

# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS IN OKLAHOMA CITY 2020



Sponsored by:

The Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness  
City of Oklahoma City





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## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Homelessness effects every community in the United States. Housing costs continue to rise in many communities, as well as eviction rates. 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 1,000 people and has increased their focus on youth and families experiencing homelessness in the community. The OKC CoC also initiated its Coordinated Entry System (CES) in January 2018, 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

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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 includes key stakeholders in the community tasked with developing a comprehensive strategy to combat homelessness in the city.

The City of Oklahoma City contracted with research firm Analytic Insight, LLC (AI) to work with the Task Force on Homelessness to develop a comprehensive plan to reduce and end homelessness in the community. AI designed the methodology that included 45 key informant interviews, 12 strategic planning sessions with a wide variety of stakeholders who shared ideas and recommended strategies, analysis of existing data analysis and a social network analysis.

### The Current State of Homelessness in OKC

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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 24, 2019, 1,273 men, women and children were identified as literally homeless in OKC, 90 more people compared to 2018. The number of unsheltered homeless continued to be one of the highest seen over a five-year period at 384 individuals or about 30% of the homeless population.

### Stakeholder Perspectives

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Many key informants said that people experiencing homelessness need access to affordable housing options as well as mental and behavioral health services. Many key informants said 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. Most key informants 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 said that organizations work very well or somewhat well together and that the ability of service providers and key stakeholders to collaborate and coordinate services for people experiencing homelessness is what organizations do best in OKC. Key informants agreed that residents are very engaged or somewhat engaged around the issue of homelessness and that there is a need for affordable housing in the community. Several key informants 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.

Many key informants 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 like 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 Oklahoma City revealed a strong, highly connected network with balanced contributions from sectors including direct service providers, governmental agencies, healthcare providers and others. The strength of this 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 the homelessness plan in a coordinated and collaborative process.

## OKC'S COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS

Combating homelessness requires comprehensive strategies to help residents experiencing homelessness move into permanent housing and achieve housing stability. The 2020 Comprehensive Strategies to Combat Homelessness in Oklahoma City provides 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.

Our plan details 31 comprehensive 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 comprehensive strategies is provided on the following page and detailed further in this report.



## Comprehensive Strategies to Combat Homelessness in Oklahoma City

Preventing Homelessness		Affordable Housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Eviction Diversion and Mediation Program</li> <li>❖ Discharge Planning Liaison Program</li> <li>❖ Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders</li> <li>❖ Expand Sober Living Options</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Affordable Housing Committee</li> <li>❖ Dedicated One-Stop-Shop for Developers</li> <li>❖ Zoning and Ordinance Changes</li> <li>❖ Lien Forgiveness Program</li> <li>❖ Land Bank 501c3</li> </ul>	
Outreach and Engagement	Emergency Shelter	Supportive and Specialized Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Enhance Police Outreach Teams</li> <li>❖ Library Social Workers</li> <li>❖ Transit Resource Liaisons</li> <li>❖ Enhance Access and Use of HMIS</li> <li>❖ Engage City-wide Business Districts (BIDS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Winter Shelter Expansion</li> <li>❖ Expand Shelter Services</li> <li>❖ Expand City Care's Beacon Tags Program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Case Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Intensive Case Management</li> <li>❖ Case Manager Training and Professional Development</li> </ul> <p><b>Treatment for Substance Use, Mental Health &amp; Primary Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Mobile Services Team</li> <li>❖ Peer Support Mentor Program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transitional Age Youth Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Transitional Housing Program for Youth</li> <li>❖ Expand Pivot's Tiny Home Program</li> <li>❖ Establish Host Home Programs</li> </ul> <p><b>Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Establish a Micro-Transit System</li> <li>❖ Expand Bus Pass Program</li> </ul>
Funding Sources		Policy and Advocacy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Develop Funders Roundtable</li> <li>❖ Develop Housing Trust Fund</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Homeless Services Representation for MAPS-4</li> <li>❖ Public Education and Community Engagement Campaign</li> <li>❖ Cost of Homelessness Study</li> </ul>	



## B. 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, un-sheltered 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.<sup>1</sup>

Branded Journey Home-OKC, the CoC's service initiative continues to work to end veteran and chronic homelessness in the city. Indeed, the OKC CoC has housed over 1,000 people and has increased their focus on youth and families experiencing homelessness in the community since 2013.

The OKC CoC also initiated its Coordinated Entry System (CES) in January 2018, 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 CoC organizations to track services better, locate people more easily, and pool their resources to house people faster.

<sup>1</sup> <https://okc.roundtable.city/programs/by7fyto28idwi5oiq>

### 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:

1. Outreach, intake and assessment to identify service and housing needs and connect people to both.
2. Emergency shelter to provide an immediate and safe alternative to the streets, especially for homeless families with children.
3. Transitional housing with supportive services to allow for the development of skills that will support housing stability.
4. 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/>



## 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 James Cooper of Ward 2, JoBeth Hamon of Ward 6 and Nikki Nice of Ward 7.

The Task Force's mission includes developing a strategy to combat homelessness in OKC. This mission aligns with OKC's City Council priorities, which are grounded in the lessons of the city's history and the values of inclusiveness, mutual respect and self-reliance.<sup>2</sup>

## 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>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/government/city-council/council-priorities>



## DEVELOPING A STRATEGY TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS IN OKC

To develop a comprehensive strategy to combat homelessness in OKC, the City contracted with research firm Analytic Insight, LLC (AI) to work with the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness to develop a comprehensive plan to reduce and end homelessness in the community. The City contracted with AI 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 in order 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 and ending homelessness. This analysis is based on several information sources:

1. Key Informant Interviews conducted with 45 community stakeholders.
2. Twelve strategic planning sessions with a wide variety of 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 informant 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?

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### Key Informant Interviews

AI interviewed 45 stakeholders identified by the City and Task Force. The 45 interviewed 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.

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### Stakeholder Planning Sessions

AI facilitated twelve stakeholder 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 3,445 children experiencing homelessness at the end of the 2018 academic year, with most identified as couch homeless.

On January 24, 2019, 1,273 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.

The 2019 PIT count was higher than the previous year with 90 more people identified as homeless compared to 2018. The number of unsheltered homeless continued to be one of the highest seen over a five-year period at 384 individuals or about 30% of the homeless population.

### 2019 OKC PIT COUNT FINDINGS:

- ❖ Veterans comprise 10% of people experiencing homelessness in OKC, consistent with 2018
- ❖ Families with children comprise 16% and is down for the second year
- ❖ 30% are female, 69% are male, 1% transgender or nonconforming
- ❖ 58% are white, 27% are black, and 8% are Native American
- ❖ 31% report mental illness
- ❖ 15% are youth age 24 or younger
- ❖ 22% are considered “chronically” homeless, of whom 72% are unsheltered
- ❖ In total, 58% of people experiencing homelessness in OKC were staying in a shelter, 12% in transitional housing and 30% unsheltered

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

Year	Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	Total
2015	908	192	200	1,300
2016	963	241	307	1,511
2017	888	212	268	1,368
2018	635	154	394	1,183
2019	738	151	384	1,273



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. Indeed, the increase of people counted in 2019 compared to 2018 in OKC may be due to the cold night experienced on January 24, 2019. Emergency overflow beds open on cold nights making it easier to account for some people who may otherwise be unsheltered and harder for surveyors to find.

According to the 2018 Housing Inventory Count conducted in January of last year, the OKC CoC's shelter and housing resources add up to 959 emergency shelter beds, 170 transitional housing beds, and 1,308 permanent supportive housing beds.

Annually, 11,278 people received homeless services in Oklahoma City in 2018 according to the Homeless Management Information System.

In 2018, 22% of Oklahoma City's homeless population was chronically homeless (260 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.

Oklahoma City has seen tremendous success in addressing the population of Veterans experiencing homelessness. In the 2018 PIT count, 121 people identified themselves as Veterans, representing an 18% decrease compared to 2017.

During the 2018 PIT count, the utilization rate for Permanent Supportive Housing beds exceeded 100%, indicating a great need for permanent supportive housing in Oklahoma City. The utilization rate for Transitional Housing beds was 91%, also an indication that the City's supply of transitional housing is at capacity. The utilization rate for Emergency Shelter beds was 66% with 322 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 informant interview. The information below does not provide an all-inclusive listing of all available resources in OKC. People in need of help should contact Heartline 211 by dialing 2-1-1 on their home or cell phone to speak with a call specialist for more information to address their needs.

### 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 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.



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## Homeless Alliance

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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, rationale, and caring.”<sup>3</sup> 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.

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## Westtown Homeless Resource Campus

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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, as well as 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.

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## The Curbside Chronicle

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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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<sup>3</sup> <https://homelessalliance.org/>



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### **City Care OKC**

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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 Fall of 2020 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.

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### **HOPE Community Services**

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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 included 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.

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### **City Rescue Mission**

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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.

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### **The Salvation Army Central Oklahoma Area Command**

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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.

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### **Mental Health Association Oklahoma**

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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.

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### **NorthCare**

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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.

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### **Upward Transitions**

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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 harder 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.

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.

### 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>

#### 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. The Point at Pivot plans to expand Pivot's emergency shelter opportunities for young people up to the age of 24, as well as provide shower and laundry facilities, meals and access to supportive services and referrals. Construction is slated to complete later in 2020. Pivot also manages two transitional living apartments and is launching 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.







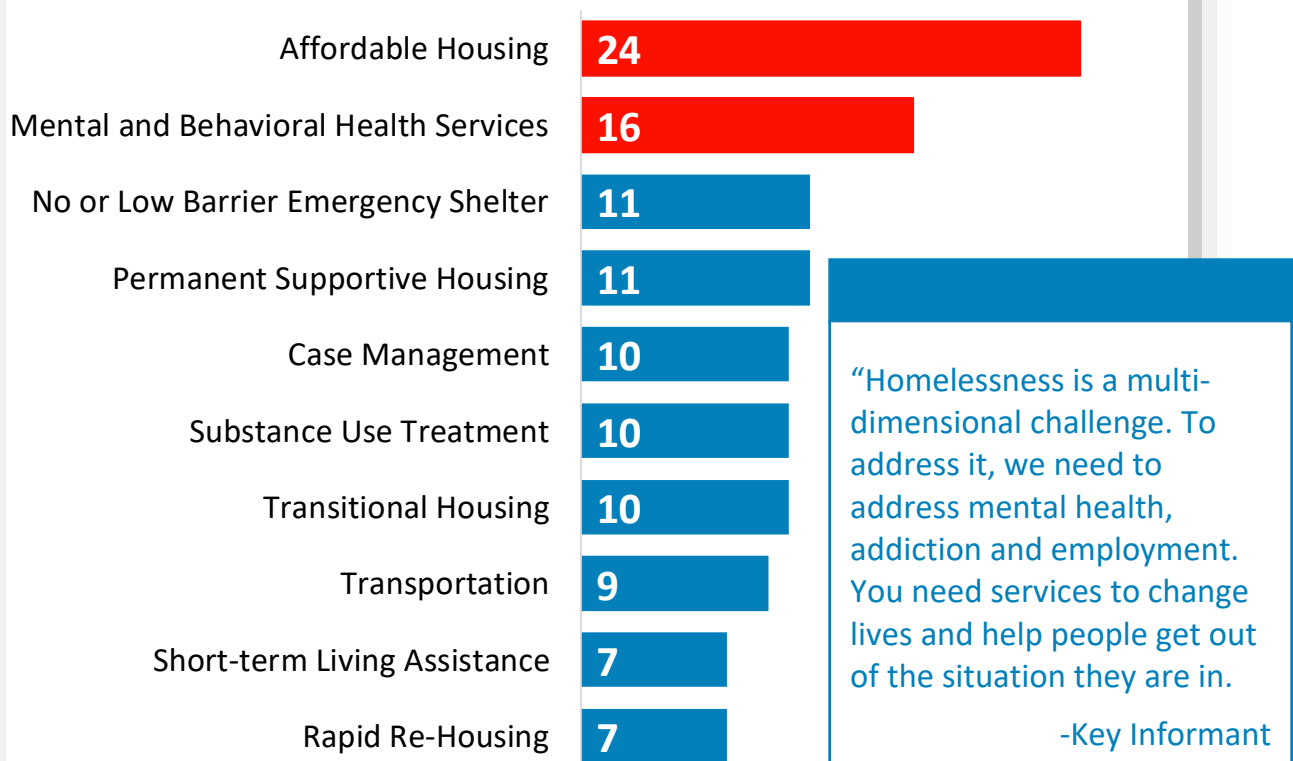
## C. STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

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

#### Key Informants on the Greatest Needs for People Experiencing Homelessness



Source: Key Informant Interviews



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

Many key informants 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 of key informants noted that Heartline 211 needed better promotion to increase its use. Many key informants said 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 key informants said 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 key informants talked 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 Informant**

### Key Informants on Greatest Challenges for People At Risk of Homelessness in OKC

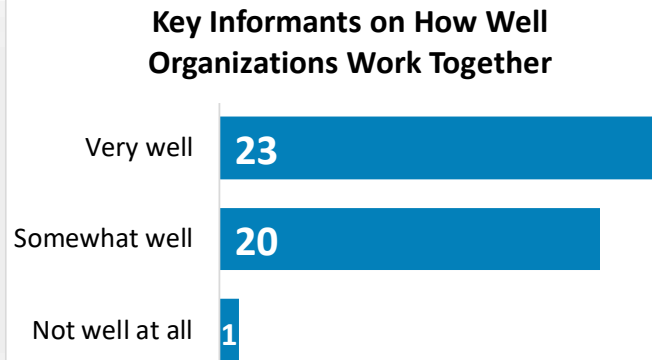




## THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT WORK WITH PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

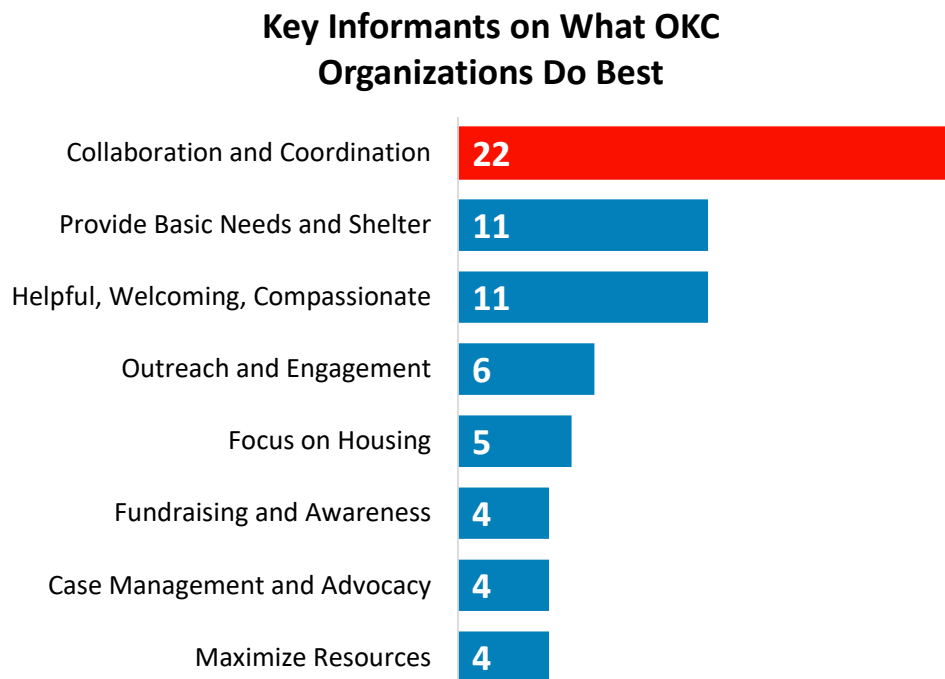
Almost all key informants said that organizations work very well or somewhat well together. Many key informants discussed the strong collaboration and coordination that exists across the CoC, with some key informants pointing to the monthly meetings related to emergency shelters, outreach and case management.

Several key informants 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.



### What Organizations Do Best

Many key informants 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 key informants noted that organizations best work to provide basic needs and shelter, as well as provide a helpful, welcoming and compassionate environment for their clients.



Source: Key Informant Interviews

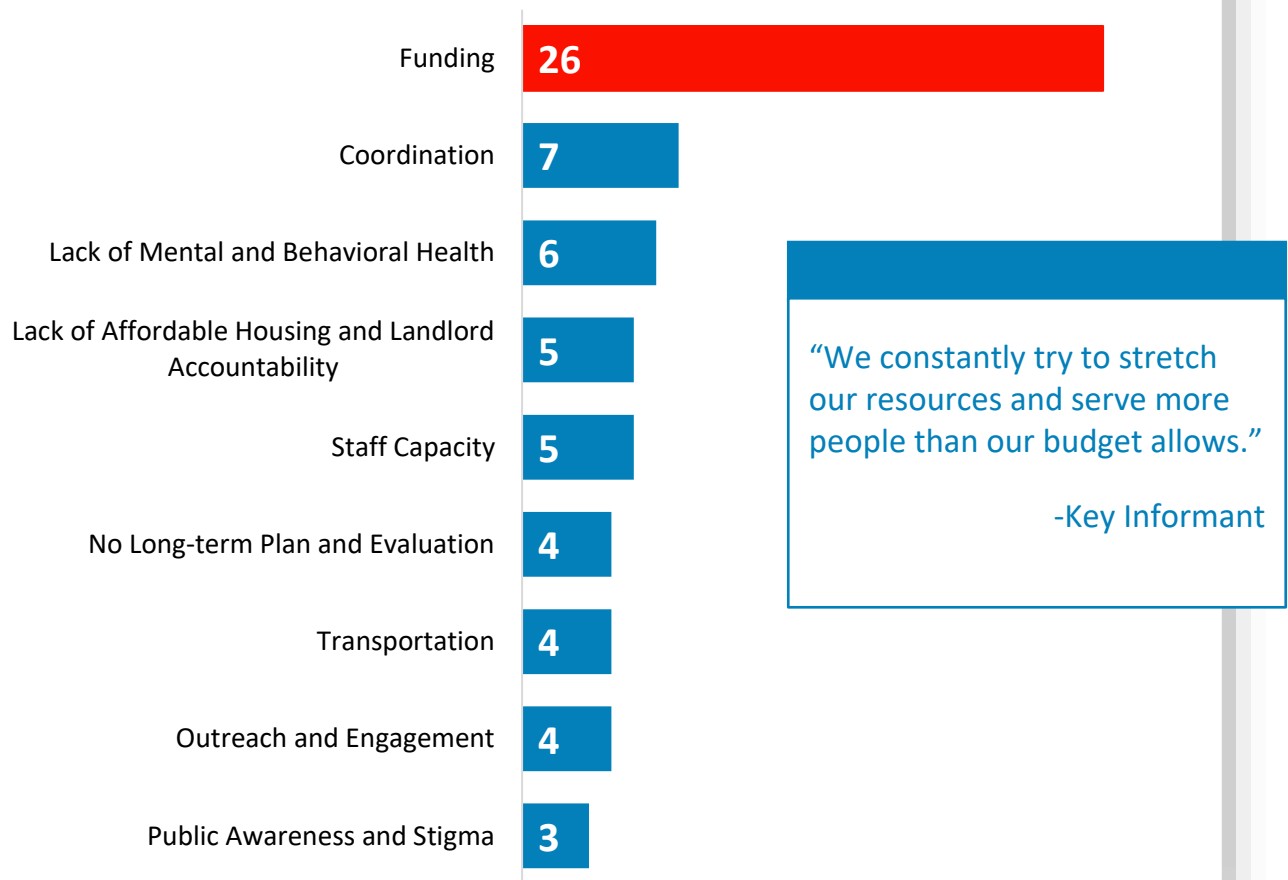


### Challenges Organizations Face to Help People Experiencing Homelessness

Most key informants 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 key informant noted that OKC homeless service providers would benefit from collaborative grant applications and coordinated resource development.

Some key informants said that homeless service providers could coordinate service even better, especially discharge planning services, prevention services and ongoing case management. Other key informants pointed to the lack of mental and behavioral health services, as well as the lack of affordable housing and holding landlord accountable to provide safe housing. A few key informants also noted staff capacity challenges, especially to provide adequate case management services.

#### Greatest Challenges Facing OKC Organizations



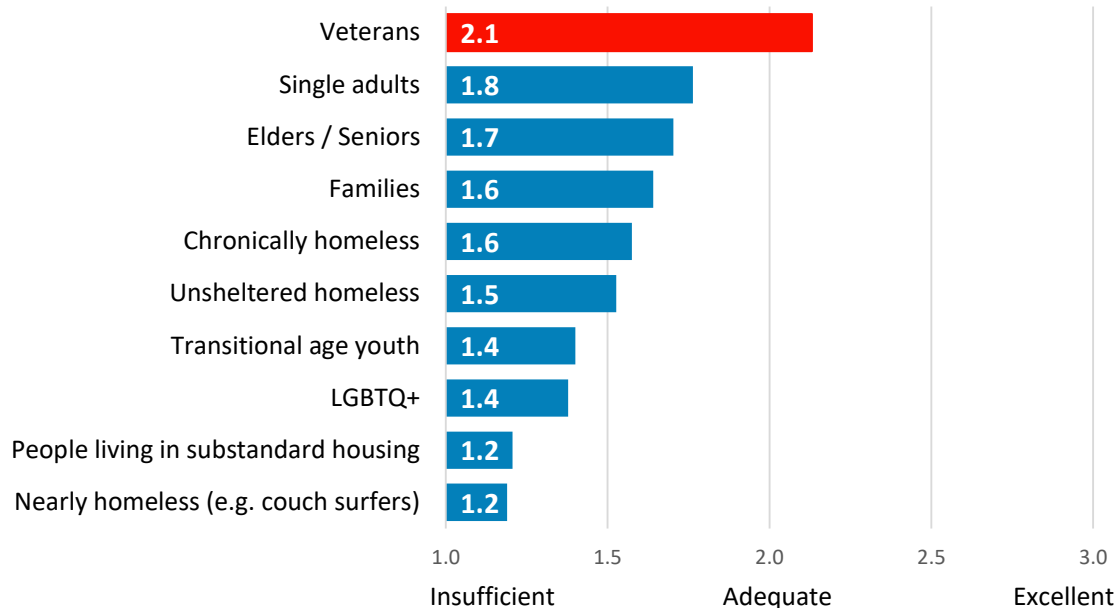


### Service Coverage by Population

Key informants were asked to rate the services provided to various populations within the homeless community as excellent, adequate or insufficient. Key informants said 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.

#### Key Informants on Service Coverage by Population

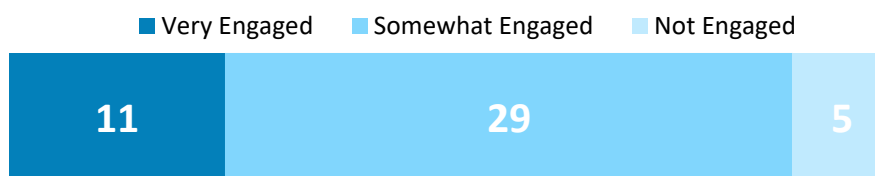




## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

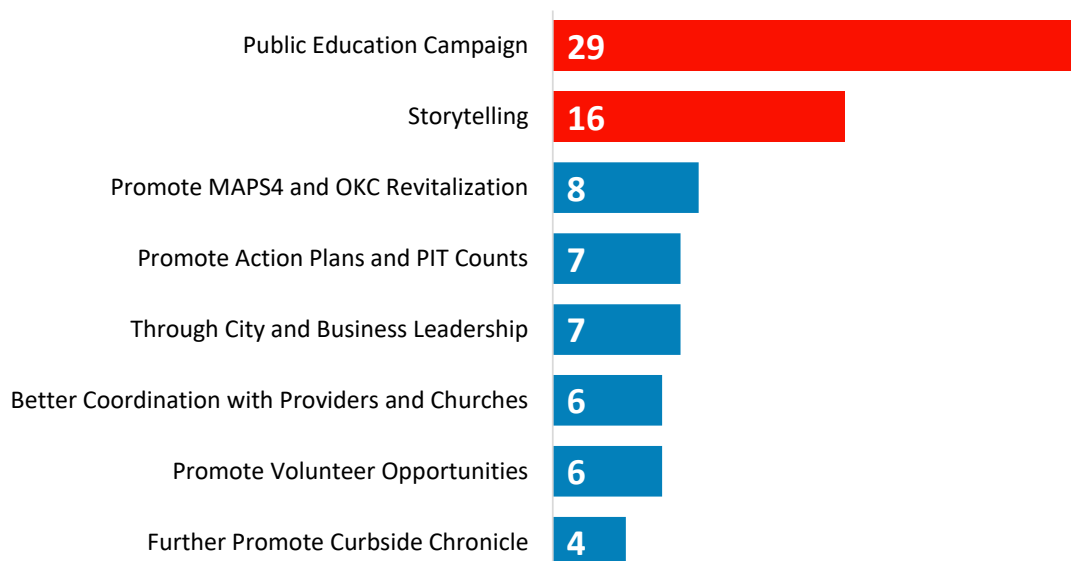
Key informants agreed that residents are very engaged or somewhat engaged around the issue of homelessness and the need for affordable housing in the community. Several key informants pointed to the recent passage of MAPS 4 by OKC voters in a special election in December 2019 as a reason on increased 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.

