

# HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVES ANNUAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 2022



**Submitted by:**

City of Oklahoma City Planning Department  
Housing and Community Development Division  
Homelessness Services Section



The City of  
**OKLAHOMA CITY**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / INTRODUCTION



The nation is facing growing numbers of chronic and unsheltered homelessness. While Oklahoma City's last Point in Time count reflected a small decrease in overall homelessness, the number of chronically disabled individuals experiencing long-term homelessness continues to rise. People considered chronically homeless currently make up sixty-one percent (61%) of Oklahoma City's unsheltered population. This public health challenge is fueled by factors like the pandemic, inflation, low wages and perhaps most of all, a lack of affordable housing options.

Investment in more robust behavioral health services, other housing stabilization services, and direct access to housing are needed to address this growing concern. The high demand for rental units paired with increasing costs of rent makes it more difficult for lower income residents to find affordable housing. Two people working full-time on Oklahoma's minimum wage cannot afford a two-bedroom rental home at fair market value without exceeding the recommended 30% of income to be spent on housing.

Combating this complicated social and economic ordeal requires a broad range of strategies to help residents experiencing homelessness move into permanent housing and achieve housing stability. If we are not strategic, collaborative, and data-driven in our efforts, the trauma of homelessness will continue to grow. Solving and preventing homelessness is a complex problem that will take time, funding, and compassion. Numerous non-profits, philanthropic funders, and state agencies in Oklahoma have programs and services that touch the lives of persons experiencing homelessness. Many of these work in conjunction with City programs

that are funded primarily with federal grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the largest of which is the Continuum of Care (CoC) grant.

The City of Oklahoma City and local non-profit service providers determined that an evaluation of current service needs and better targeting of resources was needed to address the issue of homelessness effectively. In April 2019, Mayor David Holt established a Task Force on Homelessness. This group oversaw the development of a strategic plan that expressed goals and prioritized actions that organizations in the homeless delivery system could take. The resulting plan, called *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City*, contains 24 strategies categorized within 8 different areas of focus. Upon adoption of this plan, the City hired a full-time position to focus on its implementation and worked with a consultant to advise how to prioritize goals and facilitate changes that result in immediate impacts.

This is the first annual report after launching implementation of the *Strategies* plan. This report provides an overview of existing conditions in Oklahoma City and highlights progress on implementing initiatives to address homelessness. Some accomplishments to highlight within this last year include the establishment of the A Better Way program in Oklahoma City, funding and initiating a Homeless Street Outreach program, offering grants for Affordable Housing funded by Local & State Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA), obtaining a \$3 million grant for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, and testing a pilot Encampment Decommissioning Program.

## SECTION 1. EXISTING CONDITIONS & BACKGROUND

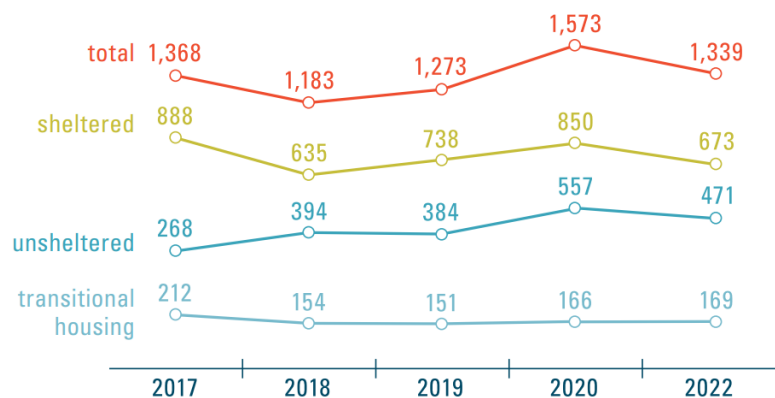
### STATE OF HOMELESSNESS

Each January, homeless service organizations count the number of residents experiencing homelessness during a 24-hour period. Known as a point-in-time or PIT count, this provides a snapshot of homelessness in our community. Every City that receives federal homeless services funds is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct a count every other year. The City of Oklahoma City conducts one annually, so we have better data to help us determine where to focus our resources.

City staff and service organizations spend several months planning the PIT count to determine locations that need to be visited, information we want to gather from the census, and how many volunteers are needed. On the day of the count, volunteers visit locations outdoors starting at 4 a.m. The count continues all day at outdoor locations, meal sites, day shelters, encampments, libraries, and other places while information such as age, race gender veteran status, length of time spent on the street and health characteristics is entered into a database. The data is reported to HUD and released to the community.

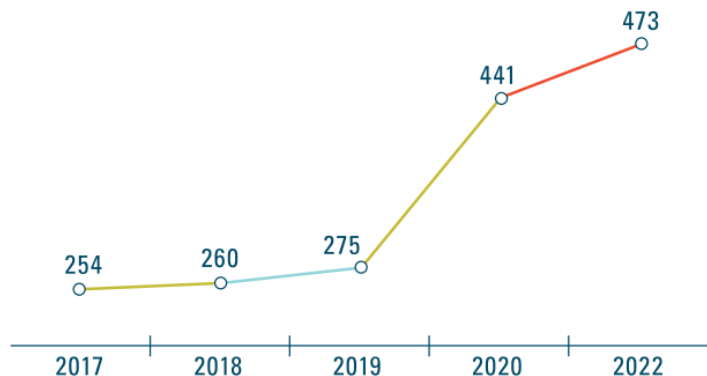
In 2022, we counted 1,339 people staying either outdoors, in shelters or in transitional programs on the day of the PIT count. 473 of these people were considered “chronically homeless” and 121 were unaccompanied youth.

Read the report at [okc.gov/homeokc](http://okc.gov/homeokc) under “Studies and Reports,” along with reports from previous years.



#### chronically homeless

An unaccompanied homeless person with a disabling condition, or a family with a disabled adult head-of-household, who has either been continuously homeless for a year, or at least four times in three years with a combined total of at least 12 months.



## COST OF HOUSING AND WAGES

The City completed a Housing Affordability Study in 2021. It indicated that Oklahoma City's lower income households are challenged to find decent and affordable housing even though overall housing trends showed stable gains. The study found that the percentage of homeowners in Oklahoma City is declining while the percentage of renters is increasing. The high demand for rental units paired with increasing costs of rent makes it more difficult for lower income residents to find affordable housing. Two people working full-time on Oklahoma's minimum wage cannot afford a two-bedroom rental home at fair market value without exceeding the recommended 30% of income to be spent on housing.

