

Asotin County Alliance for the Unhoused (ACAU)

*Addressing the homelessness crisis within Asotin County through
community partnerships, shared resources,
and strategic assessment*



3-Year Strategic Plan (2025-2028)

Approved by the ACAU Board
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Executive Summary

A lack of affordable housing and temporary shelters for those experiencing homelessness has left hundreds of Asotin County residents with little to no options for overnight shelter, with many choosing to sleep in city and county parks, parking lots, wilderness areas, and business outdoor alcoves. Among this group, many struggle with health conditions—mental and physical—that compound their inability to seek assistance or interact with others. Basic needs such as shelter, food, and hygiene go unmet, further isolating and alienating them from achieving any sort of higher standard of living or modicum of success. Conversely, many Clarkston city residents have grown uneasy and unsettled by the growing presence of unhoused people congregating and sleeping in community parks and recreation areas. City resources, such as the police and fire departments, are stretched thin as they respond to calls and complaints stemming from the increasing tensions and incidents. If left unaddressed, tensions will continue to rise possibly leading to violence. If left unhoused, people will succumb to exposure, starvation, and dire neglect. We can no longer stand by and passively allow this to happen. The homelessness crisis within Asotin County is an emergency event for the entire community.

Organizational Background

The Asotin County Alliance for the Unhoused (ACAU) was formed as a direct response to the homeless crisis. Led by a steering committee consisting of key personnel from behavioral health providers, local government officials, local business owners, and concerned Asotin County residents, the ACAU proposes to establish a dedicated low-barrier Sleep Center for unhoused people in need of shelter. Modeled after similar Sleep Centers in Walla Walla, Moses Lake, and Eugene, OR, the proposed Sleep Center consists of twenty Conestoga-style individual huts that can be locked during the day. While without electricity, these huts have proven to provide adequate sleeping quarters during the winter.

ACAU Board of Directors & Steering Committee

The current ACAU Board of Directors is comprised of five Asotin County residents, and will expand to include twelve individuals by the end of 2025. Ideal candidates include those with relevant and strategic backgrounds to best advance the ACAU in its mission and vision.

The ACAU Steering Committee is comprised by the ACAU Board, three employees from Quality Behavioral Health, the Clarkston Chief of Police, an Asotin County Commissioner, and the pastor from First Christian Church.

Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Mission: To help address the current and emergent homelessness crisis within Asotin County through community partnerships, shared resources, and strategic assessment.

Vision: To help foster a robust community-centered support network and temporary shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Core Values: Respect, Empathy, Responsibility, Collaboration, Sustainability

- Respect: People deserve be treated with dignity no matter their economic status or current living situation.
- Empathy: Recognizing the human being within every person, and the universal feelings we all share.
- Responsibility: When people are held to account and are responsible for their choices, they are empowered to assert more control over their own lives.
- Collaboration: Creative partnerships create stronger support systems for our clientele, while shared resources reduce financial burdens and capacity limitations with community partners.
- Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the those of the future.
- Resiliency: Helping people to adapt and learn from difficult experiences.

SWOT Analysis

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis addresses areas that are doing well and those in need of improvement, as well as identifies the opportunities and challenges to be aware of. This analysis helps guide strategic planning and implementation, and is dynamic in nature.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Internal areas that are doing well and can be built upon	Internal barriers that limit and impede growth and development	External resources that are within reach and can be benefitted from	External factors or barriers that can prevent progress
Steering Committee experience	Limited funds in bank	Support from local governments and community partners	Small, but loud, community dissenters
Evidence-backed need for program	No dedicated paid staff	Interest from regional and state agencies	Limited available locations for Sleep Center
Strong trust between Steering Committee and target population	Limited community outreach	Community volunteers with social work experience	Limited general understanding of homelessness; NIMBY mindsets

Goals & Objectives

In order to bring our vision to fruition, we must first secure land for the Sleep Center and funding for initial start-up costs. Short-term goals include establishing the Sleep Center location, facilities, and personnel.

- **Short-term Goal 1:** Provide a low-barrier shelter for unhoused people within Asotin County and the LC Valley.
 - **Objective 1.1:** Identify and purchase land for Sleep Center.
 - **Objective 1.2:** Obtain and build Conestoga huts.
 - **Objective 1.3:** Evaluate house for renovation or removal.
- **Short-term Goal 2:** Raise funding to cover 1-2 years of operating costs.
 - **Objective 2.1:** Identify and/or apply for private, state, and federal funding.
 - **Objective 2.2:** Targeted community fundraising.
- **Short-term Goal 3:** Establish initial management team.
 - **Objective 3.1:** Hire Program Director.
 - **Objective 3.2:** Create volunteer pool and identify Volunteer Coordinator.

Long-term goals are geared toward achieving the vision of a robust community-centered support network that includes providing a temporary shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness.

- **Long-term Goal 1:** Expand Sleep Center operations to 24-hours.
 - **Objective 1.1:** Secure funding to sustain one to two additional staff.
 - **Objective 1.2:** Establish partnerships with wrap-around services providers.
- **Long-term Goal 2:** Expand Sleep Center occupant capacity.
 - **Objective 2.1:** Expand operational hours to 24 hours.
 - **Objective 2.2:** Add Transition Housing section for those preparing to acquire permanent housing.