### Key Informants on Community Engagement



Many key informants 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





## D. 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 key informant 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

Key informants 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

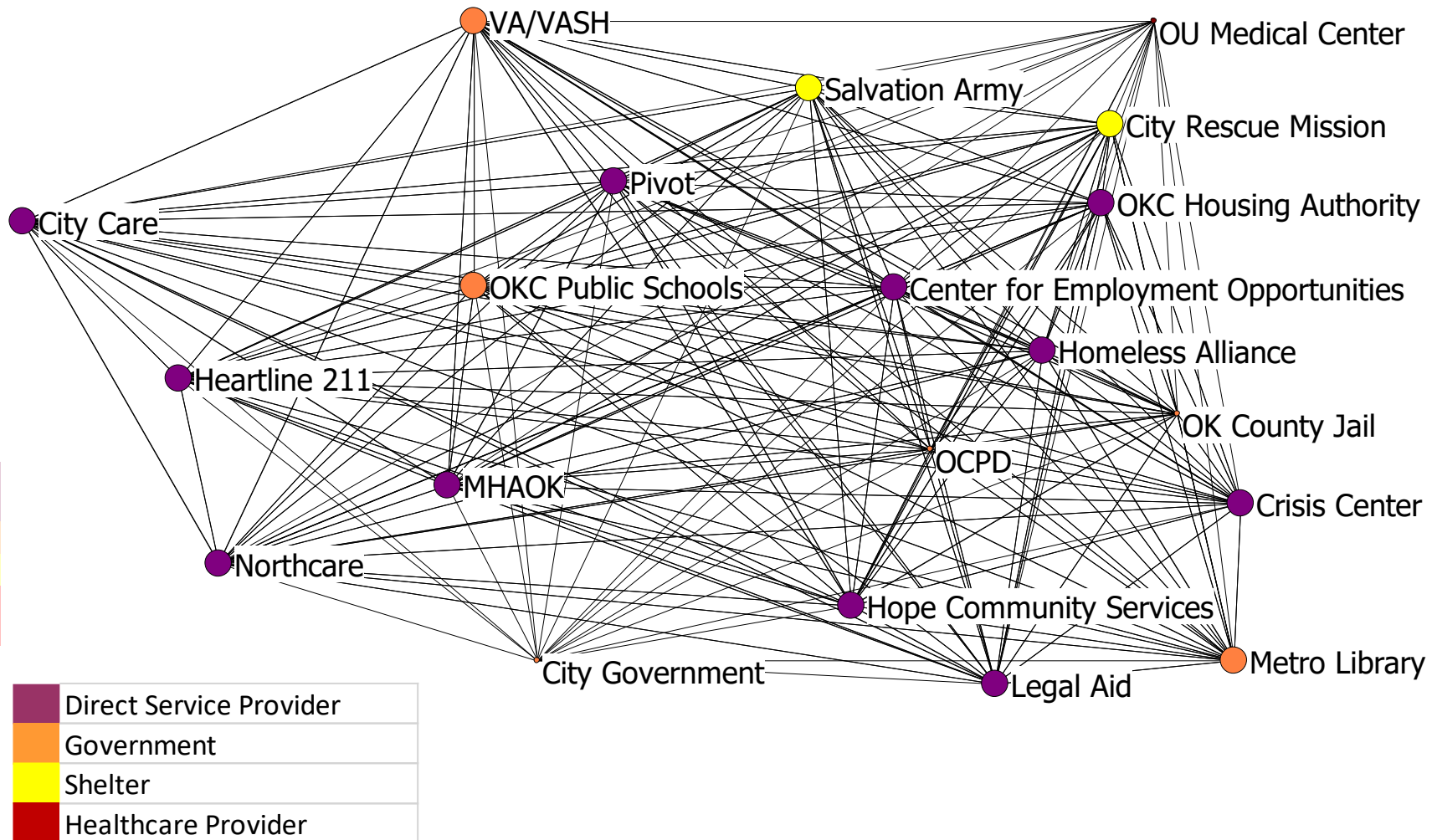
If a key informant from one organization described their communication differently than their counterpart at the other organization, the most frequent rating was used in this network analysis.

In the network diagram 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. Funders are shown in green. A few other organizations are categorized in khaki green.

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 of 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.







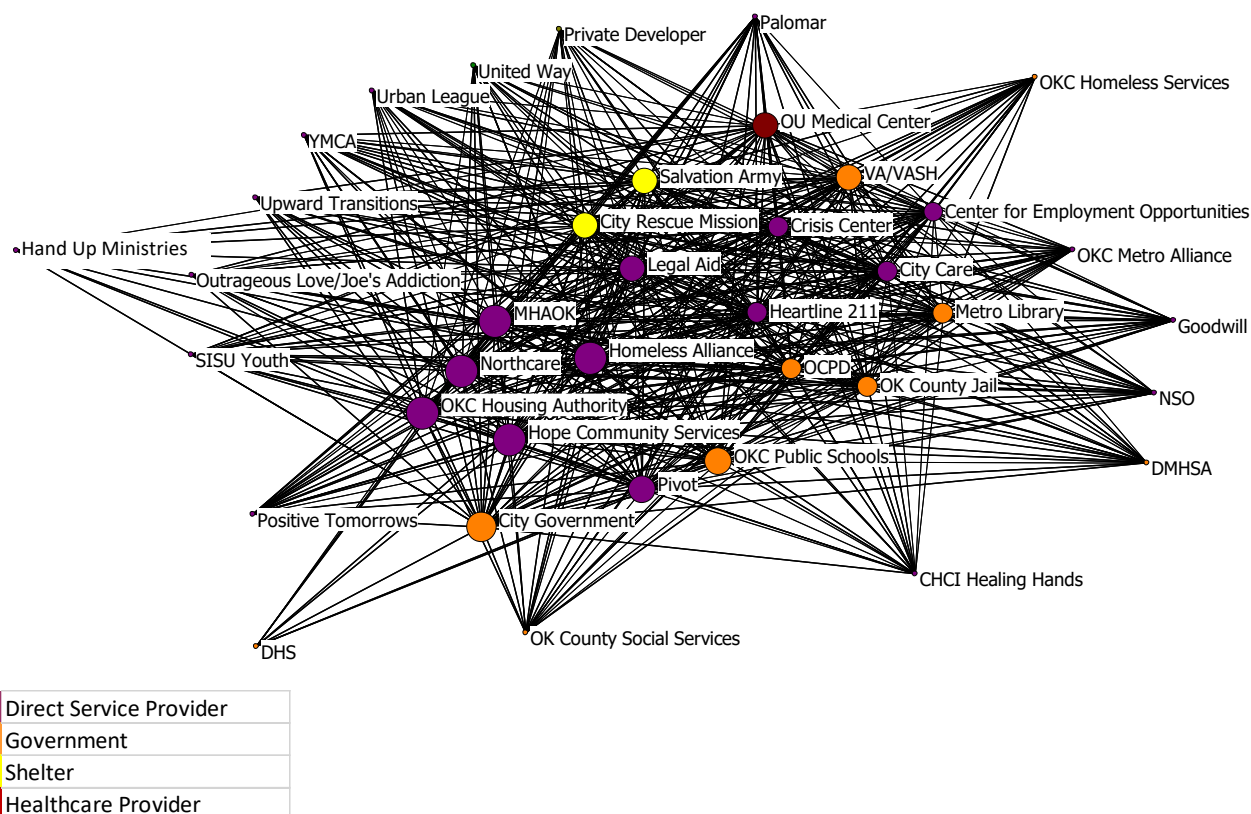
## THE NETWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PROGRAMS OR SERVICES

The ability to collaborate on new projects is a critical component of implementing a strategic plan. Key informants 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 a key informant interview are 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.





## E. OKC 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 fluctuate slightly year to year. On January 24, 2019, 1,273 men, women and children were identified as literally homeless in OKC, up by 90 people compared to 2018.

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.<sup>4,5</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> worst eviction rate in the country<sup>6</sup>.

### THE HOUSING FIRST MODEL

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. This Plan is guided by the Housing First model, which provides people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing and case management services before addressing the other root causes of their homelessness.

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. 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 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.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 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>

<sup>5</sup> Desmond M. 2015. Unaffordable America: poverty, housing, and eviction. Fast Focus Brief 22-2015, Inst. Res. Poverty, Madison, Wis.

<sup>6</sup> <https://oklahoman.com/article/5593790/okc-eviction-rate-is-20th-worst-in-nation-new-program-gives-free-legal-help-to-tenants>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/socialdeterminants/faq.html#what-are-social-determinants>



Housing First does not mandate participation in services either before obtaining housing or to retain housing. This enables people experiencing homelessness to access permanent housing without prerequisites or conditions beyond those of a typical renter. Supportive services assist people with maintaining housing stability and individual well-being, but participation is not required.<sup>8</sup>

## SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH HOUSING FIRST INITIATIVE

In 2005, Utah approved a 10-year plan to end homelessness. The State's Homeless Taskforce led implementation efforts and determined that most people experience homelessness temporarily, with only a small percentage experiencing homelessness chronically. However, this small number of people experiencing chronic homelessness use up to 60% of the homeless resources available.

**A Focused Effort.** Utah's plan focused on the Housing First model that links people experiencing chronic homelessness with permanent housing and case management services. The Taskforce created a pilot program that located scattered site housing units throughout the City. Program recipients included 17 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness known to service providers as challenging and difficult to house under previous models. Each were provided an apartment and pay rent equal to 30% of their income or \$50, whichever is greater. An evaluation of the program two years later revealed that all 17 individuals continued in permanent housing.

**Sustainability.** The Road Home, Utah's largest homeless shelter, provides permanent supportive housing to people experiencing chronic homelessness while also providing supportive services to ensure housing stability. The Road Home currently operates two permanent supportive housing apartment complexes with 233 units, as well as supports several hundred permanent supportive housing units scattered around Salt Lake City, such as the 84-unit Grace Mary Manor.

**Bottom Line Appeal.** The Taskforce analyzed the impact the Housing First model had on Utah's State budget, reporting that prior programming cost Utah \$19,208 per year to care for one chronically homeless person when considering all related health and jail costs. Comparatively, using the Housing First model reduced the cost to \$7,800 for the same person.

**Outcomes.** Ten years after implementation, Utah reported a 91% reduction in people experiencing chronic homelessness in the state from 1,932 in 2005 to 178 in 2015. Additionally, Utah's chronic homeless population rate stood at 6% compared to 22% nationwide.

**Criticisms.** Despite success among people experiencing chronic homelessness, those experiencing homelessness episodically or temporarily continue to grow. Contacts with Utah's network of homeless services rose from 12,241 in 2014 to 13,614 in 2016. Critics argue that people move to Utah in hopes of qualifying for the Housing First program, but do not meet the criteria of chronically homeless. Increased crime near The Road Home neighborhood contributes to ongoing challenges to secure community support for emergency shelters.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/housing-first-fact-sheet.pdf>



## OKC'S COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS

Combating homelessness requires comprehensive strategies to help residents experiencing homelessness move into permanent housing and achieve housing stability. The 2020 Comprehensive Strategies to Combat Homelessness in Oklahoma City provides 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> Others fail because they do not bring the right people to the table.

To address the challenges of implementing the strategic plan, the Task Force may consider establishing a strategic planning manager to coordinate the planning activities necessary to implement the various strategies presented throughout this action plan. Many of the 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.

The average salary for a strategic planning manager ranges from \$67,500 to \$95,000<sup>11</sup>. We assume an average salary of \$81,250. A benefits package averaging 30% of this salary, or \$24,375, increases the average compensation package to \$105,625. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$111,963.

The table on the following page provides the specific strategies recommended to combat homelessness in OKC, followed by the overall plan timeline. We then detail each recommended strategy to move the Task Force and community toward implementation efforts.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/creating-systems-that-work/>

<sup>10</sup> <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>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Strategic\\_Planning\\_Manager/Salary](https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Strategic_Planning_Manager/Salary);  
[https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/strategy-and-planning-manager-salary-SRCH\\_KO0,29.htm](https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/strategy-and-planning-manager-salary-SRCH_KO0,29.htm)



## Comprehensive Strategies to Combat Homelessness in Oklahoma City

Preventing Homelessness		Affordable Housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Eviction Diversion and Mediation Program</li> <li>❖ Discharge Planning Liaison Program</li> <li>❖ Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders</li> <li>❖ Expand Sober Living Options</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Affordable Housing Committee</li> <li>❖ Dedicated One-Stop-Shop for Developers</li> <li>❖ Zoning and Ordinance Changes</li> <li>❖ Lien Forgiveness Program</li> <li>❖ Land Bank 501c3</li> </ul>	
Outreach and Engagement	Emergency Shelter	Supportive and Specialized Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Enhance Police Outreach Teams</li> <li>❖ Library Social Workers</li> <li>❖ Transit Resource Liaisons</li> <li>❖ Enhance Access and Use of HMIS</li> <li>❖ Engage City-wide Business Districts (BIDS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Winter Shelter Expansion</li> <li>❖ Expand Shelter Services</li> <li>❖ Expand City Care's Beacon Tags Program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Case Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Intensive Case Management</li> <li>❖ Case Manager Training and Professional Development</li> </ul> <p><b>Treatment for Substance Use, Mental Health &amp; Primary Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Mobile Services Team</li> <li>❖ Peer Support Mentor Program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transitional Age Youth Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Transitional Housing Program for Youth</li> <li>❖ Expand Pivot's Tiny Home Program</li> <li>❖ Establish Host Home Programs</li> </ul> <p><b>Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Establish a Micro-Transit System</li> <li>❖ Expand Bus Pass Program</li> </ul>
Funding Sources		Policy and Advocacy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Develop Funders Roundtable</li> <li>❖ Develop Housing Trust Fund</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Homeless Services Representation for MAPS-4</li> <li>❖ Centralized Public Education and Community Engagement Campaign</li> <li>❖ Cost of Homelessness Study</li> </ul>	



## OVERALL PLAN TIMELINE

Year	Proposed Strategy
<b>Year 1</b> <b>July 2020 – June 2021</b>	Eviction Diversion and Mediation Pilot Program (Year 1)
	Discharge Planning Liaison Pilot Program (Year 1)
	Affordable Housing Committee
	Zoning and Ordinance Changes
	Library Social Workers
	Winter Shelter Expansion
	Develop Funders Roundtable
	Homeless Services Representation for MAPS 4
	Centralized Public Education and Community Engagement Campaign
	Cost of Homelessness Study
<b>Year 2</b> <b>July 2021 – June 2022</b>	Eviction Diversion and Mediation Pilot Program (Year 2)
	Discharge Planning Liaison Pilot Program (Year 2)
	Enhance Police Outreach Teams
	Enhance Access and Use of HMIS
	Transit Resource Liaisons
	Engage City-wide Business Districts (BIDS)
	Expand Shelter Services (Pilot Program Year 1)
	Expand City Care's Beacon Tags Program
	Peer Support Mentor Program
	Expand Pivot's Tiny Home Program
	Expand Bus Pass Program



Year	Proposed Strategy
<b>Year 3</b> <b>July 2022 – June 2023</b>	Transitional Housing Program for Youth (Pilot Program Year 1)
	Dedicated One-Stop-Shop for Developers
	Lien Forgiveness Program
	Expand Shelter Services (Pilot Program Year 2)
	Case Manager Training and Professional Development
	Intensive Case Management Program
	Establish Host Home Programs
<b>Year 4-5</b> <b>July 2023 – June 2024</b> <b>July 2024 – June 2025</b>	Transitional Housing Program for Youth (Pilot Program Year 2)
	Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders (Pilot Program Year 1 and 2)
	Expand Sober Living Options
	Land Bank 501c3
	Mobile Services Team
	Establish a Micro-Transit System
	Develop Housing Trust Fund



## 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 reenter homelessness without the intervention. The Task Force seeks to prevent homelessness in OKC by implementing the following actions:



### Eviction Diversion and Mediation Program



### Discharge Planning Liaison Program



### Specialized Transitional Housing and Sober Living Facilities

## Eviction Diversion and Mediation Program

Recent studies show that evictions can cause homelessness.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

According to research compiled by the Eviction Lab at Princeton University, OKC ranks as the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 this year. Legal experts in OKC worry that the COVID-19 pandemic will accelerate eviction filings. As of the writing of this report, the Oklahoma County Sheriff Office is not enforcing evictions. Under the CARES Act passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law on March 27, 2020, landlords with units funded through federal programs cannot serve eviction notices to tenants who have not paid rent until July 25, 2020.<sup>14</sup> Units funded through other means can evict prior to this date and already are upon the writing of this report.

<sup>12</sup> National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (2018). *Protect Tenants, Prevent Homelessness*. Accessed at: <https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ProtectTenants2018.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://oklaw.org>

<sup>14</sup> <https://evictionlab.org/rankings/#/evictions>; <https://okcfox.com/news/local/legal-experts-discuss-evictions-with-city-council>; <https://oklaw.org>





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, familial instability, physical and mental health challenges, and decreased school performance amongst 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.<sup>15</sup>

### 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.<sup>16</sup>

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

1. Short-Term Financial Assistance Program
2. Housing Navigators
3. Landlord/Tenant Mediation and Education Services
4. 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.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.okbar.org/freelegalinfo/tenant/>; <https://www.avail.co/education/laws/oklahoma-landlord-tenant-law>; <https://www.ok.gov/ohfa/documents/landlord-tenant-act.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Stout Risius Ross (2016, March 16). *The Financial Cost and Benefits of Establishing a Right to Counsel in Eviction Proceedings Under Intro 214-A*. Accessed at: [https://www2.nycbar.org/pdf/report/uploads/SRR\\_Report\\_Financial\\_Cost\\_and\\_Benefits\\_of\\_Establishing\\_a\\_Right\\_to\\_Counsel\\_in\\_Eviction\\_Proceedings.pdf](https://www2.nycbar.org/pdf/report/uploads/SRR_Report_Financial_Cost_and_Benefits_of_Establishing_a_Right_to_Counsel_in_Eviction_Proceedings.pdf)



The design of a short-term financial assistance fund needs to consider various parameters and challenges. Overall, the fund should be flexible and individualized based on the needs of the person or family exiting homelessness. Many programs use a progressive engagement approach that maximizes the number of people the fund can help. As a strategy, progressive engagement provides a small amount of assistance to all people entering the homelessness system. Often a small amount of financial assistance can stabilize a person's housing crisis and they return to housing stability quickly.

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 deposit 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; however, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and local stay-at-home orders may see an increase in internet service coverage as more households work and educate their children from home. Households may need ongoing access to internet-based programming into the future considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic or other unforeseen events.

### Housing Navigators

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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

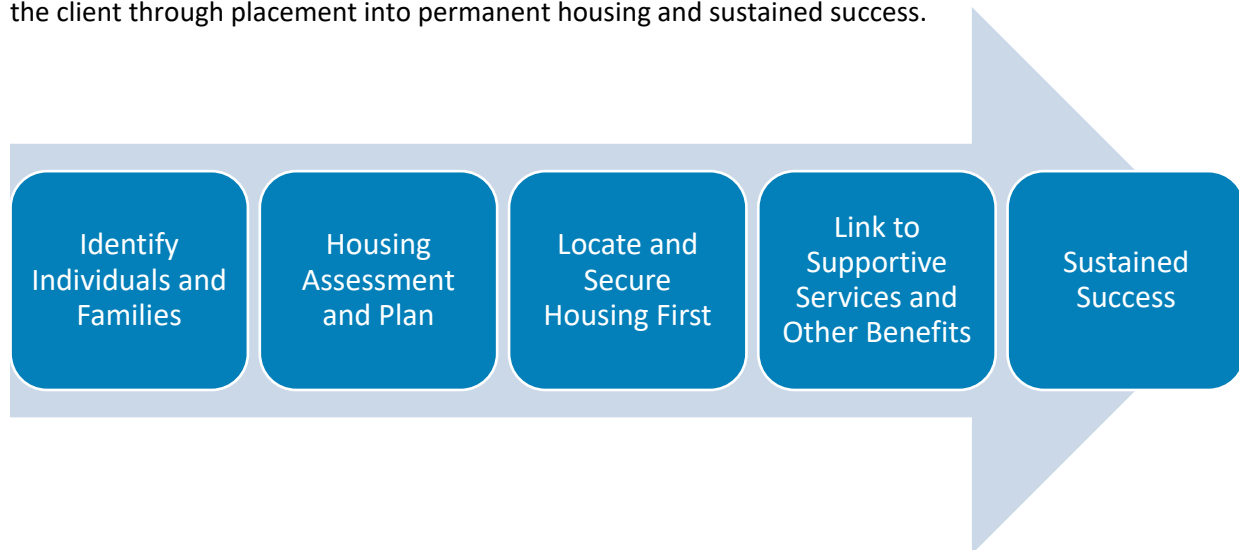


or family is determined to be eligible for specific housing, the navigator then assists with the housing search and application process as well as compiling and submitting all necessary documentation.

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.

Providers can identify and map the steps in the "program flow" in their community. This begins at the point an individual or family is identified as experiencing homelessness due to eviction and moves with the client through placement into permanent housing and sustained success.



#### Landlord-Tenant Mediation and Education Services

Mediation is defined as intervention in a dispute in order 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 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.

### WENATCHEE VALLEY, WASHINGTON LANDLORD TENANT LIAISON PROGRAM

The Wenatchee Valley in Washington encompasses Chelan and Douglas counties. Like many places in the United States, the demand for affordable housing is greater than the supply. To address the growing concern, the Women's Resource Center launched a Landlord Tenant Liaison Program in May 2018, which included 15 landlords and 20 households, plus another seven families or individuals that had not yet been housed. To address landlord concerns, the program offers protection with a risk mitigation fund and the Landlord-Tenant Liaison visits the tenant regularly, reports any issues and ensures the unit is being well-maintained.

Tenants pay nothing for the first 90 days but must requalify for continued assistance. If their income is below 30% AMI, the Community Action Council pays full rent, or the tenant pays 30% of their income. Tenants can remain in the program for up to two years.

Even with available funding, a shortage of affordable housing units persists. The program operates under fair market rental prices and landlords can be reluctant to meet them.

[https://www.wenatcheeworld.com/news/affordable-housing/article\\_7d008300-9d17-11e9-913f-2721d4aedf18.html](https://www.wenatcheeworld.com/news/affordable-housing/article_7d008300-9d17-11e9-913f-2721d4aedf18.html)





## 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.<sup>17</sup>

## 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>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.legalaidnc.org/Documents/durham-eviction-diversion-program.pdf>



### Recommended Actions

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

1. The Task Force should convene an implementation group including key stakeholders such as Legal Aid, judges, housing organizations, landlords, other legal organizations, nonprofit providers and others to determine:
  - a. The organization to manage the Eviction Diversion and Mediation Pilot Program such as the Legal Aid, the Oklahoma City Housing Authority, the City or another agency.
  - b. Mission, goals and vision of the Eviction Diversion and Mediation Pilot Program.
  - c. The responsibilities and services to be provided, including the number of housing navigators, program mediators and landlord-tenant liaisons needed to launch the pilot program, the responsibilities of each position, as well as the salary and benefits to be offered, as well as other operational logistics including the establishment of the short-term financial assistance fund and the fund amount to be maintained each year.
  - d. Funding for the Eviction Diversion and Mediation Pilot Program.
  - e. Referral process for the courts, CoC providers and others.
  - f. Training protocols for the courts, CoC providers and others on the role of the Eviction Diversion and Mediation Pilot Program.
2. Create program eligibility requirements and operating procedures; create job descriptions for housing navigators, program mediators and landlord-tenant liaisons.
3. Advertise the housing navigator, program mediator and landlord-tenant liaison job descriptions requesting applicants, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidates.
4. Launch pilot program, including promotion of the new services and resources available to OKC and/or Oklahoma County residents.
5. Educate and train courts, CoC providers, landlords and others on the referral process to Eviction Diversion and Mediation Pilot Program.
6. Track outcomes such as the number of people seeking short-term financial assistance, the reasons for seeking assistance, the amount of funds provided, the number/percent of people who maintained housing due to the assistance, and the amount of time assistance was provided for, number of affordable housing units identified by liaisons, number of landlords providing affordable housing units, number/percent of individuals or families housed, demographics of the individual or family housed, length of time the person or family stays housed, the number of tenants engaged in mediation services, reason for the mediation services, number/percent of successful mediation agreements reached and the number/percent of tenants able to retain their current housing.
7. Expand the Eviction Diversion and Mediation Program, including securing additional funding to expand the staffing capacity of housing navigators, program mediators and landlord-tenant liaisons, as well as enhance the short-term financial assistance program.





