STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IN OKLAHOMA CITY

Sponsored by the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness, City of Oklahoma City
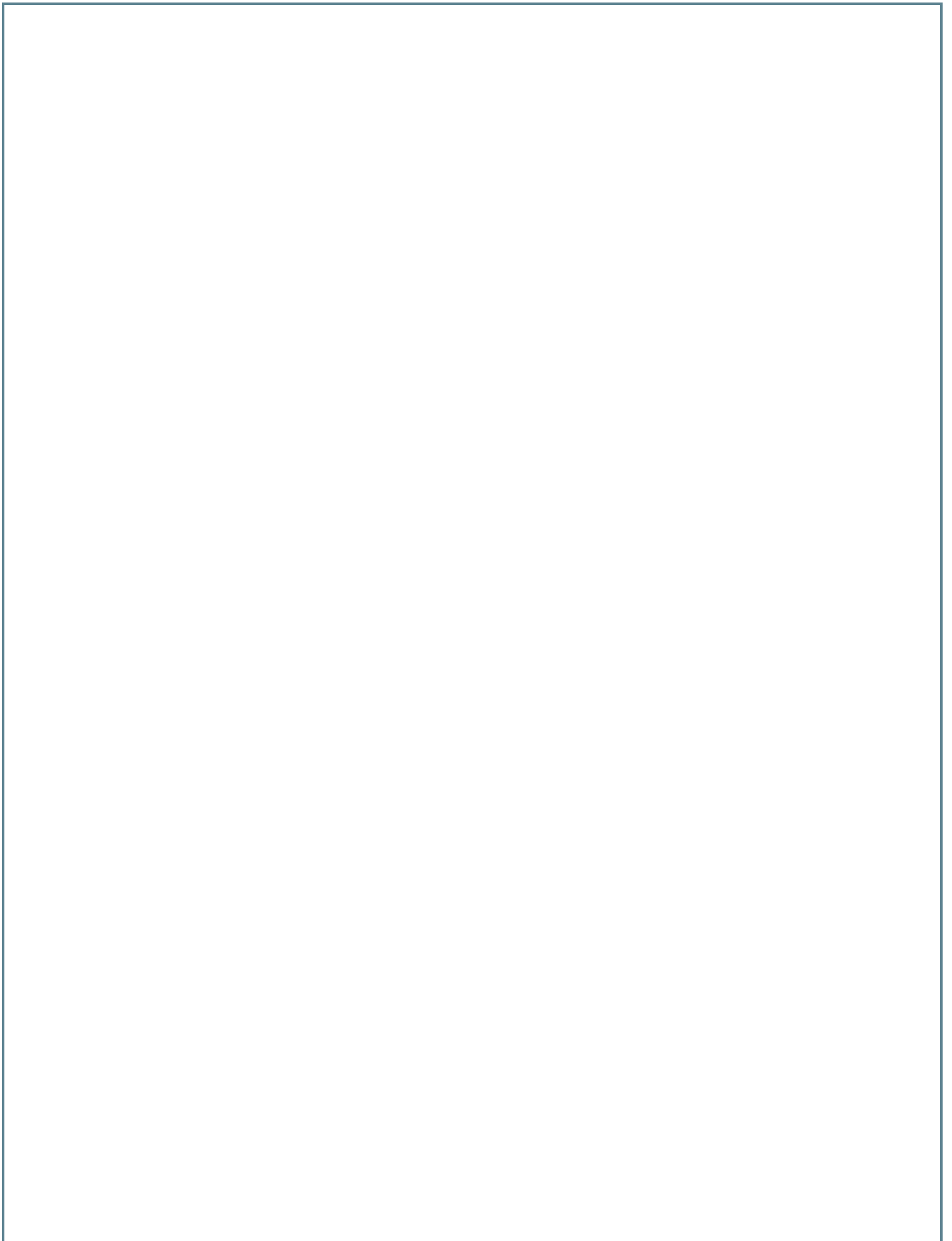
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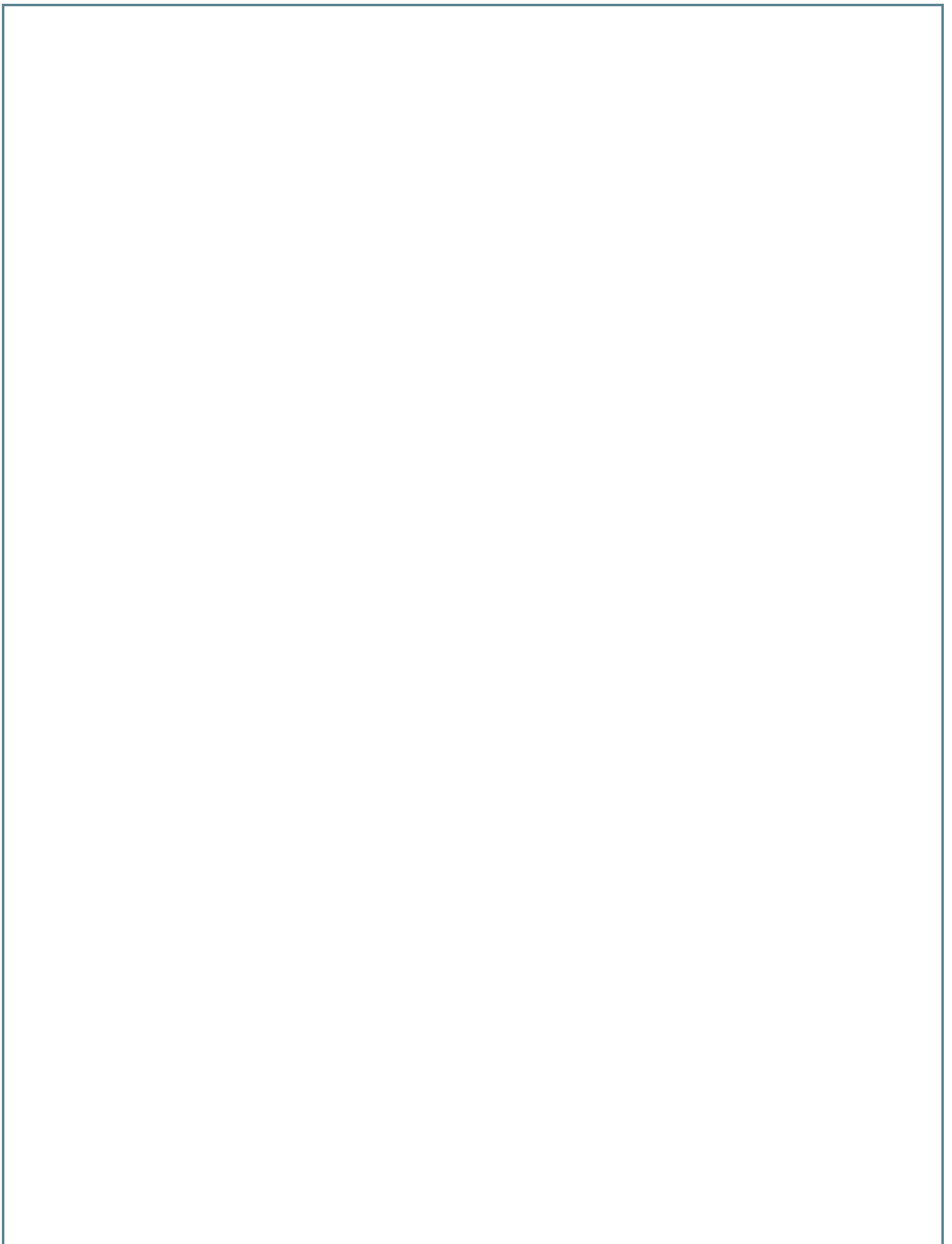
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Homelessness affects every community in the United States. Housing costs continue to rise in most communities, and eviction rates are rising in many. Rental assistance programs have declined, while costs for family support services like childcare and health insurance have all continued to increase.

The Oklahoma City (OKC) Planning Department's Housing and Community Development Division leads OKC's Continuum of Care (CoC). As the lead agency for the CoC, the City works with local nonprofit service providers and other government agencies to coordinate homeless services and develop policies and procedures for the CoC.

In 2013, the OKC CoC shifted the City's homeless services system towards a Housing First approach that prioritizes those who are most vulnerable for services. Since then, the OKC CoC has housed over 12,500 people and has increased their focus on youth and families experiencing homelessness in the community. In January 2018, the OKC CoC also initiated its Coordinated Entry System (CES) which allows homeless service providers to track services better, locate people more easily and pool their resources to house people faster.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

Rapid growth throughout OKC and a more visible homeless population led City leadership to realize the essential need to increase the effectiveness of OKC's homeless services system. In response to this need, Mayor David Holt formed a task force to address homelessness in OKC in April 2019. The Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness (Task Force) asked key stakeholders in the community to participate in developing a plan to prevent and reduce homelessness in the city.

The City of Oklahoma City contracted with the research firm Analytic Insight, LLC (AI) to work with the Task Force to develop the strategy to make homelessness in the community brief, rare and nonrecurring. AI designed the methodology that included interviews with 45 key stakeholders, and 12 strategic planning sessions with a wide variety of service providers, service recipients and other stakeholders who shared ideas and recommended strategies. Additionally, AI conducted an analysis of the service network as well as data from the CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database.

The Current State of Homelessness in OKC

Each year in January, communities count the number of persons who are experiencing homelessness during a 24-hour period. Known as a point-in-time or PIT count, this provides a snapshot of homelessness in a community. On January 23, 2020, 1,573 men, women and children were identified as homeless in OKC, an increase of 300 people compared to 2019. The number of unsheltered homeless continued to be one of the highest seen over a five-year period at 557 individuals or about 35% of the homeless population.

Stakeholder Perspectives

Many key stakeholders said that people experiencing homelessness need access to affordable housing options as well as mental and behavioral health services. Others said the community lacks sufficient prevention resources such as access to short-term financial assistance for rent or utilities to help those in need and at risk of eviction. Most said that funding and competition among organizations for the

same funding streams is the greatest challenge facing the organizations working with people experiencing homelessness in the community.

Almost all stakeholders said that local organizations work well together and that the ability to collaborate and coordinate services for people experiencing homelessness is what organizations do best in OKC. Key stakeholders agreed that residents are engaged around the issue of homelessness and that there is a need for affordable housing in the community. Several pointed to the recent passage of MAPS 4 by OKC voters in a special election in December 2019 as a reason for increased community engagement.

 Comments included the need for a centralized public education campaign and unified messaging, as well as the importance of telling stories about the causes of homelessness, who homelessness impacts –including families and children, and ways people and families have successfully navigated out of homelessness into permanent and stable housing.

The Network of Organizations

A social network analysis of the communication patterns among organizations working to address homelessness in OKC revealed a strong, highly connected network with balanced contributions from sectors including direct service providers, governmental agencies, healthcare providers and others. The strength of OKC's network and the large number of organizations that make balanced contributions to new initiatives indicate that the City's organizations involved in addressing homelessness are well-positioned to address the elements of this homelessness action plan in a coordinated and collaborative process.

OKC'S STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

Combating homelessness requires a broad range of strategies to help residents experiencing homelessness move into permanent housing and achieve housing stability. The 2021 Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City provides a roadmap for the community to reduce and prevent homelessness and to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Oklahoma City.

Homeless delivery systems are complex and unique to each community. They include multiple organizations working to meet the many needs of people experiencing homelessness, often with extremely limited resources. Communities need a coordinated approach to address homelessness as they move from a collection of individual programs to a strategic, data-driven community-wide response. A strategic plan to address homelessness helps communities set goals and prioritize the actions organizations in the homeless delivery system should take.

This plan details 24 strategies for the community to implement to enhance homeless service delivery and help residents experiencing homelessness to move into permanent housing and achieve housing stability. A listing of the strategies is provided on the following page and detailed further in this report.

Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City

Preventing Homelessness	Affordable Housing
❖ Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program ❖ Discharge Planning Liaison Program ❖ Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders ❖ Increase and Expand Low-Barrier Employment Options ❖ Advocate for Tenant Protection Legislation Like HB 3710 and/or Similar Legislation	❖ Zoning, Ordinance and Development Policy Changes ❖ Land Bank 501c3 ❖ Lien Forgiveness Program ❖ Follow the Recommendations of the Affordable Housing Study

Outreach and Case Management	Emergency and Temporary Shelter	Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	Transportation
❖ Enhance Access and Use of HMIS ❖ Case Manager Training and Professional Development ❖ Expand Use of Peer Support Mentors ❖ Intensive Case Management and Outreach ❖ Mobile Services Team	❖ Inclement Weather Shelter ❖ Expand Coordinated Entry Access in Shelters	❖ Transitional Housing and Services for TAY	❖ Establish a Microtransit Program ❖ Expand Bus Pass Program

Funding Sources	Advocacy
❖ Priority Driven, Outcomes-Based Coordinated Funding ❖ Develop Housing Trust Fund	❖ Public Education and Community Engagement Initiative ❖ Updated Cost of Homelessness Study ❖ Expand Samaritan Program

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As the CoC's lead, the City works with local nonprofit service providers and other government agencies to coordinate homeless services and develop policies and procedures for the CoC. The City's Housing and Community Development Division also administers the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program.

In 2013, the CoC shifted the City's homeless services system towards a Housing First approach that prioritizes those who are most vulnerable for services. Over 40 nonprofit organizations, private business and government agencies worked together to provide housing and case management support for veterans and individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Once people were housed, case managers worked with each individual to address the issues that led to their homelessness.

Initially, the CoC's goal was to house 84 chronically homeless, unsheltered individuals each year. The collaborative exceeded expectations and housed more than 320 people in the first two years, with a 90% housing retention rate and an estimated cost reduction of more than $2 million annually.[1]

Branded Journey Home-OKC, the CoC's service initiative continues to work to end veteran and chronic homelessness in OKC. Indeed, since 2013 the OKC CoC has housed over 12,500 people and has increased their focus on youth and families experiencing homelessness in the community.

In January of 2018, the OKC CoC also initiated its Coordinated Entry System (CES), which ensures that homeless service providers use the same intake tools and uniform eligibility criteria, as well as house clients from a single, community-wide by-name list. CES allows OKC's CoC organizations to track services better, locate people more easily and pool their resources to house people faster.

CONTINUUM OF CARE

A CoC is a regional or local planning body that coordinates federal funding for housing and services for people experiencing homelessness. Communities receive CoC funding primarily through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD identifies four necessary parts of a continuum:

- Outreach, intake and assessment to identify service and housing needs and connect people to both.
- Emergency shelter to provide an immediate and safe alternative to the streets, especially for homeless families with children.
- Transitional housing with supportive services to allow for the development of skills that will support housing stability.
- Permanent supportive housing to provide individuals with an affordable place to live with supportive services if needed.

CoCs track and manage the homeless community in their area. They conduct the biannual count of the homeless population and an annual enumeration of emergency systems, transitional housing units and the beds that make up the homeless assistance system.

https://endhomelessness.org/resource/what-is-a-continuum-of-care/

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[1] https://okc.roundtable.city/programs/by7fyto28idwi5oiq

MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS

In response to rapid growth throughout OKC and a more visible homeless population, Mayor David Holt formed a task force to address homelessness in OKC in April 2019. The Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness (the Task Force) includes representatives from local service providers, philanthropic agencies and the City, as well as City Council members.

The Task Force was charged with selecting a consultant that they will then work with to develop a strategies to address homelessness in Oklahoma City. The Task Force serves as a resource to identify stakeholders, coordinate tasks and sub-groups, disseminate information, and review the consultant's findings and provide feedback. At the conclusion of their work, the planning document is produced. The Insamuch Foundation donated $100,000 to fund the consulting work and Analytic Insight was selected as the consultant to develop the strategic plan in June of 2019.

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:
CONTINUE TO PURSUE SOCIAL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES

All people deserve to be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect. Pursuit of these values provides unity within our community to move our City forward and place us at the forefront of communities which seek the betterment of all people. We will ensure equitable justice through continued criminal justice system reform and increased engagement with residents and community groups. We will support our partners and promote access to social services that facilitate a better future for those in need.

Progress Indicators

- % of residents citywide reporting they feel safe
- % of officers who have received procedural justice training
- % change in the number of people incarcerated for municipal charges
- # of prisoner days utilized by Oklahoma City at the Oklahoma County jail
- # of homeless persons identified during the Point-In-Time Count
- # of federally assisted affordable rental housing units

https://www.okc.gov/government/city-council/council-priorities

Task Force Members

Sue Ann Arnall	President - Arnall Family Foundation
Damon Britton	Executive Director – Diversion Hub
James Cooper	Councilman, Ward 2 - City of Oklahoma City
Kim Rolston	General Council - W&W/AFCO Steel
Cheryl Vinall Denney	Shareholder, Practice Group Leader, Industry Group Leader - McAfee & Taft
Ranya Forgotson O'Connor	Director - The Curbside Chronicle
Courtney Franklin	Community Relations Manager - Love's Travel Stops
Mark Gillett	Executive Director - OKC Housing Authority
Kori Hall	Women's Discipleship Director - Frontline Church (Former Case Manager - OKC Day Shelter)
JoBeth Hamon	Councilwoman, Ward 6 - City of Oklahoma City
Debby Hampton	President and CEO - United Way of Central Oklahoma
Joe Hodges	Regional President - SSM Health Oklahoma
Adam Luck	Chief Executive Officer - City Care
Bill Major	Executive Director - Zarrow Family Foundation
Aubrey McDermid	Assistant City Manager - City of Oklahoma City
Frank Merrick	President - Foundation Management, Inc.

Nikki Nice   Councilwoman, Ward 7 - City of Oklahoma City

Sarah Roberts   Senior Program Officer - Inasmuch Foundation

Bob Ross   President and CEO - Inasmuch Foundation

Shelley Sanders   Senior Vice President-Investment Officer, Senior PIM
                                    Portfolio Manager - Wells Fargo Advisors

Gregory Shinn   Chief Housing Officer - Mental Health Association of
                                    Oklahoma

Dan Straughan   Executive Director - Homeless Alliance

Randy Tate   Chief Executive Officer - NorthCare

Frank Turner   President - Turmanage, Inc.

DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS IN OKC

The City contracted with the research firm Analytic Insight, LLC (AI) to work with the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness to develop a strategies to reduce and prevent homelessness in the community. AI was to study the conditions of homelessness in OKC, the current resources used to address homelessness and the service needs to better help people experiencing homelessness, as well as engage in strategic planning and develop the comprehensive community plan.

AI designed the methodology to collect a broad range of community perspectives and to develop a final action plan that will accelerate the community's progress towards reducing and ending homelessness in the community. AI's analysis on the current state of homelessness included identifying gaps and needs, as well as soliciting input into how the community could improve its approach to reducing homelessness. This analysis is based on several information sources:

1. Key Informational Interviews conducted with 45 community stakeholders.

2. Twelve strategic planning sessions with a wide variety of service providers, service recipients and other stakeholders who shared ideas and recommended strategies.

3. Secondary data analysis including Census, HUD, HMIS, and case studies of similar communities for best practices.

4. Network analysis using the results of two questions asked during the key stakeholder interviews:

    a) How frequently do you communicate with each of the other stakeholder organizations?
    b) Which would you turn to if you were beginning a new project related to homelessness?

Key Stakeholder Interviews

AI interviewed 45 stakeholders identified by the City and Task Force. These stakeholders were obtained through a list provided to AI by the City and included known service providers and local agencies that work with the local homeless community. AI requested a telephone interview with a representative from each organization to discuss the services and resources the organization provides to people experiencing homelessness, how well sub-populations within the homeless community are served, the network of organizations who serve people experiencing homelessness and the need for coordinating efforts, other gaps and duplications of service, challenges that organizations face, and suggestions to better engage the community around the homelessness issue.

Stakeholder Planning Sessions

AI facilitated twelve planning sessions with a variety of community members including service providers, faith-based and community organizations, family-focused organizations, health and mental health providers, housing providers, government agency staff, community advocates, community foundations and representatives from the business and finance community.

The objective of these sessions was to identify common goals, reasonable actions and opportunities for all stakeholders to collaborate across organizations to address homelessness in OKC.

The strategic planning sessions included ten topic areas:

Affordable Housing

Transitional Age Youth Services and Transitional Housing

No or Low Barrier Emergency Shelter

Preventing Homelessness

Outreach and Engagement

Substance Use, Mental, Behavioral and Primary Care Treatment

Improving Case Management and the Coordinated System

Transportation

Policy and Advocacy

Funding Sources

The strategic planning sessions were conducted over two weeks in February 2020. AI held two sessions on the topics of affordable housing and preventing homelessness. Each topic area included several goals and participants discussed specific actions the community could take to address each goal.

THE CURRENT STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN OKC

Each year in January, communities count the number of persons who are experiencing homelessness during a 24-hour period. Known as a point-in-time or PIT count, this provides a snapshot of homelessness in a community. This count and the data collected from people experiencing homelessness help service providers better understand the needs of the people they serve, as well as to plan on what services and programs should be implemented or expanded upon in the community.

In OKC, a team of community volunteers from over 25 organizations work together to conduct the PIT count and survey people in emergency homeless shelters, transitional housing facilities, hot meal sites, crisis facilities, encampments, and across various street locations. The PIT count does not include people considered "couch homeless", i.e., people experiencing homelessness but temporarily staying with a friend, acquaintance or family member. While the total number of couch homeless in OKC remains unknown, the OKC Public School District reported 2,474 children experiencing homelessness at the end of the 2019-20 academic year, with most identified as couch homeless.

On January 23, 2020, 1,573 men, women and children were identified as literally homeless in OKC. A person is identified as homeless if the individual or family lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; will imminently lose their primary residence; or is fleeing domestic violence and has no other residence or lacks the resources and support networks to secure one.

2020 OKC PIT COUNT FINDINGS:

❖ Veterans comprise 10% of people experiencing homelessness in OKC, with 43% unsheltered.

❖ Families with children comprise 17%.

❖ 33% are female, 66% are male, 1% transgender or nonconforming.

❖ 60.5% are white, 26% are black, and 8% are Native American.

❖ 33% report severe mental illness, 26% report substance abuse.

❖ 441 persons are considered "chronically" homeless, of whom 80% are unsheltered. This is a 60% increase from 2019.

❖ The number of people in emergency shelter also rose by 15% to 850, and there was a 10% increase to 166 people using transitional housing compared to 2019.

https://homelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/PIT-Final-Report-single-pages.pdf

The 2020 PIT count was higher than the previous year with 300 more people identified as homeless compared to 2019. The number of unsheltered homeless continued to be one of the highest seen over a five-year period at 557 individuals or about 35% of the homeless population.

Year	Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	Total
2016	963	241	307	1,511
2017	888	212	268	1,368
2018	635	154	394	1,183
2019	738	151	384	1,273
2020	850	166	557	1,573

The total number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness from year to year can fluctuate due to various factors including the weather conditions on the day of the count, counting methods, changes in economic conditions, successful housing efforts by service providers and changes in the level of services available in the community.

According to the 2018 Housing Inventory Count conducted in January of last year, the OKC CoC's shelter and housing resources add up to 1,000 emergency shelter beds, 180transitional housing beds, and 871 permanent supportive housing beds.

Annually, over 11,000 people receive homeless services in OKC according to the Homeless Management Information System.

In 2020, 28% of OKC's homeless population was chronically homeless (441 individuals). People experiencing chronic homelessness are generally the most frequent users of emergency rooms, hospitals, shelters and police services. There is often a strong cost savings that results from providing housing to chronically homeless individuals.

 Additionally, 150 people identified themselves as Veterans during the 2020 count, representing an 16% increase compared to 2019.

During the 2020 PIT count, the utilization rate for Permanent Supportive Housing beds was 96%, indicating a great need for permanent supportive housing in OKC. The utilization rate for Transitional Housing beds was 92%, also an indication that the City's supply of transitional housing is at capacity. The utilization rate for Emergency Shelter beds was 85% with 150 beds available.

EXISTING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

OKC's housing and homelessness services include housing providers, community and nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, healthcare providers and funders. Below provides information on some of the existing community resources in OKC for people experiencing homelessness obtained through the organization's website, annual report and/or key stakeholder interviews. The information below does not provide an all-inclusive listing of all available resources in OKC.

Heartline 211

Heartline 211 provides a free, 24-hour-a-day service for Oklahomans to access information about health and human services. 2-1-1 call specialists engage, assess and refer callers to appropriate resources based on eligibility requirements for each program. They have over 13,000 services available and can offer help to callers in over 200 languages.

