

ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #2024-09

A resolution requesting the Alaska State Legislature assist communities in addressing homelessness.

WHEREAS, housing is the solution to homelessness, but until our housing shortage is addressed, local governments must look at making investments in emergency shelter and other support; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homelessness as: individuals or families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; individuals or families who are temporarily couch surfing; unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age who are unstably housed; and individuals or families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence and have no other residence; and

WHEREAS, the unduplicated statewide total count of clients within the Alaska Homeless Management Information System from 08.11.22 to 08.31.23 is 17,796 individuals; and

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of individuals and families have received some type of rental, utility or energy assistance that keeps them out of homelessness, but the recent 7% increase in rents statewide is putting the efficacy of these efforts in jeopardy; and

WHEREAS, a recent visit by HUD Secretary Fudge highlighted the need for review of HUD funding formulas and the negative and inequitable impact they have on Alaska; and

WHEREAS, communities, whether through local governments or through philanthropy, have made significant investments to address homelessness across the state; and

WHEREAS, emergency shelter includes large congregate shelter, non-congregate shelter, churches, or other smaller facilities serving many different populations; and

WHEREAS, line-item budget vetoes of the State of Alaska FY20 budget led to a reduction in shelter capacity throughout the state, highlighting the fragility of operational funding; and

WHEREAS, there are limits on local government capacity to take on operational costs of shelter, especially winter shelter, but are making investments across the system and need help from the State of Alaska to make these investments sustainable long term; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Council on the Homeless is responsible for updating and reporting on activities and goals of the 2009 Alaska Plan to End Long Term Homelessness; and

WHEREAS, HUD reports that several studies have found that, compared with the treatment first model, Housing First approaches offer greater long-term housing stability, especially among people experiencing chronic homelessness.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML supports the Alaska Legislature invest in regular operational funding for emergency shelters across the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AML requests that the governor task the Alaska Council on the Homeless to update Alaska's Plan to End Long Term Homelessness and encourages the update to adopt the housing first model and provide a continuum of services and an exit strategy with measurable, trackable outcomes.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.