Short-term Milestones & Timeline

Goal	Objective	Milestones	Responsible Party	Timeline
Provide a low-barrier shelter for unhoused people within Asotin County and the LC Valley	Identify and purchase land for Sleep Center	Procurement of land	ACAU Steering Committee	August 18, 2025
		Lease agreement with Asotin County	ACAU Board & Asotin County Commissioners	August 22, 2025
		Site assessment and preparation (ground-leveling, landscaping, sewer/septic capacity)	Asotin County Commissioners & Public Health	Aug – Oct 2025
	Obtain and build Conestoga huts	Build Conestoga huts	ACAU Steering Committee	Aug – Oct 2025
		Organize community volunteers to help with assembly	ACAU Steering Committee	Sep 2025
	Evaluate house for renovation or removal	Conduct inspection of current house to determine feasibility for operations and shower facilities	ACAU Steering Committee	Aug – Sep 2025
Raise funding to cover 1-2 years of operating costs	Identify and/or apply for private, state, and federal funding	Awarded grants covering start-up costs	ACAU Board	Ongoing
		Awarded grants toward operational costs	ACAU Board	
		Negotiate potential funding from local sources	ACAU Board	
	Targeted community fundraising	Produce donor brochures and targeted media marketing	ACAU Steering Committee	Complete; ongoing
		Provide information and link for donors on website	ACAU Steering Committee	Complete; ongoing
		Establish dedicated fundraising event	ACAU Board & Program Director	Ongoing annual basis
Establish initial management team	Hire Program Director	Successful hire and onboarding of ACAU Program Director	ACAU Board	3 months
	Create volunteer pool and identify Volunteer Coordinator	Successful recruitment of twenty (20) community volunteers with a (non-paid) Volunteer Coordinator in place, Social Work background preferred	ACAU Board & Program Director	1-5 months; ongoing

Long-term Milestones & Timeline

Goal	Objective	Milestones	Responsible Party	Timeline
Expand Sleep Center operations to 24-hours	Secure funding to sustain one to two additional staff	Secure between \$50,000 - \$90,000 in funding to support one to two full- and/or part-time employees for one program year	ACAU Board & Program Director	12-24 months; ongoing
		Hire one to two additional employees to support administrative and maintenance activities	Program Director	Program Year 3
	Establish partnerships with wrap-around services providers	Secure Memorandums of Agreements with community partners including primary care, behavioral health, recovery services, employment assistance, education advancement, and housing	ACAU Board & Program Director	Program Year 2
Expand Sleep Center occupant capacity	Expand operational hours to 24 hours	Secure funding to cover staffing costs for 24-hour operations	ACAU Board	Program Year 3
	Add Transition Housing section for those preparing to acquire permanent housing	Raise \$400,000 to expand Sleep Center grounds to include Transition Housing units	ACAU Board	Program Year 5
		Prepare new space and assemble Transition Housing units	ACAU Board & Program Director	Program Year 5

Areas of Impact

Through this work, the ACAU strives in its vision to help foster a robust community-centered support network for those experiencing homelessness. We will achieve this by impacting the following areas:

Community Continuum of Care

People experiencing homelessness often have several extraneous factors contributing to their current circumstances beyond physical and mental health. A single social service provider alone usually isn't enough to get someone positioned for long-term success, much like how giving someone \$100 won't address all of their ongoing financial needs. A community continuum of care brings several services together to address specific needs, giving an individual a broader network of support. By including services that address educational goals, assist with medication and appointment management (Community Health Workers), and employment preparation and assistance, unhoused people can increase their chances at successfully obtaining, and maintaining, permanent housing.

Personal Accountability

Many people experiencing homelessness are unable to accept personal accountability because they are mainly focused on getting through a single day. When people are under immense stress and pressure, critical thinking and self-reflection are superseded by a short-term survival mode of thinking. The time and patience necessary to change one's behaviors and habits is simply out of reach for someone who is constantly struggling to find food and shelter day after day. When those basic needs are met, a person can begin to build resiliency and take the steps toward personal accountability.

Cultural Shift

Without a doubt, the largest barrier in addressing the homeless crisis is the cultural perception of people who are unhoused. It's a scary thing to think about, and can make many feel uncomfortable. For some, it's easier to assume those who experience homelessness somehow brought it upon themselves. The idea that it could happen to them under the right set of uncontrollable circumstances is unsettling at best. For others, they themselves might have experienced hardships and were not given opportunities for advancement. They see assistance as "unfair", and view themselves as "proof" that someone can rise out of homelessness on their own. What they often fail to realize is that almost no one rises up out of homelessness alone. Most of these individuals at one point benefitted from support from family, friends, and even law enforcement on their journey. In most cases, it's not the homeless people themselves that this groups dislikes, but rather pain over their own past experiences. They need to understand that they were not, and are not, bad people because they had struggles in the past. They did not deserve to suffer. We can reframe these negative and scary perceptions of homelessness in a way that is less judgmental and more accepting. We generally don't look down on someone who developed lung cancer after decades of smoking, nor would we someone who developed diabetes from years of poor nutrition. We simply see people who need support and care. This is how we need to reframe our thinking about homelessness, and remove the guilt, social stigma, and trauma carried in our hearts.

Accomplishments

The ACAU received 501(c)(3) non-profit status in June 2024, after months of planning and development by the Steering Committee. Since its inception, it has created a basic website to attract interest and

inform the public, and has held one Town Hall meeting. The ACAU Board and Steering Committee meet on a regular basis, and are actively seeking land for Sleep Center use.