



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - January 9, 2026

Deep-rooted nonprofits merge into stronger regional service provider

Two Puget Sound based nonprofits, each founded more than a century ago, have combined into one stronger, more resilient, and mission-aligned organization.

[Lutheran Community Services Northwest](#) (LCSNW) and [Compass Housing Alliance](#) completed a legal merger on Jan. 1, 2026 and are on a steady path to integrate their operations in the year ahead. Together, they serve more than 75,000 clients and employ nearly 1,000 staff members.

“This moment marks not only the start of a new year, but a powerful new chapter for LCSNW and Compass, grounded in shared purpose, expanded impact, and deep hope for the future,” said David Duea, CEO of Lutheran Community Services Northwest, which serves communities in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

LCSNW and Compass trace their roots back to the same founders, the Reverend Otto and Mrs. Alva Karlstrom. Both organizations were established in the Puget Sound area in the early 1920s.

In 2019, LCSNW and Compass leaders began discussing the benefits of coming together. “After a multi-year process and thorough analysis, it was clear to the Boards that this merger was indeed a win-win for Compass clients and LCSNW clients,” said Greg Gilbert, LCSNW Board Chair.

Driven by immense opportunity and intense community need, the organizations decided 2026 was the right time to merge. “Compass is now the Housing Division of LCSNW at a moment when housing insecurity continues to impact communities across King County and the Pacific Northwest,” said Christopher Ross, Compass President. “By joining Compass’s housing expertise with LCSNW’s human service programs, we will be equipped to respond to the realities that so many of our neighbors face. Together, we will deliver services that help more people move toward stability, independence and permanent housing.”

Compass brings more than 750 affordable housing units, over 200 enhanced shelter beds, and a robust mix of emergency services into the LCSNW portfolio. Compass’ expertise in regional housing will strengthen the six lines of service offered by LCSNW: behavioral health, family wellness, immigrant and refugee services, aging and independent living, community support, and housing services.

“Together, we have a rare opportunity to lead in a space our region urgently needs — one where affordable housing, emergency services, and direct care are integrated, compassionate, and mission-driven,” said Heike Lake, LCSNW’s President and Chief Operating Officer.

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