of Special Projects, Heidi Wiersma, with representatives from the Lived Experience Coalition, the City of Seattle, and King County.

- **How is Partnership for Zero being funded?**

Partnership for Zero is led by KCRHA, which is publicly funded by both the City of Seattle and King County. Through We Are In, business and philanthropic partners are contributing significant funding towards this public-private partnership. Private funders include: Ballmer Group, who has contributed a lead gift, as well as Alaska Airlines, Amazon, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Campion Foundation, Costco, Expedia Group, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, JP Morgan Chase Pacific Northwest, Kaiser Permanente Washington, Madrona Venture Group, Microsoft Philanthropies, Nordstrom, PATH, Puget Sound Energy, Raikes Foundation, REI, Russell Investments, Schultz Family Foundation, Seattle Foundation, Starbucks, Ste. Michelle Wine Estates, Symetra, T-Mobile, Weyerhaeuser, and Zillow Group.

- **How can I learn more about Partnership for Zero and stay updated on its progress and impact?**

Joining We Are In is the best way to stay engaged and informed about Partnership for Zero. Visit [wearein.org](http://wearein.org) to sign up for our email updates and follow us on social media at @WeAreInKingCo. We also encourage members to follow KCRHA for updates, at <https://kcrha.org/> and @KC\_RHA.