Even before the pandemic, the cost of housing and the shortage of low-cost available units were stressors for low to moderate-income households, which are likely to live paycheck to paycheck. Due to the composition of the industries and occupations most affected by public health restrictions and declining economic activity during the pandemic, renter households faced higher rates of job loss. Renter households making less than 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) are our most at risk of homelessness.

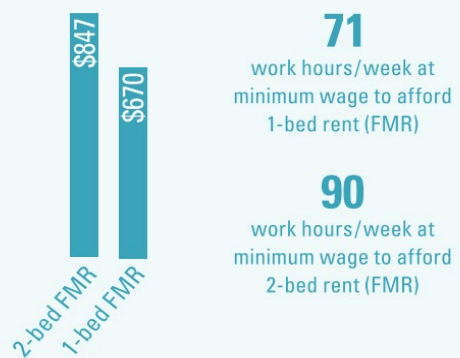
Local agencies that issue housing vouchers and rental assistance say it is harder than ever to find landlords willing to accept those they serve. It is clear from multiple studies and national trends that we need to increase the quality and number of affordable housing units, including other housing options to meet immediate needs. The options should include shelters, transitional, and permanent housing - particularly for youth experiencing homelessness.

### OKLAHOMA HOUSING

Most Expensive	Housing Wage
Oklahoma City	\$17.65/hr
Tulsa	\$17.23/hr
Beckham County	\$16.00/hr
Greer County	\$15.33/hr
Payne County	\$15.87/hr

Housing Affordability	
minimum wage	\$7.25/hr
average renter wage	\$15.42/hr
2-bed housing wage	\$16.28/hr
number of renter households	508,939
% renters	34%

Monthly Rent	Amount
rent affordable at AMI	\$1,698
rent affordable w/full time mean wage	\$802
rent affordable w/full time minimum wage	\$377
rent affordable at 30% AMI	\$510
rent affordable on SSI	\$251



FMR: Fair Market Rent AMI: Area Median Income

## Key Recommendations

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- Increase the inventory and diversity of affordable rental units, including housing for those with special needs
- Preserve the long-term affordability and habitability of new and existing housing
- Increase Household and Shelter Supportive Services, such as financial literacy, counseling and tenant rights
- Support opportunities to obtain and sustain affordable home ownership

## 2019 MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS

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



*“Homelessness is a multidimensional challenge. To address it, we need to address mental health, addiction and employment. You need services to change lives and help people get out of the situation they are in.”*

*– Key Stakeholder*

In April 2019, Mayor David Holt established a Task Force on Homelessness with a charge to develop strategies to reduce and prevent homelessness and address the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Oklahoma City. The Arnall Family Foundation and Inasmuch Foundation donated funds to hire a consultant, Analytic Insight, to work with the Task Force and community to develop the *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* document (“*Strategies*”). The process to develop this plan included:

- Interviews with over 50 stakeholders
- Review of data from Homeless Services database
- Four meetings of the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness
- One task force workshop
- One public input meeting
- 12 planning sessions with service providers, task force members and other stakeholders
- 11 working group meetings with task force members and service providers to refine strategies

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## Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City

The *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* plan was received by City Council on September 28, 2021. It details 24 strategies to enhance homeless service delivery and help residents experiencing homelessness move into permanent housing and achieve housing stability. The plan's eight areas of focus are:

1. Preventing Homelessness
2. Affordable Housing
3. Outreach and Case Management
4. Emergency and Temporary Shelter
5. Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Services
6. Transportation
7. Funding Sources
8. Advocacy

Read the report at

<https://www.okc.gov/departments/planning/programs/homelessness/strategies-to-address-homelessness-in-oklahoma-city>.





## SECTION 2. IMPLEMENTATION & INITIATIVES

### LEADERSHIP

Successful implementation of the *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* requires a dedicated management team to create and maintain infrastructure and data to drive implementation activities. This team is responsible for providing project management, funding administration, collection of data and performance reporting, public education, and supporting the multiple non-profits and community organizations carrying out the services needed to rehouse individuals and families in the community.

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#### City Staff

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##### HOMELESS SERVICES TEAM

The Oklahoma City Planning Department's Housing and Community Development Division manages federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and serves as the lead agency for the Oklahoma City Continuum of Care (CoC). HUD uses the term "CoC" or "Continuums" when referring to the grant program, the geographic service area, and the range of homeless and homelessness prevention services that operate within that area. Most Continuums throughout the state of Oklahoma cover multiple counties, but Oklahoma City has been designated its own Continuum with a service boundary set at the city limits.

The City works with local nonprofit service providers and other government agencies to coordinate homeless services and develop policies and procedures for the Oklahoma City CoC. Program Planner Jerod Shadid leads the Homeless Services section of the Division, overseeing administration of the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program, the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program, and the coordination of the CoC.

Immediately upon completion of the *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* plan, the City hired Lindsay Cates to be its first full-time, general fund position dedicated to homelessness initiatives. The Inasmuch and Arnall Foundations helped fund the position in its first year. Lindsay plans activities, convenes stakeholders, secures funding, tracks performance measures, and communicates the benefits of the strategies to residents and taxpayers. She works closely with the Planning Department's Homelessness Services staff, Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team, service providers, philanthropic groups, and the community.

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##### HOMELESS OUTREACH TEAM

When the Police Department receives calls concerning homeless individuals or encampments, they can deploy a special team of officers called the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT). The HOT

is comprised of three officers, Police Lieutenant David Dale, Sergeant George Anderson, and another position currently in the process of filling. This team was created to ensure OCPD remains sensitive to the unique needs of the homeless population while responding to the concerns of the greater community.

The HOT works with people experiencing homelessness and links them with valuable social services to improve their living conditions thereby improving public safety. The Homeless Outreach Team coordinates efforts between law enforcement, local, state and private agencies that provide services to those at risk of experiencing homelessness in the City and those who are living on the streets and considered chronically homeless. The HOT also works closely with street outreach teams who have special training and expertise and can connect people to needed resources.

