



**KEY TO**

**HOME**

PARTNERSHIP



**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>STATE OF HOMELESSNESS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Goal 1: Create a new governing system .....	<b>6</b>
Goal 2: Address homelessness differently .....	<b>14</b>
Goal 3: Reduce youth homelessness .....	<b>21</b>
Goal 4: Reduce unsheltered homelessness .....	<b>23</b>
<b>COLLECTIVE IMPACT</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>LOOKING AHEAD</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>33</b>



# INTRODUCTION

The current state of homelessness in the United States is very concerning, as cities across the country (including Oklahoma City) are experiencing significant increases in recent years. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Annual Homelessness Assessment Report, between 2022 and 2023 the number of people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. increased by 12% - the largest annual increase since data collection began in 2007. Likewise, last year, more than 650,000 people were estimated to be experiencing homelessness across the country, the highest number since 2007.

Experts attribute this surge to various systemic issues, including a shortage of affordable housing, rising eviction rates and inflation. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues. Federal eviction moratoriums, emergency housing vouchers, and COVID relief programs like Emergency Rental Assistance initially mitigated the surge of instability, but these programs have since ended, leaving many people vulnerable to homelessness as the economic fallout continues to impact low-income households.

In Oklahoma City, homeless service providers have managed to keep the overall homeless population relatively steady over the past decade. For the past three years, the system has helped over 1,400 individuals per year end their homelessness, a testament to the efforts and dedication of the community's local service providers. Even still, unaccompanied youth homelessness

and chronic unsheltered homelessness both increased during this period.

Recognizing that we could not continue to work the same way in an environment that was changing so dramatically, the City of Oklahoma City and local non-profits evaluated current service needs. In April 2019, Mayor David Holt established a Task Force on Homelessness. The Task Force developed the "Strategies to Address Homelessness in Oklahoma City," which outlined key strategies across several core focus areas.

To implement the plan, the City hired a dedicated full-time position and collaborated with a consultant to prioritize goals and to test and refine strategies for implementation.

In April 2023, the City launched the Key to Home Partnership ("the Partnership"), a public-private collaborative involving over 50 organizations who are working together in new ways to address homelessness. The City serves as the lead agency, driving efforts to develop new pathways to housing and support system-wide strategies for reducing homelessness in Oklahoma City.

Much like a complex machine where each gear must operate seamlessly with the others to drive progress, this partnership reflects the intricate interplay between various components of the homeless response system. Each organization, project, and initiative acts as a critical gear, contributing to a coordinated effort to reach the shared goal of reducing homelessness.

# INTRODUCTION

## continued

The homelessness crisis is complex, but the Key to Home Partnership has a powerful solution. Addressing it will require time, increased funding, and coordinated efforts across various systems and levels of government, much like ensuring that each gear in a machine functions together harmoniously.

The improved coordination and strategic focus of the Key to Home Partnership has so far resulted in two programs aimed at housing and supporting youth experiencing homelessness, and those experiencing chronic, unsheltered homelessness.

To address the rising number of unaccompanied homeless youth, the City applied for and received funding from HUD for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project in 2023. This project includes various housing programs, extended-hour drop-in centers, and services designed to prevent youth homelessness.

To combat the growing number of unsheltered individuals, the Key to Home Partnership implemented the Encampment Rehousing Initiative in late 2023. This initiative aims to quickly move people from encampments into housing within four to six weeks through collaboration between the City, service providers, and private businesses.

The Partnership set goals to rehouse or divert 100 youth from entering homelessness and to house 500 unsheltered individuals by the end of 2025. Beyond these milestones, the Partnership is focused on refining our City's homeless response system to make homelessness in Oklahoma City brief, rare, and non-recurring.

This is the first annual report since launching the implementation of key interventions to address homelessness in Oklahoma City, including the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project and the Encampment Rehousing Initiative. This report provides an overview of existing conditions in Oklahoma City and highlights progress made implementing various strategies to address homelessness in our community.

