

# AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITY

As leaders committed to doing all we can to end homelessness, we want to be clear: **our community is facing this unprecedented challenge head on.**

Nonprofits, businesses, government and individuals are working every day to address the struggles faced by too many of our neighbors—and importantly, the causes behind those struggles.

The truth is, while much of Seattle has benefited from accelerated growth, that growth has also led to complex challenges.

**We need to address those complex challenges as one community.**

We'll solve homelessness like we solve other problems in Seattle: by assessing evidence; by working together on proven approaches; by innovating new solutions.

Here are the facts:

- More than 12,000 of our neighbors experience homelessness on a given night.
- About one in four are struggling with drugs or alcohol, often as a result of the trauma of chronic homelessness.
- They are without housing for many, and sometimes overlapping, reasons, including lack of health care, wages that aren't keeping pace with costs of living, and a lack of affordable housing.

Many organizations are working to help these folks find safe and stable homes, and to prevent others from ever experiencing homelessness.

**We're making progress:**

- Homelessness among youth under 18 was down 22% from 2017 to 2018.
- The number of families housed through King County's homeless response system increased by 63% between 2014 and 2017.
- Homelessness among veterans was reduced by 31% from 2017 to 2018.
- More people are being connected with housing. In four years, housing placement rates have doubled (between 2013 and 2017).

We can achieve lasting success by taking a clear-eyed view of causes and circumstances surrounding homelessness in our region.

Real solutions come from a whole community: nonprofits, businesses, philanthropists, neighbors, those who've experienced homelessness—even media.

**We are enthusiastic about the work on a new regional plan that includes healthcare, mental health, criminal justice, social services, and affordable homes. It will redesign our city and county systems to address homelessness in a coordinated, unified and compassionate way.**

That's the answer to the question of how we solve homelessness. We do it with facts, proven solutions, innovative ideas—the strengths that have always carried us forward.

Sincerely,

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