

2021 IMPACT REPORT



OUR MISSION:

Central Oregon FUSE mobilizes resources to provide housing and supportive services for people experiencing long-term homelessness to improve community health, safety, and stability.

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

For all of us, 2021 was a year of profound challenges, growth, and reflection. For FUSE, 2021 marked a major transition from a tiny start-up towards becoming a stable and trusted organization with effective programs, a set of specific strategic goals, and a strong base of community partners. FUSE capacity has evolved to effectively change lives by providing permanent, supportive housing while also prioritizing the long-term systemic work that's necessary to expand Central Oregon supply of accessible housing.

2021 was an exhausting, and profoundly motivating year. It's still hard for me to believe that we're actually creating permanent, supportive housing opportunities that hadn't existed before. Sometimes, at the end of a long day in front of my laptop, **I'm struck by the fact that tonight, there are already seven people who will be sleeping safe in their own apartments that night, after having experienced the trauma of homelessness for years.**

For me personally, 2021 was a momentous shift from working as a 17-hour a week Program Manager while finishing grad school, to serving FUSE as the Executive Director. Like the organization itself, **I'm conscious of how much there is still to learn, and how crucial solid partnerships are to be effective in this challenging work.**

Throughout this Impact Report, you'll see highlights of what we've accomplished and what our community members are saying about our work. While putting this report together, I realized again how proud I am of how FUSE has evolved. **I hope that someday, we will have solved the issue of homelessness and there won't be a need for FUSE.** Until that day though, I'm committed to work creatively and collaboratively to build bridges into permanent housing.

With gratitude,



Colleen Sinsky, MSW
Executive Director



Colleen Sinsky
Executive Director, FUSE



csinsky@centraloregonfuse.org



541-843-0868



PO Box 8481, Bend OR 97708



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2021 was a remarkable year for FUSE on so many fronts! With the help of Colleen Sinsky, our dynamic Executive Director, and the guidance of a talented and committed Board of Directors, FUSE is fulfilling its promise of mobilizing resources to provide housing and supportive services for people experiencing long-term homelessness to improve community health, safety and stability. Working closely with many community partners, we are literally moving people off the streets – and – helping lead the movement to raise community awareness and engagement around the need for more Permanent Supportive Housing.

Sincerely,

Bruce Abernethy
FUSE Board Chair

Every night, there are **over 200 people** who have disabilities or complex health care needs sleeping outside in Central Oregon.

FUSE is changing that.

For only

\$56.48


per day,

we're **creating permanent, affordable housing with supportive services**, so that our most vulnerable community members can **exit homelessness for good**.

Chronic homelessness is a complex issue that requires a holistic and strategic response.

Here's what FUSE is doing:



 **Permanent, Supportive Housing (PSH)**



Elaine Knobbs-Seasholtz

Director of Strategy and Development, Mosaic Medical, and FUSE Board Member

“Mosaic Medical was one of the partners that helped found FUSE in 2018. We have long recognized that it is critical for our patients and for our larger community that Central Oregonians have access to stable housing with supportive services. Supporting the FUSE mission is aligned with Mosaic's goal of improving social determinants of health, and we value being a partner in creating this critical resource in Central Oregon.”

FUSE is meeting a well-known, critical gap in our region.

- Without low-barrier, supportive housing in Central Oregon, there are **almost no options for the most vulnerable individuals to exit homelessness.**
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a **data-backed, evidence-based** model, and according to USICH, is credited with reducing chronic homelessness by 20% in the US.
- PSH can actually **save the community money in the long run**, by reducing costs to health care and crisis services.