## Resources Needed

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Resources needed for this action include a location for the implementation group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings, job interviews and educational trainings. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media. Other resources will be needed for the specific interventions associated with this program and are further described below.

We also assume that the Eviction Diversion and Mediation program will need an executive director or program manager to lead the implementation efforts and manage the program thereafter. The average salary for a nonprofit executive director in the United States is \$72,639<sup>18</sup>. A fringe package averaging 30% of this salary, or \$21,792, increases the average compensation package to \$94,431. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$100,097.

## Short-Term Financial Assistance Fund

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The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 allocated \$1.5 billion to the Department of Housing and Urban Development to fund the now completed Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). From October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2012, communities received funding for programs designed to provide financial assistance and coordinated services to rapidly rehouse more than 1.3 million people experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. Even though HPRP funding ended in 2012, many of the activities such as providing financial assistance for rapid re-housing programs are eligible under the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program.

The HPRP final summary report states that funding included \$941,792,967 in financial assistance for approximately 1.3 million people, or about \$725 in financial assistance per person. If the Task Force uses a progressive engagement strategy, then the short-term financial assistance program may provide a small amount of assistance to all people entering the homelessness system.

About 11,300 receive homeless services in OKC each year<sup>19</sup>. If we assume an average of \$725 in financial assistance per person, then the short-term financial assistance program fund should ultimately maintain about \$8.2 million each year. The pilot program may wish to secure initial funding of \$1 million and will require yearly funding thereafter.

## Housing Navigators

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About 6,500 evictions were filed in OKC in 2016.<sup>20</sup> We assume that the Eviction Diversion and Mediation Program will divert eviction for about two-thirds of evicted tenants like the outcomes seen in Durham. Therefore, at least 2,167 tenants may still face eviction and need housing navigation services.

We also assume an average case load of 35 clients per housing navigator. To reach full staffing capacity based on the number of evictions filed in OKC in 2016, 62 housing navigators would be needed for the program to provide services to ensure housing stability for residents facing eviction. Increasing the case

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.salary.com/research/salary/posting/nonprofit-executive-director-salary>

<sup>19</sup> [https://homelessalliance.org/?page\\_id=10](https://homelessalliance.org/?page_id=10)

<sup>20</sup> <https://evictionlab.org/rankings/#/evictions>



load to 50 clients per navigator still results in a significant staffing capacity with 43 housing navigators needed for the program.

We assume an average salary of \$38,000 for each housing navigator position<sup>21</sup> and a benefits package averaging 30% of the navigator's salary, or \$11,400. The average compensation package for a new housing navigator position totals \$49,400. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$52,364.

Ultimately, the program may need as many as 62 housing navigators to reach full capacity, resulting in a staffing cost of at least \$3,246,568. We recommend the pilot program begin with 10 housing navigators, resulting in an initial staffing cost of at least \$523,640. The number of housing navigators needed to reach full staffing capacity may increase considering the economic impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and an expected rise of evictions in OKC<sup>22</sup>.

#### Landlord-Tenant Mediation Services

Many of the 6,500 residents facing evictions OKC could benefit from mediation services. The average mediator salary in Oklahoma is \$77,920<sup>23</sup>. We assume that the initial pilot program will work to establish relationships and secure contracts with already established mediators in the community. The program may decide to hire mediators dedicated to the program as it expands beyond the pilot phase.

#### Landlord-Tenant Liaisons

We assume an average salary for a landlord-tenant liaison like the housing navigator position described above totaling \$38,000 per year, and a benefits package averaging 30% of the liaison's salary, or \$11,400. The average compensation package for a new landlord-tenant liaison position totals \$49,400. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$52,364.

We again assume an average case load of 35 clients per liaison. We also assume liaison services may be necessary for all the 6,500 residents facing eviction to ensure these residents adhere to mediation agreements, continue to maintain housing stability and to help resolve any additional landlord-tenant disputes that may arise. Liaison duties also require ongoing landlord outreach and management of a database of landlords and properties, as well as their selection criteria and eligibility requirements. Ultimately, the program may need as many as 186 landlord-tenant liaisons to reach full capacity resulting in a staffing cost of almost \$10 million. We again recommend the pilot program begin with 10 landlord-tenant liaisons, resulting in an initial staffing cost of at least \$523,640.

Other costs may include outreach and educational materials such as brochures, fact sheets and presentation materials to landlords and tenants, as well as associated venue costs, food and beverage or other audio/visual fees.

Overall, the costs to implement the Eviction Diversion and Mediation pilot program may total at least \$2,147,377.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ziprecruiter.com/Salaries/Housing-Navigator-Salary>

<sup>22</sup> <https://okcfox.com/news/local/legal-experts-discuss-evictions-with-city-council/>; <https://oklaw.org>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ziprecruiter.com/Salaries>





### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene implementation group	July 2020
Hire executive director or program manager for the Eviction Diversion and Mediation Program	By December 30, 2020
Create program eligibility requirements and operating procedures; create all job descriptions, referral processes and training protocols	By March 2022
Secure necessary funding for the Eviction Diversion and Mediation Pilot Program	By March 2022
Recruit mediators, hire housing navigators and landlord-tenant liaisons; establish the short-term financial assistance fund	By May 31, 2022
Launch Eviction Diversion and Mediation Pilot Program	By June 30, 2022
Advertise and promote the program, educate CoC providers and others on the new services and resources available to residents	July 2022 – ongoing
Track all outcomes and performance measures	July 2022 – ongoing
Determine program expansion opportunities after one year of operation including additional funding needs and staffing capacity, hire additional housing navigators, landlord-tenant liaisons and program mediators	July 2023 – ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of people seeking short-term financial assistance
2. Reasons for seeking short-term financial assistance
3. Amount of short-term financial funds provided
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



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### Discharge Planning Liaison Program

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Communities 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.

Discharge planners should form partnerships with local service and housing providers 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, especially for these hard to serve populations.

In addition to securing suitable housing options, discharge planners need to coordinate 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, discharge planners need to work with case managers to ensure their clients have applied for all eligible benefits.<sup>24</sup>

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### Strategy Description

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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 increase the number of discharge planners who can work with people experiencing homelessness to obtain the resources and community-based supportive services they need upon release.

The Task Force should work with the Homeless Alliance, City Care, Upward Transitions, Pivot, Sisu Youth Services and other key stakeholders to establish a Discharge Planning Liaison Program that can support 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 with discharge planning services for individuals and youth who would otherwise be discharged to the streets.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10935-007-0095-7>



Discharge planning liaisons would assess identified individuals as soon as possible after intake to create a customized discharge plan. Discharge planning liaisons then work with those individuals and youth throughout their stay to link them to housing support and case management services, providing a “warm hand-off” to these community services following discharge. Liaisons would work in conjunction with coordinated entry and enter client data into HMIS.

Discharge planning liaisons should also receive SOAR training to connect eligible individuals and youth to benefits like Social Security Supplemental Income (SSI), Social Security Disability (SSDI), Medicaid and Medicare, as well as health insurance if they are ineligible for Medicaid or Medicare. Liaisons should work with their clients to secure any necessary documents to secure housing and other services such as birth certificates, Social Security cards or state identification prior to discharge.

Finally, discharge planning liaisons should have access to a financial assistance fund to help secure stable housing prior to discharge. Financial assistance can be used for a variety of circumstances that would allow the individual or youth to secure housing such as paying for rent arrearages, current or back utility payments, moving costs, security deposits and ongoing short-term rental assistance.

### Recommended Actions

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

1. Convene an implementation team through the Task Force including representatives from the Homeless Alliance, City Care, Upward Transitions, Pivot, Sisu Youth Services and other key service providers, as well as Mercy Hospital, St. Anthony Hospital, Oklahoma City Public Schools, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Oklahoma County Jail, current discharge planners, and other relevant stakeholders to determine:
  - a. The organization that will manage the Discharge Planning Liaison Program such as the Homeless Alliance or another organization.
  - b. The number of discharge planners necessary to adequately work with local hospitals, correctional facilities, the schools and foster care system to assess the needs of individuals and youth experiencing homelessness, secure housing, determine eligibility for benefits and coordinate with other community resources.
  - c. The responsibilities and duties of the Discharge Planning Liaison Program, including the salary and benefits to be offered, as well as the establishment of the short-term financial assistance fund and the fund amount to be maintained each year.
  - d. Funding for the Discharge Planning Liaison Program.
  - e. Referral process and outreach to CoC providers, housing providers and other community resources.
  - f. Training protocols and education for CoC providers and others of the Discharge Planning Liaison Program.
2. Create Discharge Planning Liaison Program eligibility requirements and operating procedures.
3. Create discharge planner job description and training through the SOAR Stepping Stones to Recovery training curriculum.



4. Advertise discharge planner job descriptions, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidates.
5. Educate and train CoC providers and other relevant stakeholders on the referral process from discharge planners to housing support, case management and other community-based programs and services.
6. Track outcomes for the Discharge Planning Liaison Program such as the number of participants, reduced recidivism, reduced hospital readmissions, number/percent placed into permanent, stable housing, number of SOAR applications, number/percent of individuals or youth connected to benefits such as SSI, Medicaid or health insurance, number/percent of individuals or youth connected to other community-based programs, 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.

### Resources Needed

Resources needed for this action include a location for the implementation group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings, job interviews and educational trainings. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media.

We also assume that the Discharge Planning Liaison Program will need an executive director or program manager to lead the implementation efforts and manage the program thereafter. The average salary for a nonprofit executive director in the United States is \$72,639. A fringe package averaging 30% of this salary, or \$21,792, increases the average compensation package to \$94,431. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$100,097.

We assume an average salary of \$18.50 per hour<sup>25</sup> for a discharge planner position. As a full-time position, this results in a yearly salary of approximately \$38,480 and a benefits package averaging 30% of the discharge planner's salary or \$11,544. The average compensation package for a new discharge planner position totals \$50,024. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$53,025. There may be additional costs to provide professional development and training through the SOAR Stepping Stones to Recovery training curriculum.

We assume that the pilot program will begin with at least five discharge planners for a total cost of \$265,125. We also assume the pilot program will include a short-term financial assistance fund of approximately \$500,000 and require yearly funding thereafter.

The costs to implement the Discharge Planning Liaison Program may total at least \$865,222.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene implementation group	July 2020

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Discharge\\_Planner/Hourly\\_Rate](https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Discharge_Planner/Hourly_Rate)



Milestone	Timeline
Hire executive director or program manager for the Discharge Planning Liaison Program	By December 30, 2020
Work with local hospital, correctional facilities, schools and the foster care system to create program eligibility requirements and operating procedures; create discharge planner job descriptions, work with local service providers on referral processes upon discharge and training protocols	By March 2022
Secure necessary funding for the Discharge Planning Liaison Pilot Program	By March 2022
Hire discharge planners; establish the short-term financial assistance fund	By May 31, 2022
Launch Discharge Planning Liaison Pilot Program	By June 30, 2022
Track all outcomes and performance measures	July 2022 – ongoing
Determine program expansion opportunities after one year of operation including additional funding needs and staffing capacity, hire additional discharge planners and support staff as needed	July 2023 – ongoing

#### Performance Measures

1. Number of participants
2. Reduced recidivism
3. Reduced hospital readmissions
4. Number/percent placed into permanent, stable housing
5. Number of 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
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



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## Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders

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About 10% of people leaving jails or prisons report experiencing homelessness in the months before their incarceration. This increases to 20% for those with mental illness.<sup>26</sup> Almost one in four (23%) of sheltered homeless reported having been incarcerated within the past two years.<sup>27</sup>

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. For example, 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%<sup>28</sup>. 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. A transitional housing program should include these offenders. 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.<sup>29</sup>

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

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<sup>26</sup> 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](https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/media/publications/homelessness_and_prisoner_reentry_council_of_state_governments_2006.pdf.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Metraux, S., & Culhane, D.P. (2006). *Recent incarceration history among a sheltered homeless population*. Crime & Delinquency, 52(3), 504–517.

<sup>28</sup> Clifasefi SL, Malone DK, Collins SE. *Exposure 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

<sup>29</sup> McKernan, P. (2007) *Homelessness and Prisoner Reentry: Examining Barriers to Housing Stability and Evidence-Based Strategies That Promote Improved Outcomes*; Journal of Community Corrections. Accessed at: [https://www.vo.org/pdf\\_files/homelessness-and-prisoner-reentry-examining-barriers-to-housing-stability-and-evidence-based-strategies-that-promote-improved-outcomes](https://www.vo.org/pdf_files/homelessness-and-prisoner-reentry-examining-barriers-to-housing-stability-and-evidence-based-strategies-that-promote-improved-outcomes)



highest jail count of 204 occurred in September 2009. Over the study period of April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010, the cost of law enforcement (county jail and police) and first response (fire and EMS) was \$2,581,252.

### Strategy Description

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Planning participants discussed the need to establish a robust transitional housing program for ex-offenders including sex offenders, violent offenders and offenders convicted of methamphetamine production who experience the greatest barriers in accessing stable housing. The program can include communal housing with supportive staff that stay overnight, clustered units with or without supportive staff on-site, or scattered site apartments where an ex-offender and roommates may hold the lease.

The program should provide intensive case management, as well as housing navigators, peer support mentors, SOAR representatives and discharge planning. Several aspects of the transitional housing program for ex-offenders may include:

#### Intensive Case Managers

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Intensive case management would work with ex-offenders participating in the transitional housing program to establish goals to achieve housing stability and help participants meet those goals. Case managers would work to connect participants with primary care, mental or behavioral health care or connections to other community-based support services. Once an ex-offender successfully exits the program, the case manager provides support services for an extended period to ensure the individual maintains housing stability. The case manager works in conjunction with discharge planning, as well as the transitional housing program's team of supportive case management including housing navigators, peer support mentors and SOAR navigators.

#### Housing Navigators

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As described previously, housing navigators help individuals experiencing homelessness find and secure housing as they seek to exit the transitional housing program. Navigators are informed and knowledgeable of local housing processes and requirements, 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. Once an ex-offender is deemed eligible for specific housing, the navigator then assists with the housing search and application process as well as compiling and submitting all necessary documentation.

#### Peer Support Mentors

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Peer support mentors include ex-offenders who have successfully completed the transitional housing program and want to help others as they move through the program. Peer support mentors can be especially helpful for those suffering from substance abuse or behavioral health challenges. Peer mentors help engage these participants in the recovery process and reduce their chances of relapse. Peer mentors can also support and motivate participants to work toward their established goals, as well as provide advice and guidance on navigating community-based programming.

#### SOAR Representatives

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SAMHSA's SOAR program increases access to Social Security disability benefits for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with a serious mental illness, medical conditions or co-occurring substance use disorder. A SOAR-trained case manager would help individuals complete SSI and SSDI applications.





During the application process, the specialist keeps in contact with the applicant, the Social Security Administration field offices and state agencies.<sup>30</sup>

### Discharge Planning

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Planning for an ex-offender to successfully exit the transitional housing program should begin when the individual first enters the program. By working with program participants to establish goals, engage in ongoing case management and connecting them with the community-based supportive services they need, the transitional housing program should lead participating ex-offenders to housing stability and a productive life in the community into the future.

### Recommended Actions

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AI recommends that this program begin with a pilot program in Year 4 and 5. By tracking outcomes and reaching performance measures, the program can gain leverage to expand in the years beyond.

1. The Task Force should convene an implementation group including key stakeholders such as City Care, the Homeless Alliance, the Housing Authority and other housing organizations, Legal Aid, landlords for scattered site options, nonprofit providers and others to determine:
  - a. The organization to manage the transitional housing pilot program for ex-offenders such as City Care, the Homeless Alliance or another agency.
  - b. Mission, goals and vision of the transitional housing program for ex-offenders.
  - c. The responsibilities and services to be provided, including the number of beds or units needed, the housing options such as a communal building with staff on-site, scattered site apartments or both, and overall staffing needs.
  - d. Funding necessary for the pilot program, including initial start-up costs and ongoing operational costs.
  - e. A location if new construction is necessary, as well as staffing and administrative needs during construction.
  - f. What supportive services may be provided through the program such as primary care, mental and behavioral health care, education and employment services, transportation and childcare.
  - g. Referral process for emergency shelters, service providers and others.
  - h. Educate service providers and the public on the project; promote positive outcomes.
2. Create program eligibility requirements and operating procedures; create job descriptions for all positions including case managers, housing navigators and peer support mentors.
3. Secure communal building or scattered site apartments.
4. Advertise all staff job descriptions requesting applicants, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidates.
5. Launch transitional housing pilot program for ex-offenders.

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/grant-programs-services/soar>





6. Educate and train emergency shelters, CoC providers and others on the referral process to the transitional housing program for ex-offenders.
7. Track outcomes such as the number of ex-offenders participating in the program and their previous offense, number/percent of ex-offenders who secure employment, number/percent of ex-offenders that receive GED, college degree or other educational certificates, number/percent of ex-offenders housed upon exiting the program, and length of time the ex-offender maintains housing stability.
8. Expand the transitional housing program for ex-offenders, including securing additional funding to expand housing options and staffing needs.

### Resources Needed

Resources needed for this action include a location for the implementation group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings, job interviews and educational trainings. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media.

We also assume that the transitional housing program for ex-offenders will need an executive director or program manager to lead the implementation efforts and manage the program thereafter. The average salary for a nonprofit executive director in the United States is \$72,639. A fringe package averaging 30% of this salary, or \$21,792, increases the average compensation package to \$94,431. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$100,097.

Other staffing may include case managers, housing navigators, peer support mentors and SOAR representatives. We assume discharge planning will be incorporated throughout the case management process and included with intensive case management and housing navigation services.

### Intensive Case Managers

We assume an average salary of \$16.34 per hour based on the recent job posting for a case manager position at NorthCare in OKC<sup>31</sup>. As a full-time position, this results in a yearly salary of approximately \$34,000 and a benefits package averaging 30% of the case manager's salary or \$10,200. The average compensation package for a new case manager position totals \$44,200. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$46,852.

We assume the pilot program will staff two intensive case managers resulting in a total cost of \$93,704.

### Housing Navigators

We assume an average salary of \$38,000 for the housing navigator position<sup>32</sup> and a benefits package averaging 30% of the navigator's salary, or \$11,400. The average compensation package for a new housing navigator position totals \$49,400. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$52,364.

We assume the pilot program will staff one housing navigator for a total cost of \$52,364.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/q-Pact-I-Oklahoma-jobs.html?vjk=38a0cfb34bd80534>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.ziprecruiter.com/Salaries/Housing-Navigator-Salary>



### Peer Support Mentors

The average salary of a certified peer specialist is \$14.70 in the United States.<sup>33</sup> As a full-time position, this results in a yearly salary of approximately \$30,576. A benefits package of 30% of the peer specialists' salary or \$9,173, increases the compensation package to \$39,749. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$42,134.

We assume the pilot program will staff one peer support mentor for a total cost of \$42,134.

### SOAR Representatives

We assume an average salary for the SOAR representative the housing navigator position described above totaling \$38,000 per year, and a benefits package averaging 30% of the representative's salary, or \$11,400. The average compensation package for a new SOAR representative position totals \$49,400. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$52,364.

We assume that the SOAR representative will work on a part-time basis for a total of \$26,182.

### Operating Costs

On average, transitional housing programs cost about \$1,262 per person to operate in 2006.<sup>34</sup> Accounting for inflation, we assume an average cost today of about \$1,600 per person. If the pilot program seeks to reach 50 ex-offenders experiencing homelessness in the city, then we assume an operating budget of at least \$80,000.

The costs to staff and operate the transitional housing pilot program for ex-offenders may total at least \$394,481.

In 2004, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a Guide for Developing Housing for Ex-Offenders that recommended various funding sources for housing programs including Community Development Block Grants, HUD Section 8 vouchers, emergency shelter grant programs, and federal tax credit projects or alternative funding to promote the creation of reentry housing.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene implementation group	By July 2023
Hire executive director or program manager for the transitional housing program for ex-offenders	By December 30, 2023
Create program eligibility requirements and operating procedures; create all job descriptions, referral processes and training protocols; establish any necessary community partnerships for services	By March 2025

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/career/certified-peer-specialist/salaries>

<sup>34</sup> Spellman B, J Khaddur, et al. ABT Associates prepared for United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (March 2010). *Costs Associated with First-Time Homelessness for Families and Individuals*. Accessed at: [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/Costs\\_Homeless.pdf](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/Costs_Homeless.pdf)



Milestone	Timeline
Secure locations and all necessary funding for the transitional housing pilot program for ex-offenders	By March 2025
Hire all support staff	By May 31, 2025
Launch transitional housing pilot program for ex-offenders	By June 30, 2025
Track all outcomes and performance measures	July 2025 – ongoing
Determine program expansion opportunities after one year of operation including additional funding needs and staffing capacity	July 2026 – ongoing

#### 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



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## Expand Sober Living Options

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A large discrepancy exists in the United States between the number of people who need substance abuse treatment and those that actually receive it. In 2016, about 1 in 13 people over the age of 12 needed substance abuse treatment. Of those people, only about 18% accessed treatment. The most common treatment options available for substance use are inpatient or residential, outpatient, group therapy, and private or individual therapy.

Barriers to substance use treatment include personal concerns such as the stigma associated with mental health treatment or the time necessary to seek treatment, financial barriers such as lack of insurance and concerns about the cost of treatment, and geographic barriers such as the availability of treatment beds or substance use programs near where the individual lives.

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### Sober Living Houses

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Some strategies that may help individuals access treatment include sober living houses (SLHs), which are alcohol and drug free living environments for individuals attempting to abstain from alcohol and drugs. SLHs emphasize 12-step group attendance and peer support. Typically, residents pay for the costs to access SLHs. A study of 300 individuals entering two different types of SLHs over an 18-month period found that involvement in 12-step groups was strong predictors of positive outcomes.<sup>35</sup>

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### Inpatient or Residential Rehab Programs

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Inpatient or residential programs are programs where people live at the facility throughout the duration of their treatment. These programs typically offer comprehensive treatment including medical and psychological care, group and individual therapy, 12-step meetings and other rehabilitation activities. They offer detox and rehab treatment services, case management and other group activities. People with concurrent mental health issues, serious medical conditions or those who require medical detoxification are good candidates for inpatient treatment programs. Programs offering detoxification should tailor treatment to their client population and should include evaluation, stabilization and getting the individual ready to engage in an ongoing substance use treatment program after detox.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the need, inpatient and residential rehab programs can only serve a limited number of patients at a time due to bed availability and other issues such as insurance.

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### Strategy Description

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The Task Force should investigate expanding sober living facility options in the community for those experiencing homelessness and have no income or health insurance. Currently, there are several sober

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<sup>35</sup> <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/treatment-barriers>; Polcin, D., R. Korcha, et al. *What Did We Learn from Our Study on Sober Living Houses and Where Do We Go from Here?* J Psychoactive Drugs. 2010 Dec; 42(4): 425–433. Accessed at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3057870/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/treatment-barriers>; Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. Detoxification and Substance Abuse Treatment. Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, No. 45. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 15-4131. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2006.



living options in OKC including, but not limited to A Chance to Change Foundation, Into Action Sober Living (for men), Willis Group Home (for women), Turning Point with Community Action Agency of OKC, Catholic Charities, New Beginnings and NorthCare.

### Recommended Actions

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1. Convene an implementation team through the Task Force including representatives from sober living facilities, mental and behavioral health providers and other relevant stakeholders to determine:
  - a. Determine the number of treatment beds needed, as well as whether expanding sober living options will include a new facility or expanding the number of beds available at already existing facilities.
  - b. Secure funding for expanding sober living options, including initial start-up costs and ongoing operational costs.
  - c. Secure location if new construction is necessary, as well as staffing and administrative needs during construction.
  - d. Determine what supportive services may be provided through the facility such as transportation and childcare to reduce barriers to access.
  - e. Educate service providers and the public on the project; promote positive outcomes.
2. Create sober living program eligibility requirements and operating procedures; hire any new staff necessary for the opening of the facility.
3. Expand sober living options.
4. Track outcomes such as the number of treatment beds created, number of patients entering the facility, number/percent of patients readmitted into a substance use treatment program, and number/percent of patients entering ongoing substance use treatment programs following detox.

