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NEWS RELEASE

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Full-time administrator hired to manage 10-year plan to address homelessness

CORVALLIS, Ore. – The Housing Opportunities Action Council (HOAC), a social services initiative jointly chaired by Benton County and the City of Corvallis, contracted with United Way of Benton & Lincoln counties to serve as the lead administrator. United Way hired Shawn Collins as the first full-time program manager for the HOAC. Collins began on November 1, 2016.

A graduate of Whitman College and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Collins is an accomplished projects and operations manager who takes a consultative, participatory approach to problem solving and change management. He brings thirteen years of experience with Hewlett-Packard and a history of leading teams through organizational and technological change.

Collins’ primary responsibilities include strategic planning and project management, and ensuring accountability and transparency through developing and implementing reporting mechanisms. Instrumental to Collins’ efforts is the newly launched www.bentonhoac.com website where background and resources of the initiative, the plan update timeline and process documents, and data snapshots of housing affordability and homelessness are available to the public.

Additionally, an adjunct Healthy Communities team from Benton County Health Department is facilitating a nine-month planning process to aid HOAC members in defining priorities and strategies as the HOAC nears the midpoint of its 10-year plan to address homelessness in the area. This is funded equally by Benton County, City of Corvallis, and Samaritan Health Services.

“The update to the Ten Year Plan is a necessary component to ensuring ongoing and future efforts to address housing affordability and homelessness are optimized,” said Jim Moorefield, executive director of Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services and

member of the HOAC Governing Board. “Creating a website to serve as a central information source for the mid-point update prioritizes our goal of transparency and accountability during this process.”

Many local agencies have been part of an ad-hoc coalition to enact the plan, and Mayor Biff Traber and County Commissioner Anne Schuster have led as co-chairs since 2015. In 2009, former Mayor Julie Manning and County Commissioner Jay Dixon led collaborative efforts between the city of Corvallis and Benton County to establish a Ten Year Plan to Address Homelessness.

A more formal governance structure has replaced the ad hoc nature of the coalition and the Housing Opportunities Action Council (HOAC) came into existence to reflect the bottom-line need for housing and support services as a basic need to address homelessness.

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