



# North Star Project

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Design of Homelessness, Housing and Behavioral Health Services for Skagit County

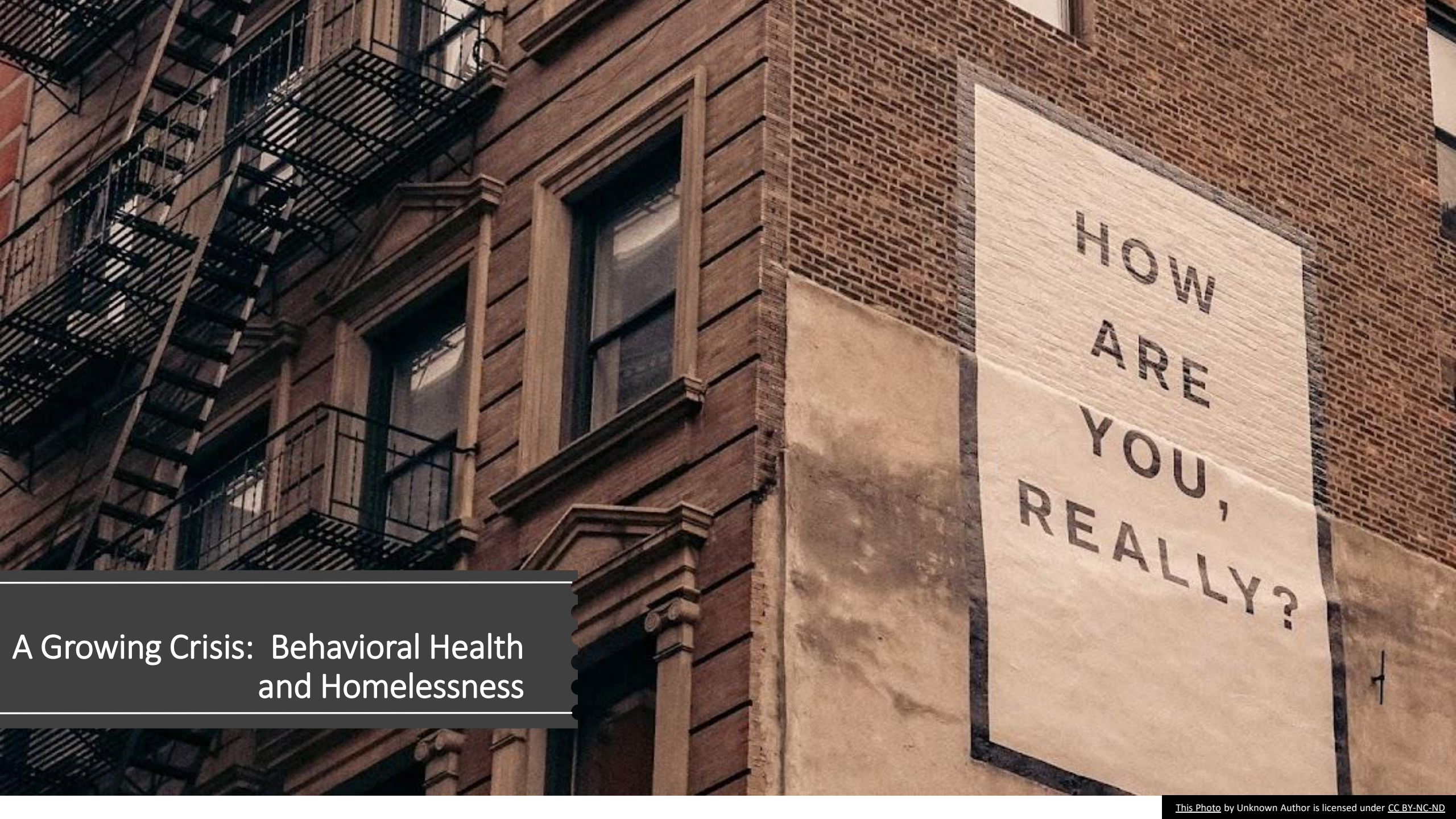
Jennifer Johnson, Director of Public Health

# Problem Statement

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Five different elected entities, community sector leadership and community partners all want to solve homelessness and behavioral health issues, but vision, priorities and methods are not aligned. The community lacks a countywide plan for leveraging collective resources for maximum impact.