City of Oklahoma City

The OKC Planning Department's Housing and Community Development Division leads OKC's Continuum of Care (CoC). As the lead agency for the CoC, the City works with local nonprofit service providers and other government agencies to coordinate homeless services and develop policies and procedures for the CoC. The Division also administers the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program.

OKC Housing Authority

The OKC Housing Authority (OCHA) works to provide affordable, decent, safe and sanitary housing or housing assistance, with quality environments and opportunities to low-income people of OKC. The OCHA owns 2,920 units of Public Housing and administers approximately 4,500 units of Section 8 Housing in the OKC community available for low-income people and their families. Specifically, in the OKC Metropolitan area OCHA owns and manages over 3,100 apartments and administers over 3,800 units of Section 8 Assistance. To qualify, applicants must be 18 years or older, or be emancipated by the Court system.

Typically, OCHA recommends that applicants apply for both housing programs as the processing period for Section 8 is much longer. Indeed, Section 8 assistance takes approximately 9 months to process, whereas Public Housing processing time is approximately 2 to 6 weeks.

PUBLIC HOUSING & SECTION 8

Public Housing is when a Housing Authority owns and manages the property it leases. The OCHA owns and manages apartments and houses which it leases to low-income people on an income-based rental rate in the OKC Metropolitan area.

Section 8 is owned and managed by private landlords who list their property with a Housing Authority who, in turn, refer prospective tenants to their property. The Housing Authority also subsidizes part of the tenant's rent to the landlord. The OCHA administers Section 8 Assistance in the OKC Metropolitan area only.

Homeless Alliance

The Homeless Alliance "works to end long-term homelessness in OKC by building the capacity of the community through collaboration with other agencies, identifying and filling gaps in homeless services, bringing nationally-recognized best practices to the community, and working to build a system that is more efficient, rational and caring."[2] The Homeless Alliance incorporated in April 2004 after initial funding through private foundation grants from the Noble Foundation, the Merrick Foundation and the Inasmuch Foundation.

The Homeless Alliance operates several housing programs for families with children, as well as coordinates with community organizations to house veterans and people experiencing chronic homelessness. The Homeless Alliance also operates Servicepoint, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) used by homeless-serving agencies in central Oklahoma to share data on shared clients, measure outcomes and report to funders. Servicepoint currently connects more than 42 agencies with over 164 programs for people experiencing homelessness in the community.

Westtown Homeless Resource Campus

The Homeless Alliance owns and operates the Westtown Homeless Resource Campus. The Campus includes a resource center with offices for multiple nonprofit and government agencies, a housing complex and a Day Shelter. In the resource center, the Coordinated Case Management program provides housing and supportive services to more than 100 homeless and at-risk families with children each month. The resource center also houses a pharmacy.

The Day Shelter serves approximately 350 people each day in their 13,000 square foot facility. The Day Shelter offers breakfast and lunch, as well as provides shower facilities, a barbershop, salon and library, and a pet kennel with pet food and access to veterinary services. The Day Shelter offers access to computers, phone, and mail, and provides access to needed services including mental and physical healthcare, budgeting assistance and legal support. Classroom space opens to Alcohol Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous programming, as well as devotionals, art classes and other educational opportunities.

The Curbside Chronicle

The Homeless Alliance also administers The Curbside Chronicle, a "street paper" created to provide both a voice and employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness through the sale of its local magazine. The Curbside Chronicle provides a source of income and works with its vendors to break down barriers to traditional employment by developing time management, money management and social skills. Street papers like The Curbside Chronicle enable people to earn enough money to get into housing and end their homelessness.

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[2] https://homelessalliance.org/

City Care OKC

City Care OKC provides homeless services, supportive housing, and a tutoring and mentoring program. City Care plans to open OKC's first low-barrier night shelter in the Spring of 2021 offering approximately 200 beds for men and women experiencing homelessness in the city, as well as some family suites.

City Care owns over 100 affordable supportive housing units. Case management support helps residents maintain housing stability. Additional services include referrals, peer mentoring, support groups, crisis intervention, legal assistance, transportation, employment support, nutrition, fitness, financial planning, recovery support, recreation and independent living skills.

City Care administers the Whiz Kids program, a faith-based, one-on-one volunteer tutoring and mentoring program that focuses on first through fourth-grade students in areas with the highest drop-out rates and lowest socio-economic levels in OKC. Program outcomes reveal that Whiz Kids score an average of 37 points higher than their counterparts on state-administered reading tests.

City Care also launched Samaritan, a technology-based solution for connecting individuals experiencing homelessness to social services, relationships and capital. City Care estimates that the OKC pilot will help 50 unhoused residents address critical housing, employment and health challenges.

Hope Community Services

HOPE is a non-profit outpatient community mental health center located in South OKC that serves adults, families and children. They provide behavioral health and addiction services, as well as permanent supportive housing and services for people experiencing homelessness. Other services include a psychiatric medication clinic, therapy, case management, peer support, wellness programs, systems of care and employment programs.

In 2019, HOPE served around 8,200 consumers and helped provide housing to more than 455 individuals and families. The organization supports the Housing First Model that prescribes safe and permanent housing as the first priority for people experiencing homelessness before addressing other complex needs through services like drug and alcohol counselling or mental health treatment. HOPE's Transportation Department provided 6,390 riders with transportation to needed services, as well as approximately 2,000 bus passes.

HOPE receives various grants that help them provide permanent supportive housing and other assistance to people experiencing homelessness. HOPE provides permanent supportive housing to over 220 persons experiencing homelessness in the OKC area, including families. Other assistance includes temporary housing assistance to youth recently discharged from foster care or a juvenile facility, as well as temporary housing assistance for adults recently discharged from inpatient facilities, prisons and jails, or foster care.

City Rescue Mission

City Rescue Mission is a faith-based organization that offers temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness. The Mission serves approximately 400 people per night, including 30 to 40 families and 70 to 90 children, as well as provides meals, access to clothing and service coordination based on a brief intake screening process. The Mission's Bridge to Life program serves men and women over 18 with substance use issues. Eligible participants who agree to enter the rehabilitation program receive temporary emergency shelter, service coordination, intensive case management, vocational programs

to address employment barriers, and supportive services to access housing and other benefits like Social Security disability.

The Salvation Army Central Oklahoma Area Command

The Salvation Army Central Oklahoma Area Command is a faith-based organization that offers various services for residents in Oklahoma county, including emergency temporary shelter for single men, women and families. The Salvation Army offers meals to shelter guests and dinner to the community at large with 500 to 700 meals provided per day. Additional services include assistance with utility payments, clothing, burial expenses, and Christmas and other seasonal drives. The Salvation Army administers the Boys & Girls Club for youth in the community to participate in sports, vocational classes, Bible studies, homework power hour and field trips, as well as four senior centers where seniors can participate in exercise classes, crafts and dancing.

Mental Health Association Oklahoma

Mental Health Association Oklahoma provides supportive housing and mental health resources to both Tulsa and OKC residents. Currently the organization manages approximately 120 units of safe, decent and affordable housing units in OKC and provides mobile street outreach throughout the city to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Street outreach teams work with law enforcement and security personnel to ensure people stay connected to services and avoid being ticketed or incarcerated.

NorthCare

NorthCare is a community mental health clinic that offers a variety of services for children, adults, and families to help with recovery from mental illness, substance use, trauma or crisis. NorthCare is one of three centers in Oklahoma designated as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC). CCBHCs provide a comprehensive range of mental health and substance use services to vulnerable individuals with an emphasis on integrated care, 24-hour crisis care, evidence-based practices and care coordination. As a "safety net" provider, NorthCare provides services to individuals and families regardless of their ability to pay. About 70% of people receiving service are uninsured and up to 20% experience homelessness.

The NorthCare Family Treatment Center (FTC) is a residential substance use/co-occurring treatment facility where women can reside with their children during their treatment. The NorthCare FTC has beds dedicated to serving women leaving the Department of Corrections.

Upward Transitions

Upward Transitions provides people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness with case management and stabilizing resources to meet their basic needs. In 2018-2019, more than 3,300 people received direct assistance from Upward Transitions. Staff obtained 1,658 legal documents or identification cards for their clients. More than 850 people received bus tokens and gas vouchers allowing them to travel to their job, medical appointment and access other social services and supports. Almost 1,000 people received support to pay rent, utilities or deposits.

YOUTH SERVICES

Unaccompanied youth are defined as persons under the age of 25 who are not presenting or sleeping in the same place as their parent or legal guardian, including single youth, youth couples and groups of youth.

Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are often underreported as they tend to make themselves hard to locate. They often fail to access services and resources to aid them out of homelessness either due to their lack of knowledge about such resources or due to concerns about mandated reporting, following rules or engaging in religious services or addiction treatment.

Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness can also experience higher rates of violence, criminal activity and sexual assault, as well as physical illness, mental illness and substance use disorders compared to non-homeless youth.

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH IN OKC

According to the 2019 PIT Count Report, 85 youth were experiencing homelessness in OKC on January 24, 2019, an increase from 53 in 2018.

Unaccompanied youth:

❖ Represented 7% of the total homeless population in OKC
❖ 15% were sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation
❖ 13 of the 85 were chronically homeless
❖ Most were between the ages of 18 and 24

https://homelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Report-Point-In-Time-Report.pdf

To address the growing issue of youth experiencing homelessness in OKC, the two youth service organizations described below opened shelters and drop-in centers 7 days a week in 2019.

Pivot

Pivot serves youth in OKC and provides programs and services to meet housing and basic needs, assist with education and employment, develop life skills and mentoring, prevention and intervention services, and therapeutic care. Most of the youth Pivot serves are ages 12 to 21. Pivot offers case management, basic counseling and therapeutic care, as well as food and clothing pantries to provide youth with their basic needs.

Family Junction Emergency Youth Shelter is a 24-hour shelter with space for 16 youth between the ages of 12 and 17. In 2020, The Point at Pivot has expanded emergency shelter opportunities for young people up to the age of 24, and provides shower and laundry facilities, meals and access to supportive services and referrals. Pivot also manages two transitional living apartments and has launched a tiny homes neighborhood with the goal of 85 homes constructed by the end of the project.

Sisu Youth Services

Sisu provides overnight shelter, clothing, hot meals and case management to OKC transitional-age youth experiencing homelessness ages 15-24. They are considered a low barrier, LGBTQ+ affirming safe space. In 2019, Sisu Youth Services sheltered 257 individual youth, served over 11,582 hot meals and assisted 17 youth in securing permanent housing. Sisu is currently in the process of expanding shelter services and adding a transitional housing component.

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

In this section, we explore how key stakeholders in the community perceive homelessness and the need for housing and other solutions in Oklahoma City.

NEEDS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Many key stakeholders said that people experiencing homelessness need access to affordable housing options as well as mental and behavioral health services. Others said no- or low-barrier emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing are the greatest needs. Still others pointed to the need for case management, substance use treatment and transitional housing options. Several   that people experiencing homelessness need access to transportation, short-term living assistance for rent or utilities and rapid re-housing services.

Greatest Needs for People Experiencing Homelessness According to Stakeholders

Need	Value
Affordable Housing	24
Mental and Behavioral Health Services	16
No or Low Barrier Emergency Shelter	11
Permanent Supportive Housing	11
Case Management	10
Substance Use Treatment	10
Transitional Housing	10
Transportation	9
Short-term Living Assistance	7
Rapid Re-Housing	7
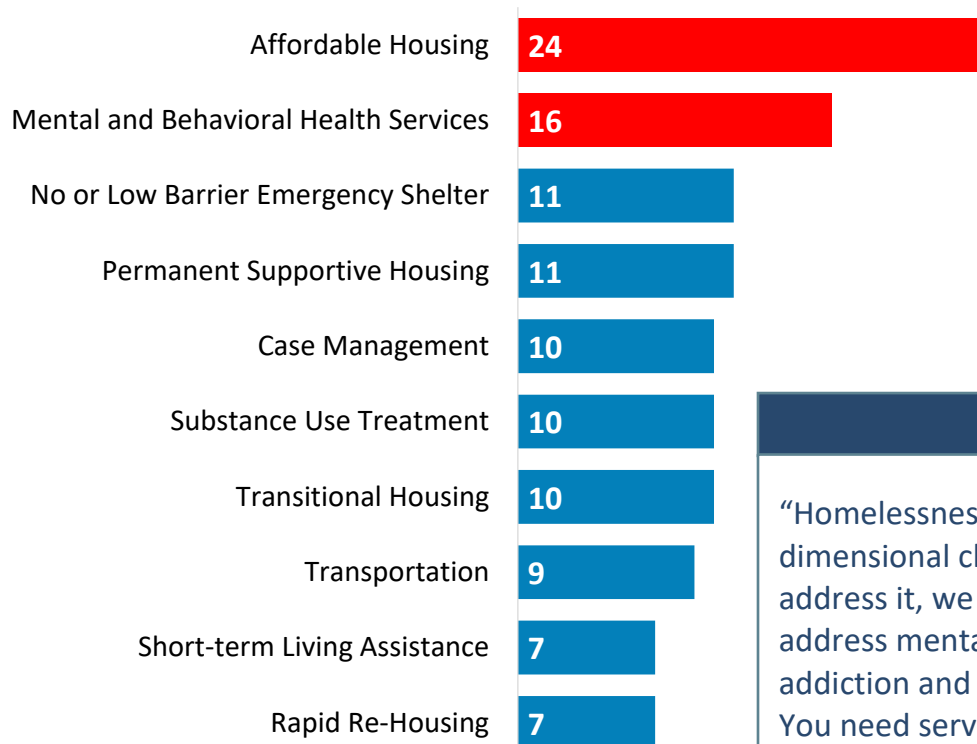
Source: Key Informant Interviews

> "Homelessness is a multi-dimensional challenge. To address it, we need to address mental health, addiction and employment. You need services to change lives and help people get out of the situation they are in."
>
> -Key Stakeholder

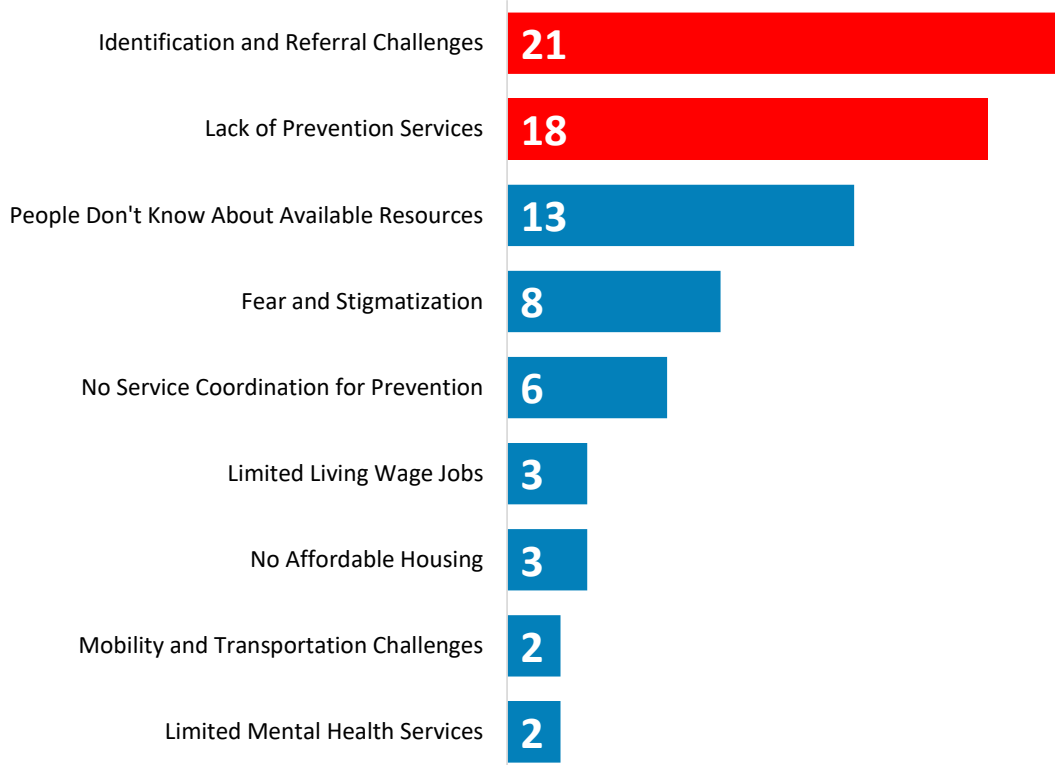### Needs of Low-Income Residents Vulnerable to Homelessness or Eviction

Many agreed that identifying low-income residents vulnerable to homelessness or eviction and referring them to the appropriate resources before they become homeless is a great challenge in OKC. A couple noted that Heartline 211 needed better promotion to increase its use. Many commented that the community lacks enough prevention resources such as access to short-term financial assistance for rent or utilities to help those in need and at risk of eviction.

Some responded that residents do not always know about the resources available to them, while others noted that residents fear the stigma of seeking help and accessing resources. A few spoke about systemic challenges such as the need for affordable housing, public transportation and mental health services.

"It's really hard to find utility and rent assistance. Failure to pay rent or utilities are often the factors that lead to families being evicted. Once the lights go out, the chances of being evicted increase. It's a snowball effect."

-Key Stakeholder

Greatest Challenges for People At Risk of Homelessness in OKC According to Stakeholders

| Challenge	Count
Identification and Referral Challenges	21
Lack of Prevention Services	18
People Don't Know About Available Resources	13
Fear and Stigmatization	8
No Service Coordination for Prevention	6
Limited Living Wage Jobs	3
No Affordable Housing	3
Mobility and Transportation Challenges	2
Limited Mental Health Services	2

Source: Key Informant Interviews

THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT WORK WITH PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Almost all key respondents said that organizations work very well or somewhat well together. Many discussed the strong collaboration and coordination that exists across the CoC, with some pointing to the monthly meetings related to emergency shelters, outreach and case management.

Several interviewed expressed the need to build on the strong collaboration that exists in the community. They want to continue to bring more diverse perspectives to the table, especially representatives from the LGBTQ community and youth groups.

How Well Organizations Work Together According to Stakeholders

Very Well	23
Somewhat Well	20
Not well at all	1

Source: Key Informant Interviews
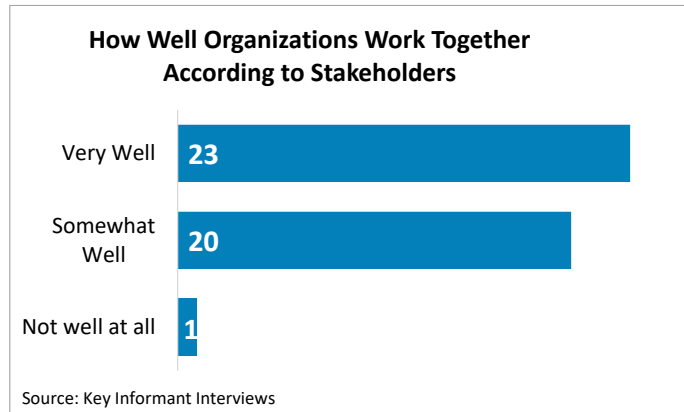
What Organizations Do Best

Many pointed to the ability of service providers and key stakeholders to collaborate and coordinate services for people experiencing homelessness as what organizations do best in OKC. Some responders noted that organizations best work to provide basic needs and shelter, as well as provide a helpful, welcoming and compassionate environment for their clients.

What OKC Organizations Do Best According to Stakeholders

Collaboration and Coordination	22
Provide Basic Needs and Shelter	11
Helpful, Welcoming, Compassionate	11
Outreach and Engagement	6
Focus on Housing	5
Fundraising and Awareness	4
Case Management and Advocacy	4
Maximize Resources	4

Source: Key Informant Interviews

Challenges Organizations Face to Help People Experiencing Homelessness

Most key stakeholders said that funding and competition among organizations for the same funding streams is the greatest challenge facing the organizations working with people experiencing homelessness in the community. One noted that OKC homeless service providers would benefit from collaborative grant applications and coordinated resource development.

Some responder said that homeless service providers could coordinate service even better, especially discharge planning services, prevention services and ongoing case management. Others pointed to the lack of mental and behavioral health services, as well as to the lack of affordable housing and the need for landlord accountability in providing safe housing. A few also noted staff capacity challenges, especially to provide adequate case management services.

Greatest Challenges Facing OKC Organizations

Challenge	Count
Funding	26
Coordination	7
Lack of Mental and Behavioral Health	6
Lack of Affordable Housing and Landlord Accountability	5
Staff Capacity	5
No Long-term Plan and Evaluation	4
Transportation	4
Outreach and Engagement	4
Public Awareness and Stigma	3

"We constantly try to stretch our resources and serve more people than our budget allows."

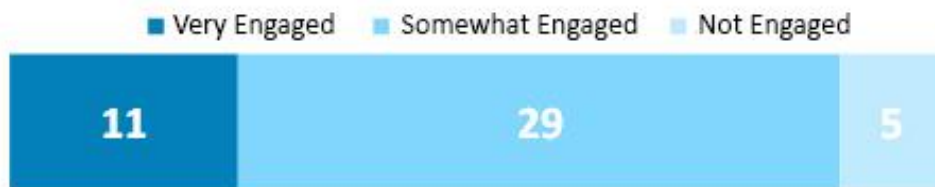-Key Stakeholder

Service Coverage by Population

Key stakeholders were asked to rate the services provided to various populations within the homeless community as excellent, adequate or insufficient. Responses indicate veterans are served the best, but rated services for veterans as only slightly above adequate.

Services for single adults and seniors approached an adequate rating, whereas services for families, the chronically and unsheltered homeless, transition age youth and the LGBTQ+ community fell halfway between insufficient and adequate. Services for at-risk populations vulnerable to homelessness such as people living in substandard housing or couch surfing were found to be insufficient.
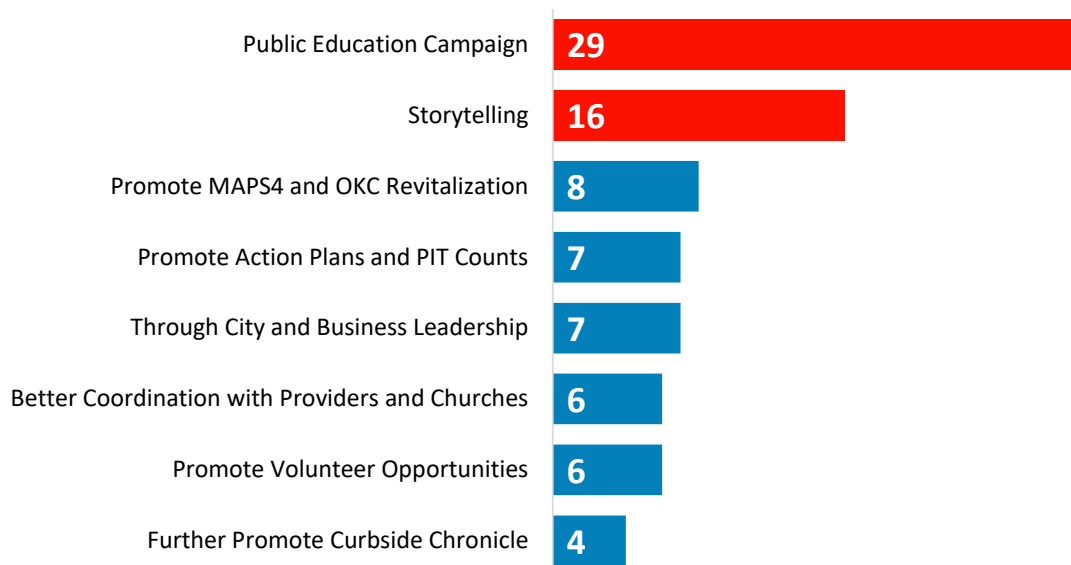
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Key stakeholders agreed that residents are very engaged or somewhat engaged around the issue of homelessness and the need for affordable housing in the community. Several pointed to the recent passage of MAPS 4 by OKC voters in a special election in December 2019 as an indicator of increased community engagement and understanding around these issues. MAPS 4 is a debt-free public improvement program funded by a temporary penny sales tax that will raise a projected $978 million over eight years. Most of MAPS 4 funding is dedicated to neighborhood and human needs, including $50 million dedicated to homelessness, $40 million for mental health and addiction services, and $87 million for transit.