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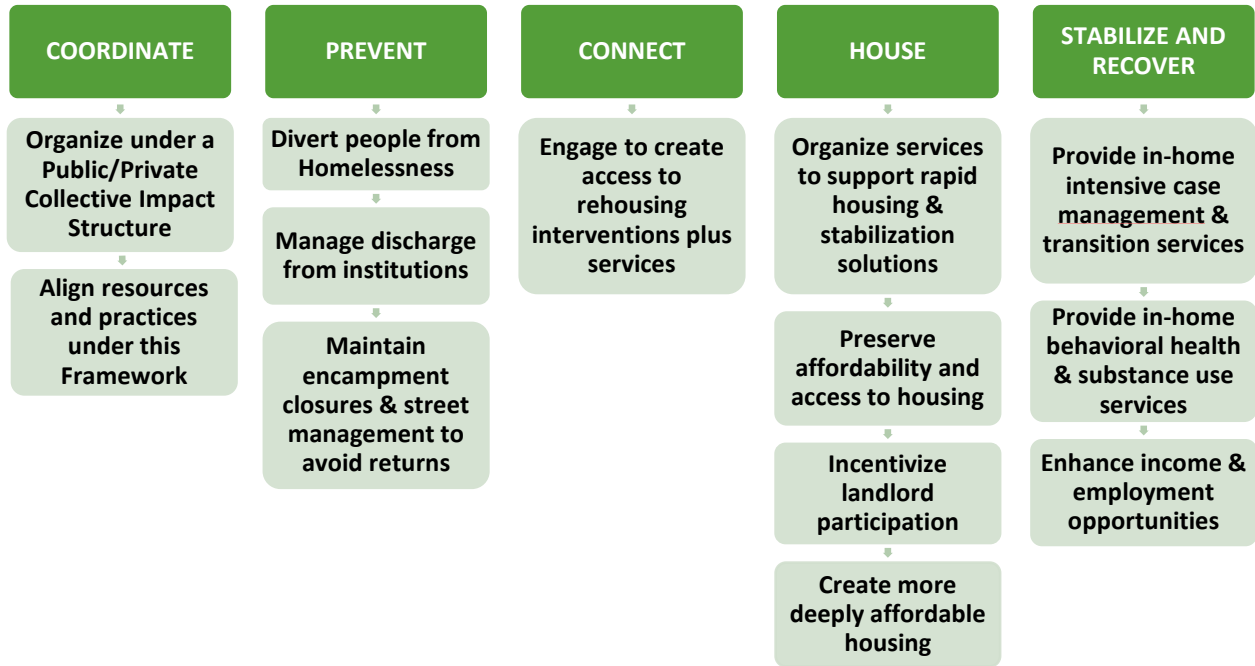
### **Clutch Consulting Group**

The Arnall and Inasmuch Foundations engaged Clutch Consulting Group to work with homeless services staff and local funders. Clutch is helping us drive the strategic and systematic transformation of the homeless response system to develop a collective vision. Clutch's expertise includes tailoring Continuum of Care architecture to develop effective policies and maximize the strengths of local partners. Clutch worked with City staff and service providers from March-June 2022 to design a blueprint to guide implementation (phase 2). They recommended practices including but not limited to, expanding and formalizing a new governance structure of the Continuum of Care Board, as well as strategies to increase permanent housing units including increased landlord engagement. Clutch also recommended the trial of encampment decommissioning and rehousing as an emerging best practice. They implemented this strategy in Houston and Dallas with positive results.

The Inasmuch Foundation, Arnall Family Foundation, and City of Oklahoma City are funding a contract between the City and Clutch Consulting to conduct phase 2 of this work, which will extend to December 2023. In this next phase, Clutch will continue to support the City's Management Team, funders and stakeholders by providing implementation steps, as well as general guidance, coaching and leadership support for implementing new programs.

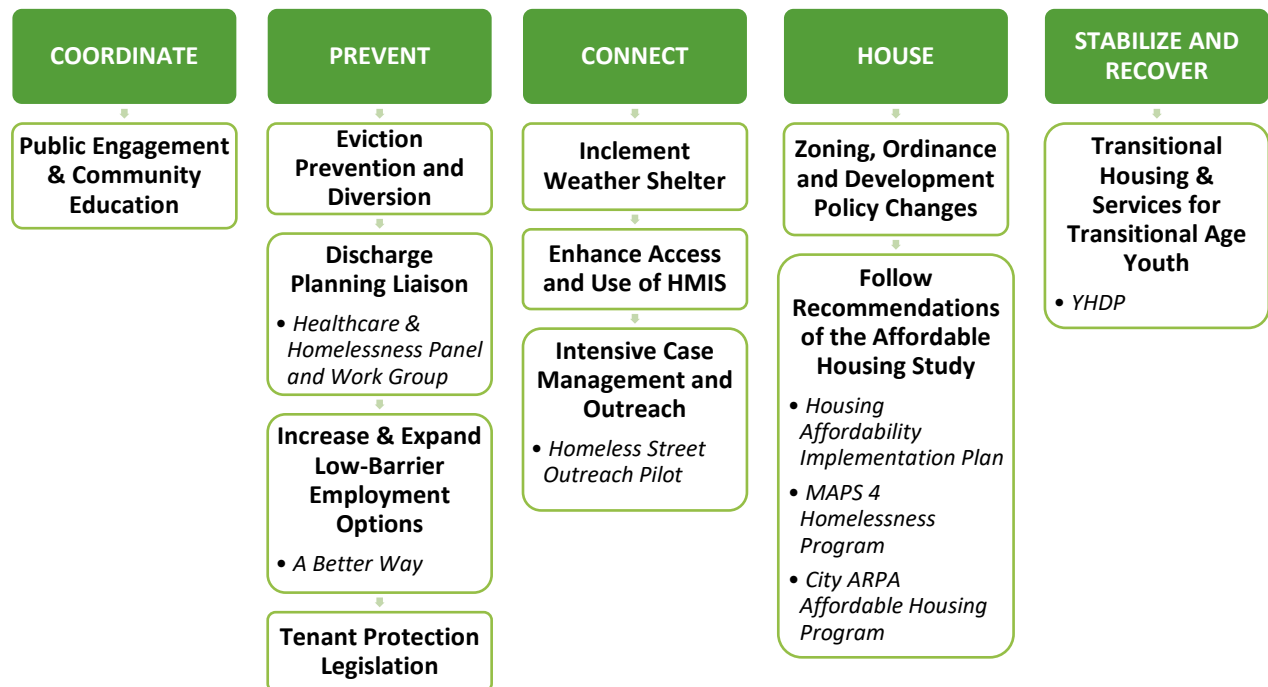
## **IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

The *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* document identifies activities to enhance homeless service delivery and help residents experiencing homelessness move into permanent housing. These activities support and enhance the existing homeless re-housing system process taken to end a person's homelessness and restore their dignity. This process involves 5 stages, each with its own objectives:



## YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

This section provides updates on progress we have made advancing recommendations from the *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* plan. You can see how individual initiatives from the plan can be organized within the five stages of the Implementation Framework below. Details about each of these initiatives follows.



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## COORDINATE

The following updates correlate to strategies recommended in the *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* plan under the “Advocacy” category.