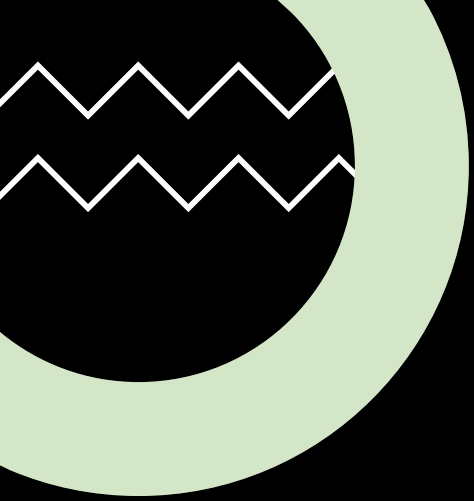




A Growing Crisis: Behavioral Health  
and Homelessness



Community  
Issue That  
Needs a  
Community  
Response



## Transforming Behavioral Health and Homelessness

- Phase 1: Develop a Shared North Star Vision for the County
- Phase 2: Build Out and Implementation of Skagit County's North Star Framework





## North Star: City and County Commitment to Co-Design a Vision, Plan and Governance Structure for Behavioral Health and Homeless Services and Funding

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- North Star Multi-Year Planning and Implementation Process
- County has engaged Tenfold Health, a team of experts with experience in health integration, transformation
- Move from crisis response to becoming multi-solvers with an integrated behavioral health, homeless and housing governance and service delivery model
- Investment allows us the ability to leverage over \$150 million behavioral health and homeless funding over the next 10 years to the maximum extent possible

# Status



## Skagit County Phase I: Workplan (Living Document)

Key Actions	Responsible Party	March	April	May	June	July	August
<b>Leadership Perspective</b>							
Draft key interview questions	Tenfold / Skagit Co.	Shaded					
Interview selected elected officials and leadership from Anacortes, Burlington, Mt. Vernon, Sedro-Woolley, and Skagit County	Tenfold/Skagit Co. Cities/Stakeholders	Shaded	Shaded				
Synthesize feedback from interviews	Tenfold		Shaded				
Draft a non-binding Call to Action and Workplan	Tenfold		Shaded	Shaded			
Confirm a non-binding Call to Action and Workplan	Tenfold/Skagit Co./Cities			Shaded			
Solidify membership and formation of project Steering Committee	Skagit Co.			Shaded	Shaded		
<b>Milestone:</b> Executive Summary Call to Action and Workplan to be shared with local government leaders and stakeholders	Tenfold				Shaded		
<b>Map Current Resources &amp; Gaps (Client Perspective)</b>							
Review all relevant data (reports, dashboards, results, etc)	Tenfold			Shaded			
Interview regional subject matter experts and clients (BH and housing)	Tenfold			Shaded	Shaded		
Draft a diagram and description of the current state	Tenfold				Shaded	Shaded	
Review/edit the current-state diagram and description	Tenfold/Skagit Co. Cities/Stakeholders				Shaded	Shaded	
Finalize the current-state diagram and description	Tenfold					Shaded	Shaded
<b>Milestone:</b> Current-state diagram with brief overview/description presented to Steering Committee	Tenfold/Skagit Co. Cities/Stakeholders						Shaded

# 46 Interviewees



- County Commissioners
- Mayors
- County Officials
- Sheriff's Department/ City Law Enforcement/ Fire & EMS
- K-12 Officials
- Healthcare Leaders
- North Sound Accountable Community of Health
- North Sound ASO
- Population Health Trust
- Skagit County Housing Authority
- Law and Justice Officials