### Targeted Priorities

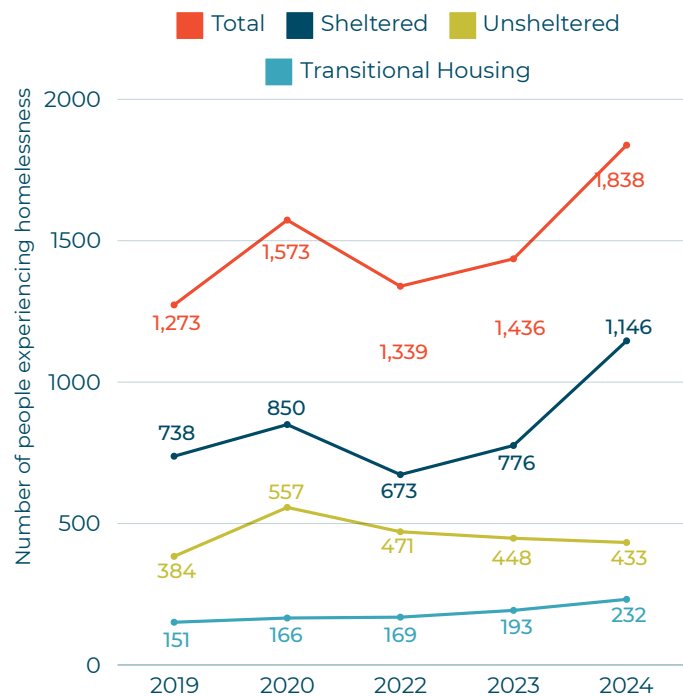
- ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS DIFFERENTLY
- REDUCE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS
- REDUCE CHRONIC UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS



# STATE OF HOMELESSNESS

Each January, homeless service organizations conduct a 24-hour count of residents experiencing homelessness, known as a Point-In-Time (PIT) count. The PIT is not meant to act as an all-encompassing look at the issue of homelessness, but rather it provides a snapshot of homelessness on one day. Every city that receives federal funds for homeless services is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct this count every other year. However, the City of Oklahoma City conducts this count every year to obtain better data, analyze trends over time and more effectively focus limited resources.

On the night of the 2024 PIT count, 1,838 people experiencing homelessness were surveyed in Oklahoma City. Similar to 2024 PIT numbers seen in communities across the country, this represented a significant increase in homelessness for Oklahoma City. Many factors affect the number counted, and a few key trends stand out when the data is analyzed.



**2019 - 2024 Point in Time data**

*(The count was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)*

## PIT Count By the Numbers

**433**

people were experiencing unsheltered homelessness

**474**

people were experiencing chronic (long-term) homelessness

**136**

veterans were experiencing homelessness

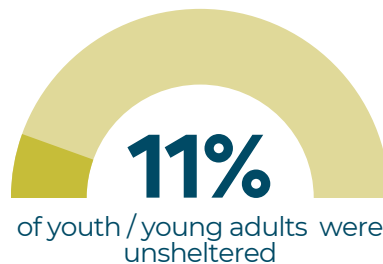
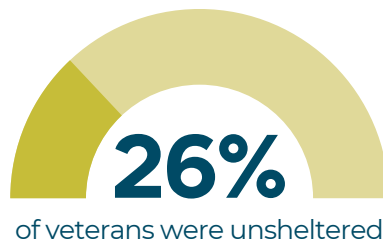
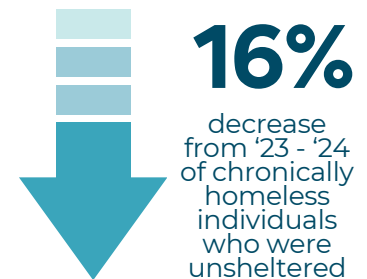
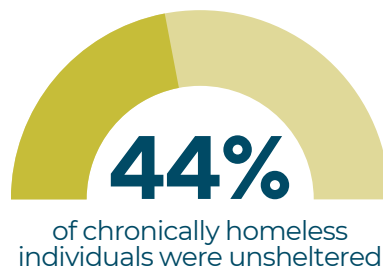
**171**

unaccompanied youth were experiencing homelessness

**101**

families were experiencing homelessness

Of all subpopulations, chronically homeless individuals have more frequent emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and contact with law enforcement. While the number of people considered chronically homeless is increasing, the number of chronically homeless individuals that were unsheltered dropped from 60% to 44% last year. This is likely due to access to more shelter beds on the night of the count and an increased focus on permanent housing efforts, like the Key to Home Encampment Rehousing Initiative.



24% of veterans surveyed are chronically homeless



## Key Data Trends & Takeaways

One of the primary factors of the increase in this year's PIT count could be attributed to the expiration of federal COVID relief programs, which provided significant additional capacity to the homeless response system in recent years.