### Strategy 8.A. Public Education and Community Engagement Initiative

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

The *Strategies* plan recommends the CoC should develop a public information committee (PIC) to create unified messaging to increase public awareness and community engagement on issues surrounding homelessness. In addition, the PIC should work with local media to promote the positive outcomes of plan implementation. The PIC may also create marketing materials, presentations, social media advertisements, and arrange community engagement events or town halls.

The formation of the PIC will be included in Year 2 Implementation goals, however work to build relationships and connect with members of the community has begun in the last year. The City’s Strategy Implementation Manager has made a concerted effort to connect with neighborhoods and business districts and attend town halls to raise awareness of current issues of homelessness around Oklahoma City, listen to residents, and communicate the efforts the City is taking towards implementing strategies to help address concerns. Homelessness Services staff attended meetings and engaged with the following groups:

- Town Halls in:
  - Ward 2
  - Ward 6
  - Ward 7
- Windsor/WesTen District Meetings
- Downtown OKC District Meetings
- OKCMAR- Realtor Day at City Hall
- Stockyards City Meeting
- Uptown 23rd District Meeting



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## PREVENT

The following updates correlate to strategies recommended in the *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* plan under the “Preventing Homelessness” category.

### Strategy 1.A. Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program

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Eviction prevention and diversion is recognized as a crucial step in the Housing First model to ensure all residents have access to safe, stable, affordable housing.

#### Partnership

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The City partnered with Communities Cares Partners (CCP), a public private program of Communities Foundation of Oklahoma (CFO) to administer CARES funding and the two Emergency Rental Assistance programs (ERA1 and ERA2). Because CCP also administered



funds from these federal treasury programs for the State of Oklahoma and Oklahoma County, the reach and impact of our funds were boosted. Since CCP was created to administer these funds and focus on eviction prevention and diversion, help was mobilized in a matter of weeks.

Evictions continued throughout the pandemic, and Oklahoma County continues to lead the country in evictions. 20% of Oklahoma City’s population resides in Oklahoma County and over 20% of CCP applicants are from Oklahoma City. Throughout the program, CCP has had a team at court every day to assist tenants with applying for assistance, informing the court of their application statuses, and answering questions. Pre-CCP, 5% of tenants showed up at court; with CCP, sometimes 50% of tenants appear. Failure to appear practically guarantees eviction. Unfortunately, more evictions are being filed now than pre-pandemic with the news of rental assistance programs expiring.

Over 30,000 families in Oklahoma City and hundreds, if not thousands, of landlords renting to Oklahoma City households received assistance thanks to funds from the City, Oklahoma County High Needs (ERA2 only), and the State of Oklahoma. This assistance helped prevent, or at least delay, evictions. These funds have helped people remain in housing while they dealt



with lifechanging events, pursued education and training, and secured employment. As the programs sunset, CCP’s focus is ensuring recipients remain secure in housing. Up to 10% of ERA funds can be applied to Housing Stability services.

CCP is leveraging funding available from State, County and City housing stability funds to provide 16 agencies serving local residents with \$13.2M in ERA1 housing stability grants. Oklahoma City’s portion is \$1.88M. Awardees include Homeless Alliance, Positive Tomorrows, SISU, Palomar, Diversion Hub, Mental Health Association, and Catholic Charities. These agencies provide wraparound services including legal representation, case management, housing navigation, outreach, education, and other services needed to attain and maintain safe, stable, affordable housing.

Funding Source	Assistance Provided	Impact	Type of Assistance	Timeframe
Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF)	\$12.66M	3,560 resident households	Rent, mortgage, utilities, retraining and essential needs	June-December 2020
Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA1)	\$19.77M	6,794 families	Rent and utilities	March 2021 – September 2022
Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA2)	\$15.56M	3,334 families and counting	Rent and utilities	November 2021 – December 2022

With ERA2 Housing Stability Grants, CCP’s focus is on pursuing innovative and proven ways to maintain stable housing, including:

- Universal representation (aka Right to Counsel)
- Legal First Aid by trained case workers
- Landlord Tenant Resource Center
- Financial literacy
- Education and training

### Strategy 1.B. Discharge Planning Liaison Program

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 at the time of intake to assess the resident’s need for services and continue throughout the person’s stay.

The *Strategies* plan called for discharging organizations and local service and housing providers to establish effective relationships. An Implementation Group was formed, involving representatives from the Homeless Alliance, Diversion Hub, Mental Health Association Oklahoma, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, OU

Health Sciences, OK Public Health Association, and the CoC Lead Agency (OKC Homeless Services). Their first task was to determine contacts at local hospitals like Mercy Hospital and St. Anthony Hospital, correctional facilities like Oklahoma County Jail, Oklahoma City Public Schools and the foster care system to coordinate discharge planning services for residents and youth who would otherwise be released to the streets.

### **HEALTHCARE AND HOMELESSNESS PANEL AND WORK GROUP**

A Healthcare and Homelessness Panel and Work Group met in July 2022 to discuss issues that both healthcare and homelessness responses systems face regarding coordination, and an Implementation Group convened in fall 2022. The next steps are to obtain data for analysis that will help the Implementation Group fully understand the characteristics and scope of the discharge process, needs for systemic changes, and how to prioritize those needs to inform refinements to our coordinated entry system.

The City will reconvene the work group this next year to obtain data, define goals and objectives and create an action plan for implementation of a coordinated discharge planning program.

### **Strategy 1.D. Increase and Expand Low-Barrier Employment Options**

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Low barrier employment options are easier to access than traditional employment and require very little initial training. The *Strategies* plan recommends creating and expanding low-barrier employment programs in Oklahoma City, such as A Better Way, which launched on September 20, 2021. These employment programs allow people to move out of homelessness and prevents them from falling into or back into homelessness. These programs also connect people to other services to provide an entryway into more traditional employment.

### **A BETTER WAY OKLAHOMA CITY**

#### **Program Overview**

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The A Better Way program provides a humane, cost-effective, and sustainable alternative to address panhandling. This innovative program targets panhandlers who may be experiencing homelessness and provides them the opportunity to work while also supporting the community by fulfilling a needed public service.



## PROGRAM PARTNERS

- Mental Health Association Oklahoma operates the program day to day.
- United Way of Central Oklahoma provided \$120,000 in seed money for the first year of operations, along with \$10,000 from Inasmuch Foundation.
- The City of Oklahoma City contributed \$150,000 in start-up funding, plus the van.
- Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma donates boxed lunches for participants.

## HOW IT WORKS

A mobile outreach van visits panhandling hotspots in Oklahoma City from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, offering people the opportunity to earn a fair wage for a day's work beautifying OKC parks. The program includes lunch and a \$65 daily wage for work like litter removal.