We're accomplishing our mission through three primary projects:

1. Neighborhood-Based Housing Program, our scattered-site PSH Program
2. Cleveland Commons development project
3. Systemic advocacy & community education



*James**

**Carpenter, Beavers fan, longtime Redmond resident.
Currently Unhoused.**

“ I thought I had it all together. I was self-sufficient. I was always been a hard worker, and I've worked some tough jobs, though maybe I should have done stuff that wasn't so hard on my body. We used to have this small RV that was a lot of fun for weekend trips with the kids and my ex wife. After I got hurt, and our family split up, me **living in the RV was supposed to be temporary.**

It's been about six years now, and the RV is a lot less fun than it was back on our trips. **I honestly can't believe that I'm in this position of needing help.** I broke down crying the first time I went in the food stamp office, thinking "this isn't me." Getting help from a nonprofit still doesn't feel like me, but I'm stuck. My Social Security Disability check isn't enough to get back into housing. My body is hurting more every day.

I really didn't see a way out of this for a long time, until I met you folks. ”

**Name and identifying details changed to protect privacy.*

FUSE 2021 Impacts

#1

We developed our Neighborhood-Based Housing Program, a new PSH program that has already ended homelessness for seven vulnerable individuals.

We are creatively leveraging funding sources to provide **in-home support services** while **subsidizing local housing units for our most at-risk community members**.

Our Neighborhood-Based Housing Program provides housing navigation, move-in assistance, and landlord incentives to **minimize barriers to stable housing**.



**STREET
OUTREACH**



**HOUSING
NAVIGATION**



**HOUSING
PLACEMENT**



**HOUSING RETENTION
SUPPORT
& RENTAL SUBSIDY**

FUSE works with REACH to provide Housing Retention support, ensuring that each of our participants have individualized, trauma-informed support, connections to healthcare, collaborative goal setting, and the resources they need to thrive.

This work would not be possible without our partners, especially **REACH, Deschutes County Behavioral Health, and EPIC Property Management**.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- FUSE keeps housing stable by subsidizing rent and utility expenses with a HUD Continuum of Care grant, which lets **our participants pay just 30% of their income for housing**.
- To comply with federal funding mandates as **we build Central Oregon's first Permanent Supportive Housing program that serves non-veterans**, we have developed extensive program policies, documentation systems, detailed financial tracking mechanisms, and a comprehensive participant assessment tool. As required by HUD, referrals to FUSE come exclusively through the regional Coordinated Entry System, and FUSE utilizes HMIS for participant records.
- **Referral Information:** Adults in Central Oregon who are chronically homeless and currently experiencing literal homelessness can complete a Coordinated Entry System assessment through the [Homeless Leadership Coalition](#). Individuals who meet those basic eligibility requirements and whose assessment indicates that they are highly vulnerable will be referred to FUSE. Unfortunately, FUSE program capacity is severely limited due to funding constraints, and at time of publishing, FUSE does not anticipate having additional housing slots available before the end of 2022. We are working hard to expand capacity to meet the overwhelming need for affordable, supported housing. Please reach out to csinsky@centraloregonfuse.org if you have questions.

#2

FUSE covered basic needs for a total of eighteen chronically homeless individuals.

- Including:** taxi rides to Urgent Care • housing application fees • clothing • household cleaning supplies • a photo ID • vehicle repair • transportation to medical appointments • winter boots • a bike helmet • emergency utility assistance • gas gift card •



• FUSE also **enabled an additional three chronically homeless households to move off the streets** and into permanent housing by paying their move-in expenses.

• For individuals who have been living outside, **moving past survival mode means having individualized, holistic support.** FUSE works to make sure that we have flexible funding available to meet needs that **improve health, housing stability, and dignity.**



Stacey Witte

Executive Director, REACH

“ FUSE provides a critical and unique opportunity for individuals to move from homelessness to permanent housing. Through our partnership with FUSE, REACH has partnered with some of our most vulnerable community members. The stability and support provides people an opportunity to move to greater independence and self sufficiency. ”

#3

FUSE is a strategic partner helping plan Central Oregon's first Permanent Supportive Housing development, coming to Bend in 2024.

