

**ADDRESSING INSTABILITY
THROUGH COMMUNITY:
OUR APPROACH TO
HOMELESSNESS IN POULSBO**

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Puget Sound Regional Council

Toolbox Series

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Lessons about reducing homelessness from Poulsbo:

*-small cities can reduce homelessness but it requires **dedicated staff, funding, and partnerships.***

*-homelessness is a complex problem because people have complex needs; there is **no single approach or solution.***

*-services + housing not as effective as services + housing + **supportive community.***



Housing, Health and Human Services in Poulsbo



Considers matters related to the health and well-being of Poulsbo residents, with an emphasis on vulnerable populations.

The Department was added to the City in 2020 during the pandemic.

WHY

- Mayor/Council with strong interest in helping low income/struggling residents.
- Realization that we need more local capacity to provide health and social services.

TOOK OFF IN 2021-state legislative changes

- HB 1220's requirements for new housing planning.
- new local revenue option.

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1220

Chapter 254, Laws of 2021

(partial veto)

67th Legislature
2021 Regular Session

New language of STEP
housing-Poulsbo's new
planning requirements for
deeply affordable housing

EMERGENCY SHELTERS AND HOUSING—LOCAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 25, 2021

H3 momentum strengthened by passage of a flexible affordable tax option in 2021...housing and behavioral health services



Bills, meetings, and session ▾

State laws and rules ▾

Learn and participate ▾

Legislators ▾

[Home](#) / [State laws and rules](#) / [RCWs](#) / [Title 82](#) / [Chapter 82.14](#) / Section 82.14.530

[82.14.525](#) << [82.14.530](#) >> [82.14.532](#)

PDF

RCW 82.14.530

Sales and use tax for housing and related services.

Up to 40% for of the moneys collected under this section may be used for the “operation, delivery, or evaluation of behavioral health treatment programs and services or housing-related services.”



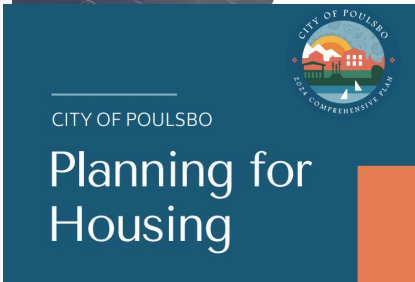
New Tax, New Funding to Meet Housing Targets **60% and below AMI**

H3 Focus on STEP



North Kitsap STEP
and Recovery
Housing Needs
Assessment

July 2025



Income Level	Housing Unit Allocation
0-30% AMI Non PSH	377
0-30% AMI PSH	166
>30-50% AMI	324
>50-80% AMI	272
>80-100% AMI	140
>100-120% AMI	138
>120% AMI	560
Total	1,977
Emergency Housing	83

Emergency Housing Units

PSH Units

Poulsbo Additional Units Needed by 2044	83	166
<i>Average Annual Additional Units Needed 2025 to 2044</i>	4	8
Poulsbo Current Supply	0*	0



Housing, Health and Human Services linked to new housing expectations and funding



Strong link between housing and services

Priority Areas:

- Increase the supply of STEP housing.
- **Help people transition from homelessness to housed.**
- Increase access to behavioral health and social services for low income residents.
- Criminal justice deflection and diversion.

Internal Funding

- Around \$700k a year from local tax
- \$280k of this tax for BH services
- \$30-\$40k opioid settlement dollars, liquor tax

