

What the Community Needs

The Intersection of Mental Health and Homelessness

Based on a series of interviews with experts in the field in King County, WA.

- **Adequate housing** (not shelters) and a system for accessing that housing that is not dependent on a person outcompeting other renters to get in. Many homeless people with mental illness will not apply for housing. Others may apply but won't pass the landlord's screening criteria. To ensure access for people with these disabilities, systems of care must affirmatively find people and recruit them into housing opportunities.
- **Programs** that go beyond conventional outpatient treatment and provide practical help to homeless people with mental illness, such as:
 - **Recovery centers:** People need a supportive place to go – and community and structure – to enable recovery. Some models include important employment preparedness and placement. These are also called “clubhouses” or Recovery Cafés.
 - **"En vivo" (where people are) mental health services:** Care needs to be available where, when, and how people need it (including outreach and engagement, case management, psychiatric, and easy-to-access drop-in centers where people can address basic needs)

Constituents and other community stakeholders, e.g., business, can support these efforts with funding and/or volunteer support.