

## **Central Oregon joins Built for Zero, a national initiative to end homelessness**

*Central Oregon becomes the seventh community in Oregon to join the initiative to measurably and equitably end homelessness*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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- Central Oregon has joined [Built for Zero](#), a national initiative of more than 90 cities and counties working to measurably and equitably end homelessness.
- The community will work toward ending veteran and chronic homelessness by reaching and sustaining a milestone known as "[functional zero](#)".
- Functional zero is a dynamic milestone that works to produce a new sustained reality where homelessness is rare and brief for a population.

**CENTRAL OREGON, OR—** Today, Community Solutions and Central Oregon announced that the community has joined [Built for Zero](#), a national movement of more than 90 cities and counties in the United States working to measurably and equitably end homelessness.

In April 2021, Community Solutions was awarded the MacArthur Foundation's *100&Change* grant, which provides \$100 million to help communities accelerate an end to homelessness through Built for Zero.

Communities in Built for Zero work towards measurably ending homelessness for all, by focusing on building systems that can continuously reduce homelessness for populations. Central Oregon CoC will begin this journey by focusing its Built for Zero efforts on the populations experiencing veteran and chronic homelessness. Chronic homelessness is a federally-defined population that includes individuals experiencing long-term or recurring homelessness, with a verified disability defined by The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Colleen Thomas, Chair of the Homeless Leadership Coalition, said** "Central Oregon is excited about the opportunity to participate in Built for Zero's national initiative to address and end homelessness. As a community, we have seen a need for comprehensive and real-time data to help address the root causes of homelessness in our community and our hope is that Community Solutions and the Built for Zero team can help us continue the vital work already being done in our community. Ending homelessness can be a reality if we work together and continue to look beyond just the numbers and start to address the real causes of our current crisis, and I believe that Built for Zero is going to help us do that."

The local Built for Zero team will represent a community-wide effort to collaborate and develop systems to measurably end homelessness. Partner agencies and organizations include NeighborImpact, REACH Central Oregon, JBarJ Youth Services, Unite Us, Family Access Network, Shepherds House, Bethlehem Inn, amongst others.

**Dana Richards, Unhoused Services Manager for NeighborImpact, said,**

"Recognizing that the PIT count is not accurately accounting for all of Central Oregon's houseless community members, we at NeighborImpact are so excited to embark on the Built for Zero journey with the Homeless Leadership Coalition and regional contributors to create a constantly updated by-name list that will more accurately count those who are experiencing homelessness. Up-to-date and accurate data means being able to strategize realistically how we as a region can create efficient and effective housing solution systems and processes. Up-to-date and accurate data leads to appropriate Local, State, and Federal funding for programs and affordable housing projects needed for our houseless community members to be housed. Frankly, I'm just over the moon for the guidance from Built For Zero and all the opportunities this partnership creates."

## THE METHODOLOGY

Communities in Built for Zero harness a data-driven methodology to drive reductions in homelessness toward zero. Using this methodology:

- 14 communities have achieved [functional zero](#) to date, a milestone where fewer people are experiencing homelessness than can be routinely housed.
- 44 communities have driven a reduction in homelessness for a population.

**Alyssa Keil, Systems Improvement Advisor, Community Solutions, said:**

"Communities in the Built for Zero initiative are demonstrating that homelessness is solvable. We are thrilled that Central Oregon has joined the movement to measurably end homelessness and the community's commitment to building a more equitable future where homelessness is rare and brief."

The [Built for Zero methodology](#) has been developed and refined to help communities develop coordinated, data-driven systems capable of making homelessness rare and brief for a population.

1. **Communities develop or deepen their community-wide teams.** The community brings together a community-wide team that works together to measurably and equitably end homelessness.
2. **Communities work toward a shared aim of functional zero.** Communities work toward achieving and sustaining functional zero, a measure for ending homelessness for a population. Communities start by focusing on creating coordinated, data-driven systems capable of ending homelessness for a population, with the goal of scaling this progress to all populations. An [Urban Institute report published in August 2021](#) found that this methodology helps communities accelerate progress across populations.

## **Built For Zero.**

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

3. **Communities use quality, real-time data.** The community develops quality by-name data, which includes each person experiencing homelessness by name and provides real-time insights into their needs. This data also provides population-level insights, like inflow and outflow, which enables communities to understand whether efforts are driving down the overall number of people experiencing homelessness.
4. **Communities target interventions based on real-time data.** Using the by-name list, the community targets resources and investments for the maximum reductions in homelessness.

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**The Homeless Leadership Coalition (HLC)** serves as Central Oregon's Continuum of Care (CoC), OR-503. HLC is a collaboration of community partners in Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Coalition membership includes nonprofit homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, people with lived experience of homelessness, and others who care about the issues facing our unhoused neighbors. The HLC works to prevent and end homelessness by improving regional and cross-system collaboration and coordination so that our communities will have a comprehensive response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience. **Media Contact:** Colleen Thomas, [info@cohomeless.org](mailto:info@cohomeless.org); 458-292-6397

**Built for Zero** is a national initiative of more than 90 communities that have committed to measurably and equitably ending homelessness. It is led by Community Solutions, a nonprofit that works to create a lasting end to homelessness that leaves no one behind. Using a data-driven methodology, these communities have changed how local homeless response systems work and the impact they can achieve. Learn more at [www.builtforzero.org](http://www.builtforzero.org) or follow us at [@BuiltforZero](https://www.instagram.com/BuiltforZero). **Media Contact:** Lauren Barnes, [lbarnes@community.solutions](mailto:lbarnes@community.solutions), 425-728-0079