### Resources Needed

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The resources needed for this action include a location and staff time for implementation group meetings. The Task Force may wish to assign or hire a program manager or executive director for implementation efforts. The average salary for a nonprofit executive director in the United States is \$72,639. A fringe package averaging 30% of this salary, or \$21,792, increases the average compensation package to \$94,431. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$100,097.

A detailed analysis of the costs to expand sober living options in OKC will need to be conducted depending on the number of beds to be created, as well as whether a facility will be constructed or if an already existing facility will be expanded. This may require hiring a consultant to conduct such an analysis with an estimated cost of \$100,000.



### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene implementation group; assign or hire program manager or executive director for implementation efforts and may include hiring a consultant to determine the costs and need for expanding sober living options in OKC	July 2023 – March 2024
Secure all necessary funding to expand sober living options	By March 2025
Facility construction or expansion of existing facility	By July 2026
Create facility eligibility requirements and operating procedures; hire staff for facility	By July 2026
Open/expand sober living options in OKC	July 2026
Track all outcomes	July 2026 – ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of treatment beds created
2. Number of patients treated at the facility
3. Number/percent of patients entering ongoing substance use treatment programs following detox
4. Number/percent of patients readmitted into a substance use treatment program following discharge



## 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.<sup>37</sup>

Below provides some key demographic information about OKC:

Oklahoma City Census Quick Facts (July 1, 2018) <sup>38</sup>	
<b>Population</b>	649,021
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$54,034
<b>Per Capita Income in past 12 months</b>	\$29,581
<b>Persons in Poverty</b>	16.8%
<b>Owner-occupied housing unit rate</b>	58.6%
<b>Median value of owner-occupied housing units</b>	\$153,700
<b>Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage</b>	\$1,362
<b>Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage</b>	\$475
<b>Median gross rent</b>	\$849

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce and the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency commissioned the 2015 Oklahoma Housing Needs Assessment that determined the state needs 66,879 housing units by 2020. Of these, these state needs 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%) will 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%) will 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 located 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%

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/affordablehousing/](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/)

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/oklahomacitycityoklahoma>



of affordable housing units have limited access to a hospital and 7.8% of affordable housing units are located 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 will 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 assessors recommended that community zoning regulations must work to promote the development of housing at all income levels.

The Task Force acknowledges the need for more affordable housing options in OKC and propose the following strategies:



Affordable Housing Committee



Dedicated One-Stop-Shop for Developers



Zoning and Ordinance Changes



Lien Forgiveness Program



Land Bank 501c3





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## Affordable Housing Committee

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Some cities across the United States have established a city committee focused on affordable housing and housing needs in their communities. These committees typically work on public policy and recommend actions to preserve, create and rehabilitate housing, including public housing, in their city. They advise city council and the city manager on housing issues, strategies, goals and policies.

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### Strategy Description

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The 2015 Oklahoma Housing Needs Assessment projected the need for affordable housing across the state as well as Oklahoma County. Key informants and planning participants agreed that OKC needs more affordable housing. They acknowledged that voters understand this need as evidenced by the passage of MAPS 4, a one-cent sales tax to fund initiatives that improve the city. More than 70% of MAPS 4 funding is dedicated to neighborhood and human needs, while the rest provides for quality of life and job-creating initiatives. Specifically, \$50 million is allocated to address homelessness, \$40 million for mental health and addiction services and \$17 million for the Diversion Hub.

The Task Force should work to engage the OKC Mayor to create an Affordable Housing Committee, as well as highlight affordable housing as a top priority in the State of the City address.

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### Recommended Actions

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1. The Task Force should encourage the Mayor to create a dedicated Affordable Housing Committee to work on public policy and recommend actions to preserve, create and rehabilitate housing, including public housing in OKC, as well as advise city council and the city manager on housing issues, strategies, goals and policies.
2. The Task Force should further encourage the Mayor to highlight affordable housing as a top priority in the State of the City address.
3. Establish Affordable Housing Committee.
4. Track outcomes for the Committee such as number of policies or actions passed by city council to preserve, create or rehabilitate housing in OKC, number/percent of affordable housing units created at 30% AMI and number/percent of affordable housing units created at 60% AMI.

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### Resources Needed

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Minimal resources are needed for this action, but include time for the Task Force to lobby the Mayor to create an Affordable Housing Committee and to highlight affordable housing as a top priority in the State of the City address, as well as the time for Affordable Housing Committee members to attend meetings once it is established.



### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Lobby Mayor to create Affordable Housing Committee and to highlight affordable housing as a top priority in the State of the City address	July 2020 – December 2020
Establish Affordable Housing Committee	By June 30, 2021
Track outcomes	June 2022 – ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of policies or actions passed by city council to preserve, create or rehabilitate housing in OKC
2. Number/percent of affordable housing units created at 30% AMI
3. Number/percent of affordable housing units created at 60% AMI



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### Dedicated One-Stop-Shop for Developers

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The OKC Planning Department “works to improve the welfare of people and the community by creating more convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient and attractive places for present and future generations.”<sup>39</sup> The Department consists of four divisions:

1. The **Administration Division** manages business operations and houses the Office of Sustainability and the Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs.
2. The **Current Planning and Urban Design Division** manages the Historic Preservation, Downtown, Bricktown, Scenic River and Urban Design districts. It also conducts code-related and development review studies.
3. The **Housing and Community Development Division** manages federal and state grants supporting affordable housing development, neighborhood revitalization, economic development and homeless assistance.
4. The **Plan Development and Implementation Division** is responsible for long-range planning functions, and provides technical assistance to support public, private and nonprofit development in the urban core.<sup>40</sup>

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### Strategy Description

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Strategic planning session participants talked about enhancing the Planning Department’s relationship with developers to help support affordable housing projects in the city. This includes ensuring that developers can access a “one-stop-shop” through the Planning Department to best support and incentivize their efforts to create affordable housing while maintaining profit margins to support their business. This one-stop-shop may include:

- ❖ Trainings for developers on incentives and resources to encourage affordable housing development
- ❖ Help troubleshoot problems throughout the planning process
- ❖ Fast track applications and ensure compliance
- ❖ Identify owners of abandoned buildings
- ❖ Clear ambiguous titles
- ❖ Database of available public land and a registry for abandoned or dilapidated homes
- ❖ Establish a “Right of First Refusal” for affordable housing developers or non-profits to use public land for affordable housing development.

The Task Force should encourage and support the OKC Planning Department to establish a “one-stop-shop” for developers to help support affordable housing projects in the city.

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/departments/planning/what-we-do>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/departments/planning/what-we-do/departments-organization>



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### Recommended Actions

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1. The Task Force should encourage and support the Planning Department to establish practices and procedures that will encourage and support developers to pursue affordable housing projects in the city. This may include:
  - a. Developing training materials and protocols to educate developers on the incentives and resources available to develop affordable housing in the city.
  - b. Analyzing the staffing needs to help troubleshoot problems that may arise during the development process, fast track applications and ensure compliance, identify owners of abandoned buildings and clear ambiguous titles.
  - c. Creating a database of available public land and a registry for abandoned buildings or dilapidated homes.
  - d. Establishing a “Right of First Refusal” for affordable housing developers or nonprofits to use public land for affordable housing development.
2. Establish “one-stop-shop” at Planning Department for developers.
3. Track outcomes such as number of trainings conducted, number/percent of fast-tracked applications, number/percent of affordable housing units created at 30% AMI and number/percent of affordable housing units created at 60% AMI.

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### Resources Needed

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We anticipate that the Planning Department may need to add two staff members to best implement the “one-stop-shop” services as described above. This would include a senior level position and an administrative assistant. We assume the senior level position would manage the “one-stop-shop” and work directly with developers through the planning process. We assume a salary between \$55,000 to \$62,000 per year based on a similar position currently posted with Oklahoma County<sup>41</sup>. The average salary for this range is \$58,500 and a benefits package averaging 30% of the position’s salary, or \$17,550. The average compensation package for the new planning position totals \$76,050. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$80,613.

A recent job posting for an administrative assistant position in Oklahoma City listed a salary range of \$40,000 - \$45,000 a year. We assume an average salary of \$42,500 and a benefits package averaging 30% of the position’s salary, or \$12,750. The average compensation package for an administrative assistant totals \$ 55,250. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$58,565. The two positions total \$139,178.

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<sup>41</sup> Job Title: Programs Planner (CDBG-Disaster Recovery), Oklahoma Department of Commerce



### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Encourage and support the Planning Department to establish practices and procedures that will encourage and support developers to pursue affordable housing projects in the city	Now – June 2022
Establish “one-stop-shop” services	By June 30, 2023
Track outcomes	July 2032 – ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of trainings conducted
2. Number/percent of fast-tracked applications
3. Number/percent of affordable housing units created at 30% AMI
4. Number/percent of affordable housing units created at 60% AMI



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## Zoning and Ordinance Changes

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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. New zoning practices such as upzoning and density bonuses are inclusionary zoning practices that 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.<sup>42</sup>

Upzoning refers to changing single-family zoning codes to allow taller and denser housing, like duplexes, triplexes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and apartment buildings. Upzoning increases the buildable capacity of land and creates an opportunity to increase housing supply. It also presents the opportunity to increase the housing supply closer to public transportation and jobs. But 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.<sup>43</sup>

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.<sup>44</sup>

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.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.usich.gov/news/increasing-affordable-housing-through-inclusionary-zoning-policy/>

<sup>43</sup> Einstein, Katherine Levine, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick. June 29, 2018. "Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes." Perspectives on Politics.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/13/us/minneapolis-single-family-zoning.html>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.austinmonitor.com/stories/2019/05/council-passes-affordable-housing-density-bonus-program/>



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, a city can 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.<sup>46</sup>

### Strategy Description

The 2015 Oklahoma Housing Needs Assessment projected that Oklahoma County, home to OKC, needs 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.

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 assessors 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. We understand that such an evaluation is scheduled to be conducted and the Task Force should encourage the City to move forward expeditiously. Planning participants hope this evaluation will help encourage “Affordable by Design” development. Some of the specific recommendations that planning participants discussed include:

- ❖ Develop inclusionary upzoning to allow taller height limits, greater development intensity, and/or new land uses such as housing in formerly industrial or commercial areas linked to requirements or incentives for lower-priced, income-targeted housing.
- ❖ Provide incentives or points for developing at 30% AMI and below, developing and building micro-units, and rehabilitation of long-term rentals.
- ❖ Change R1 zoning requirements to allow accessory dwelling units, reduce permitting costs and other impact fees to enable homeowners to add dwellings.
- ❖ Require developers to set-aside a certain number of units for low-income, such as below 30% or 50% of average median income (AMI). If developments do not meet the threshold, then they would be required to contribute to a housing trust fund.

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<sup>46</sup> Litman, T. Victoria Transport Policy Institute (2020). *Parking Requirement Impacts on Housing Affordability*. Accessed at: <https://www.vtpi.org/park-hou.pdf>; <https://www.localhousingolutions.org/act/housing-policy-library/reduced-parking-requirements-for-qualifying-developments-overview/reduced-parking-requirements-for-qualifying-developments/>



## CHICAGO, 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 ARO 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.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>





### Recommended Actions

1. The Task Force should encourage the City to move forward with an evaluation of OKC's Zoning Ordinance and monitor for the final evaluation report.
2. Review the final Zoning Ordinance evaluation report and advocate for any recommended changes with City Council.
3. Zoning changes approved by City Council.
4. Track outcomes such as the date of Zoning Ordinance change, number/percent of affordable units created at 60% AMI and below and number/percent of affordable units created at 30% AMI and below.

### Resources Needed

Resources for this action item are minimal and include the time to encourage the city to move forward with the evaluation and to advocate for any recommended zoning changes.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Encourage City to move forward with evaluation of OKC's Zoning Ordinance and monitor for final evaluation report	July 2020 – June 2021
Review final Zoning Ordinance evaluation report and advocate for recommended changes	By July 2021 – TBD
Zoning changes approved by City Council	TBD
Track all outcomes	July 2021 - ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Zoning Ordinance date change
2. Number/percent of affordable units created at 60% AMI and below
3. Number/percent of affordable units created at 30% AMI and below



## 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.<sup>47</sup> 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](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.

## Recommended Actions

1. The Task Force should work with the City 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.
3. Track outcomes like number of property owner applications, number of properties gifted to the city, amount of back taxes reduced or waived, number/percent of affordable units created at 60% AMI and below and number/percent of affordable units created at 30% AMI and below.

<sup>47</sup> [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/BarriersVol1\\_part2.pdf](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/BarriersVol1_part2.pdf)



### Resources Needed

Minimal resources are needed for this action but includes time for the Task Force to work with the City to establish the lien forgiveness program. This may be included with the job duties associated with the staffing needs for the “one-stop-shop” for developers with the OKC Planning Department.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Work with the City to establish a lien forgiveness program	By July 2022
Establish lien forgiveness program	By June 30, 2023
Track outcomes	July 2023 – ongoing

### 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



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### Land Bank 501c3

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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.<sup>48</sup>

HUD describes four critical elements necessary for successful land bank initiatives<sup>49</sup>:

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 destroy 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.<sup>50</sup> The Fulton County/Atlanta Land

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<sup>48</sup> <https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/866/what-is-the-definition-of-a-land-bank/>;  
<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/LandBankingBasics.pdf>;  
<https://www.localhousingolutions.org/act/housing-policy-library/land-banks-overview/>

<sup>49</sup> <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/LandBankingBasics.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> [http://www.thelandbank.org/downloads/lbanewsletterannualreportwinter\\_2020\\_final.pdf](http://www.thelandbank.org/downloads/lbanewsletterannualreportwinter_2020_final.pdf)



Bank can waive back taxes, clear titles and facilitates the transfer of ownership in a tax-delinquent property for redevelopment purposes.<sup>51</sup>

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 legislative changes would be needed to fully implement a land banking program.<sup>52</sup>

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### Strategy Description

The Task Force should work with the City and other relevant stakeholders to 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 Task Force may need to lobby the state legislature to expand land banking functions in the state.

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### Recommended Actions

1. The Task Force, City and other relevant stakeholders should create an implementation team to evaluate the creation of a nonprofit land bank and the functions it can engage in under current Oklahoma statute. This working group may need to lobby the state legislature to expand land banking functions through legislative changes. Other duties of the working group may include:
  - a. Establish the mission, vision and goals of the land bank.
  - b. Create Articles of Incorporation, Board of Directors and other needed documents to establish the land bank nonprofit entity.
  - c. Explore all possible funding sources to establish and sustain the land bank.
2. Secure all necessary funding to establish the land bank.
3. Establish the land bank and begin operations.
4. Track outcomes such as the number of property acquisitions, number of properties demolished, constructed or rehabilitated, number/percent of affordable housing units created at 30% AMI and number/percent of affordable housing units created at 60% AMI.

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### Resources Needed

Staff time for implementation team meetings and to create the land bank will be necessary. The Task Force may wish to secure a consultant, implementation manager or executive director to establish the land bank, create the Articles of Incorporation and any other needed documents, recruit and create the Board of Directors, secure funding and other organizational responsibilities. The average Nonprofit Executive Director salary in the United States is \$72,639. A benefits package averaging 30% of this salary, or \$ 21,792, increases the average compensation package to \$94,431. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$100,097.

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<sup>51</sup> <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/landbanks.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/home/showdocument?id=4982>



### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Create implementation team; lobby state legislature for needed changes to fully implement land banking functions	By July 2023 – June 2024
Secure all necessary funding to establish the land bank	By January 2025
Establish the land bank and begin operations	By June 30, 2025
Track outcomes	July 2025 - ongoing

### 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



## OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

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.<sup>53</sup>

Numerous service providers in OKC engage in outreach and engagement including the Oklahoma City Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team (OCPD HOT), the Homeless Alliance and other nonprofit organizations in OKC. The Task Force seeks to build upon the current outreach efforts and strengthen engagement with people experiencing homelessness through the following actions:



Enhance Police Outreach Teams



Library Social Workers



Enhance Access and Use of HMIS



Resource Liaisons



Engage City-wide Business Districts (BIDS)

<sup>53</sup> [https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Core-Components-of-Outreach-2019.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Core-Components-of-Outreach-2019.pdf)



## Enhance Police Outreach Teams

The Oklahoma City Police Department (OCPD) formed its first Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) in 2014 in an effort to find alternatives to arrest for minor violations such as trespassing which impact people experiencing homelessness and cost taxpayers money to put them in jail. HOT works with people experiencing homelessness and links them with the services needed to improve their living condition. The OCPD HOT's mission is "to impact the homeless community through positive police contact and community partnerships with the ultimate purpose of altering the homeless person's perspective on life, and potential for getting needed services and assistance."<sup>54</sup>

HOT includes two officers that work Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Strategy Description

OCPD HOT officers and planning participants agreed that HOT could be strengthened to further reach and engage with people experiencing homelessness in OKC. They recommended several strategies that could enhance HOT's outreach efforts including embedding more social services outreach workers with HOT. Many programs that serve people experiencing homelessness incorporate a team-based, multi-disciplinary and integrated approach when attempting to provide outreach services. HOT may wish to explore including health services in addition to other social services in their unit. HOT members could include physicians, nurses, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, mental and behavioral health care workers, case managers, housing navigators, SOAR representatives, legal aid representatives and peer support counselors.

## SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA HOMELESS MULTIDISCIPLINARY STREET TEAM

In 2016, the City of Santa Monica invested \$600,000 to create the Homeless Multidisciplinary Street Team (HMST). The HMST engages people experiencing homelessness chronically who are considered high utilizers of social services. The program's goals include reducing the number of times an individual experiencing homelessness use and interact with public services to reduce the burden on public service providers and the associated costs.

The HMST includes a full-time program manager and three case managers. The team also includes a physician, a psychiatrist, a physician's assistant and a peer support specialist who has experienced homelessness. The HMST creates an individual treatment plan for each client with goals targeting housing stability, mental health or substance use treatment and other needed services. Ongoing challenges of the program include transitioning clients to step-down care.

A RAND study found that clients do see a reduction in encounters with law enforcement in the year following engagement with the HMST, as well as a reduction in the use of emergency departments for medical care. RAND estimated that the net financial savings to the City of Santa Monica due to fewer encounters between the chronically homeless and public service providers to be between \$103,000 and \$259,000, an offset of between 17 percent and 43 percent of the money invested in the HMST.

[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2848.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2848.html).  
Ashwood, J. Scott, et al. Evaluation of the Homeless Multidisciplinary Street Team for the City of Santa Monica. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019.

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/departments/police/community-programs/homeless-outreach-team>





Another way to enhance HOT includes expanding the hours of operation to evenings and weekends. This may include OCPD assigning more officers to HOT. Allowing officers to engage in outreach in plain clothes versus their police uniform was also discussed.

Finally, planning participants discussed establishing a Rapid Response Hotline for community members, businesses or service providers to call if they encounter a person experiencing homelessness in need of help. A HOT member could quickly respond, identify the person experiencing homelessness and connect them to housing assistance and other services.

### Recommended Actions

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1. The Task Force should convene a working group of key stakeholders and the OCPD to determine:
  - a. The positions to be included in the expanded HOT program and coordination with local service providers to staff various aspects of the team.
  - b. Expanding HOT's hours of operations, including whether more officers are necessary to staff HOT considering its expanded hours.
  - c. Exploring the use of plain clothes for HOT officers.
  - d. Establishing a Rapid Response Hotline and promoting it in the community.
  - e. Funding for an expanded HOT program, including any new OCPD officers for HOT.
2. Secure additional funding for the expanded HOT program if appropriate.
3. Recruit HOT members such as physicians, nurses, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, mental and behavioral health care workers, case managers, housing navigators, SOAR representatives, legal aid representatives and peer support counselors.
4. Hire additional HOT officers as appropriate.
5. Establish the Rapid Response Hotline.
6. Launch the expanded HOT program and educate CoC providers and others about the program.
7. Track outcomes such as number of people entered in coordinated entry and/or HMIS, use and interaction with public services, number/percent of people successfully housed, number/percent of people connected to mental, behavioral or other health services and number/percent of people transitioned to step-down programs.

### Resources Needed

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Resources needed for this action include a location for working group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings, job interviews and educational trainings. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media. Additional resources include recruiting HOT members and establishing partnerships, as well as establishing the Rapid Response Hotline.

We assume that two additional HOT officers may be necessary to expand HOT's hours of operation. Officer Step A annual salary starts at \$56,751.84.<sup>55</sup> A benefits package averaging 30% of the officer's

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<sup>55</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/departments/police/recruiting/pay-scale-and-benefits>



salary, or \$17,025.55 increases the compensation package to \$73,777.39. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$78,205. Two additional officers would cost the City \$156,410.

#### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Establish working group	By July 2021
Recruit HOT members such as physicians, nurses, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, mental and behavioral health care workers, case managers, housing navigators, SOAR representatives, legal aid representatives and peer support counselors	By April 2022
Expand hours of operation and hire additional HOT officers as appropriate	April – May 2022
Establish Rapid Response Hotline	April – May 2022
Launch expanded HOT program	By June 30, 2022
Educate CoC providers about the expanded HOT program	July 2022 - ongoing
Track outcomes	July 2022 – ongoing

#### Performance Measures

1. Number of people entered in coordinated entry and/or HMIS
2. Use and interaction with public services
3. Number/percent of people successfully housed
4. Number/percent of people connected to mental, behavioral or other health services
5. Number/percent of people transitioned to step-down programs



## Library Social Workers

Libraries are free to enter and offer a space to sit, rest, read a book and access the Internet and bathroom. Libraries therefore frequently encounter people experiencing homelessness as they seek shelter during the day. Libraries across the United States have responded by incorporating social workers into their staff to link homeless patrons with housing assistance and other needed services.

San Francisco Public Library was the first to hire a social worker to provide outreach and engagement services to patrons experiencing homelessness in 2009. Known as Health and Safety Associates (HASAs), the program had expanded to six HASAs by 2019.

Denver Public Library created a Homeless Services Action Committee in 2012 that recommended the library add social workers to their staff. The library hired its first social worker in 2015 to lead the library's Community Resource program. The program has gone from serving 434 library customers in 2015 to 3,500 served in 2018. The staff has grown to ten and includes four social workers and six peer navigators. Peer navigators have lived experiences of homelessness.

The Chicago Public Library hired its first social worker in 2017, who split her time between two of its Uptown branches. The position was paid for by a local hospital system Amita Health and has since expanded to hire additional social workers for Chicago's library system.

### AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION POLICY STATEMENT: LIBRARY SERVICES TO THE POOR

The American Library Association promotes "equal access to information for all persons and recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing number of poor children, adults, and families in America. These people are affected by a combination of limitations, including illiteracy, illness, social isolation, homelessness, hunger, and discrimination, which hamper the effectiveness of traditional library services. Therefore, it is crucial that libraries recognize their role in enabling poor people to participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies.

Concrete programs of training and development are needed to sensitize and prepare library staff to identify poor people's needs and deliver relevant services. And within the American Library Association the coordinating mechanisms of programs and activities dealing with poor people in various divisions, offices, and units should be strengthened, and support for low-income liaison activities should be enhanced."

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/extending-our-reach-reducing-homelessness-through-library-engagement-7>

## Strategy Description

In Oklahoma, Norman's Pioneer Library System is one of the only systems with a social worker program. Interns from the University of Oklahoma's school of social work provide outreach and engagement services at one location in Norman and one location in Shawnee. This involves processing referral forms and connecting patrons experiencing homelessness to the social service programs they need. Interns receive a stipend or class credit for their work.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> <https://oklahoman.com/article/5635465/public-libraries-help-fill-social-services-gap>



OKC's downtown library sees many people experiencing homelessness. The library provides programming such as eviction and computer literacy, job application and resume building courses, legal education and parenting skills lectures. The library hopes to add a social worker program, but funding is necessary to hire the staff necessary for the program.

The Task Force should work with the Metropolitan Library System, specifically the Downtown Library, to implement a social worker program.