During the lunch break, participants are connected to a case manager and are provided with information to help them overcome barriers to employment. Some of these services include things like mental and physical healthcare, substance use counseling, federal and state benefits, housing, transportation, and training. At the end of the workday, the

participants are provided another opportunity to receive further program support from both the case manager, who links them to individualized resources that address specific barriers to employment, and an employment specialist, who collaborates with the participants to develop career opportunities.



## EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Developing competitive employment opportunities for program participants is vital. The Employment Specialist actively outreaches employers each week providing them with education about the program and access to potential employees. The Employment Specialist targets industries in accordance with participant preference (a key component of the Individual Placement and Support model). The Employment Specialist continues to identify appropriate job opportunities, pursues leads, secures interviews, and helps remove barriers that prevent participants from getting and retaining competitive employment.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In addition to employers, the A Better Way team engages key community stakeholders such as WORKlahoma, Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma, and Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. Other community partners include the Oklahoma City Police Department and the City of Oklahoma City, which assist with identifying panhandling hot spots and helping get the word out about the program to potential participants.

### Accomplishments

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#### CITY PARKS IMPACT

The A Better Way program targets high trash-impacted parks such as Stars and Stripes Park, Will Rogers Park, Woodson Park, McKinley Park, Draper Park, as well as beautification at many other Oklahoma City parks.



#### PARTICIPANT OUTREACH

The A Better Way van has the capacity to transport up to eight participants per day. Of individuals who accepted the invitation to work for the day, 50.54% completed an intake for further case management and employment services. These 233 people engaged in services aimed at supporting recovery and employment.

#### PARTICIPANTS EMPLOYED

The A Better Way program is changing lives from panhandling to working in various industries including food service, hospitality, industrial, and custodial. In just the first year, the team has secured full-time, competitive employment for 28 participants. Using the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, the team strives to support workers with resources to address barriers that typically make it hard to maintain their employment.

#### PARTICIPANTS HOUSED

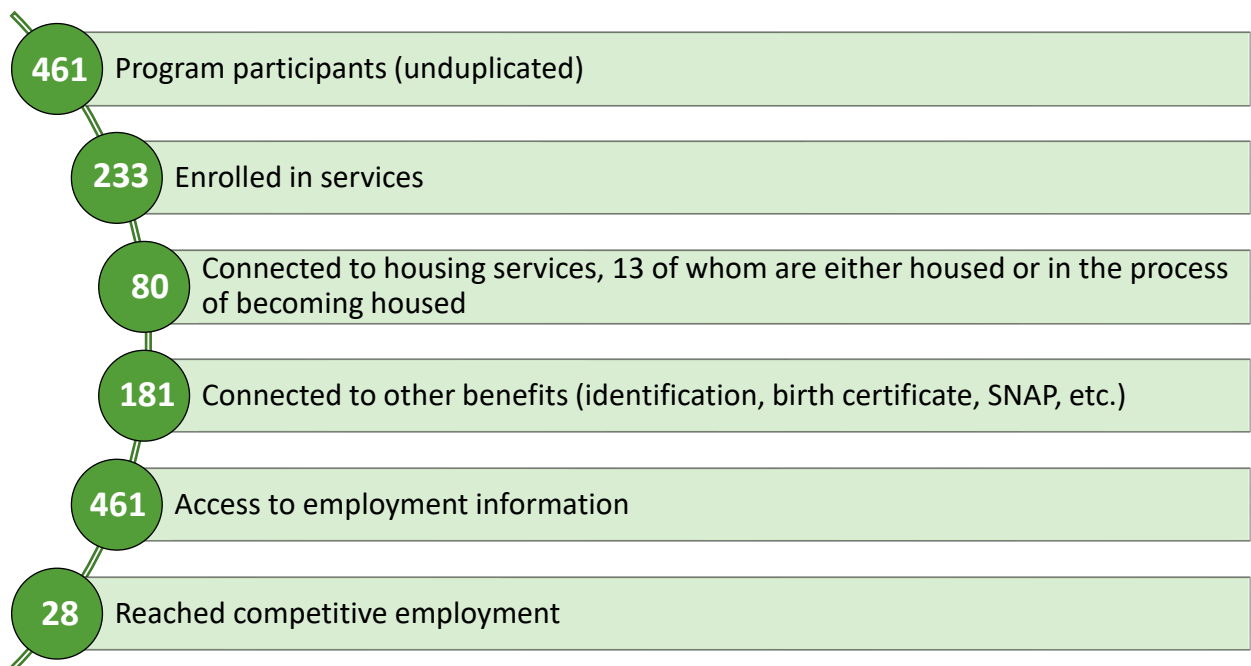
The A Better Way team has connected 80 residents to housing resources and has helped 13 individuals with housing services. For individuals experiencing homelessness, housing is a critical factor in maintaining employment.

## OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED

In addition to employment and housing, the team connects all enrolled participants to important services in support of their recovery and employability, including identification vouchers, connection to outside community agencies such as Department of Human Services, Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Embark, Skyline Urban Ministries, Palomar, Neighborhood Services Organization, Catholic Charities, Upward Transitions, Social Security Administration, and Veterans Services. Referrals were also made to community mental health providers including NorthCare and Red Rock Behavioral Health Services.

### Program Stats

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### Moving Forward

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During our first year, the A Better Way Oklahoma City program has developed partnerships with community agencies and has engaged employers throughout the Oklahoma City area. We will continue to refine our approach to focus on reaching new participants in our targeted population. The team will also continue to focus on housing success and gainful employment opportunities.

The A Better Way program has been overwhelmed with the demand in our community to participate in employment activities. From March 2022 through August 2022, 549 people were unable to ride the van due to reaching its capacity. The City will continue to seek partnerships, sponsors, and donors to sustain and grow the program.

### Strategy 1.E. Advocate for Tenant Protection Legislation

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The Oklahoma Residential Landlord and Tenant Act (ORLTA) statutes governing the Landlord/Tenant relationship do not contain many of the tenant protections that are in place in most states. The law is based on the 1972 version of the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act with several exceptions. In general, the laws to protect tenants from evictions without just cause are weak. This increases renters' vulnerability to homelessness.

Oklahoma City has worked with partners to address the ORLTA over the past few years. In the 2021 state legislative session, SB 200 was signed into law and allows tenants to terminate their lease without penalty if they are a victim of domestic violence.

In the 2022 legislative session, HB 3409 was signed into law. The new legislation takes effect November 1, 2022 and is an effort to give renters a faster response when needing essential repairs. Previously, tenants were only able to deduct \$100 worth of repairs from their rent. Under the new law, after notice to the landlord, if repairs that materially affect health or safety are not made, the tenant can complete repairs and be reimbursed up to a month's rent.