Interviews conducted between March - May





# Major Themes

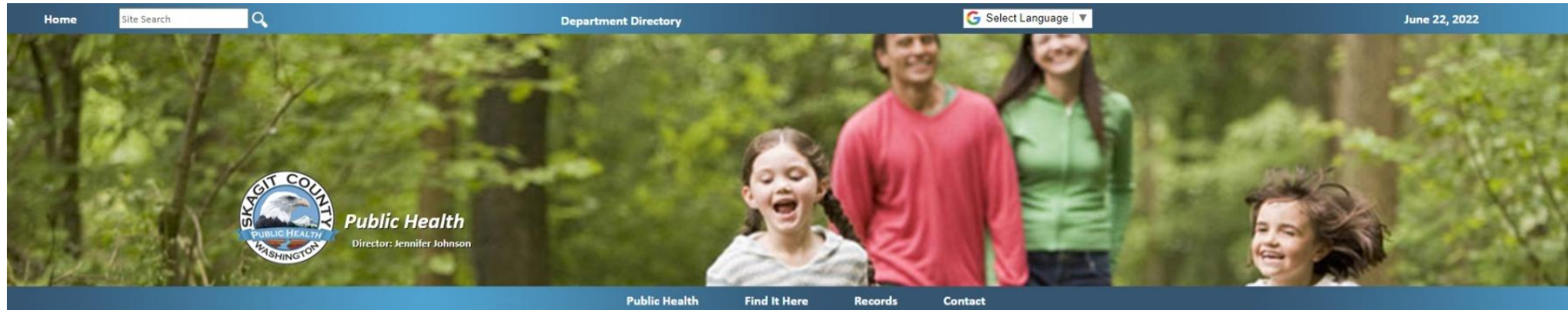
1. Goodwill and appetite for change are high.
2. Resources are insufficient to meet the need.
3. Actions by non-profits, service providers, and behavioral health systems are uncoordinated.
4. Tightness of the housing market is a major factor, including for keeping skilled workers in the system.
5. Availability of and confidence in data is low.
6. Action is needed.



# Next up



- Review a Call to Action with elected officials.
- Begin a deeper dive into available reports, data sets.
- Conduct interviews with additional stakeholders, subject-matter experts, and people on the front line.
- Begin mapping existing resources and identifying gaps.
- Form a Leadership and an Advisory Committee to oversee this work through the end of the year.



## Skagit County Launches North Star Project to Address Behavioral Health and Homelessness

Skagit County has recently launched the North Star Project, a multi-phased whole-of-government effort to address behavioral health and homelessness challenges in our community.

Homelessness and behavioral health have been important issues in Skagit County for many years. As most know, they are also incredibly complex issues to tackle. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has only added to local housing challenges, creating, and exacerbating mental health issues and substance use disorders in our community.

The overarching mission of the North Star project is to make addressing homelessness and behavioral health a top priority at the highest levels. City Mayors, County Commissioners, and Public Health are joining together and aligning forces to work towards a healthy and thriving community. This mobilization of combined forces is the best method to ensure the well-being of every Skagitonian as the County works through these complicated challenges.

In working together, existing strategies will be evaluated, new approaches will be implemented when necessary, and a plan to ensure tangible results will be put into action. Through the entirety of this project, best practices will be incorporated; feedback and lessons learned from stakeholders, advocacy groups, and other communities will take precedence as strategies are identified.

We also recognize that the goals of this project cannot be successfully achieved without prioritizing the needs of our most underserved community members. Equitable approaches for removing barriers to care and services will be at the forefront of all strategies being developed.

Skagit County is contracting with Tenfold Health, a team of experts who will lead our community through a co-design planning and assessment process. The work will occur in two phases over the course of roughly 24 months:

- Phase 1 (*currently underway*): Develop a Shared North Star Vision for the County
- Phase 2: Implementation of Skagit County's North Star Framework, including governance, roles, and resources

The County will be using ARPA funds to support Phase 1 and 2 of this project.

### Related documents:

- [North Star Project Work Plan: Phase 1](#)
- [Mayors of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and Skagit County Commissioners Joint Statement on Addressing Behavioral Health and Homelessness](#)
- [Key Leader Interview Findings, June 2022](#)
  
- [Introducing Tenfold Health](#)

### Press Releases:

April 26, 2022

[Skagit County Launches North Star Project to Address Behavioral Health and Homelessness](#)

Skagit County has recently launched the North Star Project, a multi-phased whole-of-government effort to address behavioral health and homelessness challenges in our community.



# Change

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A night sky with a bright star and many smaller stars. The background is dark blue/black, filled with numerous small white stars. A single, very bright star is positioned in the upper right quadrant, emitting a large, multi-pointed starburst effect. The text 'Thank You!' is written in white, sans-serif font in the lower left area. A solid orange horizontal bar is located at the bottom of the image.

Thank You!