



## **Supportive Housing Services Tailored to Older Adults in Eastern Washington**

### **What Is Washington State’s Foundational Community Supports?**

Foundational Community Supports (FCS) is currently one of the original three initiatives developed under the state of Washington’s 1115 Medicaid Transformation waiver. Beginning in 2018, FCS supportive housing services have been available to eligible Medicaid beneficiaries who meet health needs-based criteria and at least one risk factor: chronic homelessness; lengthy institutionalization; an in-home care recipient with frequent turnover of caregiver; frequent stays in adult residential care/treatment settings; and/or high risk of incurring substantial Medicaid claims.

Through a third-party administrator (currently Wellpoint), the FCS program reimburses community-based providers for delivering individualized supportive housing and supported employment services. These services may include facilitating cross-sector coordination of all services that the person needs, including long-term services and supports, behavioral health, primary care, and legal or financial issues. When possible, the Aging and Long-Term Support Administration pairs FCS with state-funded rental assistance because the current 1115 demonstration does not extend to room and board.<sup>1 2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Washington State Health Care Authority, [Foundational Community Supports \(FCS\)](#), October 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, [2022 LTSS Accomplishments](#), 2023.

## Area Agency on Aging Becomes an FCS Provider

[Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington](#) (ALTCEW), the designated area agency on aging (AAA) for a five-county region that includes Spokane, is a FCS community-based provider. As a local leader on aging well at home and in the community, ALTCEW and all other AAAs develop, coordinate, and deliver a wide range of services and housing assistance targeted to older adults and people with disabilities. (Learn more about AAAs at <https://acl.gov/HousingAndServices/issue-briefs>.)

In the late 2010s, ALTCEW began noticing the significant uptick in older adults who were becoming homeless, especially in Spokane. ALTCEW responded by:

- Having two employees specialize their caseloads in assisting the AAA's existing Medicaid in-home care clients who were at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- Educating community leaders and stakeholders about the issue.
- Building relationships with housing and homeless services organizations.

ALTCEW soon discovered that many housing supports and services in the community were not oriented to older adults' needs. Older adults had difficulties accessing home modifications or transportation, legal services for tenancy issues like neglected repairs or rental arrears, homemaker services, and property tax relief. Older adults also struggled with online searches and applications for rental units and/or with challenges in accessing subsidized housing or housing vouchers. The unmet needs for these types of assistance are some reasons why older adults lost their housing or became unhoused. Among older adults who were newly unhoused, shelters and staff were not equipped to address functional and complex health needs. Finally, too many older adults returned to homelessness after a few months in a new place due to insufficient tenancy-sustaining and in-home supports and services.

Eventually, ALTCEW became a Medicaid supportive housing provider through FCS. Table 1 provides an overview of ALTCEW's pre-tenancy and tenancy-sustaining services, and the latter is a key focus for their assistance. Specifically, ALTCEW care managers not only connect people to needed services and supports but also consistently follow up once individuals are housed to help keep them stable.

### Keys for Success

- Create a statewide program infrastructure through which housing-related supports and services (HRSS) are delivered through community-based providers
- Engage the aging network as HRSS providers so older adults:
  - Receive tailored assistance
  - Are connected to additional social care and housing resources to further stabilize housing
- Encourage partnerships between aging network organizations and public housing agencies

**Table 1. FCS Services Provided by ALTCEW**

Pre-Tenancy Services	Tenancy-Sustaining Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a person-centered housing support or housing crisis plan.</li> <li>• Assist with finding and securing affordable housing.</li> <li>• Review leases and educate about legal rights and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Advocate for individuals in securing housing.</li> <li>• Assist with the move-in process.</li> <li>• Coordinate with the individual’s care team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively support maintenance of tenancy.</li> <li>• Coordinate with care team.</li> <li>• Coordinate authorized long-term services and support.</li> <li>• Support community integration and relationship-building with landlords, property managers, and neighbors.</li> <li>• Update housing plan.</li> <li>• Connect to permanent affordable housing.</li> </ul>

ALTCEW also expanded and strengthened its housing partnerships to effectively deliver FCS support to program participants and, more generally, help older adults with housing instability. Table 2 presents an overview of their key FCS partners and the focus of those collaborations.