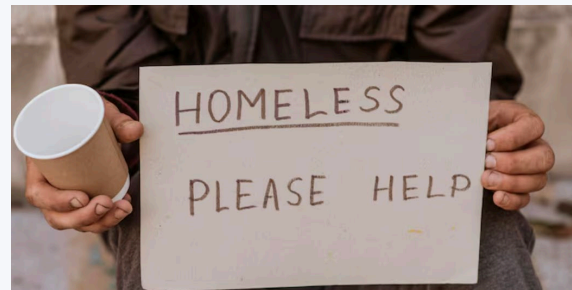
External Funding: \$300-\$800k per year

KEY H3 RESPONSIBILITY:
help people transition from homelessness

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

**ECONW report unsheltered=
over 200 in North Kitsap (2025)**

**PIT count unsheltered=
37 people in Poulsbo (2025)**

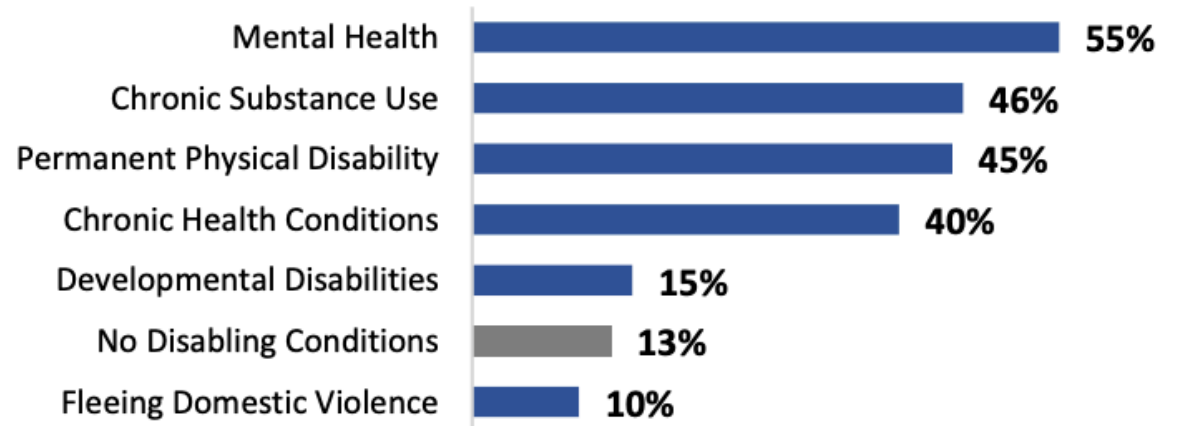


Lots of Familiarity in a Small City: WHO is unsheltered in Poulsbo?

People with complex mental health issues and mental illness	People with substance use disorders	People with complex physical health issues
People with intellectual and developmental disabilities	<i>Working/not working</i>	People who are ineligible for housing
People with HIGH interest in housing and difficulty staying sheltered/housed (often older)	People with NO interest in shelter/housing (often younger)	People on the move and locals

Consistent with Kitsap County “PIT” Count Self Identified Characteristics (2025)

When asked about various personal characteristics, 164 unsheltered heads of households (65%) responded. The most common response from survey participants was that they experienced challenges related to mental health, followed by chronic substance use, permanent disability, and chronic health conditions.



**POINT: NO SIMPLE SOLUTIONS HERE
“ARREST THEM/DETAIN THEM/SEND THEM BACK/HOUSING FIRST”**

“MILO”

“ALLISON”

“TOM”

Planning critical (HB 1220) but – by itself –
wont produce housing that these three
(and many others) need.