### Recommended Actions

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1. The Task Force should convene an implementation group including key stakeholders such as the Downtown Library, nonprofit providers and others to determine:
  - a. Mission, goals and vision of the library social worker program.
  - b. The responsibilities and services to be provided, including the number of social workers needed to launch the program, the responsibilities of the social worker position, as well as the salary and benefits to be offered.
  - c. Funding for the library social worker program.
  - d. Partnership with local university school of social work to establish internships.
  - e. Training protocols for social workers on coordinated entry, standardized assessment, entering data into HMIS, as well as the housing and other services available in the community to link patrons with housing navigators or other case management services.
2. Create program requirements and operating procedures; create job descriptions for the social worker.
3. Advertise the social worker job description requesting applicants, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidate(s).
4. Launch library social worker program, including promotion of the new services and resources available to library patrons experiencing homelessness.
5. Track outcomes such as reduction in customer incidents, number/percent of patrons experiencing homelessness connected to coordinated entry and HMIS, number/percent of people successfully housed, and number/percent of people connected to mental, behavioral or other health services.

### Resources Needed

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Resources needed for this action include a location for implementation group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings, job interviews and trainings. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media. We assume that one social worker will be hired at the Downtown Library with an annual salary of \$37,350<sup>57</sup>. A benefits package averaging 30% of the social worker's salary, or \$ 11,205 increases the compensation package to \$48,555. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$51,468.30.

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.socialworkguide.org/licensure/oklahoma/>



### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Create implementation team	July 2020
Create program requirements, job descriptions and training protocols; establish partnership with local university for internships as appropriate	August – March 2021
Hire social worker(s)	April – May 2021
Launch library social worker program	By June 30, 2021
Track outcomes	July 2021- ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Reduction in customer incidents
2. Number/percent of patrons experiencing homelessness connected to coordinated entry and HMIS
3. Number/percent of people successfully housed
4. Number/percent of people connected to mental, behavioral or other health services



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## Transit Resource Liaisons

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Like libraries, transit centers provide shelter for people experiencing homelessness during the day and often the night. 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.

Declining ridership presents a major challenge for transit agencies. While many factors contribute to this decline, a survey of 49 transit agencies found that three in four (73%) agencies believe homelessness impacts ridership in one form or another. A little more than two in three (68%) said transit agencies should play a role in addressing homelessness, but only a few agencies (5%) actually allocate resources toward that goal.<sup>58</sup>

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 incorporating outreach officers with law enforcement to connect people experiencing homelessness to services. APTA says that transit agencies can start small by adding one or two outreach officers targeted at known locations where people experiencing homelessness congregate. Funding may be secured by partnering with local municipalities and the private sector, as well as developing innovative solutions such as hiring a person experiencing homelessness for an entry-level outreach worker position.

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### Strategy Description

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OKC's transit agency EMBARK (formerly METRO Transit) provides bus, ferry transit, bike share and downtown parking solutions in the OKC metro area. They have an estimated 3 million riders each year. EMBARK operates over 20 bus routes in OKC as of 2014. It is also responsible for the Downtown Discovery, EMBARK Plus Paratransit Service, downtown off-street public parking, Oklahoma River Cruises, and Spokies (Downtown Bike-Share).

EMBARK provides some assistance to address homelessness in the city. In 2019, EMBARK added two stops outside of the Homeless Alliance at Virginia Avenue and NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street to better respond and provide access to people experiencing homelessness. EMBARK, along with the City of Oklahoma City, underwrites Helpline, a taxi service for emergency or medically related transportation for people experiencing homelessness.

The Task Force should work with EMBARK, the City and other key stakeholders to establish resource liaisons at transit centers in the city. Resource liaisons would provide outreach and engagement services to people experiencing homelessness that congregate at known transit locations or bus stops such as the one located outside the Homeless Alliance. Resource liaisons would assess, identify and connect people experiencing homelessness with housing support and other services.

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<sup>58</sup> 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](https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Transit_Responses_Homeless/REPORT-2018-Leadership-APTA-Team-4-Public-Transit-and-Social-Responsibility.pdf)



## SOUTHEASTERN PHILADELPHIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (SEPTA) PROJECT HOME

SEPTA operates 1,172 buses, 334 commuter rail cars, 286 heavy rail cars, 126 streetcar rail cars and 30 trolleybuses in the five-county southeastern Pennsylvania metropolitan area. SEPTA views homelessness as a major challenge as people experiencing homelessness increasingly congregated in the underground concourses of center city and at SEPTA's two largest rail stations.

Project HOME launched in the early 1990's through a partnership with a Philadelphia nonprofit organization and the SEPTA Police Department. In the initial phase, Project HOME, the City of Philadelphia's Department of Housing, professionals from the various mental health agencies, other volunteers and SEPTA police jointly canvassed the stations and underground concourses where people experiencing homelessness typically congregated. The goals of the canvass included assessing and identifying the needs of the person experiencing homelessness, as well as building the relationship with the person to encourage them to seek shelter or accept services. This canvassing is done multiple times per year. Project HOME also worked with local faith-based organizations and private groups to open "cafes" that serve as temporary overnight shelters located near transit stations when the SEPTA system is closed.

In 2011, Project HOME established a walk-in outreach center at SEPTA's largest rail center named the Hub of Hope. The Hub provides social and health services to people experiencing chronic homelessness. As of 2019, the Hub serves 1,400 people each week with shower and laundry services, clothing, meals, housing placement and case management support. Other outreach efforts include the "Ambassadors of Hope" special outreach team, which sees 400 people per week and the Project HOME Outreach Coordination Center teams that serve another 600 people each week.

In addition to outreach, Project HOME offers other programs to promote housing stability including permanent supportive housing, education, employment and healthcare services. As of 2019, Project HOME has 894 units of permanent housing the support approximately 1,080 residents. Overall, SEPTA reports a reduction in the homeless population within the transit system, as well as in customer complaints related to people experiencing homelessness. They say the Hub has been successful in placing people experiencing homelessness into housing and programs is a major factor in this reduction, as well as referring Veterans to the Veterans Administration hospital for services.

Since 2012, Project HOME's public-private partnership, MPOWER, has leveraged \$25 million in private investments into \$250 million in combined public-private investment. This investment has helped provide services to 15,000 people and end street homelessness for 2,000 individuals including chronically homeless persons, veterans and young adults. It has impacted Project HOME's long-term capacity by expanding outreach services, as well as integrated health services, education and workforce development.

Boyle, D; Dan Boyle & Associates, Inc.; Research Sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration in Cooperation with the Transit Development Corporation (2016) *Transit Agency Practices in Interacting with People Who Are Homeless: A Synthesis of Transit Practice*. Accessed at: [https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Transit\\_Responses\\_Homeless/TCRP-Synthesis-121-Transit-Agency-Practices-in-Interacting-with-People-Who-Are-Homeless.pdf](https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Transit_Responses_Homeless/TCRP-Synthesis-121-Transit-Agency-Practices-in-Interacting-with-People-Who-Are-Homeless.pdf)

Econsult Solutions, Inc. (ESI), (2019) *The Economic and Societal Impact of Project HOME*. Accessed at: [https://www.projecthome.org/sites/default/files/ProjectHOME\\_EIS\\_11-19-19-FINAL%20with%20SMS%20MPOWER.pdf](https://www.projecthome.org/sites/default/files/ProjectHOME_EIS_11-19-19-FINAL%20with%20SMS%20MPOWER.pdf)



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### Recommended Actions

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1. The Task Force should convene an implementation group including EMBARK, the City of Oklahoma City and other key stakeholders to determine:
  - a. Mission, goals and vision of the transit resource liaison program.
  - b. The responsibilities and services to be provided, including the number of transit resource liaisons needed to launch the program, the responsibilities of the liaison position, as well as the salary and benefits to be offered. The Task Force should also promote hiring people experiencing homelessness for these liaison positions.
  - c. Funding for the transit resource liaison program.
  - d. Training protocols for transit resource liaisons on coordinated entry, standardized assessment, entering data into HMIS, as well as the housing and other services available in the community to link individuals with housing navigators or other case management services.
2. Create program requirements and operating procedures; create job descriptions for the transit resource liaison.
3. Advertise the transit resource liaison job description requesting applicants, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidate(s).
4. Launch the transit resource liaison program, including promotion of the new services and resources available to people experiencing homelessness.
5. Track outcomes such as reduction in the homeless population within the transit system, reduction in customer complaints related to people experiencing homelessness, number/percent of people experiencing homelessness connected to coordinated entry and HMIS, number/percent of people successfully housed, and number/percent of people connected to mental, behavioral or other health services.

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### Resources Needed

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Resources needed for this action include a location for implementation group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings, job interviews and trainings. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media.

We assume that one resource liaison will be hired and located at the Embark Transit Center. We assume an annual salary of \$37,350 like the library social worker position described previously. A benefits package averaging 30% of the social worker's salary, or \$ 11,205 increases the compensation package to \$48,555. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$51,468.30.





### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Create implementation team	July 2021
Create program requirements, job descriptions and training protocols	August – March 2022
Hire resource liaison(s)	April – May 2022
Launch transit resource liaison program	By June 30, 2022
Track outcomes	July 2022- ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Reduction in the homeless population within the transit system
2. Reduction in customer complains related to people experiencing homelessness
3. Number/percent of people experiencing homelessness connected to coordinated entry and HMIS
4. Number/percent of people successfully housed
5. Number/percent of people connected to mental, behavioral or other health services



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## Enhance Access and Use of HMIS

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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.<sup>59</sup>

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.<sup>60</sup>

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### Strategy Description

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The Task Force seeks to enhance access to and use of the HMIS database by providing training, addressing security and privacy concerns, and working with organizations to waive or reduce license fees. The creation of a HMIS Data Manager position would allow for an individual to manage these responsibilities.

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### Recommended Actions

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1. The Task Force should work with Homeless Alliance and relevant stakeholders to establish a working group to secure a HMIS Data Manager. Since the Homeless Alliance currently administers HMIS for the local community, we assume this position will be housed at the Alliance. The Task Force may work with the Homeless Alliance to establish:
  - a. The responsibilities and duties of the HMIS Data Manager position, including the salary and benefits to be offered.
  - b. Funding for the HMIS Data Manager position.
  - c. Creating the HMIS Data Manager job description, advertise the job description requesting applicants, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidate.
2. Hire HMIS Data Manager.
3. Track outcomes for HMIS Data Manager including number of HMIS training session, number of users or agencies connected to HMIS, and number of programs serving people experiencing homelessness connected to HMIS.

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### Resources Needed

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We assume the salary of the HMIS Data Manager position will range between \$50,000 to \$55,000 per year<sup>61</sup>. An average of this salary totals \$52,500. A benefits package averaging 30% of the HMIS Data

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<sup>59</sup> <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hmis/>

<sup>60</sup> [https://homelessalliance.org/?page\\_id=14](https://homelessalliance.org/?page_id=14)

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/jobs?q=HMIS%20data%20manager&l=United%20States&advn=2550484072391803&vk=f48fe2ee3c337bf5>



Manager's salary, or \$15,750, brings the compensation package for this position to \$68,250. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$72,345.

#### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene working group	By July 2021
Secure necessary funding for HMIS Data Manager	By March 2022
Create HMIS Data Manager job description	March 2022
Post HMIS Data Manager job description, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidate	April - May 2022
Hire HMIS Data Manager	By June 30, 2022
Track outcomes	June 2022 – ongoing

#### Performance Measures

1. Number of HMIS training sessions
2. Number of users or agencies connected to HMIS
3. Number of programs serving people experiencing homelessness connected to HMIS



## Engage City-wide Business Districts (BIDS)

The Downtown OKC Business Improvement District (BID) is an area where property owners voted for a special property assessment to enhance their community. The City of Oklahoma City approved the Downtown OKC BID in July 2001. The City contracted with Downtown OKC, Inc., now known as Downtown Oklahoma City Partnership (DOKC) to manage the BID's initiatives. DOKC administers a variety of improvements and services and provides advocacy to advance downtown interests.

DOKC's annual budget is nearly \$1 million and funded by several sources with the largest revenue obtained from special events and sponsorships. The BID currently raises \$2.5 million from special assessments to fund enhanced services including downtown-wide marketing, streetscape maintenance, upkeep of the Bricktown Canal and Underground, and promotion for sub-districts. A volunteer advisory board oversees the BID. Board members represent different neighborhoods or districts of Downtown including the Arts District, Automobile Alley, Bricktown, the Business District, and Deep Deuce.<sup>62</sup>

### Clean Teams

DOKC operates a Clean Team that helps keep Downtown OKC clean and safe by maintaining Project 180 areas, as well as additional landscaping, hardscaping, waste management, bird control, street vacuuming, cigarette butt recycling, Big Belly recycling stations, and post-event cleanup. Clean Teams are a common BID service and can be expanded and used in conjunction with homeless services.

## NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE CLEAN & SAFE TEAM

The Nashville Downtown Partnership manages and carries out the programs provided by the BID. The BID operates with an annual budget that exceeds \$9 million, with much of its revenue coming from property assessments; other sources consist of fees from the parking facility, program management, parking shuttle, bike share program and membership dues. The Partnership works to ensure that downtown is safe, clean and attractive.

The Partnership manages the Clean & Safe Team, consisting of safety ambassadors, hospitality ambassadors and the cleaning team. The safety ambassadors, on foot or Segway, pay close attention to situations that may require police or emergency services. Hospitality ambassadors work to distribute maps, directions, guidebooks and provide recommendations to visitors in the district. The cleaning team works to keep the district clean by power washing sidewalks and alleys, weeding, and removing graffiti and litter.

The Partnership also provides support for homeless outreach through a full-time Outreach Coordinator who concentrates on connecting individuals with high numbers of downtown arrests to transitional and supportive housing. Considered a program operating under the Housing First approach, this program has resulted in 55 clients receiving more than 26,000 days of housing and prevented an estimated 2,170 arrests.

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.greateroklahomacity.com/incentives/bid-districts/>; <https://downtownokc.com/about-dokc/>; <https://downtownokc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/DOKC-Strategic-Plan-Executive-Summary-FINAL.pdf>



Many Clean Team members in cities across the United States typically provide services like OKC's Clean Team. These services may include patrolling and being the "eyes and ears" for the district, eliminating litter and graffiti, cleaning alleyways and sidewalks, increasing aesthetics by maintaining planters and hanging flower baskets, providing safety escorts, addressing public disturbances and reporting on potential and actual emergencies, homeless outreach and assisting individuals in the district.

Additional services may include serving as a direct liaison for street level businesses in the district, working on special projects for the district, notifying appropriate agencies and authorities of incidences of panhandling, public intoxication, intimidating behaviors and other behaviors that discourage public enjoyment, jumping car batteries, and performing CPR and other first aid services.

### Strategy Description

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The Task Force seeks to engage OKC's BID Clean Team to enhance support for homeless outreach services and connecting people experiencing homelessness with needed resources. This may include working with the BID to establish a full-time Outreach Coordinator like Nashville, Tennessee's BID described above. Such a position may enhance OKC's current coordinated outreach partnership between OKC's Homeless Services and the Homeless Alliance.

Some communities have worked to hire people experiencing homelessness or those who have recently exited homelessness as Clean Team members. The Task Force may also encourage the City to leverage any monetary support for the BID with an agreement that a certain number of people exiting homelessness are considered and/or employed as Clean Team members.

### Recommended Actions

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1. The Task Force may create a working group to engage with OKC's BID Clean Team. This group may need to educate the BID on the economic impact of homelessness on Downtown OKC and ways other BIDS have worked with homeless services to incorporate homeless outreach and engage in the coordinated entry system. Other duties may include:
  - a. Arrange trainings for Clean Team members on the role of the CoC, coordinated entry, standardized assessment and the resources available for people experiencing homelessness in the city.
  - b. Develop job description for BID Clean Team Outreach Coordinator.
  - c. Encourage the City to leverage any monetary support for the BID with an agreement that a certain number of people exiting homelessness are considered and/or employed as Clean Team members.
2. Launch expanded Clean Team program that incorporates homeless outreach and employment of people exiting homelessness.
3. Track outcomes such as the number of people experiencing homelessness that are identified, assessed and entered through coordinated entry and number of people exiting homelessness employed as Clean Team members.



### Resources Needed

Resources include time for working group meetings to engage with the BID to enhance homeless outreach services.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Establish working group to engage with the BID	By July 2021
Launch expanded Clean Team program	By June 30, 2022
Track outcomes	July 2022 – ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of people experiencing homelessness that are identified, assessed and entered through coordinated entry
2. Number of people exiting homelessness employed as Clean Team members



## 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, 1,132 emergency shelter beds exist in OKC through various organizations and programs. Despite this, 384 individuals were found unsheltered in OKC during the 2019 PIT count, one of the highest unsheltered counts seen in recent years.<sup>63</sup> 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 the Fall of 2020 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 our proposed strategies over the next five years, we recommend City Care and key stakeholders continue to evaluate the need to expand low-barrier emergency shelter bed capacity in the city.

The Task Force seeks to enhance emergency shelter in OKC by implementing the following actions:



Winter Shelter Expansion



Expand Shelter Services



Expand City Care's Beacon Tags Program

<sup>63</sup> OKC 2019 PIT Count Report.



## Winter Shelter Expansion

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. However, 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. As of late December 2019, the weather contingency plan had been activated 16 nights and the highest use on November 11, 2019 when people experiencing homelessness occupied 141 beds. Some providers open their overflow beds on other cold nights above 32 degrees. If those nights are included, then the winter contingency plan had been activated 39 nights as of late December 2019, with the first opening on October 30, 2019.<sup>64</sup>

### Strategy Description

Planning participants discussed expanding the winter contingency plan to other times of year during inclement weather. The Task Force should work with the shelters operating under the winter contingency plan to expand their emergency shelter capacity at any time 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.

#### NEED SHELTER WHEN IT'S COLD OUTSIDE?

The following local shelters will be providing overflow beds during the winter when the temperature drops to **32 degrees or below**.

To find out when beds are available, contact Heartline by dialing **2-1-1**

OR

Go to [www.heartlineoklahoma.org/emergency-winter-shelter-beds](https://heartlineoklahoma.org/emergency-winter-shelter-beds) and check the dates listed on the page

SHELTER	LOCATION	BEDS	POPULATION	HOURS	BUS ROUTES
SALVATION ARMY	1001 N PENNSYLVANIA AVE	90	MEN, WOMEN & FAMILIES	7PM – 6AM	008, 007, 038
CITY RESCUE MISSION (BEDS OPEN AT 40 DEGREES)	800 W CALIFORNIA AVE	40	20 MEN, 20 WOMEN (WOMEN WITH CHILDREN WILL NOT BE TURNED AWAY)	MEN 8:30PM – 6AM WOMEN & CHILDREN 6PM – 6AM (CHECK-IN FOR EVERYONE AT 6PM WHEN TEMP IS BELOW 30)	012
JESUS HOUSE	1335 W SHERIDAN AVE	16	MEN	SIGN UP FROM 1PM – 4:30PM	009
GRACE RESCUE MISSION	2205 EXCHANGE AVE	10	MEN	5PM (DINNER) – 6AM	012, 016
SISU YOUTH	3131 N PENNSYLVANIA AVE	5	YOUTH AGED 14 - 22	7PM – 8AM (CHECK-IN FROM 7PM – 8PM)	008

<sup>64</sup> <https://heartlineoklahoma.org/emergency-winter-shelter-beds>; <https://www.okgazette.com/oklahoma/cover-winter-contingency/Content?oid=6855223>





### Recommended Actions

1. The Task Force should convene the emergency shelters and key stakeholders to evaluate the winter contingency plan and develop an expanded inclement weather contingency plan, including opening during periods of excessive rain or other abnormal climatic conditions such as hail, high wind, severe dust storms, extreme high temperature or any combination thereof.
2. Establish the inclement weather contingency plan for emergency shelters.
3. Track outcomes including number of days the inclement weather contingency plan is activated, reason for the activation, and number/percent of emergency shelter beds occupied.

### Resources Needed

The emergency shelters involved in the winter contingency plan reported additional costs for staffing and security, as well as for supplies such as food and other basic necessities. Currently, the plan partners with the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma to provide extra meals during the winter and the United Way provided a special emergency grant to defray the cost of staffing and security at shelters.<sup>65</sup>

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene emergency shelters and key stakeholders	July 2020
Establish the inclement weather contingency plan	August 2020
Track outcomes	August 2020 – ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of days the inclement weather contingency plan is activated
2. Reason for the activation
3. Number/percent of emergency shelter beds occupied

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.okgazette.com/oklahoma/cover-winter-contingency/Content?oid=6855223>



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## Expand Shelter Services

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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

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Planning participants discussed expanding emergency shelter services to better connect people experiencing homelessness and specific hard-to-serve populations with housing and support services. We discuss these services in detail below:

#### Shelter Diversion Case Managers

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To effectively combat homelessness, communities should help residents maintain or regain housing before they need to enter an emergency shelter. Diversion is a strategy that helps people experiencing a housing crisis quickly identify and access safe alternatives to emergency shelter. Diversion case managers engage with individuals and families when they arrive at the emergency shelter and try to connect them with other available housing options and flexible financial assistance to help the individual or family resolve their immediate housing crisis.

Diversion is most effective when it is established at the access points to the homeless system and attempted with everyone seeking emergency shelter. It should be used when a person or family is seeking shelter but before intake.

Outcomes from diversion strategies include reduced new entries into homelessness, shelter wait lists and demand for limited shelter beds. It also allows shelters to better target people with higher needs and connect them with housing navigation and intensive case management support.<sup>66</sup>

#### Housing Navigators

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Like in other strategies described previously, housing navigators help individuals and families find and secure housing. Navigators are informed and knowledgeable of local housing processes and requirements and 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.

At the emergency shelter, housing navigators help individuals and families 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

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<sup>66</sup> <https://endhomelessness.org/whats-role-emergency-shelter-diversion/>;  
<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/role-emergency-shelter-diversion/>



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.

#### Intensive Case Managers

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For people experiencing homelessness chronically, intensive case management in conjunction with the housing navigator, helps connect the person to health, food, clothing and other shelter services while the person is seeking housing. Once the person is successfully housed, the intensive case manager provides support services for an extended period to ensure the person exiting homelessness achieves housing stability. Both the intensive case manager and the housing navigator will need to build effective relationships to avoid duplication in service or client confusion.

#### SOAR Representatives

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SAMHSA's SOAR program increases access to Social Security disability benefits for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with a serious mental illness, medical condition or co-occurring substance use disorder. The SOAR model assists children and adults in applying for these benefits, including those returning to their communities from jails and hospitals. Youth aging out of the foster care system may apply 180 days before their foster care eligibility will end due to age. A SOAR-trained case manager can help people complete SSI and SSDI applications. During the application process, the specialist keeps in contact with the applicant, the Social Security Administration field offices, and state agencies. Case managers are trained through the SOAR Stepping Stones to Recovery training curriculum.<sup>67</sup>

#### Respite Care Ward

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Medical respite care is acute and post-acute care for persons experiencing homelessness who are too ill or frail to recover from a physical illness or injury on the streets but are not ill enough to be in a hospital. Medical respite is short-term residential care that allows individuals experiencing homelessness the opportunity to rest in a safe environment while accessing medical care and other supportive services. Freestanding facilities, homeless shelters, nursing homes and transitional housing can all offer medical respite care to people experiencing homelessness.<sup>68</sup>

People experiencing homelessness are at higher risk of poor health. For example, a person experiencing homelessness is more likely to suffer from asthma, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes compared to people with stable housing. Despite poor health, people experiencing homelessness tend to go without medical treatment and end up in hospital emergency rooms when their health needs reach a critical level. Hospitals often discharge people with prescriptions and care instructions that can be problematic for a person experiencing homelessness to afford or manage on their own.

A respite care ward in emergency shelters would provide a place for discharge planners and the discharge planning liaisons described in the Discharge Planning Liaison Program above to place people experiencing homelessness in need of recuperative care following their hospital discharge. Skilled nurse practitioners or nursing assistants would provide the medical respite services.

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<sup>67</sup> <https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/grant-programs-services/soar>

<sup>68</sup> <https://nhchc.org/clinical-practice/medical-respite-care/>



### Special Population Suites

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Individuals in a housing crisis need somewhere safe to go immediately. However, certain individuals and families worry that emergency shelter is not a safe option for themselves or their children. Often, emergency shelter space allows for many different people to congregate together in a large facility. The trauma associated with entering an emergency shelter may be reduced if certain populations can access separate spaces away from the larger group. Such populations may include survivors of domestic violence, transitional age youth, and families including single fathers with daughters or single mothers with teenage sons. The Salvation Army offers family suites that can accommodate these familial dynamics, but space is limited and needs to be expanded.

The Task Force should work with the emergency shelters to determine how to best expand these various case management and special population services within their current facilities.

