

RBHA Housing Report – July 2026 - Part 4 of 4

Where We Go From Here: Gaps and Opportunities in Addressing Housing Needs

Throughout this report series, we have explored the growing housing needs within our community, how RBHA is responding, and the critical role of partnerships in addressing those needs.

While these efforts are making a meaningful impact, they also highlight an important reality: **The current system is not yet equipped to fully meet the level or complexity of need we are seeing.**

Based on data, frontline experience, and community partnerships, several key gaps have emerged - along with opportunities to strengthen our collective response.

What We Are Seeing Across Our System

Across all points of entry - 988, mobile crisis response, outreach, intake & assessment, and residential services - housing instability continues to be the most consistent and urgent need.

Staff across programs report that housing challenges are not isolated - they are deeply connected to behavioral health, physical health, and economic stability.

Housing instability remains the primary barrier to behavioral health stabilization for many individuals we serve.

Key Gaps Identified

1. Lack of Immediate Housing Options

One of the most consistent challenges identified by staff is the lack of immediate, available housing at the time of crisis.

- No same-day shelter or placement options
- Limited after-hours access to resources
- Individuals often left without safe options overnight

Impact:

Crisis response teams are frequently required to manage situations where the primary need - safe shelter - cannot be met in real time.

2. Barriers to Accessing Existing Resources

Even when housing resources exist, individuals face significant barriers to accessing them.

- Documentation requirements (ID, income verification)
- Eligibility restrictions
- Transportation challenges
- Difficulty navigating complex systems

Impact:

Delays in access often prolong instability and increase the likelihood of repeated crisis interactions.

3. Limited Low-Barrier and Appropriate Housing Options

Staff consistently report gaps in housing options that meet the diverse needs of individuals in crisis.

Limited options for:

- Couples
- Families
- Individuals with pets
- Individuals with active substance use
- Individuals with complex medical or behavioral needs

Impact:

Many individuals decline available options because they do not feel safe, appropriate, or accessible.

4. Housing Instability Driving Crisis Utilization

Housing instability is not only a need - it is a driver of system utilization.

- Individuals seeking hospitalization or incarceration for shelter
- Repeated crisis calls tied to housing instability
- Difficulty stabilizing without a safe environment

Impact:

The system becomes reactive rather than preventive, with higher costs and poorer outcomes.

5. Gaps in Transitional and Step-Down Housing

Staff identified a critical need for housing options that bridge the gap between crisis and long-term stability.

Need for:

- Short-term stabilization housing (3–14 days)
- Transitional housing while awaiting permanent placement
- Step-down supports after crisis programs

Impact:

Without these options, individuals often cycle back into crisis or lose progress made during treatment.

What We Believe It Will Take

1. Expanded Access to Immediate and Low-Barrier Housing

Increasing access to housing options that are available at the time of crisis - and that minimize barriers to entry - will be critical.

Examples:

- After-hours shelter access
 - Low-barrier housing options
 - Emergency placement resources
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2. Increased Investment in Deeply Affordable Housing

As highlighted throughout this series, the need for deeply affordable housing continues to outpace supply.

Expanding housing that is accessible to individuals with the lowest incomes will be essential to long-term system stability.

3. Strengthened Transitional Housing Pathways

Creating clear pathways from crisis response to permanent housing - including short-term and step-down options - can reduce system cycling and improve outcomes.

4. Continued Investment in System Coordination

Strengthening coordination across partners - including data sharing, referral pathways, and resource alignment - will remain a key component of an effective response.

5. Flexible Funding and Supportive Services

From our 988 data especially:

- Motel vouchers
- Transportation
- Document assistance

Small, flexible supports can have a significant impact in stabilizing individuals and preventing further crisis.

Closing Reflection

The housing challenges facing our community are complex and evolving.

While no single solution will address these needs, the insights gathered through this report series point to a clear path forward - one that requires continued collaboration, strategic investment, and a shared commitment to meeting individuals where they are.

At RBHA, we remain committed to being part of that solution.