The City's legislative agenda for 2023 is still under consideration, but staff is recommending additional changes to the ORLTA. One suggestion is to bring statutes into compliance with the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act (ULTRA). Another reform could be to expunge/seal a person's eviction records after 3-5 years since that is often an impediment for tenants to find housing. Other reforms could include addressing landlord retaliation and eviction process reforms.

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### CONNECT

The following updates correlate to strategies recommended in the *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* plan under the "Emergency and Temporary Shelter" category.

#### Strategy 4.A. Inclement Weather Shelter

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After 16 people experiencing homelessness in Oklahoma City died due to exposure during the winter of 2017, homeless service providers and stakeholders determined 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, emergency shelters open extra beds to encourage people not to sleep outside or in a car. The shelters include

Salvation Army, City Rescue Mission, Jesus House, Grace Rescue and Sisu Youth. The five shelters together offer about 161 overflow beds for the winter contingency plan. This capacity can be further expanded if the shelters see the overflow capacity beds filling up. Grace Rescue Mission can open its gym for an additional 75 cots and the Homeless Alliance can open its day shelter for 70 spaces. Outcomes were positive for the emergency shelter winter contingency plan in Oklahoma City. The winter of 2018 saw no deaths among people experiencing homelessness due to the cold weather and the contingency plan is largely credited for this outcome.

The *Strategies* plan recommends formalizing the winter contingency plan with written policies and procedures and develop expanded inclement weather protocols to indicate what other weather conditions throughout the year trigger opening of overflow beds. The plan also recommends developing a process with eligibility requirements that will allow some non-shelter sites to be pre-approved to operate as temporary emergency shelter locations in inclement weather situations.

This year the City worked on coordinating efforts between homelessness response providers to provide additional capacity for nights when the temperature drops to 32 degrees or below. To accommodate the need for additional winter shelter beds, City Care, City Rescue Mission, and Salvation Army have committed to increase their capacity and Homeless Alliance has agreed to provide overflow shelter if capacity is reached at these shelters. City staff will be bringing forth an agreement with these groups that provides funding for additional service needs such as security and staffing to operate the overflow shelter services.



The following updates correlate to strategies recommended in the *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* plan under the “Outreach and Case Management” category.

### **Strategy 3.A. Enhance Access and Use of HMIS**

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The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is used to collect client data and data related to housing and homeless services at the local level. Continuums of Care (CoCs) are responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that is compliant with HUD’s data collection, management and reporting standards. The *Strategies* plan recommends that our CoC should work with the Homeless Alliance to secure an HMIS Data Manager and to inform local, Norman and Balance of State (BOS) Continuum programs to add an HMIS line item in next CoC application so licenses can be purchased using funds from the OKC Continuum’s HMIS dedicated grant.

Our goals in this first year of refining our Coordinated Entry System (CES) along with our Homeless Management System include:

- Building a Real Time Inventory Utilization Reporting that would help people move more efficiently into housing.
- Building a Real Time Referral System through CES (tracking referral from CES Queue to a closed referral, housed or exited from the queue) to see how quickly people are exiting homelessness, track our outcomes and improve those outcomes.

### **Strategy 3.D. Intensive Case Management and Outreach**

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Street Outreach services have proven to be an effective tool to connect people with services. These services already exist here and in other cities, but the demand is growing. The City’s public safety departments have noted the increase in calls for assistance that may not require a law enforcement response and would be better suited for professional mental health and social workers to handle.



#### **HOMELESS STREET OUTREACH PILOT**

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness highlights the effectiveness of coordinated and comprehensive outreach to connect people directly to stable housing, mental/physical healthcare, recovery, employment assistance, and other wrap-around services. Effective coordinated outreach includes sharing data and information, using a coordinated map and approach to identify coverage and gaps in the outreach across the city.

Street outreach is highly effective to connect individuals with housing and much needed services and resources for individuals experiencing homelessness, especially those experiencing chronic homelessness. Street outreach teams must consistently work on building relationships with this typically trust-averse population, many of whom are facing mental health barriers. Once trust is established, the team can provide service navigation assistance including referrals to other services, partners, and community resources for housing, mental and physical health, recovery programs, employment assistance, and other wrap-around services. Without these services, individuals experiencing street homelessness remain vulnerable to extreme weather, lack of basic human necessities, and unaddressed mental and physical illness.

The Mayor’s Task Force on Homelessness, Law Enforcement Policy Task Force, and Community Policing Working Group all identified enhanced outreach strategies as a focus area for improvement. Therefore, the City is launching our own pilot Homeless Street Outreach program, funded for an initial period of two years. The intent is to provide a non-police response to low-risk calls for assistance to 9-1-1 or the police non-emergency number (405) 231-2121. In addition to responding to calls, Street Outreach teams will provide proactive outreach to people experiencing homelessness. Our goal is to help people achieve stable housing, improve their self-sufficiency, and reintegrate into the community.

The City issued a Request for Proposals this summer for qualified service providers and received one response from Mental Health Association Oklahoma. Staff is currently in the process of bringing a contract forward for Council approval. We anticipate the pilot program to begin this winter.

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## HOUSE

The following updates correlate to strategies recommended in the *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* plan under the “Affordable Housing” category.

### **Strategy 2.A. Zoning, Ordinance and Development Policy Changes**

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

The Planning Department is working to ensure the new development code is designed to enhance affordability of housing and transportation. This is being done in several ways, including:

1. encouraging integration of various residential densities and dwelling types
2. allowing accessory dwelling units
3. increasing walkability and bikeability
4. allowing and facilitating increased development density where appropriate, including near transit
5. reducing parking space requirements
6. other inclusionary zoning methods

### **Strategy 2.D. Follow Recommendations of the Affordable Housing Study**

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The City of Oklahoma City commissioned a Housing Affordability Study (HAS) and an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) in 2020. The HAS, which was completed in 2021, confirmed there is a lack of sufficient affordable housing in our community and identified a 5-point strategy for housing system changes.

1. A need to increase the inventory and diversity of affordable rental units
2. Preserve the long-term affordability and habitability of new and existing housing
3. Increase housing and shelter supportive services
4. Support opportunities to obtain and sustain affordable homeownership
5. Refine development incentives and expand funding sources and partnerships

Read the Housing Affordability Study online at:

<https://www.okc.gov/departments/planning/what-we-do/plans-studies/the-housing-affordability-study-2021>

### **HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The City issued a Request for Proposals City to hire a consultant to develop a comprehensive, feasible and prioritized implementation plan and ‘roadmap’ for successfully addressing affordable housing deficiencies in Oklahoma City. Key implementation steps identified in the HAS will be included in a Scope of Services for a Housing Affordability Implementation Plan (HAIP). Planning Department staff expects to bring a contract forward for Council approval by the end of the year.