### Recommended Actions

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AI recommends that the shelter support services program begin with a pilot in Year 2 and Year 3. By tracking outcomes and reaching performance measures, the program can gain leverage to expand in Year 4 and beyond.

1. The Task Force should convene an implementation group including the emergency shelters, the Homeless Alliance and other key stakeholders to determine:
  - a. The organization to manage the shelter support services program such as City Care, the Homeless Alliance or another agency.
  - b. Mission, goals and vision of the shelter support services program.
  - c. The responsibilities and services to be provided, including the number of shelter diversion case managers, housing navigators, intensive case managers, SOAR representatives and skilled nurses or nurses assistants needed to launch the pilot program, the responsibilities of each position, as well as the salary and benefits to be offered, as well as other operational logistics including the establishment of the flexible financial assistance fund to divert people from emergency shelter and the fund amount to be maintained each year.
  - d. Funding for the shelter support services program.
  - e. Training protocols for the case managers and medical personnel on the role of the CoC, coordinated entry, standardized assessment and the resources available for people experiencing homelessness in the City.
2. Create program eligibility requirements and operating procedures; create job descriptions for shelter diversion case managers, housing navigators, intensive case managers, SOAR representatives and skilled nurses or nurse assistants.
3. Advertise the shelter diversion case manager, housing navigator, intensive case manager, SOAR representative and skilled nurse or nurse assistant job descriptions requesting applicants, conduct interviews, hire appropriate candidates and conduct training.
4. Launch shelter support services pilot program, including promotion of the new services and resources available at the emergency shelters for OKC residents in need.
5. Track outcomes such as the number/percent of individuals or families diverted from the emergency shelter, the number/percent of individuals or families that receive financial



assistance, the reasons for receiving financial assistance, the amount of funds provided, the number/percent of people who maintained housing due to the assistance, and the amount of time assistance was provided for, the number/percent of individuals or families housed, demographics of the individual or family housed, length of time the person or family stays housed, the number/percent of individuals who receive intensive case management, number/percent of individuals connected to supportive services, number of SSI or SSDI applications, number/percent of SSI or SSDI applications approved, number/percent of individuals who secure health insurance, number/percent of individuals who secure Medicaid or Medicare, number/percent of individuals in respite care, reason for respite care, how long respite care is provided and health outcomes post-respite, number of beds allocated for special populations and number/percent of special population beds occupied.

6. Expand the shelter support services program, including securing additional funding to expand the staffing capacity of shelter diversion case managers, housing navigators, intensive case managers, SOAR representatives and skilled nurses or nurse assistants as appropriate, as well as enhance the flexible financial assistance fund.

### Resources Needed

Resources needed for this action include a location for the implementation group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings, job interviews and educational trainings. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media. Other resources will be needed for the specific interventions associated with this program and are further described below.

We also assume that the shelter support services program will need an executive director or program manager to lead the implementation efforts and manage the program thereafter. The average salary for a nonprofit executive director in the United States is \$72,639. A fringe package averaging 30% of this salary, or \$21,792, increases the average compensation package to \$94,431. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$100,097.

### Shelter Diversion Case Managers and Flexible Financial Assistance Fund

We assume an average salary of \$16.34 per hour based on the recent job posting for a case manager position at NorthCare in OKC<sup>69</sup>. As a full-time position, this results in a yearly salary of approximately \$34,000 and a benefits package averaging 30% of the case manager's salary or \$10,200. The average compensation package for a new case manager position totals \$44,200. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$46,852.

We assume one shelter diversion case manager is needed at each of the five current emergency shelters active in the winter contingency plan including Salvation Army, City Rescue Mission, Jesus House, Grace Rescue and SISU Youth, as well as at the new City Care emergency shelter opening later this year for a total of six shelter diversion case managers. This results in a total of \$281,112 to fund the six shelter diversion case manager positions.

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<sup>69</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/q-Pact-l-Oklahoma-jobs.html?vjk=38a0cfb34bd80534>



Shelter diversion case managers need access to a flexible financial assistance fund to help people resolve an immediate housing crisis to divert them from the emergency shelter. The pilot program may wish to secure initial funding of \$500,000 for this purpose and will require yearly funding thereafter.

#### Housing Navigators

We assume an average salary of \$38,000 for each housing navigator position<sup>70</sup> and a benefits package averaging 30% of the navigator's salary, or \$11,400. The average compensation package for a new housing navigator position totals \$49,400. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$52,364.

We again recommend the pilot program begin with one housing navigator at each emergency shelter active in the winter contingency plan including Salvation Army, City Rescue Mission, Jesus House, Grace Rescue and SISU Youth, as well as at the new City Care emergency shelter opening later this year for a total of six shelter housing navigators. This results in a total of \$314,184 to fund the six housing navigator positions.

#### Intensive Case Managers

We assume an average salary of \$16.34 per hour based on the recent job posting for a case manager position at NorthCare in OKC<sup>71</sup>. As a full-time position, this results in a yearly salary of approximately \$34,000 and a benefits package averaging 30% of the case manager's salary or \$10,200. The average compensation package for a new case manager position totals \$44,200. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$46,852.

We assume one intensive case manager is needed at each of the six emergency shelters described above. This results in a total of \$281,112 to fund the six intensive case manager positions.

#### SOAR Representatives

We assume an average salary for the SOAR representative the housing navigator position described above totaling \$38,000 per year, and a benefits package averaging 30% of the representative's salary, or \$11,400. The average compensation package for a new SOAR representative position totals \$49,400. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$52,364.

We assume that the SOAR representatives can alternate between the emergency shelters or be scheduled by appointment. We recommend the pilot program begin with two SOAR representatives for a total cost of \$104,728.

#### Respite Care Ward

We assume an average salary for a registered nurse of \$78,520<sup>72</sup>, and a benefits package averaging 30% of the nurse's salary, or \$23,556. The average compensation package for a new registered nurse position totals \$102,076. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$108,201. A certified nursing assistant salary is considerably less at approximately \$25,355 per year. A benefits package averaging 30% or \$7,607 and FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost \$34,940.

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<sup>70</sup> <https://www.ziprecruiter.com/Salaries/Housing-Navigator-Salary>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/q-Pact-l-Oklahoma-jobs.html?vjk=38a0cfb34bd80534>

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/career/registered-nurse/salaries/Oklahoma-City--OK>



We assume that a respite care ward will be established at one of the six emergency shelters described herein with one registered nurse and one certified nursing assistant for a total staffing cost of \$139,668.

This cost may be reduced through partnerships with the local university or hospital to establish internships or pro bono nursing services.

### Special Population Suites

Resources needed for this strategy includes staff time to determine the feasibility of creating a space for special populations within existing shelters, as well as any materials to construct or rehabilitate emergency shelter facilities, furnishings or other needed provisions.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene implementation group	By July 2021
Hire executive director or program manager for the shelter support services program	By December 30, 2021
Create program eligibility requirements and operating procedures; create all job descriptions and training protocols	By March 2023
Secure necessary funding for the shelter support services program	By March 2023
Hire shelter diversion case managers, housing navigators, intensive case managers, and SOAR representatives; establish the flexible financial assistance fund; establish partnerships with local university or hospital for internships or pro bono opportunities, or directly hire registered nurse and certified nursing assistant for respite ward	By May 31, 2023
Launch shelter support services pilot program	By June 30, 2023
Advertise and promote the program, educate CoC providers and others on the new services and resources available to residents should they require emergency shelter services	July 2023 – ongoing
Track all outcomes	July 2023 – ongoing
Determine program expansion opportunities after one year of operation including additional funding needs and staffing capacity, hire additional positions as appropriate to expand the shelter support services program	July 2024 – ongoing



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### Performance Measures

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1. Number/percent of individuals or families diverted from the emergency shelter
2. Number/percent of individuals or families that receive financial assistance
3. The reasons for receiving financial assistance
4. The amount of funds provided
5. Number/percent of people who maintained housing due to the assistance
6. Amount of time assistance was provided for
7. Number/percent of individuals or families housed
8. Demographics of the individual or family housed
9. Length of time the person or family stays housed
10. Number/percent of individuals who receive intensive case management
11. Number/percent of individuals connected to supportive services
12. Number of SSI or SSDI applications
13. Number/percent of SSI or SSDI applications approved
14. Number/percent of individuals who secure health insurance
15. Number/percent of individuals who secure Medicaid or Medicare
16. Number/percent of individuals in respite care
17. Reason for respite care
18. How long respite care is provided
19. Health outcomes post-respite
20. Number of beds allocated for special populations
21. Number/percent of special population beds occupied





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### **Expand City Care's Beacon Tags Program**

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City Care plans to launch the Samaritan app in July 2020 where "Good Samaritans" in OKC can download the app for free. The app shows the story and goals of the person experiencing homelessness in the city and provides a way for residents to donate funds to support the person's exit out of homelessness.

City Care's outreach teams 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.

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#### **Strategy Description**

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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.

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#### **Recommended Actions**

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1. The Task Force should monitor the outcomes of City Care's beacon tags 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 City Care's beacon tags program as appropriate.
3. Launch the expanded beacon tags program.
4. Track outcomes including number of beacon-holders, number of Samaritan app users, amount of funds donated per beacon-holder, number/percent of beacon-holders housed, demographics of the beacon-holder housed, and the length of time the beacon-holder stays housed.

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#### **Resources Needed**

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The United Way of Central Oklahoma's WayFinder Grant provided \$55,000 for City Care's Samaritan or beacon tags pilot project.<sup>73</sup> City Care estimates that the OKC pilot will help 50 unhoused people address their housing needs, as well as employment and health challenges.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> <https://oknursingtimes.com/031215/united-way-of-central-oklahoma-announces-17-1-million-fundraising-goal-during-campaign-kickoff/>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.citycareokc.org/samaritan>



### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Monitor City Care beacon tags pilot program	July 2020 – July 2021
Secure funding for expanded beacon tags program	July 2021 – June 2022
Launch expanded beacon tags program	By June 30, 2022
Track outcomes	July 2022 - ongoing

### 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



## CASE MANAGEMENT

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.”<sup>75</sup>

The Task Force seeks to case management in OKC through the following actions:



Case Manager Training and Professional Development



Intensive Case Management Program

### 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.”<sup>76</sup>

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.

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.cmsa.org/who-we-are/what-is-a-case-manager/>

<sup>76</sup> [http://www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/BestPractices/InnovationStation/ISDocs/NY\\_Healthy%20Babies%20are%20Worth%20the%20Wait.pdf](http://www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/BestPractices/InnovationStation/ISDocs/NY_Healthy%20Babies%20are%20Worth%20the%20Wait.pdf)



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## The Benefits of Case Management

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A recent systematic review<sup>77</sup> 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.<sup>78</sup>

Case management intervention reduces homelessness by connecting clients to rent subsidies, permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing and housing first programs. Furthermore, in addition to the benefits detailed above, case management also helps increase insurance coverage. 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.<sup>79</sup>

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## Challenges for Effective Case Management

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Despite the documented benefits of case management, organizations still may face multiple challenges in implementation. For example, implementing case management model assertive community treatment (ACT) in programs funded through the U.S. Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Treatment for Homeless Program was met with multiple challenges. These included the recruitment and retainment of clinical staff, vital clinical staff funding, recruitment and retainment of individuals experiencing homelessness, involvement of family, friends and significant others, staff knowledge development, and appropriate billing for outreach and delivery of services both on-site and in the community.

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## The Onboarding Process

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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

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<sup>77</sup> De Vet R, Van Luijckelaar MJA, Brilleslijper-Kater SN, Vanderplasschen W, Beijersbergen M, Wolf J. Effectiveness of case management for homeless persons: A systematic review. *Am J Public Health*. 2013;103(10):e13-e26.)

<sup>78</sup> Gordon RJ, Rosenheck RA, Zweig RA, Harpaz-Rotem I. Health and social adjustment of homeless older adults with a mental illness. *Psychiatr Serv*. 2012; 63:561-568

<sup>79</sup> <http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Cost-Savings-from-PSH.pdf>



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.

Companies need to create a culture where great case managers want to work. A strong culture includes a positive work environment that fosters respect, competitive compensation and engaged case managers. 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.<sup>80</sup>

The curriculum may include topics such 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, 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

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Key informants 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 and case managers.

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 through pay for performance models, help with student loan repayment, career ladders and by providing pathways to certification.

The Task Force should seek to enhance training and professional development by establishing an onboarding curriculum for case managers and others.

### Recommended Actions

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1. The Task Force may create a working group or subcommittee of CoC members to establish the onboarding curriculum and establish agreements with community organizations to participate. The subcommittee may also explore an onboarding curriculum for community members to educate them on how to best help a person experiencing homelessness, including who best to

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<sup>80</sup> <https://careexcellence.org/blog/onboarding-case-managers/>



contact to connect a person experiencing homelessness with the services and resources they need. The subcommittee may also explore ways to help organizations establish pay for performance models and providing pathways to certification, as well as other benefits such as ways to help their staff with student loan repayment or establishing career ladders.

2. Establish onboarding curriculum, which may include:
  - a. Developing a welcome packet for new hires of participating organizations with valuable information about the Task Force, 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 including 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, completing effective home visits, and working with special populations and their needs.
  - c. Developing partnerships with organizations or the 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.
  - g. Include an onboarding program to educate community members on how to help a person experiencing homelessness, including who best to contact to connect a person experiencing homelessness with the services and resources they need.
3. Launch the onboarding program.
4. The working group or subcommittee may wish to meet at least quarterly to discuss the onboarding process and how it can be improved for both satisfaction of the case managers and outcomes for the individuals being served. Once the onboarding program is established, the working group or subcommittee may shift to working with organizations to help establish pay for performance models and providing pathways to certification, as well as other benefits such as ways to help their staff with student loan repayment or establishing career ladders.
5. Track outcomes such as number of organizations participating in the onboarding curriculum, number of case managers who participate in the onboarding curriculum, number of welcome packets provided, number of trainings completed, and number/percent of case managers retained after one year.

#### Resources Needed

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The resources needed for this action item include staff time for working group or subcommittee meetings to develop the onboarding curriculum, establish agreements with community organizations to participate, partnerships with organizations or the local university to provide the trainings, as well as ongoing assessment and trainings.



Other resources may include a location for all meetings and case manager trainings if an in-person onboarding program is established. If an online training portal is primarily used, then resources may include the necessary software and equipment to host the online training portal. This online portal may then be available at any time to agencies and community members to access.

#### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Establish working group or CoC Board subcommittee	By July 2022
Establish onboarding curriculum and agreements with community organizations to participate; this may include purchasing or developing an online training portal that agencies and community members can access at any time	August 2022 – May 2023
Launch the onboarding program	By June 30, 2023
Track all outcomes and convene regularly to discuss the onboarding process and how it can be improved, as well as working with organizations to help establish pay for performance models and providing pathways to certification, as well as other benefits such as ways to help their staff with student loan repayment or establishing career ladders.	July 2023 – ongoing

#### 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 welcome packets provided
4. Number of trainings completed
5. Number/percent of case managers retained after one year



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## Intensive Case Management

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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.<sup>81</sup>

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### Strategy Description

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The Task Force seeks to leverage PACT teams for intensive case management and to connect people experiencing homelessness with housing resources.

The Program of Assertive Community Treatment<sup>82</sup> (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.

PACT program participants must be adults and have:

- A primary diagnosis of Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder or Bipolar with psychotic features; or individuals with a primary diagnosis of substance abuse, brain injury, and
- Four psychiatric hospitalizations in the past 24 months or lengths of stay *totaling* over 30 days in the past 12 months, and
- Three of the following:
  1. Persistent or recurrent severe affective, psychotic or suicidal symptoms.
  2. Homeless, imminent risk of losing housing or living in substandard/unsafe housing OR residing in supported housing but clinically assessed to be able to live in a more independent living situation if intensive services are provided.
  3. High risk of or criminal justice involvement in the past 12 months.

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<sup>81</sup> De Vet R, Van Luijcklaar MJA, Brilleslijper-Kater SN, Vanderplasschen W, Beijersbergen M, Wolf J. Effectiveness of case management for homeless persons: A systematic review. *Am J Public Health*. 2013;103(10):e13-e26.

<sup>82</sup> [https://www.ok.gov/odmhsas/Mental\\_Health/Program\\_of\\_Assertive\\_Community\\_Treatment\\_\(PACT\).html](https://www.ok.gov/odmhsas/Mental_Health/Program_of_Assertive_Community_Treatment_(PACT).html)





4. Inability to consistently perform the range of practical daily living tasks required for basic adult functioning.
5. Inability to participate in traditional office-based services.
6. Co-existing substance abuse disorder greater than 6 months.

Oklahoma County is served by PACT and providers include, but may not be limited to NorthCare, Red Rock Behavioral Health and Central Oklahoma Community Mental Health Center.

NorthCare recently posted a job description seeking applicants for a PACT case manager to be a member of the PACT multidisciplinary team. Responsibilities include performing rehabilitation and support functions and assist patients with treatment. Other responsibilities include substance abuse services, education, support and consultation to families, and crisis intervention. A PACT case manager may also assist patients with personal hygiene, grocery shopping, food preparation, finding and maintaining safe and affordable housing, adequate financial support, budgeting, accessing reliable transportation, support and observation of medication regimen, and linking with a personal physician and dentist. A PACT case manager may also assist with vocational rehabilitation and advocate for the patient to support employment at prospective or existing employers.

Due to the strict eligibility criteria, not all people experiencing homelessness will be eligible for the PACT program. The Task Force may use the PACT program model to expand intensive case management services to those who would not otherwise be eligible for PACT team services. Intensive case managers would include similar job duties as the PACT case manager 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. Intensive case managers may also work in conjunction with other strategies outlined in this Action Plan including outreach and engagement services such as the Police Outreach Teams, library social workers, resource liaisons at transit stops and the mobile services team.

### Recommended Actions

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1. Convene a working group of service providers and other key stakeholders through the Task Force to determine:
  - a. The number of intensive case manager positions necessary, as well as the organization that will manage the intensive case management program such as NorthCare, Mental Health Association Oklahoma, Red Rock Behavioral Health, or another agency.
  - b. The responsibilities and duties of the intensive case manager positions, including the salary and benefits to be offered.
  - c. Funding for the intensive case manager positions.
  - d. Referral process for CoC providers and others.
2. Create intensive case management program eligibility requirements and operating procedures.
3. Create intensive case manager job description.
4. Advertise case manager job descriptions, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidates.
5. Educate and train CoC providers on referral process to the intensive case management program.



6. Track outcomes such as number of individuals or families enrolled in the program, number/percent of individuals or families placed into housing, demographics of individual or family housed, length of time the person or family stays housed, number/percent of individuals employed, number/percent of individuals who maintain employment, number/percent of individuals connected to other benefits such as Social Security, and connection to other community resources.

### Resources Needed

Resources needed for this action include a location for the working group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings, job interviews and educational trainings for CoC providers. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media.

We again propose a pilot program for the intensive case management program to determine the appropriate level of need in the program.

We assume an average salary of \$16.34 per hour based on the recent job posting for a similar position at NorthCare<sup>83</sup>. This results in a yearly salary of approximately \$34,000 and a benefits package averaging 30% of the case manager's salary or \$10,200. The average compensation package for a new case manager position totals \$44,200. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$46,852.

If a pilot program provides ten intensive case manager positions, then the cost to fund these new positions will total \$468,520.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene working group	July 2022
Secure necessary funding for intensive case manager positions	By March 2023
Create intensive case manager job description	By March 2023
Advertise case manager job description, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidates	April – May 2023
Launch intensive case management pilot program	By June 30, 2023
Track outcomes	July 1, 2023 – ongoing
Determine intensive case management pilot program expansion and continue to track outcomes	July 1, 2023 – ongoing

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/q-Pact-I-Oklahoma-jobs.html?vjk=38a0cfb34bd80534>



### Performance Measures

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



## TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE USE, MENTAL, BEHAVIORAL AND PRIMARY HEALTH

About 30% of people experiencing homelessness chronically suffer from mental illness and about 50% have co-occurring substance use problems<sup>84</sup>. The Task Force seeks to enhance treatment for substance use, mental and behavioral health, as well as primary health care through the following actions:



Mobile Services Team



Peer Support Mentor Program

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### Mobile Services Team

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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 food, healthcare or employment services, 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.

### Strategy Description

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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 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 services provide help with transportation to clinics, food vouchers, hygiene kits and clothing, housing application, as well as applying for Social Security or other benefits.

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<sup>84</sup> [https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs\\_campaigns/homelessness\\_programs\\_resources/hrc-factsheet-current-statistics-prevalence-characteristics-homelessness.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/homelessness_programs_resources/hrc-factsheet-current-statistics-prevalence-characteristics-homelessness.pdf)



Access to dental care should also be included in mobile services. Poor dental care is linked to other negative health outcomes such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke. Poor dental hygiene can lead to employment barriers in both finding a job and maintaining one. Acute dental conditions cost nearly two days of work per year per 100 people in the U.S. according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention<sup>85</sup>. About one in three adults with incomes below 138 percent of the poverty level say that the appearance of their teeth and mouth affected their ability to interview for a job.<sup>86</sup>

## 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.

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<sup>85</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/in-plain-sight/bad-teeth-broken-dreams-lack-dental-care-keeps-many-out-v18906511>

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.ada.org/en/science-research/health-policy-institute/oral-health-and-well-being>;  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/19/upshot/how-dental-inequality-hurts-americans.html>



A consistent mobile service schedule can aid housing navigators, case managers, peer support specialists and others in setting and keeping appointments with clients who may lack transportation or inconsistent access to a phone. Similarly, people experiencing homelessness with chronic health conditions would receive more regular access to healthcare services.

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.

### Recommended Actions

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1. Convene an implementation team through the Task Force including key stakeholders from local hospitals, mental and behavioral healthcare providers, the Homeless Alliance and other nonprofit providers to evaluate the long-term actions necessary to establish a mobile services team in OKC. The implementation team may conduct the following activities:
  - a. 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, conduct outreach to organizations who may provide services on the mobile services vehicle, and establish primary partnerships.
  - c. Provide a final Implementation Plan Report documenting the work to date.
2. Establish a planning team with all primary partners. Planning team activities may include:
  - a. Secure the necessary funding to launch the mobile services program, including start-up and maintenance costs through fundraising events for private funding, federal or local foundation grant opportunities, or City and County funds.
  - b. Secure official commitments from all organizations that will provide the primary services.
  - c. Buy vehicle to serve as mobile services unit, renovate based on service provider needs.
  - d. Promote and educate the public, CoC providers and others on the mobile services program.
  - e. Establish a mobile services schedule.
3. Launch the mobile services program.
4. Maintain mobile services program and track outcomes such as number of people experiencing homelessness identified and assessed through coordinated entry, number/percent of people to receive services and which services received, and the number/percent of people connected to housing resources and successfully housed.



## Resources Needed

Initial resources will include implementation and planning group meeting locations, staff time and material costs. Additional costs may include fundraising event costs such as venue fees, refreshments and entertainment fees.

Start-up costs for the mobile services program include vehicle purchase estimated at \$300-400,000. Renovation costs may vary depending on the services provided and extent of renovation needed.

Maintaining the mobile services program each year may total between \$500-700,000, which includes such costs as driver salary and benefits, portable computer and software costs, insurance, supplies for service providers, office supplies and printing, gasoline, phone service, administration costs, maintenance costs for vehicle, as well as depreciation in vehicle value.

## 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.<sup>87</sup>

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.<sup>88</sup>

## Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene implementation team	By July 2023
Determine the primary services that will be offered on the mobile services vehicle, conduct outreach to organizations who may provide services, and establish primary partnerships. Provide a final Implementation Plan Report.	By May 2024

<sup>87</sup> Oriol, N.E., Cote, P.J., Vavasis, A.P. *et al.* Calculating the return on investment of mobile healthcare. *BMC Med* 7, 27 (2009). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1741-7015-7-27>

<sup>88</sup> Morpew T<sup>1</sup>, Scott L, Li M, *et al.* Mobile health care operations and return on investment in predominantly underserved children with asthma: the breathmobile program. *Popul Health Manag.* 2013 Aug;16(4):261-9. doi: 10.1089/pop.2012.0060. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23941048>



Milestone	Timeline
Convene planning team	June 2024
Secure all necessary funding and official commitments from organizations who will provide services on mobile services vehicle	By May 2025
Purchase mobile services vehicle and complete necessary renovations, establish schedule, and promote and educate the public, CoC providers and others	By June 2025
Launch mobile services program	By June 30, 2025
Track outcomes	July 2025 – ongoing

#### Performance Measures

1. Number of number of people experiencing homelessness identified and assessed through coordinated entry
2. Number/percent of people to receive services and which services received
3. Number/percent of people connected to housing resources and successfully housed





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## Peer Support Mentor Program

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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.

