



HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS ROUNDTABLE MEMBERS PARTNER TO CREATE TWO 'HOUSING FIRST' PROJECTS

40 Possible New Units Would Provide Permanent Housing, 'Wrap-Around' Services

Two major initiatives that could provide up to 40 new units of permanent supportive housing to those in the community experiencing chronic homelessness were announced today by members of the Roundtable on Housing and Homelessness.

Both projects are Housing First efforts, which center on quickly moving people experiencing chronic homelessness into permanent housing and then providing “wrap-around” support and services, like mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment and financial counseling. Housing First is a proven, evidence-based approach to addressing chronic homelessness.

“Getting people off of the streets and out of the shelters while giving them the opportunity to address the root causes of their homelessness - that’s what these projects represent,” said Boise Mayor David Bieter. “We couldn’t be more pleased with the way these community partners are stepping up to address this challenging need for our most vulnerable residents.”

Roundtable on Housing and Homelessness

Mayor Bieter chairs the ongoing Roundtable on Housing and Homelessness convened over the last year by the City of Boise, the City of Meridian, Ada County, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, and the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority. The more than 40 roundtable members represent the community’s non-profit and corporate sectors, advocacy groups, the faith community, and federal, state, county and city levels of government.

Over the course of several meetings in 2015, members of the Roundtable on Housing and Homelessness identified three primary community priorities for addressing affordable housing needs and the needs of those experiencing homelessness in the community:

- Creation of community Housing First/Permanent Supportive Housing options for the chronically homeless
- Enhancement of Rapid Rehousing options for homeless families
- Expanding Affordable Housing options

Today's announcement addresses the highest of the priorities named by roundtable members: Housing First. The projects were announced immediately after the roundtable's most recent meeting today. The City of Boise's [Housing Needs Analysis](#), completed in 2015, affirms the need for permanent supportive housing options like Housing First.

Housing First 'Single Site'

The 'single site' Housing First initiative involves a partnership between the Idaho Housing and Finance Association and the City of Boise. Through [a joint request for proposals](#) released today, the two partners are calling for a team of service providers to work with a development team to build approximately 25 housing first units in the community. Both IHFA and the City of Boise are committing significant financial resources to the winning proposal to ensure its viability. IHFA has up to \$5.75 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits available under its special housing needs set aside to fund the project. The City of Boise will contribute up to \$1 million in one-time money to augment acquisition and construction costs for the winning proposal. Responses to the RFP are due in September 2016.

The City and IHFA will also work to raise funding through charitable donations to support the development and make it economically feasible. Donations can be made through [IHFA's Home Partnership Foundation website](#).

"We are delighted to partner with the City of Boise and other potential donors to help bring needed housing for chronically homeless individuals in the community," said Gerald Hunter, president and executive director of IHFA.

Housing First 'Scattered Site'

The 'scattered site' Housing First project, which could provide up to 15 units, may debut as early as the summer of 2016. This project is a partnership between the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority, CATCH, Inc., Terry Reilly Health Services and the City of Boise. It will utilize existing apartment around the community to provide permanent housing and "wrap-around" services for residents.

"We are pleased to help provide additional affordable housing and supportive services in an area of critical need," said Deanna Watson, executive director of the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority.

To reach the goal of 15 scattered site units, the Boise City /Ada County Housing Authority and the City of Boise will prioritize available units from their current housing inventories and the housing authority also will provide rental assistance to residents. Terry Reilly and CATCH have teamed to provide supportive services.

"We are proud to collaborate with the community to provide a stable and supportive home for our most vulnerable neighbors," said Wyatt Schroeder, executive director of CATCH, Inc.

“Housing First remains the most effective approach to housing those on our streets and in our shelters, but can only be achieved through intentional and dedicated partnerships.”

Funding commitments from interested community foundations, corporations and individuals are sought to make this project a reality by summer 2016. Private landlords also are invited to help expand the impact of the project and provide housing choice for clients.

“Terry Reilly is excited to be part of such a great initiative,” said Heidi Traylor, CEO of Terry Reilly Health Services. “We look forward to partnering with the City of Boise, Ada County Housing Authority, and CATCH to provide much needed services to our homeless community.”

Community Costs of Chronic Homelessness

[Recent local research by Boise State University](#) shows that those experiencing chronic homelessness cost our community at least \$5.3 million a year in services, criminal justice costs and medical costs, while the estimated cost of providing permanent supportive housing options - like Housing First - would cost approximately \$1.6 million for 100 residents annually. The 2015 Point-in-Time count of those experiencing homelessness found 94 chronically homeless individuals in Ada County.

“We all understand the moral imperative we have to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness in our community,” said Mayor Bieter. “Leaving people on the streets and in the shelters without alternatives is not only unacceptable to our values as a city or society, but it also has extraordinary financial costs to our community through our jail, medical and law enforcement systems as well. Creating Housing First options is an investment in breaking this reactive cycle and a step toward proactive efforts that will save money and lives.”

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[CLICK HERE](#) for information about both Housing First projects, opportunities to donate, contact information for project partners and other supporting information.

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