- FUSE helped lead a team of local agencies that was selected to participate in the *2020-2021 Oregon Permanent Supportive Housing Institute*. This means that **Central Oregon's first PSH development will have priority access to capital financing and services funding** through Oregon Housing and Community Services and the Oregon Health Authority.
- We're working with our partners, Housing Works, NeighborImpact, EPIC Property Management, and Deschutes County Behavioral Health to **strategize operations and plan services and stable funding for the 33-unit PSH development, "Cleveland Commons"** coming to SE Bend in 2024.
- FUSE has contracted with two researchers to explore and report on how similar, already established PSH communities in Oregon have braided funding sources and established operations. **Learning and implementing best practices is a critical aspect of our mission.**



Pinnacle Architecture



David Brandt

Executive Director,
Housing Works

Central Oregon Regional Housing Authority

“ FUSE has been invaluable in bridging the gap between the housing community and the social service community. FUSE knowledge of both worlds has allowed us to proceed with one of Central Oregon's most needed projects, and one Housing Works most complex developments. ”

#4

FUSE is advocating for Permanent Supportive Housing and supporting our partner non-profits.

- **We believe in supporting our partner agencies across the continuum of homeless services and affordable housing.** FUSE is writing letters of support, sharing data, templates, and research, facilitating regular meetings for homeless service providers to connect, joining collaborative projects, and elevating our partners whenever we can.
- We're **building new partnerships, giving presentations, and creating reports** to share with local government entities and community groups to **provide education on solutions to chronic homelessness.**

FUSE is an active member of the following:

Deschutes County Public Health Advisory Board • Central Oregon Homeless Leadership Coalition • Joint City of Bend and Deschutes County Emergency Homelessness Task Force • Central Oregon Health Council's Stable Housing and Supports RHIP Workgroup • Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council Housing For All consortium • Opportunity Knocks • Nonprofit Association of Oregon • The Oregon Housing Alliance •

We are proud to be in partnership with the following organizations:

Deschutes County Behavioral Health • REACH • PacificSource • The Central Oregon Health Council • NeighborImpact • Housing Works • Mosaic Medical • Furnish Hope • Central Oregon Homeless Leadership Coalition • EPIC Property Management • Thrive Central Oregon • The Bethlehem Inn • Shepherds House Ministries • Jericho Road • Portland State University • The Corporation for Supportive Housing • Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest • Storydwelling •



Donna Mills
Executive Director,
Central Oregon Health Council

“ The Central Oregon Health Council partners with our communities to guide and align vision, strategy, and activities across industries for a healthier Central Oregon. **FUSE has been an integral partner in regional efforts to improve social determinants of health. Through advocacy and education, FUSE has elevated the need for sustainable solutions to end chronic homelessness.** ”

#5

We're working towards centering lived experience to inform our program design.

- FUSE is developing a paid supportive employment “internship” for an individual with a recent lived experience of homelessness. We want to **create opportunities for members of the community we serve to have a meaningful influence on how FUSE evolves, while building a pathway towards a career in our field.**
- We administer an adapted "Social Determinants of Health Assessment" to track participant outcomes in various SDOH arenas, solicit participant feedback about the program, and **collaboratively develop a case plan based on each individual's goals.**
- We extended a flexible, part-time contract with paid training, transportation assistance, and an above-market hourly wage to an individual who's lived experience includes homelessness to work as our Administrative Support Specialist. *(And she's been awesome!)*



Catherine

FUSE Administrative Support Specialist

“ I am so proud to be a part of FUSE. **As a person who has experienced homelessness in the past it gives me great pride to be a part of an organization that works so hard to offer individuals an opportunity of a lifetime.** I feel so appreciated and supported by FUSE as an entry level non-profit administrator and I'm so grateful to be part of this organization!!! ”

#6

FUSE hired Colleen Sinsky as the full-time Executive Director in August 2021.