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 peer 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.<sup>89</sup>

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## Strategy Description

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The Task Force should consider establishing a peer support mentoring program that includes peer support counselors in conjunction with the expanded number of positions for intensive case management as described previously. There are several organizations that provide mental and behavioral healthcare services and resources in OKC, including HOPE Community Services, Mental Health Association Oklahoma, NorthCare and Red Rock Behavioral Health Services.

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## Recommended Actions

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1. Convene a working group of substance use, mental and behavioral health providers and other key stakeholders through the Task Force to determine:
  - a. The organization to manage the peer support mentoring program such as those listed above or another agency.
  - b. The number of peer support mentors needed, including the responsibilities and duties of the position, as well as the salary and benefits to be offered.
  - c. Funding for the peer support mentoring program, including all new staff positions.

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<sup>89</sup> <https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers/core-competencies-peer-workers>;  
[https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs\\_campaigns/brss\\_tacs/core-competencies\\_508\\_12\\_13\\_18.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/brss_tacs/core-competencies_508_12_13_18.pdf)



- d. 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.
2. Secure funding for the peer support mentor program.
3. Education for CoC providers and others about the peer support mentor program, referrals and eligibility requirements.
4. Advertise, interview and hire peer support mentors.
5. Launch the peer support mentor program.
6. Track outcomes such as number of peers served and any instances of relapse.

#### Resources Needed

Resources needed for this action include a location for the working group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings, job interviews and CoC educational trainings and materials. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media.

The average salary of a certified peer specialist is \$14.70 in the United States.<sup>90</sup> As a full-time position, this results in a yearly salary of approximately \$30,576. A benefits package of 30% of the peer specialists' salary or \$9,173, increases the compensation package to \$39,749. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$42,134.

We assume a peer support mentoring program would begin with at least three peer support specialists for a total cost of \$126,402.

#### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene working group	By July 2021
Secure funding for peer support mentoring program and educate providers	By March 2022
Advertise, interview and hire peer support mentors	April – May 2022
Launch peer support mentoring program	By June 30, 2022
Track outcomes	July 1, 2022 – ongoing

#### Performance Measures

1. Number of peers served
2. Number/percent of relapses

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/career/certified-peer-specialist/salaries>



## 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 harder 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 2019 PIT Count Report, 85 youth were experiencing homelessness in OKC on that January night, an increase from 53 in 2018. That represents 7% of the total homeless population in OKC. About 15% were located sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation and 13 of the 85 were considered chronically homeless.

To address the ongoing increase in youth experiencing homelessness in OKC, the Task Force seeks to pursue the following strategies:



Transitional Housing Program for Youth



Expand Pivot's Tiny Home Program



Establish Host Home Programs

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### Transitional Housing Program for Youth

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Transitional housing programs provide supportive housing for youth who are not ready to live independently. Youth can participate in transitional housing programs for up to 21 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 violent 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.<sup>91</sup>

## 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 a robust transitional housing program 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 provide supportive services such as primary care, mental and behavioral health, life skills training and education, vocational or employment services. The program should provide intensive case management, as well as housing navigators, peer support mentors, SOAR representatives and discharge planners. Many participants discussed the need to

<sup>91</sup> <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>



involve the LGBTQ+ community in development of the transitional housing program to address safety and other concerns. Several aspects of the transitional housing program may include:

#### **Intensive Case Managers**

Intensive case management would work with youth participating in the transitional housing program to establish goals to achieve housing stability and help participants meet those goals. Case managers would work to connect youth to secure any necessary documents they need such as birth certificates or state identification, as well as establish primary care, mental or behavioral health care or connections to other community-based support services. Once the youth successfully exits the program, the case manager provides support services for an extended period to ensure the youth maintains housing stability. The case manager works in conjunction with life-skill training and discharge planning, as well as the transitional housing program's team of supportive case management including housing navigators, peer support mentors, and SOAR navigators.

#### **Housing Navigators**

As described previously, Housing Navigators would help youth find and secure housing as they seek to exit the transitional housing program. Navigators are informed and knowledgeable of local housing processes and requirements, 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. Once a youth is deemed eligible for specific housing, the navigator then assists with the housing search and application process as well as compiling and submitting all necessary documentation.

#### **Peer Support Mentors**

Peer support mentors include youth who have successfully completed the transitional housing program and want to help others as they move through the program, especially for youth suffering from substance abuse or behavioral health challenges. Here, peer mentors could help youth engage in the recovery process and reduce their chances of relapse. Peer mentors can also support and motivate participants to work toward their established goals, provide advice and guidance on navigating community-based programming and help with life-skills training programs.

#### **SOAR Representatives**

SAMHSA's SOAR program increases access to Social Security disability benefits for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with a serious mental illness, medical condition or co-occurring substance use disorder. The SOAR model assists youth in applying for these benefits if applicable. Youth aging out of the foster care system may apply 180 days before their foster care eligibility will end due to age. A SOAR-trained case manager would help youth complete SSI and SSDI applications. During the application process, the specialist keeps in contact with the applicant, the Social Security Administration field offices, and state agencies.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> <https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/grant-programs-services/soar>



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### Life-skills Training

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Like the life-skills training provided by Lighthouse Youth & Family Services, life-skills training could include topics such as managing money, resume building and job interviews, literacy and educational assistance, handling transportation, caring for personal health, housework, shopping and preparing food. Other topics may include interpersonal communication skills, negotiation and conflict resolution, problem solving, anger management, time management and advocacy skills.

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### Discharge Planning

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Planning for a youth to successfully exit the transitional housing program should begin when a youth first enters the program. By working with program participants to establish goals, engage in life-skills training and ongoing case management, and connect youth to the community-based supportive services they need, the transitional housing program should lead youth to housing stability and a productive life in the community into the future.

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### Recommended Actions

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AI recommends that this program begin with a pilot program in Year 3 and 4. By tracking outcomes and reaching performance measures, the program can gain leverage to expand in Year 5 and beyond.

1. The Task Force should convene an implementation group including key stakeholders such as Pivot, SISU Youth, other housing organizations, landlords for scattered site options, nonprofit providers and others to determine:
  - a. The organization to manage the transitional housing for youth pilot program such as Pivot, SISU Youth, or another agency.
  - b. Mission, goals and vision of the transitional housing for youth program.
  - c. The responsibilities and services to be provided, including the number of beds or units needed, the housing options such as a communal building with staff on-site, scattered site apartments or both, and overall staffing needs.
  - d. Funding necessary for the pilot program, including initial start-up costs and ongoing operational costs.
  - e. A location if new construction is necessary, as well as staffing and administrative needs during construction.
  - f. Life-skills training curriculum and community partnerships necessary to provide the training.
  - g. What other supportive services may be provided through the program such as primary care, mental and behavioral health care, transportation and childcare for parenting youth.
  - h. Referral process for emergency shelters, service providers and others.
  - i. Educate service providers and the public on the project; promote positive outcomes.
2. Create program eligibility requirements and operating procedures; create job descriptions for all positions including case managers, housing navigators, peer support mentors and life-skills trainers; create life-skills training curriculum.
3. Secure communal building or scattered site apartments.



4. Advertise all staff job descriptions requesting applicants, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidates.
5. Launch transitional housing program for youth pilot program.
6. Educate and train emergency shelters, CoC providers and others on the referral process to the transitional housing program for youth.
7. Track outcomes such as the number of youth participating in the program, number/percent of youth that participate in life-skills training and what training programs, number/percent of youth who secure employment, number/percent of youth that receive GED, college degree or other educational certificates, number/percent of youth connected to SSI, Medicaid, SSDI or other benefits, number/percent of youth housed upon exiting the program, and length of time the youth maintains housing stability.
8. Expand the transitional housing program for youth, including securing additional funding to expand housing options and staffing needs.

### Resources Needed

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Resources needed for this action include a location for the implementation group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings, job interviews and educational trainings. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media.

We also assume that the transitional housing program for youth will need an executive director or program manager to lead the implementation efforts and manage the program thereafter. The average salary for a nonprofit executive director in the United States is \$72,639. A fringe package averaging 30% of this salary, or \$21,792, increases the average compensation package to \$94,431. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$100,097.

Other staffing may include case managers, housing navigators, peer support mentors and SOAR representatives. Resources will be necessary to establish the life-skills training program. We assume discharge planning will be incorporated throughout the case management process and included with intensive case management and housing navigation services.

### Intensive Case Managers

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We assume an average salary of \$16.34 per hour based on the recent job posting for a case manager position at NorthCare in OKC<sup>93</sup>. As a full-time position, this results in a yearly salary of approximately \$34,000 and a benefits package averaging 30% of the case manager's salary or \$10,200. The average compensation package for a new case manager position totals \$44,200. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$46,852.

We assume the pilot program will staff two intensive case managers resulting in a total cost of \$93,704.

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<sup>93</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/q-Pact-I-Oklahoma-jobs.html?vjk=38a0cfb34bd80534>



### Housing Navigators

We assume an average salary of \$38,000 for the housing navigator position<sup>94</sup> and a benefits package averaging 30% of the navigator's salary, or \$11,400. The average compensation package for a new housing navigator position totals \$49,400. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$52,364.

We assume the pilot program will staff one housing navigator for a total cost of \$52,364.

### Peer Support Mentors

The average salary of a certified peer specialist is \$14.70 in the United States.<sup>95</sup> As a full-time position, this results in a yearly salary of approximately \$30,576. A benefits package of 30% of the peer specialists' salary or \$9,173, increases the compensation package to \$39,749. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$42,134.

We assume the pilot program will staff one peer support mentor for a total cost of \$42,134.

### SOAR Representatives

We assume an average salary for the SOAR representative the housing navigator position described above totaling \$38,000 per year, and a benefits package averaging 30% of the representative's salary, or \$11,400. The average compensation package for a new SOAR representative position totals \$49,400. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$52,364.

We assume that the SOAR representative will work on a part-time basis for a total of \$26,182.

### Life-skills Training

The average pay for a life-skills trainer is \$11.00 per hour in the United States.<sup>96</sup> As a full-time position, this results in a yearly salary of approximately \$22,880. A benefits package of 30% of the trainer's salary or \$6,864. The average compensation package for a life-skills trainer totals \$29,744. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$31,529.

We assume the pilot program will staff two life-skills trainers for a total cost of \$63,058. We also assume that the implementation team may work to establish partnerships with the local school district or local university to provide life-skills training courses on specific topics or areas of expertise.

### Operating Costs

On average, transitional housing programs cost about \$1,262 per person to operate in 2006.<sup>97</sup> Accounting for inflation, we assume an average cost today of about \$1,600 per person. If the pilot program seeks to reach 50 youth experiencing homelessness in the city, then we assume an operating budget of at least \$80,000.

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.ziprecruiter.com/Salaries/Housing-Navigator-Salary>

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/career/certified-peer-specialist/salaries>

<sup>96</sup> [https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/life-skills-trainer-salary-SRCH\\_KO0,19.htm](https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/life-skills-trainer-salary-SRCH_KO0,19.htm)

<sup>97</sup> Spellman B, J Khaddur, et al. ABT Associates prepared for United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (March 2010). *Costs Associated with First-Time Homelessness for Families and Individuals*. Accessed at: [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/Costs\\_Homeless.pdf](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/Costs_Homeless.pdf)





The costs to staff and operate the transitional housing pilot program for youth may total at least \$457,539.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recommends several funding sources to implement a transitional housing program for youth including the Transitional Living Program, Maternity Group Homes for Pregnant and Parenting Youth, the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, the Community Services Block Grant, the Community Development Block Grant Program, Federal Home Visiting Program, the Emergency Solutions Grant, the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program, and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

#### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene implementation group	By July 2022
Hire executive director or program manager for the transitional housing program for youth	By December 30, 2022
Create program eligibility requirements and operating procedures; create all job descriptions, referral processes and training protocols; create life-skills training curriculum and establish any necessary community partnerships for services	By March 2024
Secure locations and all necessary funding for the transitional housing pilot program for youth	By March 2024
Hire all support staff	By May 31, 2024
Launch transitional housing pilot program for youth	By June 30, 2024
Track all outcomes and performance measures	July 2024 – ongoing
Determine program expansion opportunities after one year of operation including additional funding needs and staffing capacity	July 2025 – ongoing

#### 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



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### Expand Pivot's Tiny Home Program

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Pivot serves youth in OKC ages 12 to 21. They provide programs and services to help youth meet housing and basic needs, assist with education and employment, develop life skills and mentoring, prevention and intervention services, and therapeutic care.

In October 2019, Pivot opened three tiny homes on a 12-acre plot in Oklahoma City for selected teens who were already engaged in Pivot's programming and case management, and who were over 17 years old. Each 280-square-foot home comes fully furnished and the teens are responsible for their own cooking, cleaning, and day-to-day maintenance. The teens have routine check-ins with 24/7 on-site support staff who keep them on track to meet their educational or employment goals. Rent is \$100 a month with gradual increases to no more than \$150 as the teens meet various benchmarks. Pivot hopes to expand their tiny home community to 85 homes. The initial pilot of three was funded with a \$100,000 grant from Impact Oklahoma and donated tiny home designs from local architect William Silk.<sup>98</sup>

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### Strategy Description

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Planning participants discussed the need for OKC to move toward "affordable by design" strategies such as micro-units and tiny homes to address the need for affordable housing in the city. Pivot's pilot tiny home community provides a way for the city, developers and other key stakeholders to assess the outcomes and evaluate the efficacy of pursuing "affordable by design" strategies into the future.

The Task Force should work with Pivot and monitor the outcomes of Pivot's tiny home community over the next year to determine expansion opportunities. Should the program prove effective, the Task Force can work with Pivot to expand the program the following year. This may include locating and developing building sites for the expansion.

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### Recommended Actions

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1. The Task Force should monitor the outcomes of Pivot's tiny home community pilot program over the next year. If the program proves effective, the Task Force and Pivot may wish to convene relevant stakeholders on how best to expand the program.
2. Secure funding for Pivot's tiny home community such as through the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency.
3. Launch the expanded tiny home community.
4. Track outcomes including number of tiny homes constructed, number of teens in tiny home housing, number/percent of tiny home participants who move to other stable housing, and length of time the former tiny home participant stays housed.

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<sup>98</sup> Nielsen, D. (2019, Oct. 31) *A Tiny Home Campus for Homeless Youth Opens in Oklahoma City*. Accessed at: <https://www.dwell.com/article/pivot-tiny-homes-for-homeless-teens-c3332218>



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### Resources Needed

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The \$100,000 grant from Impact Oklahoma constructed three tiny homes for an average per tiny home cost of \$33,333. Pivot would need about \$2.85 million to construct an additional 85 tiny homes.

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### Milestones and Timeline

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Milestone	Timeline
Monitor Pivot's tiny home community pilot program	July 2020 – July 2021
Secure funding for tiny home community program	July 2021 – June 2022
Launch expanded tiny home community	By June 30, 2022
Track outcomes	July 2022 - ongoing

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### Performance Measures

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1. Number of tiny homes constructed
2. Number of teens in tiny home housing
3. Number/percent of tiny home participants who move to other stable housing
4. Length of time the former tiny home participant stays housed



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## **Establish Host Home Programs**

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Host homes provide a way to divert youth experiencing homelessness from emergency shelter. They provide a safe, temporary and welcoming place for youth to access supportive services, engage in intensive case management and work toward independent housing stability. Many cities in the United States have implemented host home programs to address the increasing rate of youth experiencing homelessness in their communities including but not limited to Minneapolis, Baltimore, Louisville, San Jose and Cincinnati.

Host homes are an arrangement between volunteer community members, or “hosts” and a youth service provider. Hosts provide safe shelter and food, while the youth service provider offers program coordination, host support and case management services. The youth service provider screen hosts through an application process. Selected hosts receive training on topics such as conflict resolution and cultural competency, as well as ongoing support from the youth service provider. Some programs offer hosts financial assistance to defray the costs of hosting the youth or to compensate for loss of rental income. Youth receive individualized case management and help youth set goals and build life skills. Successful programs partner and collaborate with schools, child welfare, justice, and behavioral and mental health service providers.<sup>99</sup>

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### **Strategy Description**

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Planning participants discussed the need to establish a host home program in OKC that diverts youth experiencing homelessness from emergency shelter. Volunteer hosts would be trained and open their homes to youth for about six-months to one year as youth engage in case management and life skills training to move them toward independent housing stability. The Task Force should work with youth service organizations in the community such as Pivot and Sisu Youth Services to establish a host home program that includes intensive case management and connects youth to community-based supportive services and housing support.

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### **Recommended Actions**

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1. The Task Force should convene an implementation group including youth service providers such as Pivot and Sisu Youth Services, emergency shelters, nonprofit providers and others to determine:
  - a. Mission, goals and vision of the host home program.
  - b. The responsibilities and services to be provided, including the number of case managers needed to launch the program and the salary and benefits to be offered, the responsibilities of hosts and youth who participate in the program, the application process for hosts and whether financial assistance will be offered to hosts and in what amount.
  - c. Funding for the host home program.
  - d. Partnerships with local schools, child welfare, justice, and behavioral and mental health service providers.

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<sup>99</sup> <https://www.pointsourceyouth.org/host-homes>; <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>



2. Create program requirements and operating procedures, formalize application process for hosts, establish local partnerships and create job descriptions for case managers or other host home program staff.
3. Advertise the case manager job description requesting applicants, conduct interviews and hire appropriate candidate(s).
4. Launch host home program, including promotion of the program available to youth experiencing homelessness in the city.
5. Track outcomes such as number of volunteer hosts, number of youth participating in the program, number/percent of youth that participate in life-skills training and what training programs, number/percent of youth who secure employment, number/percent of youth that receive GED, college degree or other educational certificates, number/percent of youth connected to other community-based supportive services, number/percent of youth housed upon exiting the program, and length of time the youth maintains housing stability.

### Resources Needed

Resources needed for this action include a location for the implementation group meetings and job interviews, staff time and material costs for all meetings and job interviews. There may be fees to advertise the job positions on websites and social media.

We also assume that the host home program will need an executive director or program manager to lead the implementation efforts and manage the program thereafter. The average salary for a nonprofit executive director in the United States is \$72,639. A fringe package averaging 30% of this salary, or \$21,792, increases the average compensation package to \$94,431. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$100,097.

Other staffing will include intensive case managers. We assume an average salary of \$16.34 per hour based on the recent job posting for a case manager position at NorthCare in OKC<sup>100</sup>. As a full-time position, this results in a yearly salary of approximately \$34,000 and a benefits package averaging 30% of the case manager's salary or \$10,200. The average compensation package for a new case manager position totals \$44,200. FUTA tax of 6% increases the employer cost to \$46,852.

We assume the host home program will initially staff two intensive case managers resulting in a total cost of \$93,704.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Create implementation team	By July 2023
Hire program manager	By December 2023

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/q-Pact-l-Oklahoma-jobs.html?vjk=38a0cfb34bd80534>



Milestone	Timeline
Create program requirements and operating procedures, formalize application process for hosts, establish local partnerships, create all job descriptions	By March 2024
Hire case managers	By May 2024
Launch host home program	By June 30, 2024
Track outcomes	July 2024 – ongoing

#### Performance Measures

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



## 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, consider operating a fare-free route. APTA also suggests partnering with the city and the business community to identify funding opportunities.<sup>101</sup>

The Task Force seeks to enhance transportation services for people experiencing homelessness through the following actions:



Establish a Microtransit Program



Expand Bus Pass Program

### 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 provide transit-like service on a smaller, more flexible scale.<sup>102</sup>

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

<sup>101</sup> 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](https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Transit_Responses_Homeless/REPORT-2018-Leadership-APTA-Team-4-Public-Transit-and-Social-Responsibility.pdf)

<sup>102</sup> 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.<sup>103</sup>

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### 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.

The Task Force should work with EMBARK and other relevant stakeholders such as the Homeless Alliance, City Care, the Salvation Army and other emergency shelter locations to establish a microtransit system.

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### Recommended Actions

1. The Task Force should convene a implementation team of relevant stakeholders including EMBARK, the city, the Homeless Alliance, City Care and other emergency shelters, as well as representatives from the medical community, mental and behavioral healthcare providers, and social service organizations to determine the feasibility of establishing a microtransit program. This team may work to:
  - a. Determine the technology necessary to establish the microtransit program, as well as the fleet necessary such as small SUVs, vans or shuttle buses.
  - b. Establish program eligibility requirements and operating procedures.
  - c. Establish partnerships with relevant stakeholders and an on-demand mobility provider.
  - d. Secure funding for the technology, fleet and maintenance of the program.
2. Establish the Microtransit Program.
3. Track outcomes such as number of riders, rider pick-up and drop-off destinations, and rider satisfaction.

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### Resources Needed

Resources for this action include the time and location for implementation team meetings to establish the Microtransit Program. We assume that the program may begin with a pilot like The Rapid in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We assume funding in the amount of \$400,000 may be necessary to establish a pilot microtransit program.

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<sup>103</sup> <http://blog.ridetherapid.org/new-app-offers-the-rapids-gobus-passengers-convenience-and-less-wait-time/>





### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Create implementation team	By June 2023
Establish partnerships and secure all necessary funding	By April 2025
Establish a Microtransit Program	By June 30, 2025
Track outcomes	July 2025 - ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of riders
2. Rider pick-up and drop-off destinations
3. Satisfaction of riders



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### Expand Bus Pass Program

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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.<sup>104</sup>

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.<sup>105</sup>

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### Strategy Description

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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 be enhanced by streamlining the reduced fare application process, as well as by designating a "certifier" at each agency.

Several agencies in OKC provide free or reduced fare bus passes to their clients experiencing homelessness including the Homeless Alliance, HOPE Community Services and Community Action Agency of Oklahoma City.

The Task Force should work with EMBARK and other relevant stakeholders such as the Homeless Alliance, HOPE Community Services, Community Action Agency, City Care and other emergency shelters 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.

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<sup>104</sup> <https://apnews.com/d924386dd1b54c9bb44427459fa596cf>

<sup>105</sup> 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](https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Transit_Responses_Homeless/REPORT-2018-Leadership-APTA-Team-4-Public-Transit-and-Social-Responsibility.pdf)



### Recommended Actions

1. The Task Force should convene a working group of relevant stakeholders including EMBARK, the City, the Homeless Alliance, HOPE Community Services, Community Action Agency, City Care and other emergency shelters to expand and streamline the bus pass program. This team may work to:
  - a. Determine the number of bus passes necessary to adequately serve people experiencing homelessness in the city.
  - b. Establish program eligibility requirements and operating procedures.
  - c. Establish a streamlined reduced fare application process.
  - d. Designate a “certifier” at each agency.
  - e. Secure funding for the bus pass program.
2. Establish the expanded bus pass program.
3. Track outcomes such as number of bus passes to agencies serving people experiencing homelessness and emergency shelters, number of reduced fare applications, and the agencies with a designated “certifier”.

### Resources Needed

Resources for this action includes the time and location for implementation team meetings to establish the expanded bus pass program. Lexington’s bus pass program described above allocated \$6,516 to serve 1,800 individuals experiencing homelessness. We assume a pilot program in OKC may include similar funding up to \$10,000.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Create working team	By June 2021
Establish partnerships and secure all necessary funding	By April 2022
Establish expanded bus pass program	By June 30, 2022
Track outcomes	July 2022 - ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of bus passes to agencies serving people experiencing homelessness and emergency shelters
2. Number of reduced fare applications
3. The agencies with a designated “certifier”



## 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 Task Force seeks to:



Develop Funders Roundtable



Develop Housing Trust Fund

### Develop Funders Roundtable

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.<sup>106</sup>

#### Strategy Description

Key informants 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 establishing a coordinated Funders Roundtable to bring together the key stakeholders to review grants, establish partnerships and help each other respond to grant request for proposals.

The Roundtable could also agree to 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 Roundtable could create a support structure for smaller nonprofit organizations to receive reimbursement grants or sub-grants. The Roundtable could also provide a forum for local foundations to provide matching funds to make other federal or state grants more impactful.

