

ALL STRATEGIES

Inventory:

- Work to line up more social impact investors and philanthropists for new projects
- Utilize innovative new funding models which are already being implemented elsewhere
- Acquire, preserve, and improve existing affordable apartment blocks in the city
- Tweak the City's incentives for affordable housing development to be more flexible and attract more developers
- Create a new staff position with levy funds to leverage resources, including funding and development deals, more strategically and proactively
- Maximize the City's investment of Bellingham Home Fund, HUD HOME, and CDBG grants to build the capacity of local community housing organizations
- Hire a specialist consultant to help put together a complex funding mix of tax credits and other financing mechanisms for multi-use projects
- Leverage low-income tax credits for the acquisition of a larger building by a non-profit
- Create an insurance/damage mitigation fund to minimize the risks to landlords of renting to a tenant with no rental history, etc.
- Create a rental rehab program that makes funding available to landlords willing to rent to low-income tenants to make required upgrades in order to pass BHA or Section 8 inspection
- Provide additional vouchers/long-term subsidy options
- Initiate a program to help pay off rental debt
- Provide money for rental application fees for low-income families, or limit the fees that can be charged

Cultural:

- Public education: work to better inform the public about the housing system and how it works
- Landlord education: bring property owners and management companies to the table to inform about what they can do to help reduce the housing crisis in their community
- Tenant education: more support through trained Peer Advocates, as well as from case managers or landlord liaisons, with skills training as to how to be a successful tenant
- Increase programs that enable and empower tenants who receive subsidized housing to eventually transition out and become integrated within the community

Service:

- Provide more funding for case managers and/or landlord liaisons
- Develop dedicated recovery housing for drug court participants to increase the efficacy of the Drug Court program
- Agencies need to continue to equip their staff with evidence-based training better serve people with high needs and facilitate transitions along the continuum
- Create a "big book of services" or directory of all the entities and organizations, what they do, and who is eligible to access them

Collaboration:

- A shared data system that would help us manage high-utilizers of EMS, ED, and BH crisis services, built on the Intensive Case Management (ICM) system at WAHA

- Agencies at all levels of the continuum need to capture information for our system to better facilitate care transitions
- Regular check-ins between local funders and service providers to adapt to changing needs and trends
- Provide a forum where comprehensive solutions can be vetted and funders and service providers can propose how they could best contribute
- Full transparency between housing providers and support agencies so that tenants are empowered and held accountable
- Engage, encourage, and enable clients to participate in the decision-making process
- Encourage funders to move away from outcomes based on serving a high number of people, and find more appropriate outcomes based on indicators of clients' stability

ALL GAPS

Inventory gaps

- An existing shortage of approximately 500 units for low-income households
- An additional predicted shortage of 900-1,000 over the next 5 years

Service gaps

- Funding for 2.5-3.0 case managers or landlord liaisons are needed immediately to fill available units

Cultural gaps

- A climate in the general public conducive to addressing these barriers

Coordination gaps

- A clear, comprehensive plan, backed by public/private partnerships
- Transparency among partners in order to understand the need for resources in real time
- Access to good data about needs