Stakeholders on Community Engagement

■ Very Engaged   ■ Somewhat Engaged   ■ Not Engaged

11	29	5

Many key stakeholders discussed the need for a centralized public education campaign and unified messaging, as well as the importance of telling stories about the causes of homelessness, who is most impacted by homelessness especially families and children, and ways people and families have successfully navigated out of homelessness into permanent and stable housing.

Ways to Better Engage the Community

Public Education Campaign	29
Storytelling	16
Promote MAPS4 and OKC Revitalization	8
Promote Action Plans and PIT Counts	7
Through City and Business Leadership	7
Better Coordination with Providers and Churches	6
Promote Volunteer Opportunities	6
Further Promote Curbside Chronicle	4

THE NETWORK OF ORGANIZATIONS

The community of organizations that address issues related to homelessness in Oklahoma City make up a network of interrelationships and complementary objectives. Understanding the linkages among them is important to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the community's ability to address the many facets of homelessness. Social network analysis provides several useful indicators of communication and collaboration across organizations working together.

The social network analysis is based on two questions included in the stakeholder interviews. Each respondent described how often their organization communicates with each of about 20 organizations in Oklahoma City and how likely they would be to work with each organization if they were initiating a new service or program related to homelessness.

THE COMMUNICATION NETWORK

Stakeholders described how often they communicated with each of about 20 organizations in terms of:

- Once or twice per year
- Every few Months
- Bi-weekly to monthly
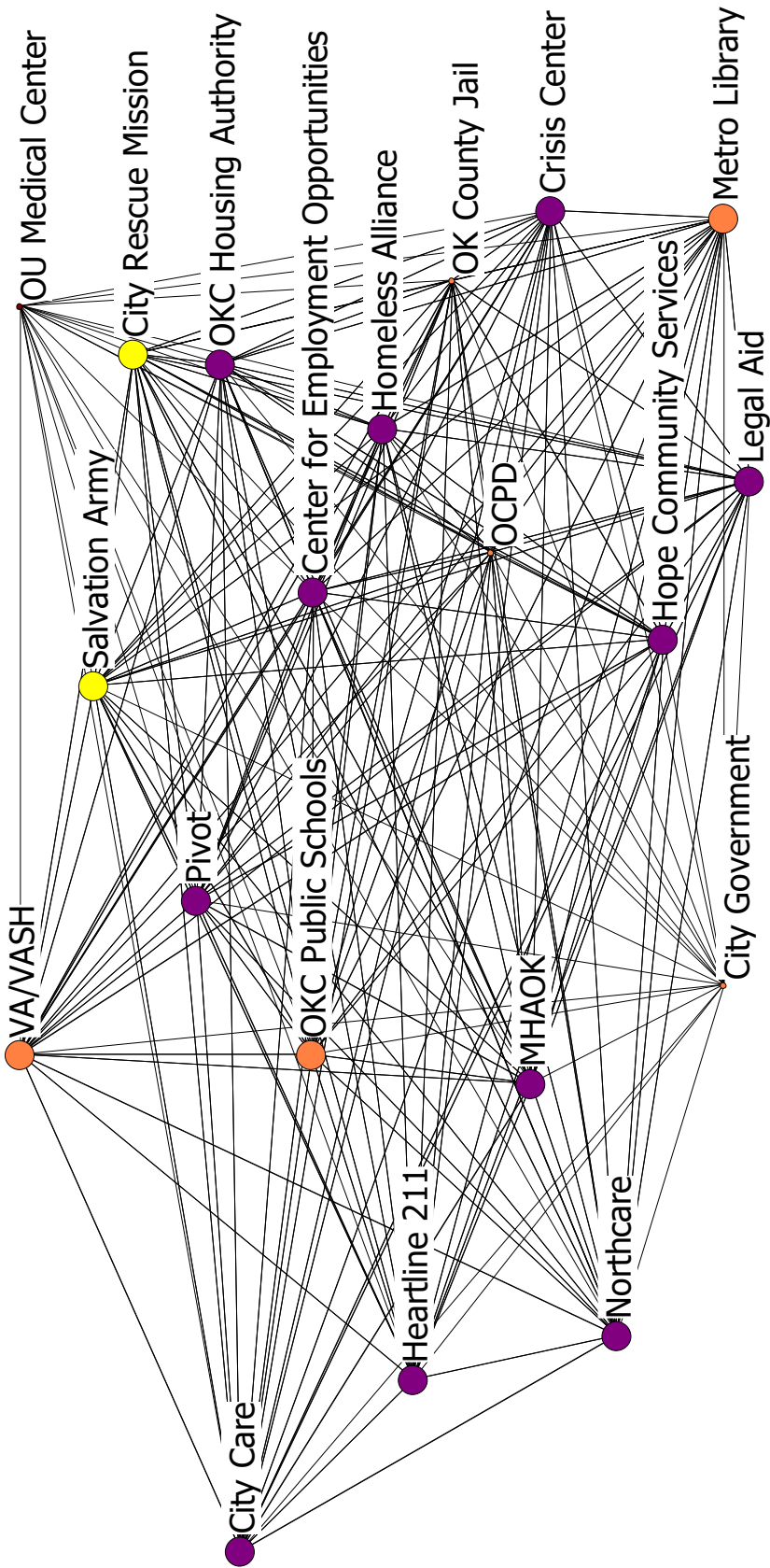- Every day to once a week

If a respondent from one organization described their communication differently than their counterpart at the other organization, the most frequent rating was used in this network analysis.

In the network diagram on the following pages, each organization is represented by a circle, or "node." The maroon nodes represent direct service providers. The orange nodes represent government agencies or departments. Overnight shelters are shown in yellow and healthcare organizations in red.

The oval shape of the network overall reveals a communication network where all members have multiple ties and the network has few outliers that lack connections to the larger group. The thicker the line connecting two organizations, the more frequent their communication. All the organizations in the network have at least bi-weekly to monthly communication with at least one other member.

Betweenness

The nodes of the diagram are coded to show the size of the organizations' "betweenness." Betweenness measures the number of times a node lies on the shortest path between other nodes. It shows which organizations act as liaisons between others in the network. It is useful for finding the individuals who influence the flow of communications through a system. For the most part, the organizations that are central to identifying and helping people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness are of similar betweenness. This is an indication of a well-balanced network that is inclusive of all members and has a small number of outliers. City government, the OU Medical Center, the county jail and the Police Department are each small nodes showing little betweenness. This is an indication that these may be frequent end points of communication, and it may be beneficial to ensure that communication with these organizations is ongoing.

OU Medical Center
City Rescue Mission
OKC Housing Authority
Center for Employment Opportunities
Homeless Alliance
OK County Jail
Crisis Center
Metro Library
Salvation Army
OCPD
Hope Community Services
Legal Aid
VA/VASH
Pivot
OKC Public Schools
MHAOK
City Government
Heartline 211
Northcare
City Care

Direct Service Provider
Government
Shelter
Healthcare Provider

THE NETWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PROGRAMS OR SERVICES

The ability to collaborate on new projects is a critical component of implementing a strategic plan. Key stakeholders rated how likely they would be to work with each network member on a new service or program related to homelessness or affordable housing in the County. The scale was whether they were "very likely", "somewhat likely" or "unlikely" to work together. In the following graph, a wide range of organizations for which a staff member participated in the interviews is included.

The shape of this network has more "pointy edges", showing several organizations that are less central to collaborative efforts. A large number of direct service providers, government agencies or departments and the two shelters are central to collaborative efforts.

Collaboration and Closeness

Closeness measures the number of "hops" along the network ties an organization would have to take to touch every other organization in the network. It is not a sum of all the ties an organization has. Instead, closeness includes a measure of how interconnected an organizations' "friends" may be. The nodes for each organization in the following graph are sized according to their closeness. The largest nodes indicate organizations who are most likely to be integral parts of a broad range of planning efforts related to homelessness or affordable housing in the County.
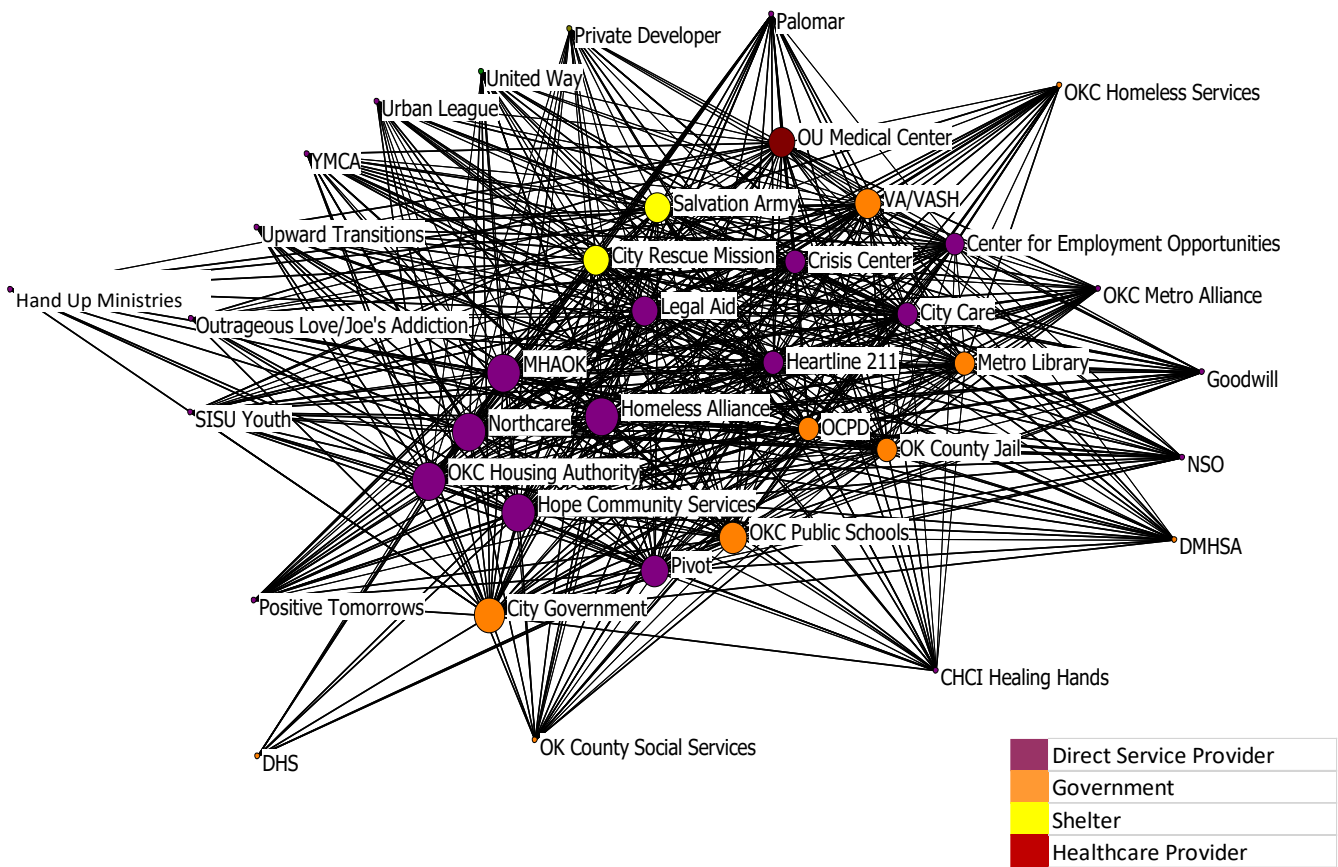
ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

Across the world, homelessness trends reveal stable or expanding rates. Point-in-Time (PIT) counts of sheltered and unsheltered individuals and families in the United States have leveled off despite federal efforts to reorganize and streamline homeless assistance. This is true in OKC as well where the annual PIT counts typically fluctuate slightly year to year. However, on January 23, 2020, 1,573 men, women and children were identified as literally homeless in OKC, up by 300 people compared to 2019.

Housing insecurity represents a much larger problem. More than 80% of US households below the federal poverty line spend at least 30% of their incomes on rent. They are considered cost-burdened and may have trouble paying for other necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. Evictions displace many individuals and families from their home to the street and into homelessness. Estimates suggest that nearly one million US households experienced eviction in 2016.[3,4] OKC saw 6,433 evictions in 2016, or 18 households each day, per the Eviction Lab at Princeton University. The city's 2016 eviction rate was 6.19 percent, the 20th worst eviction rate in the country[5].

BEYOND HOUSING FIRST

In 2013, the federal government shifted their policy to prioritizing Housing First as the one-size-fits all option for ending homelessness. In 2018, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness adopted *Home, Together: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, emphasizing the need for improved housing affordability and housing stability so people can address their challenges and pursue their goals. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) identify housing as a social determinant of personal health and well-being.

The Housing First approach views housing as the foundation for life improvement. Proponents of the approach believe that people need a place to live before addressing the issues that may be keeping them on the street in the first place, such as employment, education or substance abuse. Indeed, without a stable home, a person is less likely to succeed and continue in their job, educational aspirations or medical treatment.[6]

In October 2020, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) unveiled their "Expanding the Toolbox: The Whole-of-Government Response to Homelessness."[7] This Toolbox

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[3] Fowler, P, P Hovmand, K Marcal & S Das (2019) *Solving Homelessness from a Complex Systems Perspective: Insights for Prevention Responses.* Annual Review of Public Health 2019 40:1, 465-486 Accessed at: https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040617-013553

[4] Desmond M. 2015. Unaffordable America: poverty, housing, and eviction. Fast Focus Brief 22-2015, Inst. Res. Poverty, Madison, Wis.

[5] https://oklahoman.com/article/5593790/okc-eviction-rate-is-20th-worst-in-nation-new-program-gives-free-legal-help-to-tenants

[6] https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/socialdeterminants/faq.html#what-are-social-determinants

[7] https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH-Expanding-the-Toolbox.pdf

addresses the shortcomings of Housing First as a one-size-fits-all approach. For example, rates of homelessness have been rising steadily and dramatically in cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and New York City, despite a focus on the Housing First approach. Housing First should be used as one tool in the toolbox, but not the only tool. The expanded Toolbox offers several solutions to reduce homelessness by engaging families and individuals with a trauma-informed approach that addresses the root causes of homelessness that have exacerbated the issue.

Federal funding to target homelessness has increased each year in the last decade, with an increase of more than 200%. At the same time, according to both the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), from 2014 to 2019 unsheltered homelessness climbed by almost 21% nationally. In 2020, $6.6 billion was appropriated by Congress for targeted homelessness prevention. Additionally, more than $4 billion was allocated to address COVID-19 assistance targeted to homelessness.

Expanding the Toolbox provides a multi-faceted approach with a more vigorous response that moves beyond primarily providing subsidized housing assistance. The Toolbox must include all approaches to the problem, including eradicating barriers to access, wrap-around services and identifying programming and policies to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable.

The proposed action items described herein were developed through consultation with the Oklahoma City Task Force on Homelessness (the Task Force) and key stakeholders throughout the planning process. The Plan provides a broad approach to address homelessness in OKC and includes strategies to eradicate barriers to access, provide wrap-around services and identify programming and policies to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable.

OKC'S STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

Reducing and preventing homelessness requires a broad range of strategies to help residents experiencing homelessness move into permanent housing and achieve housing stability. The Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City provide a roadmap for the community to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness in the city.

Homeless delivery systems are complex and unique to each community. They include multiple organizations working to meet the complex and multifaceted needs of people experiencing homelessness, often with extremely limited resources. Communities need a coordinated approach to address homelessness as they move from a collection of individual programs to a strategic, data-driven community-wide response. A strategic plan to address homelessness helps communities set goals and prioritize the actions organizations in the homeless delivery system should take.[8]

Implementing strategic plans can be challenging for many communities. Some reasons strategic plans fail include fragmented implementation, as well as a lack of commitment and leadership to the strategies and actions recommended in the plan.[9] Others fail because they do not bring the right people to the table.

Plan Implementation

To address the challenges of implementing the strategic plan, it is recommended that a strategic planning manager be established to coordinate the planning activities necessary to implement the various strategies presented throughout this action plan. Many strategies presented herein include convening multiple stakeholders, securing funding and commitments by community organizations and others to provide services, and tracking key performance measures. The strategic planning manager would be responsible for coordinating and managing these activities, as well as communicating the benefits of implementing the recommended strategies to OKC residents and taxpayers. It is recommended that this position be housed in the Planning Department and work with current homeless services staff.

The table on the following page provides the specific strategies recommended to combat homelessness in OKC. Detail is then provided for each recommended strategy to move the City, CoC and community toward implementation efforts over the next five years.

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[8] https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/creating-systems-that-work/

[9] https://pmworldlibrary.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/pmwj70-May2018-Verweire-challenges-of-implementing-strategy-series-article.pdf; https://www.forbes.com/sites/aileron/2011/11/30/10-reasons-why-strategic-plans-fail/#35b973f086a8

Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City

Preventing Homelessness	Affordable Housing
❖ Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program ❖ Discharge Planning Liaison Program ❖ Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders ❖ Increase and Expand Low-Barrier Employment Options ❖ Advocate for Tenant Protection Legislation Like HB 3710 and/or Similar Legislation	❖ Zoning, Ordinance and Development Policy Changes ❖ Land Bank 501c3 ❖ Lien Forgiveness Program ❖ Follow the Recommendations of the Affordable Housing Study

Outreach and Case Management	Emergency and Temporary Shelter	Transitional Age Youth (TAY)	Transportation
❖ Enhance Access and Use of HMIS ❖ Case Manager Training and Professional Development ❖ Expand Use of Peer Support Mentors ❖ Intensive Case Management and Outreach ❖ Mobile Services Team	❖ Inclement Weather Shelter ❖ Expand Coordinated Entry Access in Shelters	❖ Transitional Housing and Services for TAY	❖ Establish a Microtransit Program ❖ Expand Bus Pass Program

Funding Sources	Advocacy
❖ Priority Driven, Outcomes-Based Coordinated Funding ❖ Develop Housing Trust Fund	❖ Public Education and Community Engagement Initiative ❖ Updated Cost of Homelessness Study ❖ Expand Samaritan Program

1 PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

Preventing homelessness is an important part of any plan to combat homelessness in a community. Prevention efforts should focus on residents that would otherwise become homeless or re-enter homelessness without the intervention. The CoC should explore implementing the following actions to prevent homelessness in OKC:

- **1.A** Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program
- **1.B** Discharge Planning Liaison Program
- **1.C** Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders
- **1.D** Increase and Expand Low-Barrier Employment Options
- **1.E** Advocate for Tenant Protection Legislation like HB 3710 and/or Similar Legislation

1.A) EVICTION PREVENTION AND DIVERSION PROGRAM

Recent studies show that evictions can cause homelessness. Eviction is a legal procedure used by landlords to remove tenants from their home. Tenants typically face eviction due to their failure to pay rent. Landlords must follow certain steps in an eviction for non-payment of rent including providing the tenant with written notice and a five-day grace period. After that, the landlord may file a suit and the tenant is served with a summons for a court hearing. If the judgment supports eviction, the tenant is provided a 48-hour move-out period before the landlord takes back the property.

According to research compiled by the Eviction Lab at Princeton University, OKC ranks as the 20th worst in the country for evictions with an eviction rate of 6.14%. OKC saw 6,433 evictions in 2016, or about 18 households each day. Oklahoma County saw about 14,000 eviction cases filed in January and February of 2020 alone. Legal experts in OKC worry that the COVID-19 pandemic will accelerate eviction filings.

Eviction impacts a person's credit score for years following the event. Renters who experience eviction are more likely to continue experiencing housing instability over time, as well as other economic and social impacts like job loss, family instability, physical and mental health challenges, and decreased school performance in children.

The Oklahoma Residential Landlord Tenant Act of 1979 provides the legal framework for leases and relationships between landlords and tenants. Landlords must keep residences safe and livable. Tenants must comply with the lease and all proper rules. Tenants must give their landlord written notice of any needed repairs that are necessary to keep the rental unit safe and healthy. If a landlord does not make the required repairs, then the tenant can either make the necessary repair, terminate the lease early or seek damages for the reduction in value of the unit. Landlords may evict tenants for nonpayment of rent, material breaches of the lease and criminal activity.

Strategy Description

In their efforts to address homelessness and the need for affordable housing, many communities have started to look at enhancing eviction intervention programming through collaborations with their local governments, the courts, legal service providers, social workers and landlords. Some communities have established a right to legal counsel for tenants facing eviction. A pilot program in New York City demonstrated that the costs to expand legal services are offset by savings on temporary shelter costs for evicted tenants.

Through discussions with relevant stakeholders at the strategic planning sessions and best practices from other communities, the City should seek to develop an Eviction Diversion and Mediation Program. This program should include the following interventions:

1. Eviction Court Legal Assistance Program
2. A flexible, multi-year grant allocated to a single, existing organization through an application process. The recipient organization for this grant would determine the services to provide that would be most effective at preventing evictions, as well as quickly re-housing those that are evicted. Just a few of the services that could be evaluated are:
    a) Short-Term Financial Assistance Program
    b) Housing Navigators
    c) Landlord/Tenant Mediation & Education Services
    d) Landlord-Tenant Liaisons

Short-Term Financial Assistance Fund

Communities that embrace the Housing First approach to end homelessness typically establish a financial assistance fund to aid people exiting homelessness for placement into permanent housing, as well as to assist people from not entering or reentering homelessness. Financial assistance can be used for a variety of circumstances that could present barriers to housing for people experiencing homelessness including payment for rent arrearages, current or back utility payments, moving costs, security deposits and ongoing short-term rental assistance. Programs provide just enough financial assistance to ensure successful outcomes for people exiting homelessness.

The design of this fund needs to consider various parameters and challenges. The fund should be flexible and individualized based on the needs of the person or family exiting homelessness. When using the fund for rental assistance, the length of time assistance is provided and at what level will have to be considered. Several subsidy options for short-term rental assistance include:

1. **Income-based Subsidy:** Under an income-based model, a household pays a specific percentage of its income towards rent. Some programs set this rate at 30 percent.
2. **Fixed Subsidy:** May be based on the rent cost, household size, apartment size or some other factor. The subsidy amount stays the same regardless of any change in household income.
3. **Graduated/Declining Subsidy:** Whether income-based or fixed, the subsidy reduces in phases based on a fixed timeline or when certain goals are met until the household assumes full responsibility for monthly housing costs.
4. **Bridge Subsidy:** A bridge subsidy provides temporary assistance to help obtain or maintain housing until a longer-term or even permanent subsidy becomes available. Bridge subsidies may

be used for persons who have experienced homelessness chronically with substance abuse or mental health diagnoses who are on waiting lists for permanent supportive housing.

Most financial assistance programs include assistance with security deposits and utility payments. Utilities eligible for assistance typically include heat, electricity, water, sewer and garbage collection. Telephone, cable and internet services are usually not eligible.

Housing Navigators

Housing Navigators help individuals and families find and secure housing. They consist of well-trained individuals who are informed and knowledgeable of local housing processes and requirements. They provide step-by-step housing support to individuals who have been identified and assessed. Navigators must know the affordable housing and supportive housing programs available in the community, as well as the status of waiting lists, eligibility requirements, documentation requirements and the specific services available.

The navigator's primary function is to serve as the main point of contact for individuals and families experiencing homelessness due to eviction or housing crisis as they navigate through the housing process. Once a person or family is identified, housing navigators help them obtain all necessary materials and information to determine eligibility for various programs. This information is then used for a formal, comprehensive needs assessment and development of a housing plan for the person or family exiting homelessness. These assessments typically use the vulnerability scale and evaluate housing needs and strengths, as well as other needed resources such as health care, transportation and childcare. The housing plan provides the navigator with a sense of what type of housing is most appropriate and enables the navigator to target suitable and available housing units. Once an individual or family is determined to be eligible for specific housing, the navigator then assists with the housing search and application process as well as compiling and submitting all necessary documentation.

Navigators provide additional services to minimize housing barriers such as poor or no credit history, criminal record or incarceration, or poor tenant history. They can assist with acquiring furnishings and preparing clients for meetings with program representatives. Navigators also assist with connecting their clients with employment services, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and Social Security or other eligible benefit programs.

A core mission of housing navigators, in addition to locating and securing housing, is to ensure the sustainability of their client's success. This is typically accomplished through collaborative efforts and coordination with other providers, as well as continued support and follow-up visits once housing is stabilized. Navigation is best handled in conjunction with case management so that navigators can focus on tasks related to housing while case managers work to connect people experiencing homelessness with support services to meet their basic needs during the housing process. Follow-up appointments ensure that the person who exited homelessness continues to meet all requirements for housing and any other programs that they participate in.