<sup>106</sup> <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1013312.pdf>;  
[https://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/niu\\_collabresearch/collabresearch/need/need.html](https://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/niu_collabresearch/collabresearch/need/need.html)



### Recommended Actions

1. The Task Force should encourage the CoC to establish a Funders Roundtable to bring together the key stakeholders to review grants, establish partnerships and help each other respond to grant request for proposals. This Roundtable may include such stakeholders as the Homeless Alliance, Legal Aid, the Inasmuch Foundation, Oklahoma City Community Foundation, the Arnall Family Foundation, the Zarrow Family Foundations, the United Way of Central Oklahoma, local banking institutions, among others.
2. Recruit members for Funders Roundtable.
3. Establish the Funders Roundtable.
4. Track outcomes for the Committee such as number of request for proposals responded to, number of request for proposals awarded, amount of grant funding awarded, for what type of project and to what organizations, and amount of matching funds awarded by local foundations or other entities.

### Resources Needed

Minimal resources are needed for this action, but include time for the Task Force to establish the Funders Roundtable, as well as the time for Roundtable members to attend meetings, establish partnerships and respond to requests for proposals once it is established.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Encourage CoC to establish a Funders Roundtable	July 2020 – December 2020
Recruit members for the Funders Roundtable	By May 31, 2021
Establish Funders Roundtable	By June 30, 2021
Track outcomes	June 2021 – ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of Requests for Proposals responded to
2. Number of Requests for Proposals awarded
3. Amount of grant funding awarded, for what type of project and to what organizations
4. Amount of matching funds awarded by local foundations or other entities



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## Develop Housing Trust Fund

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The 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 extremely 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. The HTF was established under Title I of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, Section 1338 of the Federal Housing Enterprises Financial Safety and Soundness Act of 1992<sup>107</sup>.

States administer the HTF 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<sup>108</sup>

The Housing Trust Fund in Oklahoma was established in 1998. It can be used for new construction of rental or homeownership units, conversion of non-residential structures into rental or homeownership, acquisition and/or rehabilitation, or housing infrastructure when part of a total development project. It was funded with a one-time general fund contribution of \$4.7 million and is a revolving loan fund. Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) administers several programs designed to help developers build or rehabilitate affordable housing in communities across the state including the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) and the Oklahoma Housing Trust Fund (OHTF).

With the National Housing Trust Fund, OHFA allocated \$5 million to the Fund. This created an additional 72 rental units specifically for individuals who make at or below 30% of the Area Median Income in 2019.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/htf/>

<sup>108</sup> <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/National-Housing-Fund-Trust-Factsheet.pdf>

<sup>109</sup> <https://reports.nlihc.org/rental-programs/catalog/oklahoma-housing-trust-fund>; <http://ohfa-annualreport.org/2019/about-us/>



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.<sup>110</sup>

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 developer fees through inclusionary zoning and impact fees, property taxes, 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.<sup>111</sup>

### Strategy Description

The Task Force should explore establishing 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.

Many trust funds provide grants to organizations that provide housing and essential services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness to help them become self-sufficient and permanently housed. Funds tend to be flexible and designed based on the community's most essential housing needs. Each community should determine and define the key elements of the trust fund.

The Task Force will need to determine who will administer the housing trust fund, what and who the fund will support, as well as how it will be funded.

### KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN LOCAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUND MILLAGE PROGRAM

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>

<sup>110</sup> <https://housingtrustfundproject.org/housing-trust-funds/city-housing-trust-funds/>

<sup>111</sup> <https://housingtrustfundproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/City-htfund-revenue-sources-2020.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, 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.<sup>112</sup>

#### Recommended Actions

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1. Convene an implementation team through the Task Force to determine the administrator of the housing trust fund, what and who the fund will support, as well as how it will be funded.
2. Secure commitments for funding and establish the housing trust fund programs.
3. If a non-governmental model is used, establish Board of Directors and hire appropriate staff to administer and maintain the fund.
4. Launch the housing trust fund.
5. Track outcomes including number of individuals and families served, demographics of the individuals and families served and what type of assistance the fund was used for including direct rental assistance or supportive services.

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<sup>112</sup> <https://housingtrustfundproject.org>





### Resources Needed

The average amount of public and private funds leveraged for every dollar invested in affordable housing by state housing trust funds is nearly \$7.00, ranging from a low of \$2.00 to a high of \$16.00 for individual trust funds.

The Task Force shall determine the appropriate funding level for the housing trust fund but recommend \$1-2 million should be considered to launch the housing trust fund.

In 2016, Austin, Texas voted to add all tax revenues being generated by property previously owned by the City to the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Estimates says that this will produce \$68 million in revenue for Fund over the next decade.

Most city housing trust funds report one to three staff members to administer the fund with less than \$250,000 annual administrative budget.<sup>113</sup>

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Convene implementation team	By July 2023
Secure commitments for funding and establish the housing trust fund programs	By October 2024
Establish Board of Directors and hire appropriate staff to administer the fund as appropriate	November 2024 – May 2025
Launch the housing trust fund program	By June 30, 2025
Track outcomes	July 2025 – ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of individuals and families served
2. Demographics of the individuals and families served
3. Type of assistance fund was used for (direct rental assistance, supportive services, etc.)

<sup>113</sup> [https://housingtrustfundproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/HTF\\_Survey-Report-2016-final.pdf](https://housingtrustfundproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/HTF_Survey-Report-2016-final.pdf)



## POLICY AND 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 Task Force and CoC members should actively seek to enhance advocacy for homelessness services through the following actions:



Homeless Services Representation for MAPS 4



Centralized Public Education and Community Engagement Plan



Updated Cost of Homelessness Study

### Homeless Services Representation for MAPS 4

Since 1993, Oklahoma City residents have voted to approve a one-cent sales tax to fund initiatives that improve the City. The original Metropolitan Area Projects, or MAPS, included a \$350 million initiative to revitalize downtown, improve Oklahoma City's national image and provide new and upgraded cultural, sports, recreation, entertainment and convention facilities. By funding these projects with a limited term, one-cent sales tax, the projects were all built debt free.

Due to its overwhelming success, MAPS 2 passed in 2001 with a focus on addressing the needs of the City's public-school system. MAPS 2 generated \$514 million in sales tax revenue. This revenue combined with a \$180 million Oklahoma City Public Schools bond issue improved 70 school facilities and addressed technology and transportation projects. MAPS 3 passed in 2009, which generated \$777 million to fund over 50 miles of sidewalks, fund a city-wide pedestrian and bike trail system, initiate the first phase of a fixed-rail transit system, construct a 70-acre downtown regional park, construct a new convention center, improve the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, build a whitewater recreation center on the Oklahoma River and construct a series of senior aquatic centers throughout the city.<sup>114</sup>

Voters approved MAPS 4 in December 2019 and it is projected to raise \$978 million over eight years. More than 70 percent of MAPS 4 funding is dedicated to neighborhood and human needs, while the rest provides for quality of life and job-creating initiatives. Specifically, \$50 million is allocated to address homelessness, \$40 million for mental health and addiction services and \$17 million for the Diversion Hub.

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/government/maps-3/maps-history>;

<http://www.okc.gov/planning/consolidated%20plan/Consolidated%20Plan%20Third%20Action%20Year%202012-2013.pdf>



The \$50 million investment to address homelessness supports a housing first model and specifically targets the need for affordable housing and wrap-around services. The \$50 million is expected to leverage more than \$400 million in funding from other sources. The \$40 million investment in the mental health system targets capital projects that will provide new mental health and substance abuse services and relieve pressure on the Oklahoma County jail. The funding includes \$11 million to build two new mental health crisis centers and a \$22 million restoration center that includes a crisis center, methamphetamine detox and substance abuse services. MAPS 4 also includes \$7 million for temporary housing for people experiencing mental illness and homelessness while transitioning out of a crisis center. MAPS 4 does not provide for ongoing operational costs and other funding sources will need to be found to sustain these centers over time.

Finally, MAPS 4 will provide a \$17 million “diversion hub” to further relieve pressure on the Oklahoma County jail and help low-level offenders establish a more productive life. Operational costs will be covered by a philanthropic donation of \$20 million that has been offered to the City.<sup>115</sup>

### Strategy Description

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Key informants and planning participants acknowledged the importance of having representation from the homeless services community on the MAPS 4 Citizens Advisory Board. This Board will consist of 11 members appointed by the Mayor with confirmation by Council who are residents of OKC and will serve three-year terms. Two members shall be appointed at-large, one member from each of the eight City Council wards and one City Council member. Board members will be responsible for reviewing proposed projects and submitting recommendations to the City Council.<sup>116</sup>

The Task Force should recruit members to submit applications for the MAPS 4 Citizens Advisory Board.

### Recommended Actions

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1. The Task Force should immediately identify and recruit members who would be willing to submit applications and serve on the MAPS 4 Citizens Advisory Board.
2. Submit all applications for the Board and monitor for approval.
3. Ensure the Task Force is updated on MAPS 4 projects and funding opportunities.
4. Track outcomes associated with MAPS 4 such as the number of projects addressing homelessness, mental illness and substance use, and the Diversion Hub; the funding amounts associated with each relevant project; and the housing first outcomes associated with each relevant project such as the number/percent of individuals or families housed, demographics of the individual or family housed, and length of time the person or family stays housed.

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<sup>115</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/government/maps-4/projects>

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/government/maps-4/advisory-board-application>



### Resources Needed

The resources needed for this action item include the time to complete the application for the MAPS 4 Citizens Advisory Board, as well as the time to attend Board meeting and subcommittee meetings if appointed.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Identify and recruit homeless services members to submit applications for the MAPS 4 Citizens Advisory Board	By July 2020
Submit all applications	By August 2020
Ensure Task Force is updated on MAPS 4 projects	August 2020 - ongoing
Track outcomes	July 2021 – ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Number of MAPS 4 projects addressing homelessness, mental illness and substance use, and the Diversion Hub
2. Funding amounts associated with each relevant project
3. Housing First outcomes associated with each relevant project such as the number/percent of individuals or families housed, demographics of the individual or family housed, and the length of time the person or family stays housed



## Centralized Public Education and Community Engagement Campaign

A public awareness campaign is a marketing effort that increases public awareness and recognition of a problem. These campaigns target many people in the community over a designated period to generate specific outcomes and successfully meet pre-determined goals. Public awareness campaigns can contribute to policy changes by putting increased pressure on policymakers and encouraging the community to act against the problem. These campaigns 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.

### Strategy Description

Many key informants and participants of the planning sessions discussed the need for a centralized public education and community engagement campaign with unified messaging. 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.

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

The Task Force should consider creating a centralized public awareness and community engagement campaign on issues surrounding homelessness in OKC. The campaign 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 the community.

The Task Force may wish to contract with a marketing consultant to create united messaging such as talking points, pitch decks and an elevator speech.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Community engagement needs a coordinated, ongoing progress 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
- 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 where residents can discuss the issues firsthand are important. Case studies of how the issue or proposed 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 greater impact.

<https://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/sites/default/files/Engagement.pdf>



The duties of creating and implementing a centralized public education and community engagement plan could also fall to the strategic planning manager as described at the start of this Action Plan should the Task Force pursue that option.

In addition to creating united messaging such as talking points, pitch decks and an elevator speech, the marketing consultant or strategic planning manager may work with local media to promote the positive outcomes associated with this Action Plan.

The consultant or strategic planning manager may also work to promote specific initiatives that planning participants and key informants say will better help combat homelessness in the City. These specific initiatives include promoting Heartline 211 as a resource to obtain information for residents in need, supporting the Diversion Hub that will help justice-involved individuals better navigate the services they may need to better stabilize their lives and organizing Legislative Lobbying Days with local or state lawmakers. We explore these specific initiatives further on the following page.

The consultant 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>



### Promoting Heartline 211

211 is a telephone number reserved by the Federal Communications Commission to connect people to Information and Referral services. This service is free and operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Though you need not identify yourself to get information, calls are private and confidential.

Heartline 211 provides this service for Oklahomans to access information about health and human services. Call specialists engage, assess and refer callers to appropriate resources based on eligibility requirements for each program. Heartline 211 has over 13,000 services available and can offer help to callers in over 200 languages.

Planning participants recommended publicizing Heartline 211 to increase community awareness and its use, as well as encourage more community organizations to include and update their information for the 211-resource directory for referral services. The Task Force may consider using the marketing consultant or strategic planning manager to promote Heartline 211, as well as educate community organizations on the importance of supplying and updating their information with Heartline 211.

### Support the Diversion Hub

The Diversion Hub plans to be a comprehensive, one-stop network dedicated to assisting justice-involved individuals in OKC. It will involve coordinated, life stabilization services to individuals navigating the justice system. Case managers, justice navigators and various community partners will work together on-site at the Diversion Hub. Key service areas include housing, education, employment, family support, mental health and substance abuse, and navigating civil concerns. The goal of the Diversion Hub is to transform OKC's approach to criminal justice, relieve pressure on the Oklahoma County jail and help low-level offenders establish a stable and productive life in the community.

OKC's MAPS 4 will provide \$17 million toward the Diversion and operational costs will be supported by a \$20 million endowment funded by the Arnall Family Foundation. It is expected to open later in 2020.

### Legislative Lobby Days

Planning participants agreed that key stakeholders need to influence City Council, County and State officials and advocate for the needs of people experiencing homelessness in OKC. The marketing consultant or strategic planning manager may establish talking points and arrange lobbying days with City Council members, County Commissioners, and State representatives to meet with key stakeholders, homeless service providers and people experiencing homelessness. These days could focus on various topics which may include:

- ❖ Tenant rights versus laws favoring landlords
- ❖ Law 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"
- ❖ Support for House Bill 3710
- ❖ Need for public transportation
- ❖ Ending bogus check 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

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1. The Task Force may wish to establish a subcommittee to hire and work with a marketing consultant or strategic planning manager in creating the public awareness and community engagement campaign.
2. Work with or receive updates from the marketing consultant or strategic planning manager on the public awareness and community engagement campaign with activities including townhalls and public meetings, workshops, marketing materials and outreach, fundraising events and lobbying events.
3. Create unified messaging such as talking points, pitch decks and elevator speech.
4. Launch public awareness and community engagement campaign.
5. Track outcomes such as number of townhalls and public meetings, number of workshops, effectiveness of marketing materials and outreach, amount of fundraising dollars received, number of phone calls to Heartline 211 before and after the implementation of 211 marketing strategy, number of new community organizations supplying their information to Heartline 211 for referral services, number of community organizations that consistently update their information with Heartline 211, number of FTAs for those engaging with the Diversion Hub, number of successful probation completions for those engaging with the Diversion Hub, number/percent of individuals employed for those engaging with the Diversion Hub, overall number of individuals detained pretrial, overall number of admissions in the Department of Corrections, rate of recidivism for those engaged with the Diversion Hub, number of lobbying events or Legislative Lobbying Days, and number of lawmaker pledges to support specific initiatives that address homelessness or affordable housing.

### Resources Needed

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The cost of the strategic planning manager is documented at the start of this Action Plan. The cost of a marketing consultant to manage a centralized public awareness and community engagement campaign may cost \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year<sup>117</sup>. This individual would be responsible for leading the public awareness and community education campaign from concept creation through execution, including the implementation of education strategies, such as workshops, marketing materials and outreach, public events and lobbying efforts.

Other resources needed for this action include a venue to hold townhalls, workshops and other public events, staff time and material costs for all campaigns, job interviews and educational trainings, as well as the cost to rent a van for people experiencing homelessness and key stakeholders to attend lobbying events with state lawmakers. Fees to advertise the job position, as well as a database and staff time to track outcomes may also be needed. We anticipate another \$50,000 to fund these various activities each year.

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<sup>117</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/jobs?q=marketing%20manager&l=Newark%2C%20OH&vjk=71cae2d4a37461ce>





### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Create Task Force subcommittee	July 2020
Hire marketing consultant	By September 2020
Create public education campaign strategies and materials	October 2020 – May 2021
Launch public awareness campaign activities	By June 30, 2021
Track all outcomes	July 1, 2021 – ongoing

### 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 phone calls to 211 before and after the implementation of 211 marketing strategy
6. Number of new community organizations supplying their information to 211 for referral services
7. Number of community organizations that consistently update their information with 211
8. Number of FTAs for those engaging with the Diversion Hub
9. Number/percent of successful probation completions for those engaging with the Diversion Hub
10. Number/percent of individuals employed for those engaging with the Diversion Hub
11. Overall number of individuals detained pretrial
12. Overall number of admissions in the Department of Corrections
13. Rate of recidivism for those engaged with the Diversion Hub
14. Number of lobbying events or Legislative Lobbying Days
15. Number of lawmaker pledges to support specific initiatives that address homelessness or affordable housing



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## Updated Cost of Homelessness Study

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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.<sup>118</sup>

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.<sup>119</sup>

The City of Oklahoma City Planning Department commissioned Spangler & Associates to conduct a Cost of Homelessness Study in 2009.<sup>120</sup> The Study covered the period from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 with 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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<sup>118</sup> <http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Cost-Savings-from-PSH.pdf>

<sup>119</sup> <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/H2-Innovative-Treatment-Housing-and-Service-Partnerships.pdf>

<sup>120</sup> 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. The Task Force 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 proposal 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 marketing consultant or strategic planning manager to incorporate the findings into the centralized public education and community engagement plan.
6. Track outcomes such as the date the RFP is released and proposals due, number of proposals received, vendor selection, the date of the final Cost of Homelessness Study, and the total cost of homelessness determined.

### Resources Needed

Resources to secure an updated Cost of Homelessness Study includes the time for the Task Force to develop the RFP, evaluate proposals and select a vendor, as well as to work with the vendor to secure the necessary data and information to complete the study. Securing a consultant to conduct the study may cost \$50 - \$100,000.

### Milestones and Timeline

Milestone	Timeline
Establish Cost Study Subcommittee	By July 2020
Develop the RFP, review submitted proposals and select a vendor	By October 31, 2020
Final Cost of Homelessness Study Report	By June 30, 2021
Track outcomes	July 2020 - ongoing

### Performance Measures

1. Date the RFP is released and proposals due
2. Number of proposals received
3. Vendor selection
4. Date of final Cost of Homelessness Study and the total cost of homelessness determined





## POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Many of the proposed strategies recommended herein will require significant resources for staffing capacity or other materials. The table below provides the associated costs we estimate for those proposed strategies, as well as the number of jobs that could be created in the community because of implementing the proposed action. We also indicate whether the strategy could include employing an individual with lived experience of homelessness. We understand that the cost breakdown is only an estimate and is not all inclusive of the total costs that the City or other organizations may incur as result of implementing the proposed strategy.

Proposed Strategy	Estimated Cost	Number of Jobs Created	Can Employ People with Lived Experience of Homelessness
Eviction Diversion and Mediation Pilot Program	\$2,147,377	21	Yes
Discharge Planning Liaison Pilot Program	\$865,222	6	
Library Social Workers	\$51,468.30	1	
Expand Shelter Services (Pilot Program)	\$1,724,374	23	Yes
Centralized Public Education and Community Engagement Campaign	\$100,000	1	
Enhance Police Outreach Teams	\$156,410	2	
Enhance Access and Use of HMIS	\$72,345	1	
Transit Resource Liaisons	\$51,468.30	1	Yes
Peer Support Mentor Program	\$126,402	3	Yes
Expand Bus Pass Program	\$10,000		
Transitional Housing Program for Youth	\$457,539	7.5	Yes



Proposed Strategy	Estimated Cost	Number of Jobs Created	Can Employ People with Lived Experience of Homelessness
Dedicated One-Stop-Shop for Developers	\$139,178	2	
Intensive Case Management Program	\$468,520	10	
Expand Pivot's Tiny Home Program (85 homes)	\$2.85 million	TBD	TBD
Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders	\$394,481	5.5	Yes
Expand Sober Living Options (for program manager and additional study)	\$200,097	1	
Land Bank 501c3	\$100,097	1	
Mobile Services Team	Seed Money: \$400,000 Maintenance: \$700,000	1	
Expand Host Home Programs	\$193,801	3	
Establish a Micro-Transit System	\$400,000		
Develop Housing Trust Fund	Fund: \$1 – \$2 million Administration: \$250,000	3	



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## **F. APPENDIX A: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION AGENDA**

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# KEY INFORMANT 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'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?

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:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transitional age youth | <input type="checkbox"/> LBGTQ         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elders                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Families               | <input type="checkbox"/> Single adults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronically homeless   | <input type="checkbox"/> 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.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) LBGTQ.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Elders / Seniors.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Families.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Veterans .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Single adults .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Chronically homeless.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Unsheltered homeless .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Nearly homeless individuals, such as couch surfers ..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) People living in substandard housing.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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					



Organization	Every Day to Once a Week	Bi-weekly to Monthly	Every few Months	Once or Twice Per Year	Never
5. Pivot					
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				



Organization	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Unlikely	DK/NA
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 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 is 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:

- How long have you been without a place to stay? (Probe for this time vs. chronically over a long period of time.)
- Have you been homeless before?
- What led you to be homeless?

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

- Did you feel safe at this location?
- How long did you stay?
- 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...

- Who?





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

### 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	<b>Courtyard by Marriott Oklahoma City Northwest</b>	1. Affordable Housing: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Require developers of new rental housing to include a percentage of affordable housing in their planning</li><li>❖ Identify and use public and/or private land for affordable housing development</li><li>❖ Encourage homeowners to explore offering secondary rental opportunities (e.g. apartment above the garage)</li></ul>
Wednesday, February 19, 2020	1PM – 4PM	<b>1515 NW Expressway Oklahoma City, OK 73118</b>	2. Transitional Age Youth Services and Transitional Housing: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Expand interim or bridge housing for those exiting institutions (prison, foster care, etc.)</li><li>❖ Develop a low-barrier emergency shelter space specifically for transitional age youth (e.g. youth leaving foster care)</li><li>❖ Eliminate barriers to access transitional housing units for individuals under 18 and LGBTQ+ youth</li></ul>



Thursday, February 20, 2020	9AM – 12PM		<p>3. No or Low Barrier Emergency Shelter: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Increase the number of no or low barrier emergency shelter beds</li> <li>❖ Identify and engage partners to determine the wrap-around services provided at the shelter</li> <li>❖ Expand public education efforts on the need for shelter beds</li> </ul>
Thursday, February 20, 2020	1PM – 4PM		<p>4. Preventing Homelessness: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Reduce the number of evictions</li> <li>❖ Enhance discharge planning (e.g. from hospitals, foster care, prison, etc.)</li> <li>❖ Enhance programs focused on prevention (e.g. employment training, short-term assistance financial assistance, etc.)</li> </ul>
Friday, February 21, 2020	9AM – 12PM		<p>5. Outreach and Engagement: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Enhance data sharing and tracking</li> <li>❖ Expand street outreach and outreach prior to discharge (e.g. from hospitals, foster care, prison, etc.)</li> </ul>
Friday, February 21, 2020	1PM – 4PM		<p>6. Treatment for Substance Use, Mental, Behavioral and Primary Care: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Expand access to primary care, mental and behavioral health services</li> <li>❖ Increase in-patient and mobile rehabilitation services</li> </ul>
Tuesday, February 25, 2020	9AM – 12PM		<p>7. Improving Case Management and the Coordinated System: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Increase the number of qualified case managers, mental, behavioral and health professionals</li> <li>❖ Strengthen the coordinated entry system and identify what organizations are missing from the network of service providers</li> <li>❖ Enhance employment services to improve retention and access to case management jobs</li> </ul>
Tuesday, February 25, 2020	1PM – 4PM		<p>8. Affordable Housing: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Require developers of new rental housing to include a percentage of affordable housing in their planning</li> <li>❖ Identify and use public and/or private land for affordable housing development</li> <li>❖ Encourage homeowners to explore offering secondary rental opportunities (e.g. apartment above the garage)</li> </ul>





Thursday, February 27, 2020	9AM – 12PM		<p>9. Preventing Homelessness: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Reduce the number of evictions</li> <li>❖ Enhance discharge planning (e.g. from hospitals, foster care, prison, etc.)</li> <li>❖ Enhance programs focused on prevention (e.g. employment training, short-term assistance financial assistance, etc.)</li> </ul>
Thursday, February 27, 2020	1PM – 4PM		<p>10. Transportation: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Enhance the local public transportation system</li> <li>❖ Develop transportation services for medical, document retrieval or other appointments</li> </ul>
Friday, February 28, 2020	9AM – 12PM		<p>11. Policy and Advocacy: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Engage federal, state and county lawmakers in issues related to homelessness</li> <li>❖ Increase county and state commitment to public transit</li> <li>❖ Encourage decriminalization policy for those offenses that target homelessness (e.g. trespassing or public urination)</li> </ul>
Friday, February 28, 2020	1PM – 4PM		<p>12. Funding Sources: Click <a href="#">here</a> to register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Identify, engage and coordinate new local funding streams</li> <li>❖ Coordinate organizations for state and federal grant applications</li> <li>❖ Enhance and expand existing funding streams</li> </ul>