**Table 2. ALTCEW Partnerships for Supportive Housing**

Partner	Focus
Spokane Housing Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets aside a Housing Choice Voucher for one ALTCEW referral each month</li> </ul>
Landlords and other housing providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhances access to affordable housing for FCS participants when there are vacancies</li> <li>• Creates productive working relationships that may help when tenancy issues arise</li> </ul>
Homeless service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enables bi-directional referrals and assistance with the homeless coordinated entry system</li> </ul>

## **Delivering FCS Assistance Tailored for Older Adults**

ALTCEW tailors FCS assistance to older adults' situations and preferences. They understand how to effectively support older adults with housing, nutrition, transportation, care coordination, caregiving support, falls prevention and chronic disease self-management, and other services they need to live stably and remain independent. Accordingly, ALTCEW's four FCS care managers:

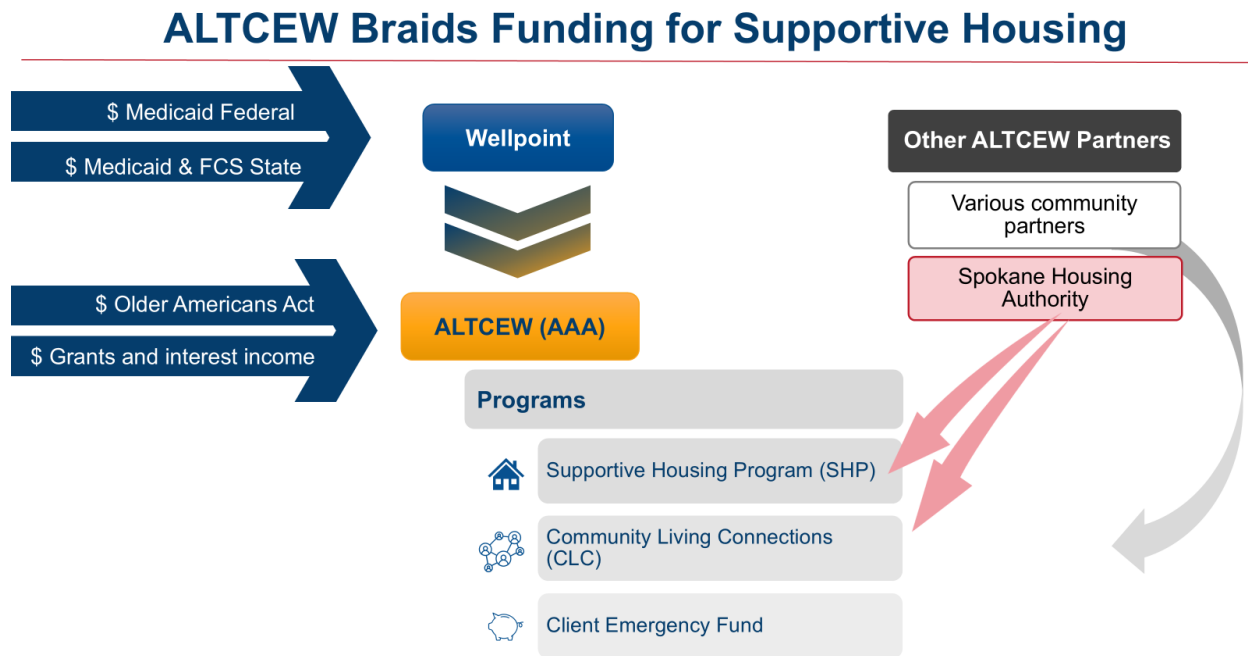
- Create person-centered housing plans focused on what matters to each individual.
- Assess and offer support options for any functional, mobility, and cognitive needs.
- Coordinate across housing, health, *and* social care services.
- Apply their knowledge of Medicaid, Social Security, Medicare, and other benefits and rights (especially ones specifically for older adults).
- Encourage self-management using a strengths-based approach.

## **Braiding Funding to Support the Whole Person**

As an AAA, ALTCEW uses Older Americans Act funding to meet the needs of older adults. It also has other government and philanthropic funding to provide access to HCBS and coordinate services for older persons, adults over 18 years old who live with a disability, and their caregivers. Thus, ALTCEW is able to braid FCS with multiple funding sources to meet each individual's needs depending on eligibility.