- Colleen has spent over a decade working on homelessness and affordable housing in Oregon. Previously, she had supported FUSE as a part-time contracted Program Manager, and as a Master of Social Work student intern. Hiring Colleen as the Executive Director ensures that **FUSE has permanent, professional staff driving the mission.**

#7

FUSE was awarded an incredible \$483,273 in grants to further our work and the work of our partners over the next few years.

• While we rely on these grants, most of what we've raised will be passed through to our partners or used to pay rent for our participants. **Looking ahead, FUSE will work on securing funding to build organizational capacity and hire program staff.**

• We are so grateful to our funders for partnering with us to end chronic homelessness in Central Oregon. Our work is not possible without their investments.



Lynne McConnell

City of Bend, Housing Director

Thank you to our 2021 supporters:

- Central Oregon Health Council
- Bend Foundation
- Pacific Accountancy, LLC
- PacificSource
- City of Bend
- Deschutes County
- Department of Housing and Urban Development

“ The City of Bend strives to enable a continuum of housing options for our community, from emergency shelter through permanent housing. Permanent Supportive Housing is a critical component of this continuum. **The City of Bend supports the important work that FUSE is doing to meet the drastic need for additional PSH in our region.** ”





"From here, our biggest goal is to be able to spend at least a few more Christmases together."

In Their Own Words

"After eight years of living out in the dirt, having this place feels like heaven to us. Life was hard out there. Hard on our bodies and hard on our relationship with each other. Both of us were suffering from some health issues: diabetes, heart issues, difficulty walking around, you name it. I felt like I'd worked too hard my whole life to end up out there.

I'd been a millworker for 25 years until the mills shut down and we started to lose everything. First the paycheck and the health insurance, then unemployment, and finally our house. We didn't really know how to get out of that situation- being stuck out in the dirt and cold. Meeting all of you [Mosaic Medical, Deschutes County Behavioral Health, REACH, and FUSE] has been a real godsend.

We still can't believe how incredible this apartment is and how blessed we are.

We got to have our grandkids visit for Thanksgiving, and we put up our first Christmas tree in eight years! Our relationship with each other is getting better and better without all of that stress, and we're actually making it to our doctors appointments now! From here, our biggest goal is to be able to spend at least a few more Christmases together."

Kris and Deb Smith

Grandparents, dog-lovers, and lifelong Oregonians

Kris & Deb were the very first participants housed by Central Oregon FUSE in our new Permanent Supportive Housing program which started in 2021. We're making sure that their housing stays stable and affordable, and coordinating with our partner agencies to offer flexible, individualized supportive services.

Our Future Goals

1

SUPPORT CLEVELAND COMMONS OPERATIONS

We're committed to helping ensure that Central Oregon's first true Permanent Supportive Housing residence will be a success, laying the groundwork for future projects.

2

GROW..SUSTAINABLY

We plan to expand our Bridge Home program to create opportunities for more people to exit homelessness, and add program staff to our team.

3

ADVOCATE & EDUCATE

We will continue to grow as a trusted thought leader in our field; building support for policies and funding investments that reduce chronic homelessness in Central Oregon.

How You Can Support FUSE

Donate

Your donation supports long-term solutions to homelessness in Central Oregon. FUSE is a registered 501(c3). EIN: 83-3580853

- [Make an online donation](#)
- [Amazon Wishlist](#)

Sign up for our Newsletter

Stay in the loop on occasional program updates, organizational news, and volunteer opportunities.

- bit.ly/co-fuse-news

Request a Presentation

We would love to visit your virtual or in-person classroom, community meeting, or professional group to share more about our work or engage in dialogue about solutions to homelessness. Please reach out for more information about scheduling a presentation or conversation tailored to your group.

Volunteer

At this time, we have a need for long-term volunteers with skills in web design, copyediting, and marketing. We may also have a need for a long-term "supportive employment coach." Please reach out for more information and stay tuned to our newsletter for additional volunteer needs.

Contact Us



csinsky@centraloregonfuse.org



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