Landlord-Tenant Mediation and Education Services

Mediation is defined as intervention in a dispute to resolve it. Two parties discuss a matter of conflict assisted by a neutral third-party or mediator. The mediator listens to both sides and guides the parties to discuss the issues, identify where the parties agree, develop possible solutions on areas of disagreement and help develop a mediation agreement. Landlord-Tenant mediation services would resolve landlord-

tenant disputes, as well as advocate for mediation clauses in leases and/or requiring landlords to go through lease agreements with the tenant before the lease is enforceable.

These services could be expanded to resolve neighbor conflicts as well. Mediation services would be voluntary and confidential. It is offered as an initial step to resolve a conflict and both parties must consent to any agreement reached.

While landlord-tenant mediation is a useful process for many conflicts, some matters are more appropriate for litigation such as tenant discrimination or persistent illegal behavior at the rental property site. Mediation may be more appropriate for issues like unpaid rent or property damage payments, managing tenant evictions, and arranging timely property repairs.

Landlord-Tenant Liaisons

The Landlord-Tenant Liaison's responsibilities would include identifying permanent housing units for rent in the community, developing partnerships with landlords to overcome barriers that prevent residents from obtaining permanent housing and working with tenants and housing navigators to ensure that participants can maintain housing stability.

Outreach and marketing to landlords through in-person meetings, presentations and community events would be a primary responsibility of the Landlord-Tenant Liaison with the goal of increasing landlord participation in affordable housing programs such as the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. This program may also work to educate landlords and residents about their rights and responsibilities, as well as their legal rights and services available to them.

Liaisons may serve as a primary point of contact for both property managers and owners, as well as tenants for housing complaints. They should create and maintain a database of landlords and properties, as well as their selection criteria and eligibility requirements. This position may work closely in conjunction with housing navigators and the landlord-tenant mediation services described above.

Other duties may include developing and maintaining a network of contacts in the property management and real estate industry. Liaisons may assist the housing navigators by helping with the overall housing process such as reviewing eligibility criteria and helping program participants through the application, approval and lease signing process.

This is not an exhaustive list, but just some of the services that may be the most effective either when implemented in their entirety or by implementing elements of them. The grantee should evaluate other elements and use the elements it determines will have the most impact on preventing evictions. If evictions cannot be prevented, services must also be available to rapidly re-house clients.

Successful Eviction Court Diversion Programs

Many communities have begun to establish eviction court diversion programs as housing costs and eviction rates continue to rise across the country.

The city of Durham, North Carolina launched their Eviction Diversion Program in 2017 through a partnership between Legal Aid of North Carolina's Durham office, Duke Law's Civil Justice Clinic, the Durham County Department of Social Services (DSS) and the courts. The program provides information to tenants at the start of the eviction process. When tenants receive their court summons from the sheriff's office telling them the date of their eviction hearing, they also receive a program flyer instructing them to call DSS for help. A case worker at DSS then determines the tenants' eligibility for emergency rental assistance and refers them to Legal Aid. The goal of legal representation is to keep the tenant in their current home with a clean rental record. Program attorneys work to establish payment plans with landlords, or if the tenant is unable to return to their previous housing, the attorney negotiates with the landlord to convert an eviction into a voluntary moveout agreement. If these avenues fail, then the program seeks to delay the eviction process to give tenants more time to find another housing arrangement.

The Durham Eviction Diversion Program has helped its clients avoid eviction judgments 80% of the time and kept two-thirds of tenants in their homes. This success helped gain the support of Durham's mayor and city council, which awarded $200,000 to fund two new program attorneys and one paralegal, doubling the program's capacity in 2018.[10]

KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN EVICTION DIVERSION PROGRAM

The Eviction Diversion Program was created after discussions with key stakeholders including judges, housing aid organizations, landlords and legal organizations. Tenants are referred to the program during eviction proceedings or through the area's 211 information hotline. Once in the program, staff from the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) meet with the tenants to work with them on ways to avoid eviction. Some households may receive emergency assistance.

Challenges: The program cannot help everyone. Lease violations or tenants who are more than three months behind on rent are not eligible.

Outcomes: In 2013, the program prevented 360 evictions, including 719 adults and 363 children. More than 800 people applied for state emergency relief through the Eviction Diversion Program in 2013 and 457 received it. In 2013, the average cost to clear back rent and avert an eviction for a household in the program was $1,067 (combined state and local funds), compared to the estimated $10,990 cost to evict and re-house the household.

Keys to Success: Support from landlords, the judicial system, service agencies and nonprofits have helped the program succeed. The program has continually reached out to landlords and emphasized the cost savings and benefits of avoiding costly eviction proceedings. Hosting a Community Housing Hour each week also provides the community with a consistent source of information and helps maintain relationships between participating organization.

https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/eviction-diversion-program

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[10] http://www.legalaidnc.org/Documents/durham-eviction-diversion-program.pdf

The City should establish an eviction prevention and diversion program that would both ensure legal assistance is available for all tenants as well as provide for legal outreach to inform at risk tenants of the resources available to assist them. Legal assistance would consist of a number of attorneys to represent tenants without legal representation. Ideally, these attorneys would be located at the County Courthouse to address unrepresented tenants as they appear. Additionally, the organization providing the housing services may consider having a case manager located at the courthouse as well.

Planning group participants also emphasized the importance and effectiveness of good tenant outreach. This would consist of development of materials and messaging on a tenant's right to council as well as available services. Materials and messages can be sent out through mailers, ads, social media, and any other means where it may be seen. This information could even be attached to evictions notices.

Recommended Actions

AI recommends that this program begin in Year 1 and 2, possibly as a pilot. By tracking outcomes and reaching performance measures, the program can gain leverage to expand in Year 3 and beyond.

1. Develop policies and procedures for the Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program to include client eligibility requirements, eligible services offered under the program, processes for service delivery, distribution methods and processes for outreach materials.

2. Determine initial funding necessary for legal services and services grant, determine funding sources to target and secure funding.

3. Develop application for legal assistance program and housing services grant, hold proposals and determine contractors for both programs.

4. Develop trainings and possibly materials that can be distributed to inform courts, landlords, service providers and other parties about the program and how to refer clients. Determine regularity of trainings and locations as well as distribution methods and procedures for materials, if produced. (Work with Public Education and Engagement Committee).

5. Develop community outreach materials to inform tenants of services available and right to counsel and determine distribution methods and procedures for materials. (Work with Public Education and Community Engagement Committee).

6. Contracted organizations determine and hire necessary staff. If determined office space at County Courthouse is necessary for legal staff, work with courthouse staff to determine if space can be reserved.

7. Launch program and track outcomes.

8. If necessary, expand Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program.

Implementation Group

- OCU Legal Clinic
- Legal Aid
- Oklahoma City Housing Authority
- CoC Lead Agency (OKC Homeless Services)

- Homeless Alliance
- Arnall Family Foundation
- Community Cares Partners

Possible Performance Measures (may vary based on services offered)

1. Number of evictions prevented through legal intervention
2. Number of evictions prevented by services program prior to going to court
3. Number of evicted clients rapidly re-housed
4. Number/percent of people who maintained housing due to the short-term financial assistance
5. Amount of time the short-term financial assistance was provided for
6. Number of affordable housing units identified by liaisons
7. Number/percent of landlords providing affordable housing units
8. Number/percent of individuals or families housed
9. Demographics of the individual or family housed
10. Length of time the person or family stays housed
11. Number of tenants engaged in mediation services
12. Reason for the mediation services
13. Number/percent of successful mediation agreements reached
14. Number/percent of tenants able to retain their current housing due to mediation

1.B) DISCHARGE PLANNING LIAISON PROGRAM

Every coordinated homeless services system should incorporate discharge planning into the larger continuum of care to help prevent homelessness. Discharge planning identifies and coordinates services for people exiting hospitals, correctional facilities or foster care as they transition into the community and residential setting.

Discharge planning should begin immediately at the time of intake to assess the need for services and continue throughout the person's stay. A comprehensive initial assessment should assess all possible conditions including mental illness, substance use disorder or other medical conditions such as HIV/AIDS, cognitive impairments or trauma-related symptoms. Discharge planning for a person with a history of homelessness or residential instability should focus on housing solutions including the ability to reside in their prior housing, locating new housing or supportive housing options.

Discharge planning should also assess the person's economic status, including whether the individual can work, eligibility for entitlements like Medicaid, Social Security, Veteran's benefits or food stamps and proceed with applications for these benefits if possible while incarcerated. Many people experiencing homelessness need help securing documents such as birth certificates, Social Security cards or state identification. Discharge planners should ensure that their clients obtain all their necessary documents prior to discharge.

Discharging organizations and local service and housing providers should form partnerships and work diligently to establish effective relationships. Outreach to landlords who may feel reluctant to accept tenants with histories of mental illness, substance abuse or violence is needed. People convicted of sex offenses, arson or burglary find it difficult to locate housing. Discharge planners need to understand the housing options available in the community or partner with an organization that understands them, especially for these hard to serve populations.

In addition to securing suitable housing options, discharge planning must include services for basic needs like hygiene products, food and clothing, transportation, medical services and medication management, and mental or behavioral health services. If not done at the assessment stage, discharging organizations should work with case managers to ensure their clients have applied for all eligible benefits.

Strategy Description

Planning participants discussed the need to enhance discharge planning at hospitals, correctional facilities and for young adults aging out of foster care. Planning participants agreed that these institutions need to invest in discharge planning and ensure that people experiencing homelessness obtain the resources and community-based supportive services they need upon release.

The Implementation Group should work to determine contacts at local hospitals like Mercy Hospital and St. Anthony Hospital, correctional facilities like Oklahoma County Jail, schools throughout the Oklahoma City Public School system and the foster care system including Oklahoma Department of Human Services to coordinate discharge planning services for individuals and youth who would otherwise be discharged to the streets.

Participants in the planning sessions agreed that service provider organizations should not be responsible for developing discharge plans for people exiting these institutions and facilities. However, participants also agreed that these institutions and facilities may need assistance with developing their discharge planning processes and even forms.

Ideally, discharge planners should establish contact with those being discharged months in advance and have access to financial assistance to help secure stable housing prior to discharge. The CoC should also develop a coordinated entry process specific to people being discharged from hospitals, correctional facilities, foster care, and other locations and services. Once a discharge process is functioning, the Implementation Group should determine if new positions are necessary or if the process will function better with current staff.

Recommended Actions

AI recommends that this program develop in Years 1 through 3. The program could possibly start as a pilot and then by tracking outcomes and reaching performance measures can gain leverage to expand in Year 4 and beyond.

1. Implementation Group establishes contacts at hospitals, mental health facilities, Department of Corrections, Department of Human Services and other organizations that are responsible for discharge planning.

2. Determine which services discharging entities and service organizations are responsible for during discharge process and work with contacts at discharging organizations to develop a discharging process that all agree on. This may include helping develop forms and simple step-by-step directions.

3. Determine service organization and discharge entity staff to participate in a discharge specific coordinated entry program. Develop policies and procedures for discharge specific coordinated entry. Ensure policies include the specific discharge process for each entity, appropriate forms and client information, and include directions to connect service providers to their clients months prior to discharge whenever possible.

4. Add discharge specific coordinated entry processes to annual coordinated entry training.

5. Implement program and track outcomes.

6. After program has been operating for a year, determine if additional staff is necessary. Target funding sources for staffing and hire additional discharge positions.

Implementation Group

- Homeless Alliance
- Diversion Hub
- Mental Health Association Oklahoma
- Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- OU Health Sciences (Halley Reeves)
- OK Public Health Association
- CoC Lead Agency (OKC Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of participants
2. Reduced recidivism
3. Reduced hospital readmissions
4. Number/percent discharged into permanent, stable housing
5. Number of SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) applications

6. Number/percent of individuals or youth connected to benefits such as SSI, Medicaid or health insurance
7. Number/percent of individuals or youth connected to other community-based programs through coordinated entry
8. Number of individuals or youth who receive short-term financial assistance, the reasons for the assistance, the amount of funds provided, and the number/percent of people who maintained housing due to the assistance
9. Number of clients connected to services at least 5 months prior to discharge

1.C) TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR EX-OFFENDERS

About 10% of people leaving jails or prisons report experiencing homelessness in the months after their incarceration. This increases to 20% for those with mental illness.[11] Almost one in four (23%) of sheltered homeless reported having been incarcerated within the past two years.[12]

Most previously incarcerated individuals live in metropolitan areas. Cities need to ensure that adequate stable housing exists for previously incarcerated individuals to avoid a cycle of homelessness. A study of a Housing First model program in Seattle found that a criminal history did not impede successful housing retention and that jail bookings and jail days were reduced by more than 50%[13]. Creating a transitional housing program using a Housing First model can provide previously incarcerated individuals experiencing homelessness with stable housing and offer supportive services to maintain housing stability over time.

Certain populations within those exiting jails such as sex offenders and offenders convicted of methamphetamine production encounter even further barriers to housing upon their release. Most are banned from accessing public housing or vouchers for subsidized housing. Transitional housing programs should include these offenders, if possible. For example, Washington State implemented a Reentry Housing Pilot Program (RHPP) to reduce recidivism among prisoners considered high-risk and high-need who were discharged without housing. The pilot provided safe and affordable housing, as well as supportive services to 208 ex-offenders. The pilot's evaluation revealed that providing this housing and supportive services increased the likelihood of successful reintegration, significantly reduced new convictions and readmissions to prison for new crimes, and participants saw an increase in their income the longer they participated in the RHPP. The study also found that having a roommate positively impacted the offender's success in the program.

A study of the Colorado Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, Sex Offender Management's Shared Living Arrangements (SLAs) found that high-risk sex offenders living in SLAs had significantly fewer violations than those living in other non-correctional living arrangements.

Locating housing for high-risk clients may be so difficult that its own separate study may be necessary. The development of transitional units for lower-risk clients should not be delayed as a result.

OKC police officers and other first responders like EMSA and Fire interact with people experiencing homelessness, often due to public intoxication or trespassing on public or private property. Therefore, the county jail houses a number of people experiencing homelessness. According to OKC's 2010 Cost of Homelessness study, the average jail count of individuals experiencing homelessness totaled 173. The highest jail count of 204 occurred in September 2009. Over the study period of April 1, 2009 to March 31,

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[11] The Council of State Governments (2006). *Homelessness and Prisoner Re-Entry*. Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice; Re-Entry Policy Council & the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Accessed at:
https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/media/publications/homelessness_and_prisoner_reentry_council_of_state_governments_2006.pdf.pdf

[12] Metraux, S., & Culhane, D.P. (2006). *Recent incarceration history among a sheltered homeless population*. Crime & Delinquency, 52(3), 504–517.

[13] Clifasefi SL, Malone DK, Collins SE. E*xposure to project-based Housing First is associated with reduced jail time and bookings*. Int J Drug Policy. 2013;24(4):291-296. doi:10.1016/j.drugpo.2012.10.002

2010, the cost of law enforcement (county jail and police) and first response (fire and EMS) was $2,581,252.

Strategy Description

Planning participants discussed the need to establish a robust transitional housing program for ex-offenders. Transitional housing should be no shorter than 2-years and should ideally include communal housing with supportive staff that stay overnight or clustered units with or without supportive staff on-site. This will require either new construction of a structure or acquiring a structure that may require renovation.

The Implementation Group should determine the necessary services to be provided. Some services that should be considered are intensive case management, housing navigators, peer support mentors, SOAR representatives and discharge planning.

Recommended Actions

AI recommends that this program begin in Year 4 and 5. The program could possibly start as a pilot and then expand in the years beyond by tracking outcomes and reaching performance measures.

1. Implementation group should determine the structure of the transitional housing program or programs. This should at least include the length of client stay (2-years unless extended), number of units required, minimum level of services provided, and funding and staffing needs among other items. it should also be determined if housing will be new construction or an acquired structure with possible renovations required.

2. Secure funding for units, staff and ideally 3-years of operating costs.

3. Secure communal structure or acquire property and construct new units.

4. Develop policies and procedures for program to include client eligibility, eligible services rendered, length of stay, referral process to the program and others. Referral process should be included in the procedures for discharge planning coordinated entry when addressing clients coming from corrections institutions.

5. Hire all necessary staff, launch transitional housing program and track outcomes.

6. If necessary, acquire resources to expand transitional housing program and expand the program.

Implementation Group

- Diversion Hub
- Mental Health Association Oklahoma
- Homeless Alliance
- SSLM Development
- CoC Lead Agency (OKC Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of ex-offenders participating in the program and for what offense
2. Number/percent of ex-offenders who secure employment
3. Number/percent of ex-offenders that receive GED, college degree or other educational certificates
4. Number/percent of ex-offenders housed upon exiting the program
5. Length of time the ex-offender maintains housing stability

1.D) INCREASE AND EXPAND LOW-BARRIER EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Low barrier employment options are easier to access than traditional employment and require very little initial training. The programs both allow people to move out of homelessness as well as prevent them from falling into or back into homelessness. Typically, these programs also connect people to other services to help them end their homelessness and sustain their housing as well as provide an entryway into other, more traditional employment options.

Strategy Description

Low-barrier employment programs that could be expanded or added in Oklahoma City include:

- ❖ The Curbside Chronicle and Associated Curbside Businesses
- ❖ A Better Way
- ❖ Sasquatch Shaved Ice

The Curbside Chronicle is a street paper that was created to provide both a voice and employment opportunities for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Oklahoma City. The program also works with vendors to break down barriers to traditional employment and develop time management, money management and social skills. Additionally, the program helps chip away at stereotypes and stigmas surrounding homelessness. Curbside has now recently opened a flower shop to employ people who are ready to move into more traditional work environments. Each vendor completes a floral certification program at OSU-OKC and is trained in the retail shop. This helps vendors build job skills and gain experience to prepare them for other traditional employment opportunities.

A Better Way is a program currently operated in Tulsa by the Mental Health Association. The program gives people experiencing homelessness who panhandle an alternative to panhandling. The program van picks people up three days a week to work on community beautification projects. Additionally, a case manager and employment specialist serve as part of the Better Way team. This allows project participants to get connected to mental health and substance abuse services, health care, federal and state benefits, childcare and more. The employment specialist both builds relationships with employers and builds rapport with project participants to assess their strengths in order to make successful employment placements in the community.

Sasquatch Shaved Ice is a non-profit snow cone stand that employs low-income youth in Oklahoma City. As the name indicates, the business serves snow cones, but employees also receive financial literacy training. The business matches dollar-for-dollar everything they save towards higher education, transportation and other life enriching opportunities.

Working group participants recommended both expanding or adding these resources as well as exploring more options that could be incorporated. All options should not only employ people but also connect them to services and housing opportunities as well as provide them an opportunity to eventually move into more traditional employment in the future.

Recommended Actions

1. Develop funding to expand or add to these current, low-barrier employment options

2. Explore opportunities to add other low-barrier employment options

3. Cultivate relationships with local businesses that provide opportunities for more traditional employment to provide options for program participants who are ready to move into those types of jobs.

Implementation Group

- Curbside Chronicle
- Mental Health Association Oklahoma
- CoC Lead (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of low-barrier employment programs added/expanded
2. Number of people employed by low-barrier employment programs
3. Number of people employed by low-barrier employment programs who move on to more skilled employment
4. Number of people connected to other mainstream resources
5. Number of people connected to housing

1.E) ADVOCATE FOR TENANT PROTECTION LEGISLATION LIKE HB 3710 AND/OR SIMILAR LEGISLATION

2020 House Bill 3710 would have increase protections for tenants in rental properties and likely lead to a significant reduction in evictions in Oklahoma City and across the state. Among its provisions, 3710 would have allowed a tenant to withhold rent if a landlord fails to make repairs to a unit and would have discouraged retaliatory evictions when a tenant reports a violation by the landlord. Participants in planning sessions indicated that if there were going to be any lasting change in Oklahoma City's evictions situation then legislation of this type or similar would be absolutely necessary. 2020 HB 3710 should be evaluated to ensure it is not retaliatory against all landlords in cases where an eviction is warranted and lobby for its refiling and passage if so. If the bill, as written, is determined to be punitive towards landlords for taking actions that could be considered reasonable, then modifications of the bill should be encouraged prior to refiling and/or other legislation strengthening tenant rights should be encouraged and supported through appropriate actions by the implementation group.

Implementation Group

- City of Oklahoma City
- Oklahoma Coalition on Affordable Housing

- CoC Lead (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)
- All CoC housing services organizations

2   AFFORDABLE HOUSING

According to HUD, families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. About 12 million renters and homeowners in the United States pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes for housing. A family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the country.[14]

Below provides some key demographic information about OKC:

Oklahoma City Census Quick Facts (July 1, 2018)[15]	
Population	649,021
Median Household Income	$54,034
Per Capita Income in past 12 months	$29,581
Persons in Poverty	16.8%
Owner-occupied housing unit rate	58.6%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units	$153,700
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage	$1,362
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage	$475
Median gross rent	$849

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce and the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency commissioned the 2015 Oklahoma Housing Needs Assessment that determined the state needed 66,879 housing units by 2020. Of these, the state needed 43,942 housing units for ownership and 22,879 housing units for rent. Of the 43,942 housing units needed for ownership, 7,454 (or 16.96%) were estimated to be needed by households earning less than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI). Of the 22,879 housing units needed for rent, 11,630 (or 50.83%) were estimated to be needed by households earning less than 60% of AMI.

The 2015 Oklahoma Housing Needs Assessment reported that almost 20% of Oklahoma homeowners are cost overburdened and 40% of renters are cost overburdened. The assessment further reported that 70% of affordable housing units in Oklahoma are located in census tracts marked by poverty and 62% of affordable housing is in census tracts where a majority of the residents are not white. Affordable housing units also lack access to community resources. Indeed, 13% of affordable housing units have no access to transit services and 56% have access to limited service, on-demand transit; 6%

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[14] https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/

[15] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/oklahomacitycityoklahoma

of affordable housing units have limited access to a hospital and 7.8% of affordable housing units are in food deserts.

Specifically, in Oklahoma County, the 2015 Oklahoma Housing Needs Assessment projected a total of 12,169 housing units for ownership and 8,132 housing units for rent would be needed by 2020. The assessment reported that approximately 45.48% of renters and 21.3% of homeowners are housing cost overburdened. The assessment stated that 3,920 units are at risk for poverty. It further reported that 3,518 units are located in mostly non-white enclaves, 2,445 units in a community of immigrants, 2,641 units in limited English neighborhoods and 1,202 units located in a food desert.

The Oklahoma 2015 Housing Needs Assessment reported that the absence of affordable housing alternatives is the largest cause of homelessness in the state. The Assessment recommended that community zoning regulations must work to promote the development of housing at all income levels.

Planning groups acknowledged the need for more affordable housing options in OKC and proposed the following strategies:

2.A Zoning, Ordinance and Development Policy Changes

2.B Land Bank 501c3

2.C Lien Forgiveness Program

2.D Follow the Recommendations of the Affordable Housing Study

2.A) ZONING, ORDINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY CHANGES

Zoning pertains to the rules that govern how cities can use their land. Across the United States, exclusionary zoning practices, or zoning rules that limit development to single-family detached houses, have contributed to the increased number of cost-burdened households and the lack of affordable housing in many communities. Inclusionary zoning practices have helped some communities expand their housing stock and housing affordability for their residents. Under inclusionary zoning policies, developers may set aside a percentage of the units in a building at target income levels or pay a fee to a fund that will create affordable units at another location.

However, changing zoning laws present challenges for many communities. A recent study of community participation regarding housing development at planning and zoning board meetings found that residents who are older, male, longtime residents, voters in local elections and homeowners are

significantly more likely to participate in these meetings. These residents overwhelmingly oppose new housing construction compared to the general public.

As cities struggle with housing affordability for their residents, leaders are beginning to look at zoning laws and ways to increase density despite vocal opposition by those residents that tend to participate more in meetings. For example, Minneapolis introduced a plan in December 2018 to address the city's history of racial segregation and housing affordability by eliminating single-family zoning. The city council eliminated this category and began allowing all neighborhoods to establish residential structures with up to three dwelling units, such as duplexes and triplexes.

Density bonuses are a zoning tool that permits developers to build more housing units, taller buildings, or allow more floor space than normal in exchange for providing a defined public benefit, such as a specified percentage of affordable units included in the development.

This past year Austin's city council approved an ordinance that allows more homes to be built on single-family zoned plots if a certain percentage of development is affordable. The Affordability Unlocked bonus program loosens restrictions and promotes construction of more units in affordable and mixed-income housing developments. To participate, developers must meet several baseline affordability criteria including allocating at least 50 percent of all units as income-restricted (defined as 60 percent median family income or below for rental units and 80 percent MFI for ownership developments). If the baseline criteria are met and the developer offers more units below 60 or 80 percent, then the developer can earn additional site privileges.