Figure 1 shows Medicaid (federal and state) and FCS (state) funding flowing to Wellpoint, the state's third-party administrator, and then to ALTCEW for the supportive housing program. Also, ALTCEW directly receives funding from the Older Americans Act, some of which supports the Community Living Connections program (along with many other programs not shown). Interest and grant income enable ALTCEW to maintain a client emergency fund as a flexible resource that team members use across the full AAA's client base. The role of program partners, including the Spokane Housing Authority, is discussed below.

**Figure 1. ALTCEW Braided Funding for Supportive Housing Services**



As summarized in Table 2, Wellpoint receives both the federal-state Medicaid funding and the state-only funding for rental assistance and then reimburses ALTCEW and other FCS providers. Because FCS rental assistance is time-limited, ALTCEW coordinates with Spokane Housing Authority, which administers Housing Choice Vouchers from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These vouchers provide ongoing rental assistance to program participants.

**Table 3. Funding and Programs Used for Supportive Housing**

Funding	Program	Contractor and/or Provider
CMS and state funding and 1115 agreement	Medicaid State administrator: Washington Health Care Authority	Wellpoint (third party administrator), which subcontracts to ALTCEW for supportive housing
State funding and 1115 agreement	Foundational Community Supports Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for housing-related fees, including move-in costs, first and last month’s rent, deposits, and non-refundable fees	
HUD	Housing Choice Vouchers	Spokane Housing Authority
Older Americans Act III-B	State administrator: Washington Aging and Long-Term Support Administration	ALTCEW (multiple programs)

Funding	Program	Contractor and/or Provider
Grants and interest income	Client Emergency Fund	ALTCEW

Although FCS covers a wide range of services, often ALTCEW clients need other additional supports to regain housing. Older Americans Act III-B funding flows through the Washington Aging and Long-Term Support Administration and enables ALTCEW to provide access to transportation, legal assistance, home and community-based services, and more. Many program participants also receive case management for Medicaid in-home care services, and this layered support helps stabilize their placement in home by providing paid caregivers for personal care, in addition to other types of assistance. In addition, ALTCEW’s client emergency funds come from grants and interest income.

Table 3 lists key AAA programs and partners that the ALTCEW’s FCS managers often tap to help older adults become and stay housed. Often, FCS managers coordinate internally with the Community Living Connections team to find other resources that older individuals want and need to help stabilize housing. For example, an older adult might be eligible for behavioral health, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, and utility discounts. If so, ALTCEW helps them access or apply for those supports and the agency’s client emergency fund fills gaps. These wraparound supports have been fundamental to the AAA’s success in assisting people as they transition back into housing.

This table also highlights in-kind resources from partners, the most important of which is a Housing Choice Voucher from the Spokane Housing Authority. FCS care managers layer in other ALTCEW or other community supports—such as falls prevention, legal aid, assistive technology, and socialization—as individuals want and need.

**Table 4. ALTCEW Layers Resources for Supportive Housing**

Support and Service Category	Provider of Support or Service
Housing options counselors	ALTCEW Community Living Connections
Essential furniture, pantry items, cleaning supplies, etc.	ALTCEW Client Emergency Fund
Rental subsidies (Housing Choice Vouchers)	Spokane Housing Authority
Home and community-based services	Varies—some are provided by ALTCEW and its subcontractors with Older Americans Act, Medicaid waivers, or other state and/or federal funding

In addition to the efforts described above, ALTCEW has developed integrated pathways that link FCS assistance to their Medicaid in-home care clients, high-risk Medicaid, and dual-eligible care coordination clients. For example, two other ALTCEW programs—Health Homes and Case

Management, which serve high-risk Medicaid and dual-eligible clients, are the primary sources of referral for supportive housing. This innovative approach enhances service delivery by creating seamless connections between various support programs.

## **Summary**

As a Medicaid provider in the FCS program, ALTCEW has helped many older adults remain or become stably housed after experiencing homelessness. This achievement is due in part to how ALTCEW has tailored FCS services to older adults, developed essential community partnerships, and braided together its own and other community resources to close gaps that otherwise would destabilize housing.

## **Learn More**

The [Accelerating Housing and Services Partnerships to Advance Housing Stability: Area Agencies on Aging \(AAAs\)](#) webinar from the Housing and Services Resource Center featured ALTCEW. The event page has links to related information.