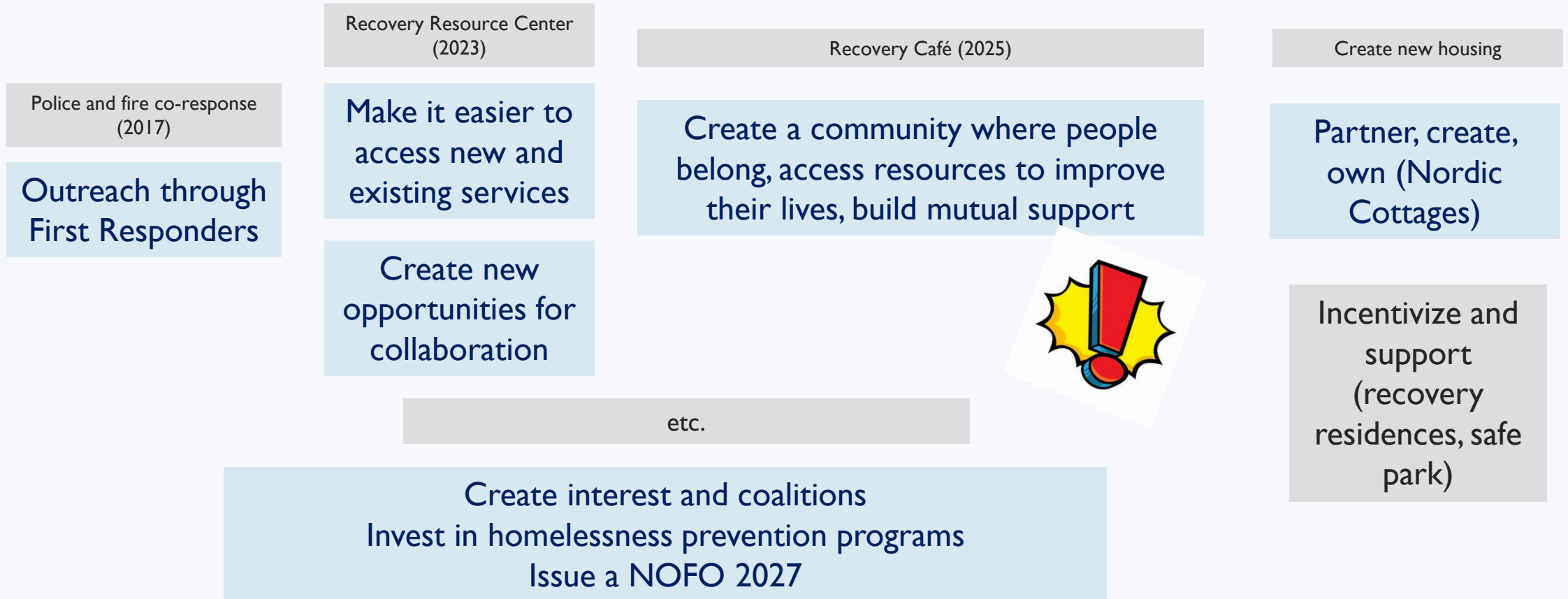
WHY: difficulty of combining services and
housing, financial disincentives, community
opposition, lack of nonprofit interest and
capacity, diversity of need.

Adding to difficulty-Kitsap
County has very limited
shelter and supportive housing
options; two year wait for PSH



H3 STEP BY STEP APPROACH TO HOMELESSNESS: START SMALL, FIND PARTNERS, CREATE COMMUNITY

Important note: our programs are accessible to all in need, not just those who are homeless





NORDIC COTTAGES-2025

Planning and H3 together



H3

- Develop concept with committees, community, city leadership
- Pursue partnerships
- Obtain grants, reporting
- Collaboration with property manager

Planning

Guidance on zoning and zoning tools, requirements, notifications, process.

Homes for 8 seniors and adults with disabilities; preference for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.



SAFE PARK-2026



Safe parking for 5 members of the Recovery Center or Recovery Café. Church provides spaces; City defrays costs.



NELSON HOUSE AND HOWLETT HOUSE

Benefit of for-profit partner



Homes for 12 men in recovery. All low income (60% and below AMI) and many homeless/at risk of homelessness.



Recovery Café (2025)

- First City run Café in international Recovery Café network
- Providing meals, peer support, support groups, job opps, classes
- **Community is as important as housing and services (maybe more)**
 - and community must = members and non-members





SUMMING UP: WHAT CAN A SMALL CITY DO TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS?

INCREASE
ACCESS/SUPPLY OF
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES

INCREASE
ACCESS/SUPPLY
SHELTER AND
HOUSING

BUILD A CULTURE OF
COMMUNICATION
AND COOPERATION

**MOST
IMPORTANTLY**

WHAT IT SHOULDN'T DO

- over emphasize planning or policing
(but both critical in this work)
- address regional needs alone
- look for quick results and fixes

INTERNAL
-leadership
-staff
EXTERNAL
-citizens
-housing/service providers
(includes faith-based)

**CREATE A PLACE WHERE
PEOPLE FIND ACCEPTANCE
AND STABILITY**

BUILD COMMUNITY THAT
-OPENS THE DOOR TO
CHANGE
-ENCOURAGES LONG TERM
RECOVERY
-CREATES NEW
CONNECTIONS



Are we making a difference?
What we can measure:
20-plus Center/Café members transitioned from homeless to housed since 2025

What I can see: community coming together to support each other's recovery-find commonality-practice "loving accountability."



WHAT'S NEXT?

LEARNING FROM OTHER
JUSISDICTIONS...

“HOMELESS TO
HOUSED” ACTION PLAN
Improve coordination and
accountability

BETTER INTER-
GOVERNMENTAL GOALS
AND PARTNERSHIPS

Thought partners welcome! khendrickson@poulsbo.gov