Most city zoning codes require a minimum number of off-street parking spaces that must be created for each unit in a new residential development, such as 0.5 parking spaces per bedroom. Parking requirements ensure that residents have a dedicated place for their vehicles and avoids negative spillover effects on public parking in the surrounding area. But parking requirements also impact affordable housing in many communities. They impose economic and environmental costs on low-income households who tend to own fewer vehicles and live in higher-density neighborhoods where they can access public transit to meet their transportation needs.

Parking costs also increase rent costs. Typically, one parking space per unit increases costs approximately 12.5%, and two parking spaces can increase costs by up to 25%. By reducing parking requirements for qualifying affordable developments, the City could ensure that parking meets the actual need. A reduction can free up resources that can be used to lower home prices and rents as well as space for additional units and/or amenities.

Strategy Description

The 2015 Oklahoma Housing Needs Assessment projected that Oklahoma County, home to OKC, needed a total of 12,169 housing units for ownership and 8,132 housing units for rent by 2020. The assessment reported that approximately 45.48% of renters and 21.3% of homeowners are housing cost overburdened. The assessment stated that 3,920 units are at risk for poverty. The need for affordable housing may increase significantly as the economic impacts of COVID-19 become more prevalent.

CHICACO, ILLINOIS
THE AFFORDABLE REQUIREMENTS ORDINANCE (ARO)

The ARO was established in 2003 and applies to new or rehabilitated housing developments with 10 or more units that involve a zoning increase or downtown Planned Development designation, City-owned land, or City financial assistance. Residential projects that use a zoning increase or City land are required to set aside 10% of total units as affordable to low- to moderate-income families. Residential projects that receive City financial assistance, such as Tax Increment Financing, are required to set aside 20% of total units as affordable. The ARO also offers real estate developers the option to pay a fee-in-lieu of $100,000 per required unit into the Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF).

Chicago was one of the first large cities in the country to pass an inclusionary housing ordinance like the ARO. With its companion ordinance, the Downtown Density Bonus, the ARO has led to nearly 1,800 homes for very-low and moderate-income households, including 189 units within new, market rate housing developments and 1,600 units financed, in part, by in-lieu funds. While the ARO has proved useful, the Mayor identified an update to the ARO as a top priority in the City's "Five-Year Housing Plan". Adopted by City Council in February 2014, the housing plan sought to coordinate $1.3 billion in spending to create, improve, and preserve more than 41,000 units of housing citywide over the next five years.

Challenges exist as developers indicate that the ARO restricts development. The high cost of construction materials and labor have resulted in lower profit margins for developers who argue that the ARO depresses profits by decreasing the rental revenue a building can generate. In some gentrifying neighborhoods, the city has created ARO Pilot zones, where 20% of the units in a project must be affordable. In many cases, the apartments or condos must be affordable to a household that makes 60% of AMI, currently $53,460 for a family of four.

Housing advocates also criticize the ARO saying big loopholes exist since developers can reduce the number of required affordable units in their projects by paying into the city's housing fund or building some of the units at a different location. Housing advocates also say the ARO does not go far enough to provide low-cost housing in high-cost neighborhoods with good schools, low crime and a higher quality of life.

Developers have adapted to the ARC by attempting to find sites that already have zoning in place, so they do not have to request a zoning changes that triggers the ARO. Some developers have moved into lower-rent neighborhoods where there is a narrower disparity between market rents and affordable rents. Downtown development under the ARO continues to grow with many downtown developers agreeing to the ARO's affordability requirements in exchange for more generous zoning. One forecast said developers will complete about 13,000 apartments downtown between 2018 and 2022.

https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dcd/general/housing/ARO_Proposed_Enhancements_Dec_2014_Web_Final.pdf;
https://www.chicagobusiness.com/commercial-real-estate/why-developers-grumble-about-affordable-housing-rules

The Oklahoma 2015 Housing Needs Assessment also reported that the absence of affordable housing alternatives is the largest cause of homelessness in the state. The Assessment recommended that community zoning regulations must work to promote the development of housing at all income levels.

Planning participants agreed that zoning regulations need to be evaluated by the City to enhance affordable housing and, as it would turn out, such an evaluation is currently underway. Planning participants discussed ways in which this evaluation could encourage "Affordable by Design" development. Some of the specific recommendations that planning participants discussed included:

❖ Explore and develop inclusionary zoning practices such as requiring developers to set-aside a designated percentage of low-income units or contribute to a housing trust fund.

❖ Utilize incentives such as density bonuses, reduced lot sizes and others to encourage "affordable by design" development such as micro-units.

❖ Change R1 zoning requirements to allow accessory dwelling units (e.g., garage apartments) and explore streamlining permitting/reducing permitting requirements and costs to facilitate the construction of these units.

Recommended Actions

1. As part of the City's ongoing Development Codes Update project, the CoC Lead should work with other Planning staff and the consultant to evaluate inclusionary zoning practices and options to allow more "affordable by design" development as well as other methods that will allow for easier development of affordable units.

2. Evaluate whether and where permitting costs can be reduced.

3. Obtain approval of Zoning and/or fee changes by City Council.

4. Track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- OKC Planning Department
- OKC Development Services

- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of Zoning Ordinance changes related to affordable housing development
2. Number/percent of affordable units created at 60% AMI and below
3. Number/percent of affordable units created at 30% AMI and below
4. Percent reduction in permitting costs
5. Percent reduction in impact fees

2.B) LAND BANK 501c3

Land banks acquire, manage and dispose of neglected or underutilized properties to help stabilize neighborhoods and encourage re-use or development of city property. They can be a public or nonprofit entity and can be used to replace antiquated systems of tax foreclosure and property disposition. They can also aid in the development of affordable housing or community development.

HUD describes four critical elements necessary for successful land bank initiatives:

1. Connect the land bank to the tax collection and foreclosure system. Local governments typically interact with abandoned properties through tax collection. Owners of abandoned properties often are delinquent or do not pay their taxes, requiring the city to institute a tax lien on the property. Land banks capture profits to manage the abandoned property through penalties and interest earned by the tax lien or the equity from valuable foreclosed property.

2. Scale the land bank at the city level, or around the most diverse real estate market possible. This ensures that land banks do not only obtain the worst foreclosed or abandoned properties, also known as "junk" property. By scaling the land bank around a diverse market, land banks can use the earnings from more valuable land sales to rehabilitate, clean or demolish other properties in worse condition.

3. Ensure the land bank is policy driven, as well as transparent in policies and transactions. This ensures that wary residents distrustful of government intervention in the real estate market have access to information about the policies and priorities on how properties are sold or transferred, to whom and for what purpose.

4. Emphasize community engagement and participation. Land held by land banks are often scattered throughout the community in various neighborhoods. It is important that land banks engage with their property neighbors to inform them of the policies and practices of the land bank, as well as help determine the appropriate outcomes for the held property. Land banks can form a Community Advisory Council or hold regular neighborhood meetings to gain public feedback and input. Land banks should also engage and develop partnerships with other nonprofits, community organizations, lenders and the city.

Land banks vary significantly in staff size, inventory, budgets and programs. The Genesee County Land Bank Authority (GCLBA) in Michigan is one of the largest land banks in the country. It sells, develops and manages property, as well as engages in land-use planning and demolition. GCLBA clears blight properties from neighborhoods, which allows for new opportunities in investments, recreation and neighborhood improvements. The cleared lots are often transformed into side yards and gardens. In 2019, GCLBA demolished 936 blighted and abandoned structures, completed almost 60,000 vacant property mows in partnership with community groups, removed 400 tons of debris and trash from lots, renovated 9 houses, and sold 251 structures and 293 vacant lots. The Fulton County/Atlanta Land Bank can waive back taxes, clear titles and facilitates the transfer of ownership in a tax-delinquent property for redevelopment purposes.

A summary report prepared for the City of OKC's Abandoned Building Coalition in June 2016 noted that land banking requires state legislative authority. Oklahoma's current laws allow certain land bank functions, but enabling legislation would be needed to implement certain, other land banking functions if the City were to decide to pursue them.

This is a strategy that is also strongly supported and recommended by the Housing Affordability Study that is currently being conducted by the City of Oklahoma City.

Strategy Description

The City and other relevant stakeholders should establish a nonprofit land bank in OKC to support affordable housing development in the city. The land bank could encourage and accept land donations, as well as reduce transfer fees.

The City and other entities may need to lobby the state legislature to expand land banking functions in the state if currently allowed land banking functions are determined by the City to be inadequate.

Recommended Actions

1. Evaluate the creation of a nonprofit land bank and the functions it can engage in under current Oklahoma statute. The City and other groups such as the Oklahoma Coalition for Affordable Housing may need to lobby the state legislature to expand land banking functions through legislative changes if current allowable functions are deemed to be inadequate. Until those changes can be made, the City should make use of current, allowable land bank functions with the possibility of expanding them later.

2. Establish the mission, vision and goals of the land bank.

3. Create Articles of Incorporation, a Board of Directors and other needed documents to establish the land bank nonprofit entity.

4. Explore and secure all possible funding sources to establish and sustain the land bank.

5. Fold lien forgiveness program into land bank functions (see following strategy)

6. Establish the land bank, begin operations and track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- Oklahoma City Planning Department – Community Development Division
- Oklahoma City Planning Department – Plan Development & Implementation Division
- Oklahoma City Manager's Office
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of property acquisitions
2. Number of properties demolished, constructed or rehabilitated
3. Number/percent of affordable housing units created at 30% AMI
4. Number/percent of affordable housing units created at 60% AMI

2.C) LIEN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

Some cities are working with developers to create affordable housing by using the value of public land to subsidize new housing for low-to moderate-income households. Cities may own properties that include vacant or underutilized buildings, or those no longer used for their original purpose such as a school or community center. Cities could offer these properties to developers at no or reduced cost if the developer commits to including affordable housing.

Cities have also begun to address and reduce "lienfields," which are properties with accumulated unpaid taxes or liens over many years. Cities can address these lienfields through actions that reduce or remove back taxes. Some cities have allowed property owners to deed their vacant or abandoned property to the city. The city accepts the property as a donation and waives all back taxes. This newly acquired public land can then be offered to developers at no or reduced cost if the developer commits to including affordable housing in the development.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
THE DONOR-TAKER PROGRAM

The Donor-Taker Program in Philadelphia allows property owners to deed their vacant or abandoned property to the city, which accepts it as a donation and waives all tax liens. The Redevelopment Authority (RDA) then takes ownership of the property and can transfer it to individuals, community organizations, or city agencies under the city's "Gift Property" program.

The Donor-Taker and Gift Property Programs receive applications where staff check to see if other applicants exist and if there are any public plans for the property. The applicant (Taker) submits a rehabilitation plan and is deeded the property at no cost if approved.

https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/BarriersVol1_part2.pdf

Strategy Description

Planning participants discussed the need to create a lien forgiveness program that would allow property owners to gift land to the City in exchange for reducing or removing back taxes. The City could offer these properties to developers at no or reduced cost if the developer commits to including affordable housing in their project. If a land bank can be established in some form, planning participants also indicated that the lien forgiveness program should then be folded into that program. This strategy will require collaboration with government offices/organizations at the County level.

Recommended Actions

1. The City should work with the County to establish a lien forgiveness program and help create or determine the mission, goals and vision of the lien forgiveness program, program eligibility requirements and operating procedures, and application process for property owners and developers.

2. Establish the lien forgiveness program and track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- Oklahoma City Planning Department, Housing and Community Development Division
- Oklahoma County Assessor's Office

- Oklahoma County Commissioner (Carrie Blumert recommended)
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of property owner applications
2. Number of properties gifted to the city
3. Amount of back taxes reduced or waived
4. Number/percent of affordable units created at 60% AMI and below
5. Number/percent of affordable units created at 30% AMI and below

2.D) FOLLOW THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING STUDY

As previously mentioned, Oklahoma City has been undertaking a Housing Affordability Study (HAS) during the same period that this Homeless Strategy has been in development. While the HAS has not been released yet, many of its recommendations will support the affordable housing recommendations made in this document. However, the HAS also features a full analysis of impediments to affordable housing and goes much farther in its recommendations to remove barriers to housing for residents of low to moderate income.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, five years ago, Oklahoma City did not even rank as one of the top 5 most expensive areas in the state. In 2020 it was ranked first. In 2020, a person making minimum wage had to work 69 hours a week to afford an apartment at fair market rent. That is up two hours from the previous year and three from 2018.[16] With nearly half of Oklahoma City's population making less than the median income, this would appear to indicate a large affordability gap that is growing at rate that many would find alarming.[17]

The City of Oklahoma City should take all measures necessary to reverse this trend and prevent a significant increase in homelessness by ensuring all who need housing can afford it. Following these recommendations and the recommendations of the Housing Affordability Study are two significant steps it can take in that direction.

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[16] https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2015_FULL.pdf;
https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2018.pdf;
https://reports.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2020.pdf

[17] Housing Affordability Study. Prepared for OKC Planning Department by Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. RRC Associates; February 8, 2021.

3 OUTREACH AND CASE MANAGEMENT

Outreach and engagement of people experiencing homelessness plays a vital role in homeless service systems. Street outreach identifies and engages people living in unsheltered locations like cars, abandoned buildings or encampments who might not seek help on their own. Street outreach provides people experiencing homelessness with basic necessities while helping to link the person with housing and other services to support their exit out of homelessness.

Outreach should be systematic, coordinated and comprehensive across a variety of organizations including law enforcement and other first responders, hospitals, health and behavioral healthcare providers, child welfare agencies, homeless education liaisons, workforce systems, faith-based organizations and other community-based providers. All outreach efforts should be connected to coordinated entry system and HMIS, as well as focused on connecting the person experiencing homelessness to stable housing resources using the Housing First model. Street outreach should be person-centered and provide warm handoffs to emergency shelter, housing and service providers.[18]

Case management can be defined in many ways, but according to the Case Management Society of America (CMSA), case management is "a collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's and family's comprehensive health needs through communication and available resources to promote patient safety, quality of care, and cost-effective outcomes."[19]

Numerous service providers in OKC engage in outreach and case management services. The CoC seeks to build upon the current outreach and case management efforts through the following actions:

3.A Enhance Access and Use of HMIS

3.B Case Manager Training and Professional Development

3.C Expand Use of Peer Support Mentors

3.D Intensive Case Management and Outreach

3.E Mobile Services Team

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[18] https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Core-Components-of-Outreach-2019.pdf

[19] http://www.cmsa.org/who-we-are/what-is-a-case-manager/

3.A) ENHANCE ACCESS AND USE OF HMIS

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is an information technology system used to collect client-level data and data related to housing and homeless services at the local level. Continuum of Care's (CoC's) are responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that is compliant with HUD's data collection, management and reporting standards.

Servicepoint is OKC's HMIS networked database and is maintained by the Homeless Alliance. It currently connects more than 42 agencies with over 164 programs serving people experiencing homelessness. Servicepoint allows these agencies to share data on shared clients, measure outcomes and report to funders.

Strategy Description

The CoC seeks to enhance access to and use of the HMIS database by providing training, addressing security and privacy concerns, and increasing the number of available licenses. The creation of a HMIS Data Manager position would allow for an individual to manage these responsibilities.

Additionally, the CoC currently funds HMIS licenses for all local programs as well as programs in the Norman and Balance of State (BOS) Continuum service areas out of a single HMIS specific grant that is allocated by HUD to the Oklahoma City CoC. During the next CoC application cycle, the OKC Continuum should require all projects in the OKC, Norman and BOS Continuums to add an HMIS line item to their project budgets so they may begin to pay for their own HMIS licenses. This will allow a significant number of new licenses to be added for local ESG, shelter and non-federally funded projects at no cost to the agencies and without adding new funding.

Recommended Actions

1. The CoC should work with the Homeless Alliance to secure an HMIS Data Manager. Since the Homeless Alliance currently administers HMIS for the local community, we assume this position will be housed there. It is possible that at least part of this position could be funded out of a Continuum grant.

2. Inform local, Norman and BOS Continuum programs to add an HMIS line item in next CoC application so licenses can be purchased for OKC projects using funds from the OKC Continuum's HMIS dedicated grant.

3. Track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- The Homeless Alliance
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of HMIS training sessions
2. Number of new agencies connected to HMIS
3. Number of programs connected to HMIS
4. Accuracy of data entered into HMIS

3.B) CASE MANAGER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Case managers play a vital and at times life-saving role for individuals experiencing homelessness. The goal of case management is "to ensure timely access to and coordination of fragmented medical and psychosocial services for an individual while considering costs, preventing duplication of services and improving health outcomes."

Case manager roles include intake, assessment of needs, service planning and coordination, ongoing monitoring, and client advocacy. Case managers may also engage in crisis intervention, discharge planning and direct services to increase the psychosocial wellbeing of the client.

In the last few decades, five major models of case management have emerged: (1) General or standard case management (SCM); (2) Intensive case management (ICM); (3) Clinical case management (CCM); (4) Assertive community treatment (ACT); and (5) Critical time intervention (CTI).

All models emphasize the importance of care coordination. Care coordination activities may include identifying client health needs and prioritizing appropriate actions, developing a plan that is both cost effective and feasible to implement, promoting the client's understanding of health information and providing ongoing monitoring and evaluation, among many others.

The Benefits of Case Management

A recent systematic review examining case management interventions between 1994 and 2008 revealed several benefits for individuals experiencing homelessness. Positive effects included increased housing stability, increased engagement in both medical and nonmedical services, reduced utilization of high-cost health system services, improved mental health, reduced drug and alcohol use, and improved quality of life. Outcomes varied across different studies and case management models, as well as the individual program design.

All five models of case management have been shown to be beneficial for individuals experiencing homelessness, especially intensive case management (ICM). A 2012 study revealed that ICM reduced substance use and psychiatric illness symptoms over a year. ICM also reduces the number of days homeless, as well as use of the emergency department and hospitalizations.

Case management intervention reduces homelessness by connecting clients to rent subsidies, permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing and housing first programs. These outcomes can help to offset costs associated with emergency shelters and hospital stays, as well as reduce the use of over-utilized health services and increase the use of under-utilized health services. Various studies conducted by communities across the United States document the costs of homelessness. In general, a person experiencing chronic homelessness costs taxpayers about $35,578 per year in over- utilized services.

The Onboarding Process for New Case Managers

The onboarding process is extremely important to ensuring successful client outcomes as well as employee retention. The onboarding process should start as soon as an offer is accepted, typically with a welcome packet of helpful information about the company. Orientation comes next and is typically one of the first steps in the onboarding process. This usually includes the collection of necessary human

resources, payroll and other benefit forms. The onboarding process should not end here; this is a common mistake for many. The onboarding process should continue, allowing the employee to assimilate to the culture of the organization, while developing the appropriate skills and tools to do so.

The onboarding process sets the tone of the relationship with the case manager and is imperative for professional development. A 2015 Forbes article titled "How to Get Employee Onboarding Right" cited a study published in 2013 by the Academy of Management Journal, which found that the 90 days of employment, often called the probationary period, is "pivotal to building rapport with the company, management and coworkers." In this case, not only the organization, but also the entire homeless service delivery system.

Agencies need to create a culture where great case managers want to work. A strong culture includes a positive work environment that fosters respect, engaged case managers and, ideally, competitive compensation. An engaged workforce expands recruitment opportunities for the company. Furthermore, a strong culture encourages and supports ongoing education through continuous trainings, allowing case managers to support diverse patient populations with complex needs more effectively.

The curriculum may include topics such as motivational interviewing, relationship building and working with interdisciplinary teams, trauma-informed care, processes and procedures for assessment, intake, and obtaining required documents as well as care planning and coordination, the importance of accurate data collection and entry, completing effective home visits, and working with special populations and their needs. Additionally, the curriculum may include knowledge of the overall CoC system as homeless delivery systems are complex and unique to each community. Newly hired case managers need to understand the overall homeless delivery system and the roles and responsibilities of all participating organizations so client referral and access to supportive services is streamlined and effective in ending the person's homelessness. Effective client service should not be impacted by a case manager's employment tenure.

Strategy Description

Key stakeholders and planning participants acknowledged the challenges of recruiting and retaining effective case managers. Many agreed that case managers need enhanced training and professional development to best meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness in the community. Planning participants said it is important for the training to be centralized, standardized and ongoing, trauma-informed and include multiple positions including intake specialist, case managers, and peer support specialists.

Planning participants also said it is important to provide support to existing case management staff. Many noted that organizations need to focus on retaining good staff by providing pathways to certification and other means, if possible.

The CoC should seek to enhance training and professional development by establishing an onboarding curriculum for case managers and developing standardized, ongoing training.

Recommended Actions

1. Develop the onboarding curriculum and establish agreements with community organizations to participate.

2. Explore ways to help organizations provide pathways to certification, as well as other benefits.

3. Establish onboarding curriculum, which may include:

    a. Developing a welcome packet for new hires of participating organizations with valuable information about the CoC and their organization's role, as well as the CoC's mission, vision and case manager expectations.

    b. Preparing an orientation program for new case managers which might include training on such topics as motivational interviewing, relationship building and working with interdisciplinary teams, trauma-informed care, processes and procedures for assessment and intake, as well as care planning and coordination, the importance of accurate data collection and entry and other relevant topics.

    c. Building a team from local service providers or developing partnerships with organizations or a local university to provide the trainings, most of which could be offered through an online training portal.

    d. Ensuring a shared understanding with new hires on their role and expectations. Communicate regularly to ensure continued understanding.

    e. Providing and developing an ongoing training curriculum for professional development.

    f. Standard packets or videos from each provider in OKC to educate a new case manager on services, requirements, and expectations.

4. Launch the onboarding program and meet at least quarterly to discuss the process and how it can be improved for both satisfaction of the case managers and outcomes for the individuals being served.

5. Once the onboarding program and trainings are established shift to working with organizations to explore pay for performance models and providing pathways to certification.

6. Track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- Hope Community Services
- The Homeless Alliance
- Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of organizations participating in the onboarding curriculum
2. Number of case managers who participate in the onboarding curriculum
3. Number of trainings completed
4. Number/percent of case managers retained after one year

3.C) EXPAND USE OF PEER SUPPORT MENTORS

Peer support mentors have successfully completed a recovery process and help others experiencing similar situations. Mentors help people suffering from substance use disorder engage in the recovery process and reduce their chances of relapse.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides core competencies for peer workers in behavioral health that guide service delivery and promote best practices in peer support. These core competencies can help organizations establish peer training programs, develop certification standards, and inform job descriptions. The fundamental principles of peer support core competencies include:

- **Recovery-oriented**: Peer workers help their peers to identify their strengths and empower them to make their own choices and decisions on their path to recovery.

- **Person-centered**: Peer recovery support services are always directed by the person participating in services. Peer support is customized to the specific needs and goals of the peer.

- **Voluntary**: Participation in peer recovery support services is always contingent on peer choice.

- **Relationship-focused**: The relationship between the peer worker and peer is respectful, trusting, empathetic, collaborative and mutual.

- **Trauma-informed**: Peer recovery support uses a strength-based framework that emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional safety.

Strategy Description

There are several organizations that provide mental and behavioral healthcare services and resources in OKC that utilize peer support. Mental Health Association Oklahoma and NorthCare are just two such organizations. The CoC should consider expanding peer support services at these organizations and others in conjunction with the expanded number of positions for intensive case management as described in the following strategy. Additionally, the CoC should consider developing ongoing standardized training for peer support mentors as part of the Case Manager trainings discussed in the previous strategy.

Recommended Actions

1. Determine organizations that will utilize peer support and the target number of peer support mentors.

2. For organizations without current peer support programs, define responsibilities and duties of the positions, as well as the salary and benefits.

3. Determine the referral process for CoC providers and others, as well as eligibility requirements for peers to participate in the mentor program and training protocols for peer mentors.

4. Begin securing funding for peer support expansion.

5. Educate CoC providers and others about peer support mentors, referrals, eligibility requirements, and other elements of the program.

6. Expand peer support mentors and track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- Inasmuch Foundation
- Mental Health Association Oklahoma
- Northcare

- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)
- Hope Community Services

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of peers hired
2. Number of clients served

3.D) INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

The primary goal of outreach workers is to connect people experiencing homelessness with case management and other services and eventually help them attain housing. Case managers seek to coordinate resources for individuals and families, as well as help them access services in a timely fashion. The basic components of case management include intake, needs assessment, service planning, connecting to services, ongoing monitoring and client advocacy.