In the meantime, the City is pursuing the development of affordable housing funded by two sources – \$50 million from MAPS 4 and \$8.25 million from the City’s federal allocation of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Fiscal Recovery Funds), provided under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

## MAPS 4 HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM

MAPS 4 will provide \$55.7 million for truly affordable housing, and this investment is expected to leverage over \$400 million in housing funding available from various sources. MAPS funds will be used to: 1) provide new permanent supportive housing for the most vulnerable chronically homeless people, paired with intensive case management and supportive services from existing providers; 2) preserve thousands of units of public housing, which provides a level of stability through rental assistance and access to supportive services; and 3) build new affordable housing units for people that may still be at risk or require services to succeed. This housing will fill desperately needed gaps in our housing market and help the City implement a successful “housing first” strategy by serving people experiencing homelessness and who are at risk of becoming homeless. The MAPS Office is currently working on an operator agreement, which is expected to be in place by early 2023.

## CITY ARPA AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM

The City allocated \$8.25 million of its ARPA funds for affordable housing. In July 2022, a Request for Proposals was issued to develop affordable housing that supports the most urgent needs in our community, which include construction or rehabilitation of housing to serve special needs populations and/or households under 60% of the Area Median Income. The application closed on September 28, 2022, and the City received 22 applications. A selection committee will review applications and recommend proposers to City Council in December. Selected housing projects must be contracted and in progress by December 2024 and completed by December 2026.

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## STABILIZE & RECOVER

The following updates correlate to strategies recommended in the *Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City* plan under the “Transitional Age Youth Services” category.

### Strategy 5.A. Transitional Housing and Services for Transitional Age Youth

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Transitional housing programs provide supportive housing for youth who are not ready to live independently. Successful programs use a Housing First model including low or no-barriers to access and provide specialized services for pregnant and parenting teens, youth fleeing domestic violence or human trafficking, youth with



*“This plan gives me hope for the future to be better, with Youth Voice being held at the forefront of our efforts I truly believe things will change for the better.”*

Dane Valentine, YAB Co-ambassador



mental or behavioral health issues, LGBTQ+ youth or youth leaving foster care or juvenile justice. The *Strategies* plan identified the need to establish robust transitional housing for youth in the city and to involve the LGBTQ+ community in development of the transitional housing program to address safety and other concerns.

### **OKLAHOMA CITY YOUTH HOMELESSNESS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM**

On September 15, 2021, HUD awarded \$3,028,026 to Oklahoma City through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP). Oklahoma City was tasked to create a coordinated community response to prevent and end homelessness among unaccompanied and pregnant and parenting youth. Oklahoma City YHDP stakeholders spent seven months developing a Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness in Oklahoma City. The CCP provides a roadmap for the Oklahoma City YHDP and identifies the types of project to be funded through YHPD resources along with expectation of programs to be funded.



### **Shared Vision**

- Youth choice, inclusivity, trust, empathy, and respect are the core values driving Oklahoma City’s shared vision to end youth homelessness.

- We envision our city as a place where every youth and young adult has access to proactive preventive services and a choice of prompt, safe and low-barrier housing options.
- Our housing and supportive services will be youth and data-driven, equitable, transparent, intentional, innovative, sustainable, and well-coordinated.
- We will engage our community in a culturally sensitive and trauma-informed way while using a positive youth development approach.
- We acknowledge we must always work to monitor and evaluate the results of our system to ensure our work continues to meet the vision and value of our diverse community.

### Guiding Principles

- The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Youth Framework and Four Core Outcomes (Stable Housing, Permanent Connections, Education/Employment and Social/Emotional Well-being)
- Equity
- Youth Choice
- Focus on Special Populations
- Positive Youth Development
- Housing First
- Family Engagement
- Coordinated Entry for Youth

