

The Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative began as a collaborative effort among the cities of Salem and Keizer and Marion and Polk counties. A task force and eight subcommittees worked diligently during 2016-17 on a strategic plan to identify and launch proven strategies that will reduce homelessness in the Marion-Polk county region, encompassing the cities of Keizer and Salem. Task force members included business and community leaders with expertise in social services, housing, public safety, and business.

The initiative's strategic plan addressed issues in cities and counties; lack of affordable housing; best practices for reducing chronic homelessness; specialized service for veterans, seniors, victims of domestic violence, and runaway and homeless youth; and coordination of available support and education services. Contributing factors such as mental illness, addiction, lack of education and the need for transportation were also addressed. [For information on the Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative Task Force, click here.](#)

Later in 2017, five governments – Independence, Keizer, Marion County, Monmouth, and Salem – entered into an intergovernmental agreement, formed a Steering Committee, and pooled their funds to support a staff person housed at COG that advanced the Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative's work. Then in 2019, the Steering Committee voted to support creating a new Continuum of Care. Staff support for the Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative shifted its focus entirely to Continuum of Care development.

The five Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative participants reached out to other governmental and nonprofit community organizations to engage in the Continuum of Care development process. The Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance was formed in September 2019 and was recognized by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development as a Continuum of Care in December 2019.

[The Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance website can be found here.](#)

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