Studies show that people experiencing homelessness who receive case management have improved outcomes including increased housing stability, increased engagement in medical and nonmedical services, reduced use of high-cost health system services, improved mental health status, reduced use of drug and alcohol, and improved quality of life. Clearly, case management is a crucial element to helping people who are homeless access and maintain housing and outreach can be an extremely effective approach to connecting people with case management services.

Strategy Description

The Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) is an effective, evidenced-based, outreach-oriented, service delivery model using a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week approach to community-based mental health services. PACT delivers comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation services to consumers in their homes, at work and in community settings. PACT seeks to reduce the need for inpatient care by assisting patients with their basic needs, ensure patients take their medication on schedule, keeping their family together and securing employment. PACT teams use an integrated service approach to combine clinical and rehabilitation staff expertise, such as psychiatric, substance abuse, and employment, into one service delivery team.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) recognizes PACT as the leading treatment model of choice for people with severe mental illness. Over 40 states across the country have adopted the PACT model, including Oklahoma.

However, due to strict eligibility criteria, not all people experiencing homelessness are eligible for the PACT program. This being the case, the PACT program model of outreach coupled with intensive case management services should be expanded to those who are not eligible for PACT team services. Outreach workers and intensive case managers would include similar job duties as PACT teams and would work in conjunction with homeless prevention services such as the Eviction Diversion and Mediation Program housing navigators and the Discharge Planning Liaison Program as described above under Preventing Homelessness. Outreach and Intensive case managers may also work in conjunction with other strategies outlined in this Action Plan such as the mobile services team.

Part of the criteria for this Intensive Case Management and Outreach model should be to use a data driven approach to targeting the most vulnerable clients for housing and services. In order to accomplish this, similar programs like FUSE in Ft. Collins, Colorado have worked with health care providers, law enforcement, mental health services, and other sectors to identify the highest utilizers of crisis response services and target them for assistance. While this is difficult, it can also be effective and other communities have begun to develop and utilize this model as well, including Tulsa, OK with a program known as Bridge.

Additionally, to facilitate a more rapid expansion of outreach and intensive case management resources, the City could consider partnering with district organizations (Ex. Stockyards City Main

Street) and non-profit service providers that use this model. One possibility is that half the cost of an outreach worker/case manager is funded with City resources while a district organization covers the other half. In return, the organization gets a service worker dedicated to their district for a year or other designated period of time. This both allows more funds to be used on other services and removes a piece of the City's geography from the rest of Coordinated Outreach's workload. The program could be applied for by both the non-profit provider and the district organization at an interval determined by the CoC or City.

Recommended Actions

1. Develop the model, including establishing target populations, staffing ratio recommendations, operating procedures, eligibility requirements, vision and goals.

2. Determine target number of intensive outreach and case management staff to secure funding for and begin securing funding.

3. Establish points of contact with local hospitals, correctional facilities/organizations, fire department and other organizations to begin building list of high service users. Develop and MOU for all organizations involved.

4. Hire outreach and intensive case management candidates and educate and train CoC providers on referral process to the outreach and intensive case management program.

5. Explore partnering with district organizations for partial funding of outreach and case management workers specifically assigned to that district. Develop a one pager to share with the district organizations explaining possible benefits.

   a. Hire additional staff for districts if proceed with district organization program.

6. Track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- Mental Health Association Oklahoma
- Homeless Alliance
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of weekly/monthly contacts
2. Number of individuals or families enrolled in the program
3. Number/percent of individuals or families placed into housing
4. Demographics of individual or family housed
5. Length of time the person or family stays housed
6. Number/percent of individuals employed
7. Number/percent of individuals who maintain employment
8. Number/percent of individuals connected to other benefits such as Social Security
9. Number/percent of individuals connected to other community resources

3.E) MOBILE SERVICES TEAM

To identify people experiencing homelessness and link them to appropriate medical resources, planning session participants discussed providing mobile services via a van, RV or bus. Mobile services can provide a way to reach people experiencing homelessness where they congregate across OKC. People experiencing homelessness could access healthcare as well as enter centralized intake and coordinated care.

People experiencing homelessness encounter many barriers including accessing and receiving appropriate healthcare. Many people experiencing homelessness distrust the health care system, which can be exacerbated by a history of abuse, mental illness or a substance use disorder. Some feel stigmatized and segregated due to these conditions. Most lack health insurance and do not know of clinic locations that serve uninsured individuals. Other issues to accessing healthcare may include the lack of proper identification, lack of medical records and limited knowledge about navigating the health care system.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
MOBILE MEDICAL PROGRAM

Implementation: In July 2016, Seattle unveiled the Mobile Medical program, which entails a "one-stop-shop" RV bringing primary care, dental care and mental health services, free of charge, to people experiencing homelessness. The mission of the Mobile Medical program is "to build relationships with people experiencing homelessness by providing patient-led health and social services, meeting people where they are, and fostering health and well-being."

Program: This program gives homeless residents access to a physician, nurse, mental health case manager and chemical dependency professional. To address continuum of care, these professionals also direct people experiencing homelessness to other support services and treatment (i.e., doctor's office, mental health/substance abuse counseling services, enrollment into health insurance, enrollment into ORCA LIFT, and referrals to shelters, food banks, etc.), allowing for longer-term and follow up care.

Location: The medical services RV meets people experiencing homelessness at prime locations such as tent cities, food banks, and other encampments throughout Seattle and South King County.

Funding: The medical services van costs the city approximately $700,000 a year and is funded by the city's emergency funds to address homelessness, as well as federal funding.

Results: Since its implementation, the mobile medical van served over 1,200 patients and recorded over 3,800 visits for medical, behavioral health and dental services in 2016. In 2017, the medical team engaged with over 1,400 patients. The program has since introduced new sites and strategies to introduce the growing local homelessness crisis. In Seattle, this now includes the 24-hour Navigation Center as well as several sanctioned encampments. In South King County, new sites include the new Day Centers in Auburn and Federal Way.

Strategy Description

The Task Force seeks to establish a mobile services team to improve access to healthcare and other needed services to people experiencing homelessness. These mobile units should ideally contain integrated services provided by multidisciplinary clinical teams where a holistic approach is used to address both medical and psychosocial needs in a non-judgmental therapeutic setting. Mobile services can improve access by providing care in a way that welcomes people experiencing homelessness who may otherwise not go to fixed-site clinics. Mobile services can provide compassionate and culturally competent outreach.

Mobile health units vary, typically based on the environment and cost, and may include remodeled RV's, trucks, passenger vans and/or buses, as well as custom-designed vans that generally include at least one exam room in addition to other features. Agencies that provide a mobile outreach program most frequently partner with emergency shelters, social services, and community health centers. Other partners may include public health departments, police departments, churches, and schools.

Mobile health outreach and services reduce costs for the community overall. Some people experiencing homelessness can present with complex health problems that differ from the general population, such as a higher risk for chronic and uncontrolled medical conditions, as well as communicable diseases like tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. People experiencing homelessness have trouble adhering to a medical regimen, increasing their likelihood of going back to the emergency room for a preventative problem.

Possible Return on Investment (ROI)

A 2008 study in Boston that assessed the ROI associated with healthcare mobile units. The study found that the saved cost from diverted emergency visits was estimated at more than $3 million per year and the value of providing preventive services was approximately $20 million a year. The cost to run the program was $567,700. The ROI was thus estimated to be $36 for every $1 spent.[87]

Another program, a group of mobile asthma clinics called the Breathmobile, provides free care to underserved children in different cities across the nation. A study of Breathmobile use in Baltimore found that after a year in the program, $79.43 was saved for patients each day they were symptom free. A study of Breathmobile in California found an ROI of $6.73 per $1 invested. They added the emergency room costs avoided and the value of quality-adjusted life years saved and divided it by the cost of the program, which was approximately $500,000 a year.

Recommended Actions

1. Evaluate the long-term actions necessary to establish a mobile services team in OKC. The implementation team may conduct the following activities:

    a. Determine the organization to manage the mobile services, as well as the mission and goals of the team.

    b. Determine the primary services that will be offered on the mobile services vehicle and establish primary partnerships.

    c. Secure the necessary funding to launch the mobile services program, including start-up and maintenance costs. This may need to be accomplished through several avenues such

as private fundraising events, federal or local foundation grant opportunities, or City and County funds.

    d. Buy vehicle to serve as mobile services unit, renovate based on service being offered.

    e. Promote and educate the public, CoC providers and others on the mobile services program as part of the public education and community engagement initiative (addressed in Advocacy strategies).

    f. Establish a mobile services schedule.

2. Launch the mobile services program.

3. Maintain mobile services program and track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- Community Health Services Inc. (Healing Hands)
- Mental Health Association Oklahoma
- OU Health Sciences Center (Halley Reeves)

- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)
- Oklahoma City County Health Department

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number/percent of people to receive services and which services received
2. Number of people connected to coordinated entry through mobile services team

4   EMERGENCY AND TEMPORARY SHELTER

People in a housing crisis will always need a safe and decent place to go immediately. Emergency and temporary shelters provide the immediate need of shelter and a safe place to sleep for people experiencing homelessness, as well as instantly connecting them with housing and support services.

Low-barrier shelters provide a safe, warm place of shelter to all people who may not have any other place to go. They do not require sobriety, attendance at religious services, minimum income requirements or lack of a criminal history. Family members and partners can stay together, and even pets are allowed inside. Providing a low-barrier emergency shelter plays an important role within an effective, housing-focused response to homelessness. Low-barrier shelters serve as a platform to link people experiencing homelessness to housing through identification and assessment. Once the immediate need of shelter is met, people can be navigated toward permanent housing.

Emergency shelters also provide an important access point for hard-to-serve populations, such as those with diagnoses of serious mental illness and substance dependence. Emergency shelters secure better outcomes if they operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week where people can store belongings, access employment services and healthcare, and quickly move on to permanent housing.

As of 2019, 1,000 emergency shelter beds exist in OKC through various organizations and programs. Despite this, 557 individuals were found unsheltered in OKC during the 2020 PIT count, one of the highest unsheltered counts seen in recent years. Many OKC emergency sheltered beds are considered high-barrier or designed for special populations such as survivors of domestic violence or youth experiencing homelessness.

City Care plans to open OKC's first low-barrier night shelter in early 2021 offering approximately 200 beds for men and women experiencing homelessness in the city, as well as some family suites. Planning participants agreed that while this begins the process of adding more low-barrier emergency shelter beds in the city, more may be necessary to adequately meet the need. The yet unknown economic impact of COVID-19 may further exacerbate the need to expand low-barrier emergency shelter capacity in OKC. While not explicitly recommended in the proposed strategies over the next five years, City Care and key stakeholders should continue to evaluate the need to expand low-barrier emergency shelter bed capacity in the city.

The CoC can enhance emergency and temporary shelter in OKC by implementing the following actions:

4.A   Inclement Weather Shelter

4.B   Expand Coordinated Entry Access in Shelters

4.A) INCLEMENT WEATHER SHELTER

After 16 people experiencing homelessness in OKC died due to exposure during the winter of 2017, homeless service providers and key stakeholders determined that emergency shelter bed capacity needed to expand during cold weather events. All the shelter directors, the City of Oklahoma City Homeless Services and other volunteer groups established the winter contingency plan in 2018. When the temperature outside is expected to drop below 32 degrees, OKC emergency shelters open extra beds to encourage people not to sleep outside or in a car. The shelters include Salvation Army, City Rescue Mission, Jesus House, Grace Rescue and SISU Youth.

The five shelters together offer about 161 overflow beds for the winter contingency plan. This capacity can be further expanded if the shelters see the overflow capacity beds filling up. Grace Rescue Mission can open its gym for an additional 75 cots and the Homeless Alliance can open its day shelter for 70 spaces.

Outcomes are currently positive for the emergency shelter winter contingency plan in OKC. The winter of 2018 saw no deaths among people experiencing homelessness due to the cold weather and the contingency plan is largely credited for this outcome.

Strategy Description

Planning participants discussed expanding the winter contingency strategy to other times of year during inclement weather. Inclement weather can mean the existence of rain or other abnormal climatic conditions such as hail, high wind, severe dust storm, extreme high temperature or any combination thereof.

Recommended Actions

1. Formalize the winter contingency plan with written policies and procedures and develop expanded inclement weather protocols to indicate what other weather conditions throughout the year trigger opening of overflow beds.

2. Explore developing a process with eligibility requirements that will allow some non-shelter sites to be pre-approved to operate as temporary emergency shelter locations in inclement weather situations.

3. Initiate the inclement weather contingency plan for emergency shelters and track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- OKC Shelter Executives Group
  - Salvation Army
  - City Rescue Mission
  - City Care
  - Jesus House
  - Grace Rescue Mission
    - Homeless Alliance
- Coordinated Outreach Team
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Utilization of services

4.B) EXPAND COORDINATED ENTRY ACCESS IN SHELTERS

Emergency and temporary shelters provide an opportunity to instantly connect people experiencing homelessness with housing and support services. Emergency shelters provide an important access point for hard-to-serve populations, such as domestic violence survivors, transitional age youth and those with diagnoses of serious health issues, mental illness and substance dependence.

Strategy Description

Planning participants discussed expanding access to the coordinated entry system in shelters to better connect people experiencing homelessness and specific hard-to-serve populations with housing and support services. This will require Coordinated Entry Advocates or Housing Navigators in each shelter facility who can work with clients to conduct housing assessments, collect required documents and connect them with housing. Once a client is housed, the advocate would then pass the client off to a housing case manager.

For some shelters with greater capacity, staff may be trained to fulfill this role. Additionally, a single organization should apply for a Coordinated Entry project through the Continuum of Care competition. This would allow several advocates to be employed that could visit shelter sites several days a week to perform these tasks if a shelter is not able to address them themselves.

Recommended Actions

1. Expand Coordinated Entry Policies, Procedures and Trainings to incorporate protocols for conducting the Coordinated Entry process in shelters.

2. Determine which shelter facilities have ability to begin the process immediately with current staff and provide training.

3. During Continuum of Care grant competition, emphasize need for applications requesting bonus funding for the Shelter Coordinated Entry program. Submit highest ranked application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for funding.

4. Hire rotating Coordinated Entry program staff and determine weekly schedule for visitations to shelters to conduct assessments and collect documentation.

5. Hold annual trainings for all Coordinated Entry staff.

Implementation Group

- Salvation Army
- City Rescue Mission
- City Care
- Homeless Alliance
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Amount of time assistance was provided for
2. Number/percent of individuals or families housed
3. Length of time the person or family stays housed
4. Number/percent of individuals connected to supportive services
5. Number of SSI or SSDI applications and number/percent of SSI or SSDI applications approved
6. Number/percent of individuals who secure health insurance
7. Number/percent of individuals who secure Medicaid or Medicare

5   TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH (TAY) SERVICES

Transitional age youth (TAY) or unaccompanied youth are young people experiencing homelessness up to age 24 who are unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, or spouse, or who are with their own children. Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are often underreported as they tend to make themselves hard to locate. They often fail to access services and resources to aid them out of homelessness either due to their lack of knowledge about such resources or due to concerns about mandated reporting, following rules or engaging in religious services or addiction treatment.

Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness can also experience higher rates of violence, criminal activity, sexual assault and physical illness, and mental illness and substance use disorders compared to non-homeless youth.

According to the 2020 PIT Count Report, 90 youth were experiencing homelessness in OKC on that January night. That represents 6% of the total homeless population in OKC. About 20% were located sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation.

To address the ongoing increase in youth experiencing homelessness in OKC, the CoC recommends the following strategy:

5.A   Transitional Housing and Services for Transitional Age Youth

5.A) TRANSITIONAL HOUSING AND SERVICES FOR TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH

Transitional housing programs provide supportive housing for youth who are not ready to live independently. Youth can typically participate in transitional housing programs for up to 24 months and work to develop life skills, go to school or secure a job. Programs can include communal housing with supportive staff that stay overnight, clustered units with or without supportive staff on-site, or scattered site apartments where a youth or youth roommates may hold the lease.

Successful transitional housing programs use a housing first model including low or no-barriers to access or stay in housing and provide specialized services for vulnerable populations such as pregnant and parenting teens, youth fleeing domestic violence or human trafficking, youth with mental or behavioral health issues, LGBTQ+ youth or youth leaving foster care or juvenile justice. Successful programming uses positive youth development that focuses on skill-building, leadership and community involvement. Health services include primary and mental health care, support groups and substance abuse treatment. Other services provide education, employment, vocational or life skills training. Program staff engage in active discharge planning and help connect participants to community-based programs so youth can continue to receive the services and resources they need to maintain housing stability once they transition out of the transitional housing program. Many programs offer ongoing case management to program participants for a period after a youth exits the program.

CINCINNATI, OHIO
LIGHTHOUSE YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Lighthouse serves youth ages 0 to 24 by providing emergency shelter, same-day intake and assessment, early childhood intervention, education and life skills training, foster care and adoption, youth housing, residential treatment, community juvenile justice services, and mental and behavioral health services.

Lighthouse Youth Housing Opportunities: This program provides youth with safe, furnished apartments while they learn essential life skills. Youth must be aged 17 to 24 years and in custody or aging out of the child welfare system, or youth aged 18 to 24 experiencing homelessness. Housing options include communal, supervised buildings, as well as scattered site apartments. Case management connects program participants with community-based support services, help participants reach identified goals and move them toward self-sufficiency and housing stability.

Lighthouse staff member provide participants with life skill training such as managing money, job, and educational assistance, handling transportation, caring for personal health, housework, shopping and preparing food. Individualized services such as mental health counseling is also provided.

In 2018, Lighthouse opened the new Sheakley Center for Youth that includes 36 individual shelter bedrooms, a day resource center and 39 apartments.

Lighthouse receives funding from a variety of sources including city and county funds, Medicaid, Federal funds, State funds and contributions.

https://www.lys.org/services/life-skills-and-housing-options-for-young-adults-17-24/

Strategy Description

Planning participants discussed the need to establish robust transitional housing for youth in the city. Participants said this program should help youth secure documents they may need such as birth certificates or state identification, as well as connect them with supportive services such as primary care, mental and behavioral health, life skills training and education, vocational or employment services. Ideally, and transitional program should connect youth with intensive case management, as well as housing navigators, peer support mentors, SOAR representatives and discharge planners, among other services. Many participants discussed the need to involve the LGBTQ+ community in development of the transitional housing program to address safety and other concerns.

Case Management and Services

Life skills training is essential for youth to be able to live independently and these skills are largely not taught through their K-12 education curriculum. Standardized life skills programming should be developed and universal among youth service agencies operating within the CoC. Additionally, standardized case management programming and principals should be developed and integrated into the case management trainings developed as part of the Case Manager Training strategy.

Case managers should not only connect youth to necessary services while in the program but continue to provide case management for an extended period of time once a youth exits the program to ensure they maintain housing stability.

Recommended Actions

1. Focus all current supports on the expansion of youth housing and service projects being operated or developed through SISU Youth, Pivot, and Mental Health Association Oklahoma (MHAO).

2. Engage consultant to assist with writing the Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP) grant application. This is potentially a request that could be made to a local foundation.

3. Develop standardized life skills assessment and programming across all youth service providers. Have a shared case plan for youth so   they can receive consistent services no matter which agency they receive services from.

4. Include Youth Action Board (YAB) representation on the CoC Board. Give them more of a voice in developing policy and programs.

5. Expand the transitional housing program for youth, including securing additional funding to expand housing options and staffing needs.

Implementation Group

- Sisu Youth
- Pivot
- Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse

- Mental Health Association Oklahoma
- Oklahoma City Youth Action Board
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of youth participating in the program
2. Number/percent of youth that participate in life-skills training and what training programs
3. Number/percent of youth who secure employment
4. Number/percent of youth that receive GED, college degree or other educational certificates
5. Number/percent of youth connected to SSI, Medicaid, SSDI or other benefits
6. Number/percent of youth housed upon exiting the program
7. Length of time the youth maintains housing stability

6 TRANSPORTATION

In recent years, transit agencies have begun to look more at connecting people experiencing homelessness with housing assistance and other services through outreach and engagement in lieu of costly arrests or law enforcement interactions. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) says that addressing homelessness in local communities will require leveraging partnerships with other community services such as law enforcement, nonprofit organizations and social service providers.

APTA recommends that transit agencies implement strategies to address homelessness including aligning transit service with social service destinations, which may be operated free of charge. Depending on locations of those services, the City should consider operating a fare-free route. APTA also suggests cities partner with the business community to identify funding opportunities. [20]

The City can enhance transportation services for people experiencing homelessness through the following actions:

6.A Establish a Microtransit Program

6.B Expand Bus Pass Program

6.A) ESTABLISH A MICROTRANSIT PROGRAM

The Federal Transit Administration defines microtransit as an IT enabled, private multi-passenger transportation service that serves passengers using dynamically generated routes. Vehicles can range from large SUVs to vans to shuttle buses. Microtransit provides transit-like service on a smaller, more flexible scale.[21]

Some communities across the country have implemented microtransit systems to better connect seniors, people with disabilities or other at-risk populations with jobs, healthcare and other social service needs. For example, The Rapid deployed Rapid On Demand, a six-month, app-based pilot program in Grand Rapids, Michigan to test the feasibility of on-demand ridesharing as a public transportation solution for seniors and persons with disabilities. To launch the pilot program, The Rapid received a grant in the amount of $373,782 through the Michigan Mobility Challenge, which aims to

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[20] Lacy Bell (Sound Transit), Gabriel Beltran (DART), Elayne Berry (MARTA), Derik Calhoun (AC Transit), Tera Hankins (BART), and Laura Hester (NJ Transit); American Public Transportation Association (2018, Sept 19) *Public Transit and Social Responsibility: Homelessness.* Accessed at: https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Transit_Responses_Homeless/REPORT-2018-Leadership-APTA-Team-4-Public-Transit-and-Social-Responsibility.pdf

[21] The following definitions are used in the FTA's Shared Mobility *frequently asked questions (FAQs)*. Many are based on TCRP Research Report #188: *Shared Mobility and the Transformation of Public Transit*. Accessed at: https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/shared-mobility-definitions

improve rider experience by shortening the trip duration and reservation lead time. The Rapid's project team consists of the City of Grand Rapids, Disability Advocates of Kent County, and global on-demand mobility provider Via. Using the Rapid On Demand app, GO! bus-eligible passengers in the pilot service area select their pickup and drop-off locations and confirm their ride. Trips cost $3.50. [22]

Strategy Description

Planning participants discussed establishing a social services microtransit option for people experiencing homelessness and other at-risk populations to better connect them with healthcare, mental and behavioral health, employment services and other support services. Planning participants discussed offering this service free of charge or for a reduced fare.

A project implementation team should work with EMBARK to establish a microtransit system.

Recommended Actions

1. Determine the technology necessary to establish the microtransit program, as well as if a fleet of small SUVs, vans or shuttle buses is required.

    a. Establish program eligibility requirements and operating procedures.

    b. Establish partnerships with relevant stakeholders and an on-demand mobility provider, if necessary.

    c. Secure funding for the technology, fleet and maintenance of the program.

2. Establish the Microtransit Program.

3. Track outcomes such as number of riders and rider satisfaction.

Implementation Group

- Embark

- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of riders
2. Rider satisfaction with service

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[22] http://blog.ridetherapid.org/new-app-offers-the-rapids-gobus-passengers-convenience-and-less-wait-time/

6.B) EXPAND BUS PASS PROGRAM

Transportation is a barrier for people experiencing homelessness who have little or no income making it challenging to get to doctor appointments, mental health appointments, employment services and work. Many communities offer free bus pass programs for people experiencing homelessness to connect them with housing resources and other support services. For example, the city of Lexington, Kentucky's Office of Homelessness Intervention and Prevention partnered with Lextran to launch UpLIFT in August 2018. This free bus pass pilot program provided free one-year bus passes to individuals and families living in emergency shelters or transitional housing. Eligible applicants must be working on a case plan with a case manager to obtain housing.