## YEAR 1 COLLECTIVE IMPACT



**1600**

Individuals Housed



**79**

Average Number of Days Individuals Experience Homelessness



**96%**

Remained Housed after 2 years



**16,971**

Unique Individuals Served

## SECTION 3: YEAR 2 IMPLEMENTATION

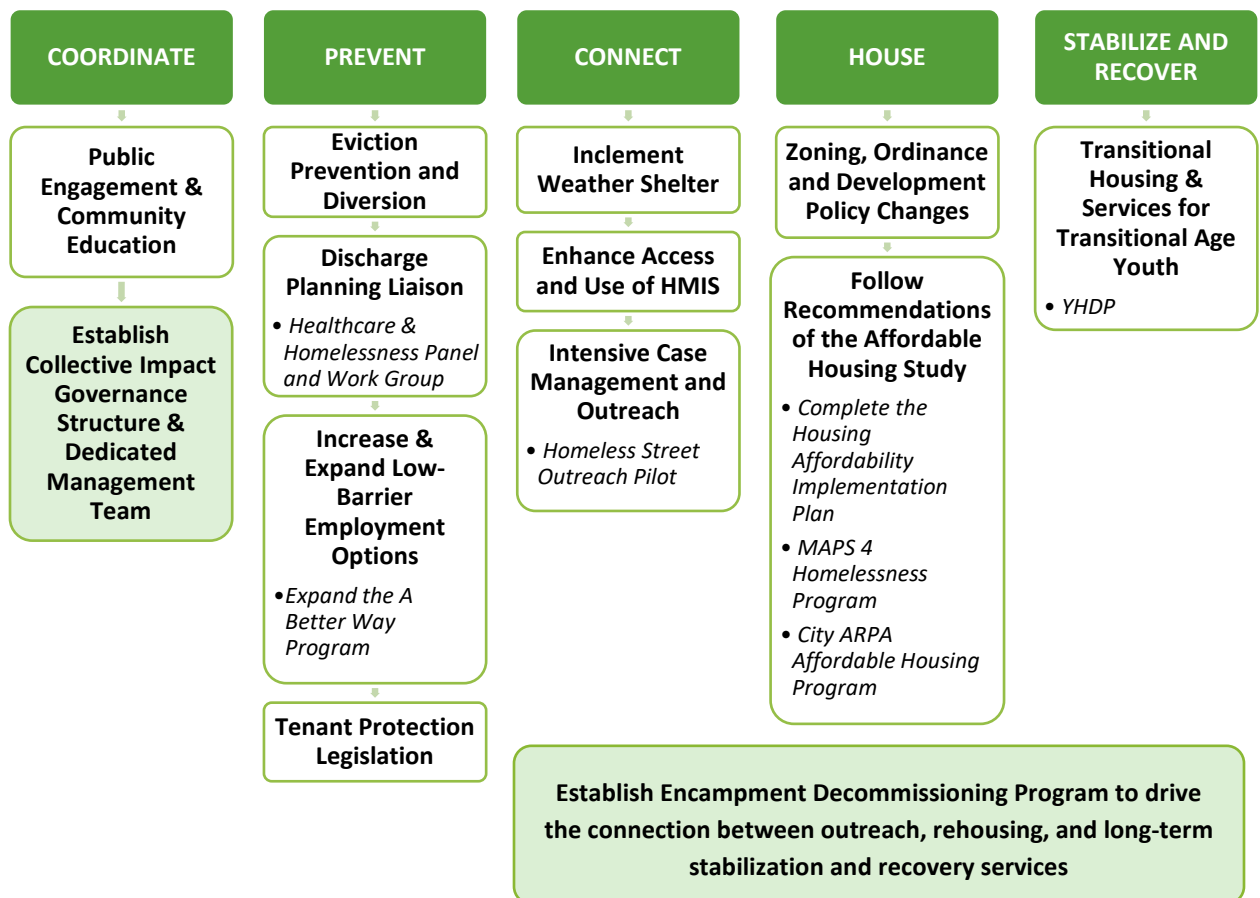
### SHARED GOALS

Intensify focus and additional investment into targeted rehousing of:

UNSHLETERED HOMELESS

YOUTH HOMELESS

### ENHANCED FRAMEWORK



### ENHANCED LEADERSHIP

#### Homeless System Governance Refresh

To maximize stakeholder engagement and create shared accountability across all partners, the community will undergo a Homeless System Governance Refresh. This refresh will serve to

reorder interactions, clarify roles, and emphasize the implementation elements as that is where policy is conceived and tested.

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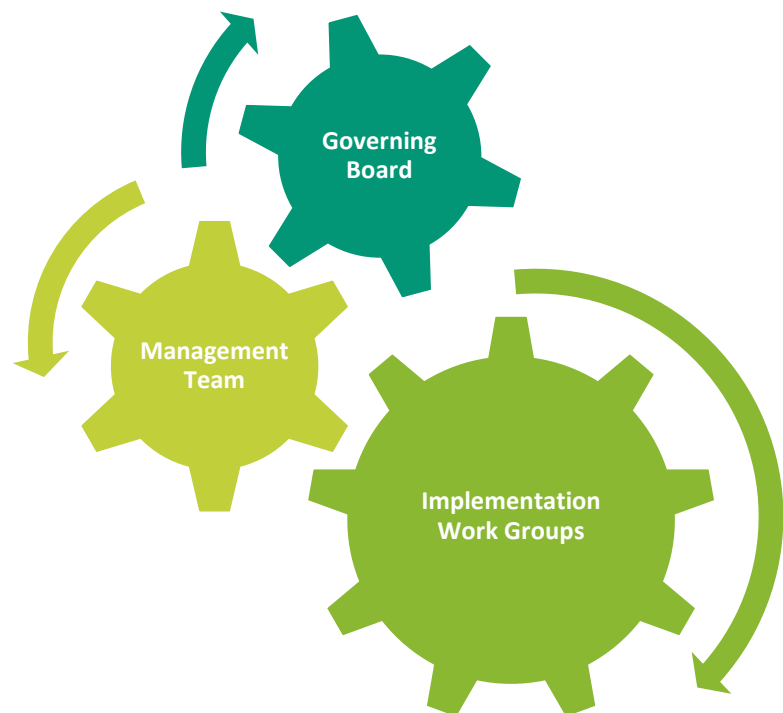
### CONTINUUM OF CARE (COC) BOARD

The CoC Board is a federally mandated board largely comprised of major system partners and funders to align investments, standardize and oversee performance, and approve operating policies. The current board of directors are working to revise their charter to ensure the homeless system governing board is inclusive of those who have resources to align, activities to align, and those who represent a critical voice.

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### MANAGEMENT TEAM

This team is responsible for providing project management, funding administration, collection of data and performance reporting, public education, and supporting the multiple non-profits and community organizations carrying out the services needed to rehouse individuals and families in the community.



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### IMPLEMENTATION WORKGROUPS

The implementation workgroups are a collection of standing and ad hoc workgroups organized to support implantation and policy creation. They serve to inform and test planning of implementation of activities and to provide oversight and implementation of policies in real time. Workgroups will meet as needed to participate in change activities that support system-wide implementation and inform policy.

## 2023 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

<b>Coordinate</b>	
7.A. Priority Drive, Outcomes-Based Coordinated Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene implementation group and begin recruitment of larger membership.</li> <li>• Determine structure of Coordinated Funding Partnership.</li> </ul>
8.A. Public Education and Community Engagement Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create public information committee and develop plan and policies.</li> <li>• Create public education strategies and materials.</li> </ul>
<b>Prevent</b>	
1.A. Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine funding sources for legal services and providing ongoing support for tenants through an Eviction Prevention and Diversion program.</li> </ul>
1.B. Discharge Planning Liaison Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine which services discharging entities and service organizations are responsible for during discharge process and work with contacts at discharging organizations to develop a discharging process that all agree on.</li> </ul>
1.D. Increase and Expand Low-Barrier Employment Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of A Better Way participants who gain employment and housing.</li> <li>• Secure partnerships and additional funding for the A Better Way program to sustain operations and expand capacity.</li> </ul>
1.E. Advocate for Tenant Protection Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support legislative efforts to improve Landlord-Tenant laws and see such legislation adopted.</li> </ul>
<b>Connect</b>	
3.A. Enhance Access and Use of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number of HMIS user licenses required for adding additional users</li> </ul>
3.D. Intensive Case Management and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract with Homeless Street Outreach program provider, begin administering services, and track outcomes.</li> </ul>
4.A. Inclement Weather Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter into agreements with service providers to accommodate and coordinate emergency winter shelter, providing City funding required to increase capacity to operate.</li> </ul>

<b>House</b>	
2.A. Zoning, Ordinance and Development Policy Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate Zoning Ordinance and ensure addition of elements that allow for easier development of affordable units.</li> </ul>
2.D. Follow Recommendations of the Affordable Housing Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire Housing Affordability Implementation Plan consultant and receive recommendations for implementing strategic goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Stabilize and Recover</b>	
5.A. Transitional Housing and Services for Transitional Age Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop standardized programming and shared case plans across agencies.</li> <li>Support efforts to expand Transitional Housing programs at Pivot, Sisu Youth and other organizations such as Mental Health Association.</li> </ul>

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**For more information, contact**

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