Another example is the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) in Louisville, Kentucky, which has a history of working with social service organizations over the past 20 years. TARC's Executive Director said he was asked to provide free tickets for individuals experiencing homelessness to get to emergency shelters, but thought it was an opportunity to better understand how the community could develop a more robust program to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness in the community while still being mindful of the need for TARC to collect fares. TARC and the local homeless coalition agreed that TARC would provide two tickets for the price of one to the coalition. The coalition could then distribute those tickets to their member organizations and their eligible clients. TARC also agreed to provide free transportation to emergency shelters on days when temperatures fall below 35 degrees for more than four hours.[23]

Strategy Description

Planning participants discussed the need to increase funding to expand the number of bus passes organizations can offer for people experiencing homelessness in the city. Planning participants said that the bus pass program can possibly be enhanced by streamlining the reduced fare application process or using less-restrictive funding sources.

An implementation team should work with EMBARK to expand the number of bus passes that can be offered to people experiencing homelessness in the city, as well as how best to streamline the reduced fare application process, if possible.

Recommended Actions

1. Evaluate feasibility of a streamlined reduced fare application process.

2. Secure less restrictive funding for the bus pass program through collaborative grant applications with service providers and EMBARK.

3. Establish the expanded bus pass program and track outcomes.

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[23] Lacy Bell (Sound Transit), Gabriel Beltran (DART), Elayne Berry (MARTA), Derik Calhoun (AC Transit), Tera Hankins (BART), and Laura Hester (NJ Transit); American Public Transportation Association (2018, Sept 19) *Public Transit and Social Responsibility: Homelessness.* Accessed at: https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Transit_Responses_Homeless/REPORT-2018-Leadership-APTA-Team-4-Public-Transit-and-Social-Responsibility.pdf

Implementation Group

- EMBARK
- Homeless Alliance

- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of passes distributed
2. Number of reduced fare application

7   FUNDING SOURCES

Many OKC stakeholders agree that securing adequate and sustainable funding for programs is the greatest challenge facing organizations who serve people experiencing homelessness in the City. To address these concerns and enhance funding focused on homelessness services and housing affordability, the City should consider the following strategies:

7.A   Priority Driven, Outcomes-Based Coordinated Funding

7.B   Develop Housing Trust Fund

7.A) PRIORITY DRIVEN, OUTCOMES-BASED COORDINATED FUNDING

For many cities, combatting homelessness requires creating new partnerships, investment strategies and funding sources. Federal grants can mandate collaborative partnerships to achieve the greatest return on investment for awarded grant funds. Private foundations increasingly want to see multi-agency collaboration as a part of their request for proposals and grant awards. Collaboration provides an opportunity to access expertise and joint knowledge from a variety of partners, as well as explore innovative service design and positive outcomes for clients.[24]

Strategy Description

Stakeholders and planning participants agree that securing adequate funding is the greatest challenge organizations face to combat homelessness in OKC. To better align organizations with funding opportunities, planning participants suggested coordinated funding of private and government resources aimed at specific priority service areas with the goal of more effectively achieving desired outcomes. This would require foundations and other organizations to form a partnership to determine priorities and outcomes and coordinate all or a portion of their resources towards those priority areas.

This partnership could agree to a common request for proposals for local foundation grants with standard criteria for agencies to apply for funds such as requiring the use of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or participation in the Coordinated Entry (CE) system. The Partnership could create a support structure for smaller nonprofit organizations to receive reimbursement grants or sub-grants and possibly provide matching funds to make other federal or

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[24] https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1013312.pdf;
https://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/niu_collabresearch/collabresearch/need/need.html

state grants more impactful. This targeting of resources would ideally lead to better outcomes and lead more organizations to develop a stronger outcomes-based approach to services.

Recommended Actions

1. Convene implementation group to determine the initial membership of the partnership which should be comprised of both organizations focused on funding services as well as service leaders.

2. Determine structure and criteria for Coordinated Funding Partnership, which could include:

   a. Whether all resources or a dedicated pool of resources will be coordinated

   b. Priority service areas to address and desired outcomes

   c. Preferred best practices to achieve desired outcomes

   d. Eligibility criteria for applicants

   e. Criteria for performance evaluation

3. Establish Coordinated Funding Partnership and track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- Inasmuch Foundation
- Communities Foundation of Oklahoma
- Arnall foundation
- Zarrow Foundation
- Shell
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of participating organizations
2. Funds awarded
3. Number of determined outcomes achieved

7.B) DEVELOP HOUSING TRUST FUND

A Housing Trust Fund (HTF) is an affordable housing production program that complements existing federal, state and local efforts to increase and preserve the supply of decent, safe and sanitary affordable housing for low and very low-income households, including homeless families. HTF funds may be used for the production or preservation of affordable housing through the acquisition, new construction, reconstruction, and/or rehabilitation of non-luxury housing with suitable amenities.

Many states administer Housing Trust Funds as a formula grant program and can choose to administer their own program or designate an entity to administer the funds on its behalf. HTF grants require grantees to use at least 80 percent of each annual grant for rental housing, up to 10 percent for homeownership housing and up to 10 percent for administrative and planning costs.

Eligible activities and expenses include:

- ❖ Real property acquisition
- ❖ Site improvements and development hard costs
- ❖ Related soft costs
- ❖ Demolition
- ❖ Financing costs
- ❖ Relocation assistance
- ❖ Operating cost assistance for rental housing (up to 30% of each grant)
- ❖ Administrative and planning costs

Cities can establish their own housing trust fund. Indeed, 116 city housing trust funds exist in thirty-three states, including another 176 jurisdictions participating in Massachusetts' Community Preservation Act and 296 communities certified in New Jersey by the Council on Affordable Housing, for a total of 588 city housing trust funds.[25]

In 2018, housing trust fund revenues generated by cities exceeded $1 billion. Many city housing trust funds collect revenue through developer impact or linkage fees, inclusionary zoning in-lieu fees and property taxes. Other revenue sources include tax increment districts, hotel/motel tax and short-term rentals, demolition taxes, recordation taxes, real estate transfer taxes, land sales, and bond revenues. According to the Housing Trust Fund Project's 2016 Housing Trust Fund Survey Report, the average amount of public and private funds leveraged for every dollar invested in affordable housing by city housing trust funds is $6.00, with the highest leverage reported at $14.00. [26]

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[25] https://housingtrustfundproject.org/housing-trust-funds/city-housing-trust-funds/

[26] https://housingtrustfundproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/City-htfund-revenue-sources-2020.pdf

Strategy Description

The City should establish a Housing Trust Fund specifically for OKC that may include both private and public funding, as well as tax initiatives, bond issuances and fee programs, and a grant-making mechanism that satisfies statutory and regulatory requirements. This could include engaging non-traditional funding sources such as corporations, hospitals, foundations and other nonprofits.

The Fund must be flexible and designed based on the OKC's most essential housing needs. The City and implementation group will need to determine who will administer the housing trust fund, what and who the fund will support, how it will be funded as well as how priorities will be determined, and outcomes evaluated.

KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN
LOCAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUND

The Local Housing Assistance Fund Millage Program in Kalamazoo County, Michigan was approved by voters in November 2015 with a focus on rehousing families with school-age children experiencing homelessness. Families began accessing funds in August 2016.

As of August 2017, the program housed over 100 families including 242 children. Of the $545,000 funds allocated for this program, 60% was invested in direct client assistance such as rental subsidies, back utilities and security deposits, and 25% was used for family supportive services. Other outcomes included reduced family vulnerability by 24%, reduced suspensions, increased school attendance and improved language arts grades. Over 90% of participants were at or below 50% of area median income.

https://housingtrustfundproject.org/kalamazoo-passes-housing-millage-to-assist-homeless-students/;
https://www.kalcounty.com/userfiles/boc/file/boards/iEval%20Q3%20Report%202019.pdf

Administering a trust fund usually includes four major components, including:

- ❖ **Establishing the housing trust fund's programs.** Program materials guide day-to-day operations such as administrative and program guidelines, and request for proposals. These establish the ways eligible applicants can access the funds.
- ❖ **Funding projects**. Administering the housing trust fund also includes funding projects. Duties include reviewing applications, making awards, providing technical assistance, and monitoring and reporting on expenditures and outcomes.
- ❖ **Taking fiscal responsibility for the trust fund**. Administration involves holding, investing and administering the fund itself. If the fund is administered by a government entity, then that government's fiscal agent usually takes fiscal responsibility. If the trust fund is administered by an outside entity, then a fiscal agent will be established or appointed.
- ❖ **Overseeing housing trust fund operations**. If the fund is a government program, then authority may rest with the state legislature, county commissioners or city council. An advisory board or board of trustees may be assigned to ensure that the fund meets its obligations. If the trust fund is not run by government, it may have an independent board with similar responsibilities.

Housing trust funds can be administered by the government or other entity. Most housing trust funds follow the government agency model.

❖ **The Government Agency Model**. The trust fund is established as a program within its operating jurisdiction. The fund usually resides in the agency or department with the most experience operating housing programs, such as the HOME program or the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Other options include a quasi-public body such as a housing or redevelopment authority or a state housing finance agency.

❖ **The Non-Governmental Model.** A few trust funds have been established through government action but are administered by an outside nonprofit entity such as a community foundation or a nonprofit corporation, with operations overseen by a Board and paid staff.[27]

Recommended Actions

1. Determine Trust Fund model, administrator, priorities and other criteria as well as sources of funding.

2. Secure commitments for funding and establish the housing trust fund programs.

3. If a non-governmental model is used, establish Board of Directors. Hire additional staff to administer the fund if necessary.

4. Launch the housing trust fund and track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- OKC Planning – Community Development Division
- Inasmuch Foundation
- Arnall Foundation
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)
- Housing Solutions Tulsa (Advisor)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of individuals and families served
2. Number of determined outcomes achieved

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[27] https://housingtrustfundproject.org

8   ADVOCACY

Advocacy can help gain new and increased resources, as well as change local policies or laws to better combat homelessness in the community. Advocacy is defined as the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal. People can engage in a variety of activities to advocate and engage local lawmakers to bring needed change.

The CoC should actively seek to enhance advocacy for homelessness services through the following actions:

8.A   Public Education and Community Engagement Initiative

8.B   Updated Cost of Homelessness Study

8.C   Expand Samaritan Program

8.A) PUBLIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

A public awareness initiative is a marketing effort that increases public awareness and recognition of a problem. These initiatives target many people in the community to generate specific outcomes. They can contribute to policy changes by putting increased pressure on policymakers and encouraging the community to act against the problem. These initiatives further inform the community by providing information, education, and solutions on the issue, which is vital in creating actions to make change.

Homelessness impacts our social and economic systems. Strengthening advocacy to fight the root causes of homelessness while also addressing the shortcomings of the current assistance services is fundamental to reducing and ending homelessness in the community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Community engagement needs a coordinated, ongoing process to build relationships and establish trust among diverse and representative stakeholders such as residents, community groups, faith-based groups, racial, ethnic and cultural groups, volunteer and outreach groups, and business and economic development groups

Engagement events should have a clear purpose and mission. Communication materials should be jargon free and available in accessible formats and alternative languages. In-person events provide residents the opportunity to discuss the issues firsthand. Case studies of how the issue or plan is likely to affect different residents and the community overall can be impactful. Publicize events using existing community networks and identify opportunities to combine events for more impact.

Strategy Description

Many key stakeholders and participants of the planning sessions discussed the need for more unified messaging and initiatives intended to engage and educate the community. Many stakeholders noted the importance of telling stories about who is impacted by homelessness and the ways individuals and families have successfully exited homelessness into permanent and stable housing.

In addition to information on the causes of homelessness, stakeholders also stated that some messaging could be tied to cost avoidance, return on investment and the economic impact of homelessness in the community. Stakeholders believed that this sort of messaging could help secure additional funding streams for the strategies described in this Action Plan.

Most every homeless services organization in OKC has staff responsible for public information. The CoC and these organizations should develop a public information committee (PIC) to develop unified messaging to increase public awareness and community engagement on issues surrounding homelessness in OKC. Messaging may address topics such as available homelessness services and resources, who experiences homelessness in the community like families and children, tenant rights and eviction diversion, and the funding necessary to combat homelessness in OKC.

In addition to creating united messaging, the PIC should work with local media to promote the positive outcomes associated with this Action Plan.

The PIC may also create marketing materials, presentations, social media advertisements, and arrange community engagement events or townhalls. Public education and community engagement events could be coordinated with fundraising events during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, or other seasonal occasions.

NATIONAL HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

Each year, during the week before Thanksgiving, the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness (NSCAHH) co-sponsor National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness week. During this week, college and community organizations, communities and cities take part in a nationwide effort to bring awareness to the problems of hunger and homelessness.

David Pirtle, from the Faces of Homelessness Speakers Bureau, points to increased awareness as the reason for increased participation in the Hunger and Homelessness Awareness week. The success in participation was said by both David Pirtle and Michael Stoops, director of community organization for the National Coalition for the Homelessness, to be attributed to the combination of public education, literature, lobbying, and working with the natural idealism of young people.

The NSCAHH also operates under the mission that advocacy is vital in importance to ending homelessness. The NSCAHH works with a coalition of students and various community members across the county to end hunger and homelessness through education. They educate students through workshops, conferences and training sessions on campuses across the county. The NSCAHH is currently the largest student network, with 600 participating campuses nationwide.

https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/homelessness-awareness;
https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/national-student-campaign-against-hunger-and-homelessness

Issues, initiatives and services that could be promoted could include.

- ❖ 211 as a referral resource
- ❖ The Diversion Hub
- ❖ The Curbside Chronicle
- ❖ The Samaritan App
- ❖ Tenant rights versus laws favoring landlords
- ❖ Zoning changes allowing for more flexibility for urban areas to develop affordable housing
- ❖ Medicaid expansion
- ❖ Increasing the minimum wage
- ❖ Establishing a jobs program like the Civilian Conservation Corp.
- ❖ "Ban the Box" (The box which requires applicants to indicate incarceration history on housing or job applications)
- ❖ Support for House Bill 3710 (Bill giving more rights to tenants in cases of eviction)
- ❖ Need for public transportation
- ❖ Ending bad check restitution programs
- ❖ Ending cash bail
- ❖ Ending incarceration for failing to pay fines or fees
- ❖ Funding the Indigent Defense Program
- ❖ Awareness of the harms done by clearing camps

Recommended Actions

1. Convene implementation group, determine Committee membership and chairs.

2. Develop communications plan with policies, including specific programs that will be promoted, policy issues, a calendar of annual events that most programs collaborate on to promote, how to address controversial subject matter, and how to coordinate release of information to ensure a message stays active and identify performance measures.

3. Determine times of year for townhalls and public meetings; develop execution plan as well as marketing materials.

4. Launch public awareness and community engagement initiative and track outcomes.

Implementation Group

- Homeless Alliance (Kinsey Crocker)
- City Care (Rachel Freeman)
- Salvation Army (Traci Jinkens)
- Mental Health Association Oklahoma (Jacob Beaumont & Whitney Cipolla)
- Frontline Church (Kori Hall)
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of townhalls and public meetings
2. Number of workshops
3. Effectiveness of marketing materials and outreach (policy or law changes, tax abatements or other positive impacts on social service programs, housing programs and homelessness services)
4. Amount of fundraising dollars received
5. Number of new community organizations supplying their information to 211 for referral services
6. Increase in support for specific initiatives that address homelessness or affordable housing
7. Increase in sales of Curbside Chronicle and other Curbside ventures
8. Increase in Samaritan users

8.B) UPDATED COST OF HOMELESSNESS STUDY

Various studies conducted by communities across the United States document the costs of homelessness. In general, a person experiencing chronic homelessness costs taxpayers about $35,578 per year. These costs are reduced by almost 50% when that person lives in supportive housing. Supportive housing costs about $12,800 per unit, making the net savings roughly $4,800 per year.[28] Other specific studies have found:

❖ **Asheville, North Carolina**: 37 homeless men and women cost the City and County over $800,000 each year over a three-year period. The total costs included $120,000 for 280 episodes of EMS services, and $425,000 in hospitalization costs.

❖ **West Virginia**: A study conducted by West Virginia University (WVU) and the West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness found that 267 persons experiencing homelessness who received care at WVU Ruby Memorial Hospital over a one-year period incurred $5,979,463 in service costs, including 785 emergency department visits totaling $1,128,036 and 257 inpatient stays totaling $3,743,699.

❖ **Missoula, Montana**: In 2009, the emergency department of St. Patrick Hospital's emergency room served 514 people experiencing homeless who incurred $3,028,359 in charity care for their 1,219 separate visits to the ER.

❖ **Minnesota**: The Minnesota Supportive Housing and Managed Care Pilot program found that homeless single adults with highly complex needs such as mental illness, substance use disorders or trauma used about $13,954 per year in services before entering a PSH program.[29]

The City of Oklahoma City Planning Department commissioned Spangler & Associates to conduct a Cost of Homelessness Study in 2009.[30] The Study covered the period from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 wither over 40 agencies and organizations contributing data. The key findings included:

❖ The total cost of homelessness was $28,746,094.

❖ Emergency shelters and hospital emergency rooms combined accounted for more than 50% of the overall costs.

❖ The cost of law enforcement (county jail and police) and first response (fire and Emergency Medical Services Authority) was $2,581,252.

❖ One chronically homeless man cost more than $160,000 during the one-year study period in emergency room visits, jail and police interactions, and EMSA transports. He was not served in the homeless system during that time.

❖ 59% of the dollars that were spent came from private sources (individuals, foundations, hospitals, faith-based organizations, United Way, etc.), and 41% came from public sources (federal, state and local government).

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[28] http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Cost-Savings-from-PSH.pdf

[29] https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/H2-Innovative-Treatment-Housing-and-Service-Partnerships.pdf

[30] Spangler J & A Larason Niblett, Spangler & Associates, Inc. (2010). *Oklahoma City Cost of Homelessness Study 2009-2010.*

Strategy Description

Since the previous study was completed a decade ago, the Task Force should commission an updated Cost of Homelessness Study to better understand the economic impact of homelessness in the City.

Recommended Actions

1. Implementation group should establish a Cost Study Subcommittee to develop a request for proposal (RFP) or quote to secure an updated Cost of Homelessness Study.

2. Develop the RFP, review submitted proposals and select a vendor.

3. Work with the vendor to secure the necessary data and information to develop the Cost of Homelessness Study.

4. Review the final Cost of Homelessness Study and communicate the findings to City Council, OKC residents, business and economic development groups, and other key stakeholders.

5. Work with the PIC to incorporate the findings into the public education and community engagement plan.

Implementation Group

- Mental Health Association Oklahoma (Greg Shinn)
- Homeless Alliance (Meghan Mueller)
- OU Health Sciences (Halley Reeves)
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Develop RFP
2. Vendor selection
3. Receive final Cost of Homelessness Study by determined date.

8.C) EXPAND SAMARITAN PROGRAM

Samaritan is an app that shows the story and goals of a person experiencing homelessness in the city and provides a way for residents who have the app to donate funds to support the person's exit out of homelessness. The app is free, and the program was launched locally by City Care in 2020.

City Care will offer individuals experiencing homelessness smart wallets, called "beacons". Beacon-holders work with City Care case managers to set goals and can access donated funds by reaching them. Beacons are reactivated as individuals attend their medical or other appointments. Samaritan app users can write letters of encouragement and well wishes, as well as provide job opportunities to beacon-holders. Beacons also serve as a form of electronic identification and will securely store documents such as insurance cards, state identification or work permits. Planning group participants indicated that they think the Samaritan program could help create a better understanding of homelessness by connecting directly with people experiencing it.

Strategy Description

The Task Force should monitor the outcomes of City Care's beacon tags pilot program over the next year to determine expansion opportunities. Should the program prove effective, the Task Force can work with City Care to expand the program the following year.

Recommended Actions

1. The Task Force should monitor the outcomes of the Samaritan pilot program over the next year. If the program proves effective, the Task Force and City Care may wish to convene relevant stakeholders on how best to expand the program.

2. Secure funding for the Samaritan program as appropriate.

3. Expand the Samaritan program and track outcomes.

Implementation Group
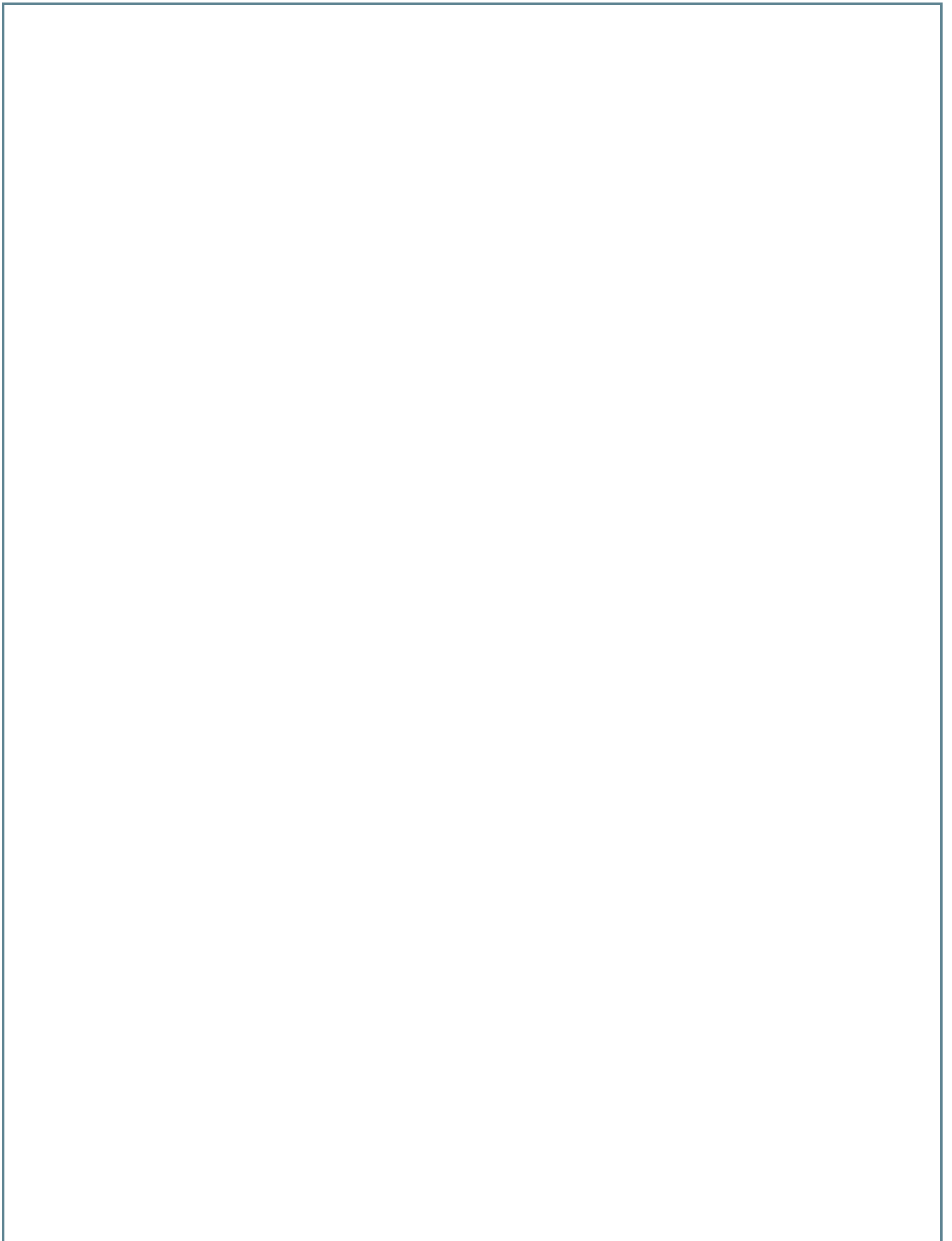
- City Care
- CoC Lead Agency (Oklahoma City Homeless Services)

Possible Performance Measures

1. Number of beacon-holders
2. Number of Samaritan app users
3. Amount of funds donated per beacon-holder
4. Number/percent of beacon-holders housed
5. Demographics of the beacon-holder housed
6. Length of time the beacon-holder stays housed

APPENDIX A: POSSIBLE RESOURCES NEEDED

1) PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

1.A) Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program

- Location for Implementation Group Meetings
- Funding for Housing services grant
- Funding for Legal Assistance Program
- Tenant outreach materials and funding for outreach ads

1.B) Discharge Planning Liaison Program

- Meeting space for Implementation group meetings and meetings with discharging entity staff
- Possible funding for discharge planner position(s) if determined to be necessary

1.C) Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders

- Locations for Implementation Group Meetings
- Possibly funding for development or renovation of transitional housing
- Funding for operating costs
- Funding for staff positions, once determined

1.D) Increase and Expand Low-Barrier Employment Options

- Meeting space for implementation group
- Funding
- Partnerships with local businesses

2) AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2.A) Zoning, Ordinance and Development Policy Changes

- Time and meeting space to evaluate zoning code and evaluate permitting costs and impact fees

2.B) Land Bank 501c3

- Staff time and locations for meetings, development of the program, and possibly lobbying
- Additional staff to oversee and operate the land bank

2.C) Lien Forgiveness Program

- Time and meeting space for implementation team to work with City and County to develop the lien forgiveness program

3) OUTREACH AND INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT

3.B) Enhance Access and Use of HMIS

- Salary and benefits for HMIS Data Manager

3.C) Case Manager Training and Professional Development

- Materials for onboarding and training programs

- Staff time to develop curriculum and trainings
- Possible on-site location for trainings

3.D) Expand Use of Peer Support Mentors
- Meeting space for implementation group, job interviews, training
- Salary and benefits for targeted number of peer support specialist positions

3.E) Intensive Case Management and Outreach
- Space for regular meetings and trainings
- Funding for outreach and intensive case manager positions
- Materials to promote program to BIDs

3.F) Mobile Services Team
- Meeting space for implementation team
- Space for fundraising events (if necessary)
- Staffing costs
- Cost for vehicle purchase and renovations
- Costs to maintain the program

4) EMERGENCY AND TEMPORARY SHELTER

4.A) Inclement Weather Shelter
- Funding for staffing, supplies and food

4.B) Expand Coordinated Entry Access in Shelters
- Applicant for Coordinated Entry projects
- Space for Trainings
- Possibly non-CoC funding to increase staff eventually

5) TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH

5.A) Transitional Housing and Services for Transitional Age Youth
- Intensive Case Managers
- Housing Navigators
- Peer Support Mentors
- SOAR Representatives
- Life Skills Training
- Operating Costs

6) TRANSPORTATION

6.A) Establish a Microtransit Program
- Meeting Space and funding to establish pilot

6.B) Expand Bus Pass Program

- Meeting space and funding to expand number of passes

7) FUNDING SOURCES

7.A) Priority Driven, Outcomes-Based Coordinated Funding

- Regular meeting space
- Information materials
- Eventually, a website will likely be necessary

7.B) Develop Housing Trust Fund

- Funding to launch Trust Fund (Recommend $1 – 2 million)
- Additional staff to administer Trust Fund

8) ADVOCACY

8.A) Public Education and Community Engagement Initiative

- Strategic Planning Manager
- Marketing Materials
- Venues for Townhalls and Workshops
- Funding to sustain activities annually

8.B) Updated Cost of Homelessness Study

- Time for Subcommittee to develop RFP, evaluate proposals, select vendor, and assist with securing information
- Funding to secure consultant

8.C) Expand Samaritan Program

- Funding for expansion of the program

APPENDIX B: PROPOSED TIMELINE

1) PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

1.A) Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program

Develop policies and procedures for the Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program to include client eligibility requirements, eligible services offered under the program, processes for service delivery, distribution methods and processes for outreach materials	Year 1
Determine initial funding necessary for legal services and services grant, determine funding sources to target and secure funding	Year 1
Develop application and hold proposals for legal diversion program and eviction prevention and housing services grant, hold proposals and determine contractors for both programs	Year 2
Develop trainings and possibly materials that can be distributed to inform courts, landlords, service providers and other parties about the program and how to refer clients. Determine regularity of trainings and locations as well as distribution methods and procedures for materials, if produced. (Work with Public Education and Engagement Committee)	Year 2
Develop community outreach materials to inform tenants of services available and right to council and determine distribution methods and procedures for materials. (Work with Public Education and Community Engagement Committee)	Year 2
Contracted organizations determine and hire necessary staff. If determined office space at County Courthouse is necessary for legal staff, work with courthouse staff to determine if space can be reserved	Year 2
Acquire resources to expand Eviction Diversion and Mediation Program and expand program	Year 3 - ongoing

1.B) Discharge Planning Liaison Program

Establish contacts at hospitals, mental health facilities, Department of Corrections, Department of Human Services and other organizations that are responsible for discharge planning	Year 1 – Year 2
Determine which services discharging entities and service organizations are responsible for during discharge process and work with contacts at discharging organizations to develop a discharging process that all agree on. This may include helping develop forms and simple step-by-step directions	Year 2
Determine service organization and discharge entity staff to participate in a discharge specific coordinated entry program. Develop policies and procedures for discharge specific coordinated entry. Ensure policies entail the specific discharge process for each entity, appropriate forms and client info, and directions to connect service providers to clients months prior to discharge when possible	Year 2 – Year 3
Add discharge specific coordinated entry processes to annual coordinated entry training	Year 3
Implement program and track outcomes	Year 3
After one year of operation, determine if additional funding and staffing capacity is necessary. If necessary, hire additional discharge planners and support staff as needed	Year 4 – ongoing

1.C) Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders

The implementation group should determine the structure of the transitional housing program(s) that should at least include the length of time of a client's stay (2-years unless extended), number of units needed, minimum level of services provided and funding and staffing needs. It should also be determined if housing will be new construction or an acquired structure with possible renovations required.	Year 3
Secure funding for units, staff and ideally 3-years of operating costs	Year 3
Secure communal structure or construct new units	Year 4 -Year 5
Develop policies and procedures for program to include client eligibility, eligible services rendered, length of stay, referral process to the program and others. Referral process should be included in the procedures for discharge planning coordinated entry when addressing clients coming from corrections institutions.	Year 4

Hire all necessary staff, launch program and track outcomes	Year 5
If necessary, acquire resources to expand transitional housing program and expand the program	Year 6 - ongoing

1.D) Increase and Expand Low-Barrier Employment Options

Timeline for this strategy is fluid. The CoC should aim to add or expand *at least* 3 employment options over the next 5 years, starting in Year 1.	Year 1 – Year 5

1.E) Advocate and Lobby for Refiling and Passage of HB 3710

Evaluate HB 3710 and lobby for refiling and passage	Year 1 – Year 2

2) AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2.A) Zoning, Ordinance and Development Policy Changes

Complete evaluation of Zoning Ordinance and ensure addition of elements that allow for easier development of affordable units	Year 1 – Year 2
Review permitting costs and impact fees for possible reductions in cost	Year 2 - TBD
Obtain approval of Zoning, permitting and impact fee changes by City Council	TBD
Track outcomes	Year 2 - ongoing

2.B) Land Bank 501c3

Lobby the state legislature for needed changes to fully implement land banking functions	Year 2 – Year 4
Secure all necessary funding to establish the land bank and begin operations	Year 5
Fold lien forgiveness program into land bank	Year 5
Track outcomes	Year 5 – ongoing

2.C) Lien Forgiveness Program

Determine which parties at the County level will need to be collaborated/coordinated with to develop the lien forgiveness program	Year 2 – Year 3

Work with the City and County to determine program requirements, procedures and other elements necessary for the lien forgiveness program	Year 3 – Year 4
Establish the lien forgiveness program and track outcomes	Year 4 – ongoing

3) OUTREACH AND CASE MANAGEMENT

3.A) Enhance Access and Use of HMIS

Require Norman, BOS & OKC CoC projects to enter HMIS line item in project budget to free up licenses that can be purchased for local projects with HMIS dedicated grant	Year 1
Secure necessary funding for and hire HMIS Data Manager	Year 2
Design and hold trainings and track outcomes	Year 2 - ongoing

3.B) Case Manager Training and Professional Development

Establish agreements with community organizations to participate	Year 2 – Year 3
Develop onboarding and ongoing training curriculum and materials. This may include developing an online training portal that agencies can access at any time	Year 3
Track all outcomes and convene regularly to review and revise the onboarding process and to work with organizations to explore pay for performance models, and pathways to certification, as well as other benefits	Year 3 – Year 4

3.C) Expand Use of Peer Support Mentors

Determine organizations that will utilize peer support and target number of peer support mentors, duties of positions, salary and benefits, eligibility requirements and training protocols	Year 2
Begin securing funding for peer support mentor expansion	Year 3
Educate CoC providers on peer support program	Year 3
Begin expanding use of peer support mentors and track outcomes	Year 3 - ongoing

3.D) intensive Case Management and Outreach

Develop Outreach and Intensive Case Management model and determine staffing target	Year 2

Begin securing necessary funding for outreach and intensive case manager positions	Year 3
Establish points of contact with hospitals, corrections, fire department and other organizations; sign MOUs and begin developing high service user list	Year 3 – Year 4 and ongoing
Begin hiring outreach and intensive case managers and educating CoC providers on referral process	Year 3
Explore possibility of partnering with BIDs to fund and assign BID specific outreach and case management	Year 4
If establish BID program, hire additional staff as needed	Year 4
Track outcomes	Year 3 - ongoing

3.E) Mobile Services Team

Determine the primary services that will be offered on the mobile services vehicle and establish primary partnerships	Year 4
Secure start-up funding for mobile services program	Year 4 – Year 5
Purchase mobile services vehicle and complete necessary renovations, establish schedule, and promote and educate the public, CoC providers and others	Year 5
Launch mobile services program and track outcomes	Year 5 - ongoing

4) EMERGENCY AND TEMPORARY SHELTER

4.A) Inclement Weather Shelter

Develop and initiate the inclement weather contingency plan	Year 1
Determine options for pre-approving non-shelter facilities to legally operate as temporary shelter during emergencies & develop eligibility criteria	Year 1 – Year 2
Track outcomes	Year 1 – ongoing

4.B) Expand Coordinated Entry Access in Shelters

Expand Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures to incorporate protocols for shelters	Year 1
Determine which shelter facilities can operate program with own staff. Train staff and implement program at those facilities	Year 1 – Year 2
Apply for Coordinated Entry project through Continuum of Care program to fund rotating Coordinated Entry staff	Year 2
Hire rotating coordinated entry staff and develop schedule for weekly visitations to shelters to conduct assessment and collect documentation	Year 2 - 3
Hold annual trainings for all Coordinated Entry staff	Year 1 - ongoing

5) TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH

5.A) Transitional Housing and Services for Transitional Age Youth

Engage consultant to assist with YHDP grant application & expand Youth Action Board	Year 1
Develop standardized programming and shared case plans across agencies	Year 2 - 3
Support Sisu Capital Campaign and other funding efforts to expand Transitional Housing programs at Pivot, Sisu Youth & other organizations such as Mental Health Association	Year 2 - 4
Hire support staff and complete construction on initial units and open	Year 4
Track all outcomes and performance measures	Year 4 - ongoing
Determine expansion opportunities after one year of operation including additional funding needs and staffing capacity	Year 5 – ongoing

6) TRANSPORTATION

6.A) Establish a Microtransit Program

Establish partnerships and secure all necessary funding	Year 2
Establish a Microtransit Program	Year 5
Track outcomes	Year 5 - ongoing

6.B) Expand Bus Pass Program

Establish partnerships and secure all necessary funding	Year 2
Expand bus pass program	Year 2 - 3
Track outcomes	Year 3 - ongoing

7) FUNDING SOURCES

7.A) Priority Driven, Outcomes-Based Coordinated Funding

Convene initial implementation group and begin recruitment of larger membership.	Year 1
Determine Structure of Coordinated Funding Partnership	Year 1 – Year 2
Establish Coordinated Funding Partnership, release application(s) and track outcomes	Year 3 - ongoing

7.B) Develop Housing Trust Fund

Develop Trust Fund structure - determine model, administrator, priorities and source of funding	Year 3 – Year 4
Secure commitments for funding and establish the housing trust fund programs	Year 4
Establish Board of Directors and hire additional staff to administer the fund, if necessary	Year 4 – Year 5
Launch the housing trust fund program and track outcomes	Year 5

8) ADVOCACY

8.A) Public Education and Community Engagement Initiative

Create Public Information Committee and develop plan and policies	Year 1
Create public education campaign strategies and materials	Year 1 – Year 2
Launch public awareness campaign activities and track all outcomes	Year 2 - ongoing

8.B) Updated Cost of Homelessness Study

Establish Cost Study Subcommittee, develop the RFP, review submitted proposals and select a vendor	Year 1
Final Cost of Homelessness Study Report	Year 2

8.C) Expand Samaritan Program

Monitor Samaritan pilot program	Year 1
Secure funding for expanded Samaritan program, expand and track outcomes	Year 2 – Year 3

APPENDIX C: KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION AGENDA KEY

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

SERVICE PROVIDERS
OKLAHOMA CITY HOMELESSNESS PLANNING
AUGUST 15, 2019

Name/Organization: _____

Phone Number: _____ Date/Time: _____

INTRODUCTION:

Hello, this is _____ and I'm with Analytic Insight. We are working with the City of Oklahoma City on strategic planning around the issue of homelessness. We have an appointment to speak. Is this still a convenient time?

I am going to be recording our interview using a smart pen that links my notes to an audio recording. After the report is developed I will destroy the recording part of our conversation. Your interview will be combined with other interviews and we will not use your name or position in our report. We report only what was said, not who said it. Is it OK with you if I record this conversation?

1. I have here that you are the _____ (e.g., Director) of the _____ (Organization). Is this correct?

2. How long have you been in this position?

ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

3. What services or resources does your organization currently provide related to homeless individuals?
    (Probe for details within each category.)
    ☐   Preventing homelessness

    _____

    ☐   Expanding affordable permanent housing access

    _____

    ☐   Providing housing subsidies

    _____

☐ Preventing eviction

_____

☐ Increasing income among vulnerable individuals

_____

☐ Developing police and emergency response policies

_____

☐ Providing emergency or temporary shelter

_____

☐ Addressing substandard housing

_____

☐ Other

_____

POPULATION COVERAGE – AVAILABILITY AND GAPS

I just have a few more questions about how well certain populations are served.

4. Does your organization work with a specific population, for example transitional age youth or veterans? If yes, probe for populations served:

☐ Transitional age youth   ☐ LBGTQ
☐ Elders   ☐ Veterans
☐ Families   ☐ Single adults
☐ Chronically homeless   ☐ Other: _____

5. How would you rate the services in the City of Oklahoma for each of the following populations? Would you say the current services provided are excellent, adequate or insufficient?

	Excellent	Adequate	Insufficient	Don't know/NA
a) Transitional age youth..	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) LBGTQ..	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) Elders / Seniors..	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) Families..	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) Veterans	☐	☐	☐	☐
f) Single adults	☐	☐	☐	☐
g) Chronically homeless..	☐	☐	☐	☐
h) Unsheltered homeless	☐	☐	☐	☐
i) Nearly homeless individuals, such as couch surfers ..	☐	☐	☐	☐
j) People living in substandard housing.........................	☐	☐	☐	☐
k) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Of these populations, who has the greatest need for services in Oklahoma City?

a. What type of services or programming is needed most?

DATA COLLECTION AND COLLABORATION

7. How well do you think organizations work together in Oklahoma City to provide services for individuals who are homeless?

☐ Very well ☐ Somewhat well ☐ Not well at all

Probe for reasons: _____

8. Do you share data with other organizations working on homelessness issues?

9. Do you think more data should be shared among organizations in Oklahoma City working on homelessness?

a. If so, what kinds of data should be shared?

10. What suggestions do you have to improve data sharing and collaboration in Oklahoma City?

NETWORK OF ORGANIZATIONS

Next, I'd like to talk to you about the network of organizations that are serving homeless individuals in Oklahoma City.

11. What three organizations have you worked with most frequently in the past year on issues related to homelessness?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

12. If you wanted to get something done on an issue related to homelessness, who would you call first? What are your reasons?

13. I have a list of organizations that work often with homeless individuals in Oklahoma City. I would like to get a sense of how often you communicate with each of these organizations regarding issues related to homelessness. As I go through the list, please tell me about how often you communicate such as every day, once a week, every few weeks, every few months, once a year or never.

Organization	Every Day to Once a Week	Bi-weekly to Monthly	Every few Months	Once or Twice Per Year	Never
1. Homeless Alliance					
2. Heartline 211					
3. Salvation Army					
4. City Rescue Mission					
5. Pivot					

Organization	Every Day to Once a Week	Bi-weekly to Monthly	Every few Months	Once or Twice Per Year	Never
6. Legal Aid					
7. Northcare					
8. MHAOK (incl. Lottie House)					
9. OKC Housing Authority					
10. VA/VASH					
11. OCPD					
12. OK County Jail					
13. OKC Public Schools					
14. City Care					
15. Hope					
16. Center for Employment Opportunities					
17. City Government					
18. Metro Library (esp. Downtown & Ellison)					
19. Crisis Center					
20. OU Medical Center					

14. Next, I'd like to know who you would work with if you were going to initiate a new service or program related to homelessness in Oklahoma City. For the same list of organizations, please tell me if you would be very likely, somewhat likely or unlikely to work with them on starting a new service or program.

Organization	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Unlikely	DK/NA
1. Homeless Alliance				
2. Heartline 211				
3. Salvation Army				
4. City Rescue Mission				
5. Pivot				
6. Legal Aid				
7. Northcare				
8. MHAOK (incl. Lottie House)				
9. OKC Housing Authority				
10. VA/VASH				
11. OKCPD				
12. OK County Jail				
13. OKC Public Schools				
14. City Care				
15. Hope				
16. Center for Employment Opportunities				
17. City Government				

18. Metro Library (esp. Downtown & Ellison)				
19. Crisis Center				
20. OU Medical Center				

SERVICE COVERAGE – AVAILABILITY AND GAPS

I have a few questions about the local homelessness services in Oklahoma City.

15. What are the largest gaps in service for homeless individuals?

16. Are there duplications in service?

17. What do the organizations that work to address homelessness in Oklahoma City a do best?

18. What are the greatest challenges organizations in Oklahoma City face?

19. What are the greatest challenges in reaching individuals and families at risk of homelessness?

20. What are the largest gaps in services for this group?

COMMUNITY

21. How engaged do you think the community it to address the issue of homelessness in the City?

   ☐ Very engaged   ☐ Somewhat engaged   ☐ Not engaged at all

22. What are your suggestions to better engage the community in Oklahoma City around the homelessness issue?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

23. Is there anything else you would want community leaders to know about preventing homelessness in Oklahoma City?

PERSON EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
INTERVIEW GUIDE

OKLAHOMA CITY HOMELESSNESS PLANNING
DRAFT: SEPTEMBER 16, 2019

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____   Date/Time: _____

INTRODUCTION:

Hello, this is _____ and I'm with Analytic Insight. We are working with the City of Oklahoma City on strategic planning around the issue of homelessness. We have an appointment to speak. Is this still a convenient time?

I'm going to be recording our interview using a smart pen that links my notes to an audio recording. After the report is developed, I will destroy the recording part of our conversation. Your interview will be combined with other interviews and we will not use your name or position in our report. We report only what was said, not who said it. Is it OK with you if I record this conversation?

HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS

24. Do you currently have a place to stay?

   If no:
   a. How long have you been without a place to stay? (Probe for this time vs. chronically over a long period of time.)
   b. Have you been homeless before?
   c. What led you to be homeless?

25. (As needed: While you were homeless,) Where do/did you go to seek shelter?

   a. Did you feel safe at this location?
   b. How long did you stay?
   c. Where did you go when you left _____?

26. What resources or services did/do you receive? (E.g., showers, food, backpack of supplies.)

27. How did you know about them?

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

28. Did anyone help you find housing, food or other services? If yes…

   a. Who?
   b. Where did they refer you?
   c. What services or resources did that organization provide?

d.

EXPERIENCE WITH SUBSIDIZED OR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (IF APPLICABLE)

29. In the past two months, have you been living in stable housing? (Probe for rent, own, etc.)

30. Was it hard to find a place to stay that you can afford in Oklahoma City? (Probe for reasons or how they go about finding a place to stay.)

31. Do you get help paying rent?

32. Do you live in supportive housing?
    a. If yes, what services do you use? What other services would you like?
    b. If no, have you ever applied? (If so, when, how many times, other barriers?)

EMPLOYMENT

33. Is it difficult to find a job in Oklahoma City? (Probe for reasons or how they go about finding a job or barriers encountered.)

EXPERIENCES IN THE COMMUNITY

34. Is it difficult to find help in the community if you are experiencing homelessness? (Probe for ways of finding help or barriers encountered.)

35. What is your experience with law enforcement while you were homeless? (Probe for experiences being arrested, in jail, interventions/rides to a shelter, etc.)

36. While you were homeless did you ever go to the emergency room?

    a. How many times?

    b. Were you assigned a case manager or referred to any other services from the hospital?

SERVICE COVERAGE – AVAILABILITY AND GAPS

I have a few questions about the local homelessness services in Oklahoma City.

37. What service or resource did you find most helpful while you experienced homelessness in the City?

38. Were there services or resources that you needed but could not find in the City?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

39. Is there anything else you would want community leaders to know about experiencing homelessness in the City of Oklahoma City?

DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY
TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IN OKLAHOMA CITY

Registration for each session you would like to attend is required due to limited seating.

Session Date	Time	Location	Topic
Wednesday, February 19, 2020	9AM – 12PM		1. Affordable Housing: Click here to register. ❖ Require developers of new rental housing to include a percentage of affordable housing in their planning ❖ Identify and use public and/or private land for affordable housing development ❖ Encourage homeowners to explore offering secondary rental opportunities (e.g., apartment above the garage)
Wednesday, February 19, 2020	1PM – 4PM	Courtyard by Marriott Oklahoma City Northwest 1515 NW Expressway Oklahoma City, OK 73118	2. Transitional Age Youth Services and Transitional Housing: Click here to register. ❖ Expand interim or bridge housing for those exiting institutions (prison, foster care, etc.) ❖ Develop a low-barrier emergency shelter space specifically for transitional age youth (e.g., youth leaving foster care) ❖ Eliminate barriers to access transitional housing units for individuals under 18 and LGBTQ+ youth
Thursday, February 20, 2020	9AM – 12PM		3. No or Low Barrier Emergency Shelter: Click here to register. ❖ Increase the number of no or low barrier emergency shelter beds ❖ Identify and engage partners to determine the wrap-around services provided at the shelter ❖ Expand public education efforts on the need for shelter beds

Date	Time	Topic
Thursday, February 20, 2020	1PM – 4PM	**4. Preventing Homelessness: Click here to register.** ❖ Reduce the number of evictions ❖ Enhance discharge planning (e.g., from hospitals, foster care, prison, etc.) ❖ Enhance programs focused on prevention (e.g., employment training, short-term assistance financial assistance, etc.)
Friday, February 21, 2020	9AM – 12PM	**5. Outreach and Engagement: Click here to register.** ❖ Enhance data sharing and tracking ❖ Expand street outreach and outreach prior to discharge (e.g., from hospitals, foster care, prison, etc.)
Friday, February 21, 2020	1PM – 4PM	**6. Treatment for Substance Use, Mental, Behavioral and Primary Care: Click here to register.** ❖ Expand access to primary care, mental and behavioral health services ❖ Increase in-patient and mobile rehabilitation services
Tuesday, February 25, 2020	9AM – 12PM	**7. Improving Case Management and the Coordinated System: Click here to register.** ❖ Increase the number of qualified case managers, mental, behavioral and health professionals ❖ Strengthen the coordinated entry system and identify what organizations are missing from the network of service providers ❖ Enhance employment services to improve retention and access to case management jobs
Tuesday, February 25, 2020	1PM – 4PM	**8. Affordable Housing: Click here to register.** ❖ Require developers of new rental housing to include a percentage of affordable housing in their planning ❖ Identify and use public and/or private land for affordable housing development ❖ Encourage homeowners to explore offering secondary rental opportunities (e.g., apartment above the garage)
Thursday, February 27, 2020	9AM – 12PM	**9. Preventing Homelessness: Click here to register.** ❖ Reduce the number of evictions ❖ Enhance discharge planning (e.g., from hospitals, foster care, prison, etc.) ❖ Enhance programs focused on prevention (e.g., employment training, short-term assistance financial assistance, etc.)

Thursday, February 27, 2020	1PM – 4PM	10. Transportation: Click here to register. ❖ Enhance the local public transportation system ❖ Develop transportation services for medical, document retrieval or other appointments
Friday, February 28, 2020	9AM – 12PM	11. Policy and Advocacy: Click here to register. ❖ Engage federal, state and county lawmakers in issues related to homelessness ❖ Increase county and state commitment to public transit ❖ Encourage decriminalization policy for those offenses that target homelessness (e.g., trespassing or public urination)
Friday, February 28, 2020	1PM – 4PM	12. Funding Sources: Click here to register. ❖ Identify, engage and coordinate new local funding streams ❖ Coordinate organizations for state and federal grant applications ❖ Enhance and expand existing funding streams