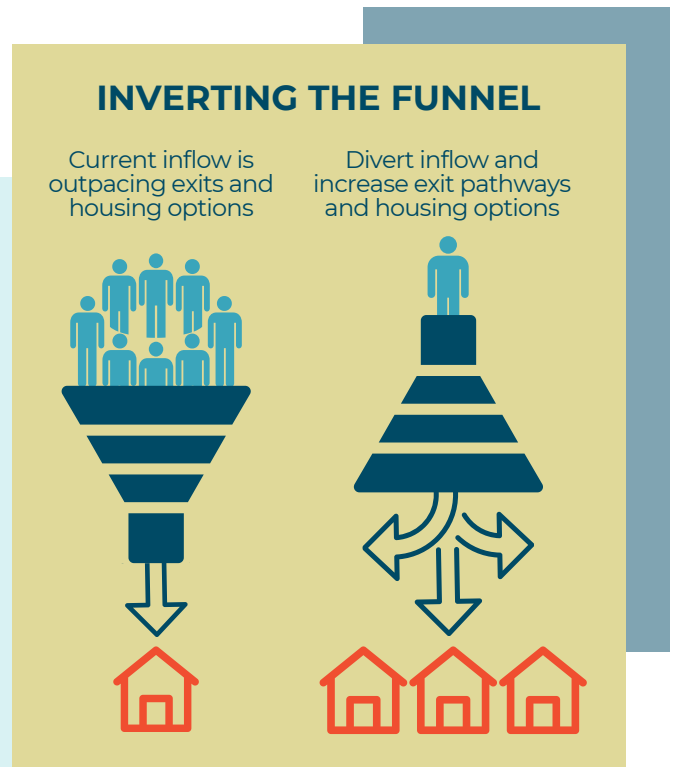
Another factor adding to the number of people counted this year can be attributed to a new 300-bed winter shelter, which regularly reached capacity last winter. This increased shelter capacity made counting people easier and is reflected in this year's count. Many people accessing winter shelter only spent one night in shelter while many others using winter shelter did not have touchpoints with other service providers. Both of these data points suggest that additional cold weather and overflow shelters served many people who may have been experiencing housing instability, rather than literal homelessness, emphasizing the need for expanded diversion strategies to prevent people from ever entering homelessness in the first place.

Our 2024 PIT data showed a 17% increase in the number of people experiencing long-term, sheltered homelessness, meaning more people are staying longer in shelters. Generally, the longer a person remains unhoused, the higher the level of intervention and supports will be needed to end their homelessness.

As more people fall into homelessness and remain homeless, a bottleneck in the system begins to form. When the number of people who are staying longer and needing more support grows, it makes it more difficult for others to move through the system efficiently.

The analogy of a funnel is often used to describe this unique challenge. The current homeless response system in OKC is shaped like a funnel with a wide opening at the top and a narrow exit at the bottom. This traditional funnel structure allows for large numbers of people to flow into the system but only allows for very few exits from the system.

To address homelessness more efficiently, efforts must be focused on inverting the funnel of the homeless response system so that fewer people are falling into homelessness, and those that do have a direct and streamlined pathway to exit homelessness. To do this, we must focus on diverting people from entering homelessness whenever possible and expand housing options so that people can exit the homeless response system more quickly.



# IMPLEMENTATION

When the Key to Home Partnership launched, the first order of business for the Board of Directors was to adopt a 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. The plan set four goals: 1) Create a new governing system; 2) Address homelessness differently; 3) Reduce youth homelessness; and 4) Reduce chronic, unsheltered homelessness.

## GOAL 1: CREATE A NEW GOVERNING SYSTEM

### Governing Board

What was previously known as the “Continuum of Care” board was expanded and rebranded as the Key to Home Partnership. The Partnership’s new Board of Directors, consisting of high level and influential decision makers from the community, social service agencies and people with lived experience, expanded to 18 seats. Eleven of those are fixed-representative seats designated for individuals from specific agencies. These positions can bring resources to the table and inform our work based on the expertise and role in their respective organization.



## 2024 KEY TO HOME PARTNERSHIP BOARD

### FIXED REPRESENTATIVE SEATS

- **Business Representative** Gary Brooks
- **City of Oklahoma City** Aubrey McDermid
- **Faith-Based Representative** To be filled
- **Oklahoma City Housing Authority** Mark Gillett
- **Oklahoma Dept. of Human Services** Austin Marshall
- **OK Dept. of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Svcs.** Jessica Wisdom
- **Oklahoma Health Care Authority** Sandra Puebla
- **Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency** Deborah Jenkins
- **Philanthropic Representative** Kelly Gray
- **Service Provider Representative** Dan Straughan
- **United Way of Central Oklahoma** Rachel Holt
- **Youth Action Board Ambassador or Co-Ambassador** Marcel Miller, Lexi Taylor-Hill

### AT-LARGE

### REPRESENTATIVE SEATS

- Clay Moss, Chair
- Justin Brown, Vice-Chair
- Gary Jones
- David Odle

### AT-LARGE CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE SEATS

- Raymond Rivas
- Robert Stonebraker

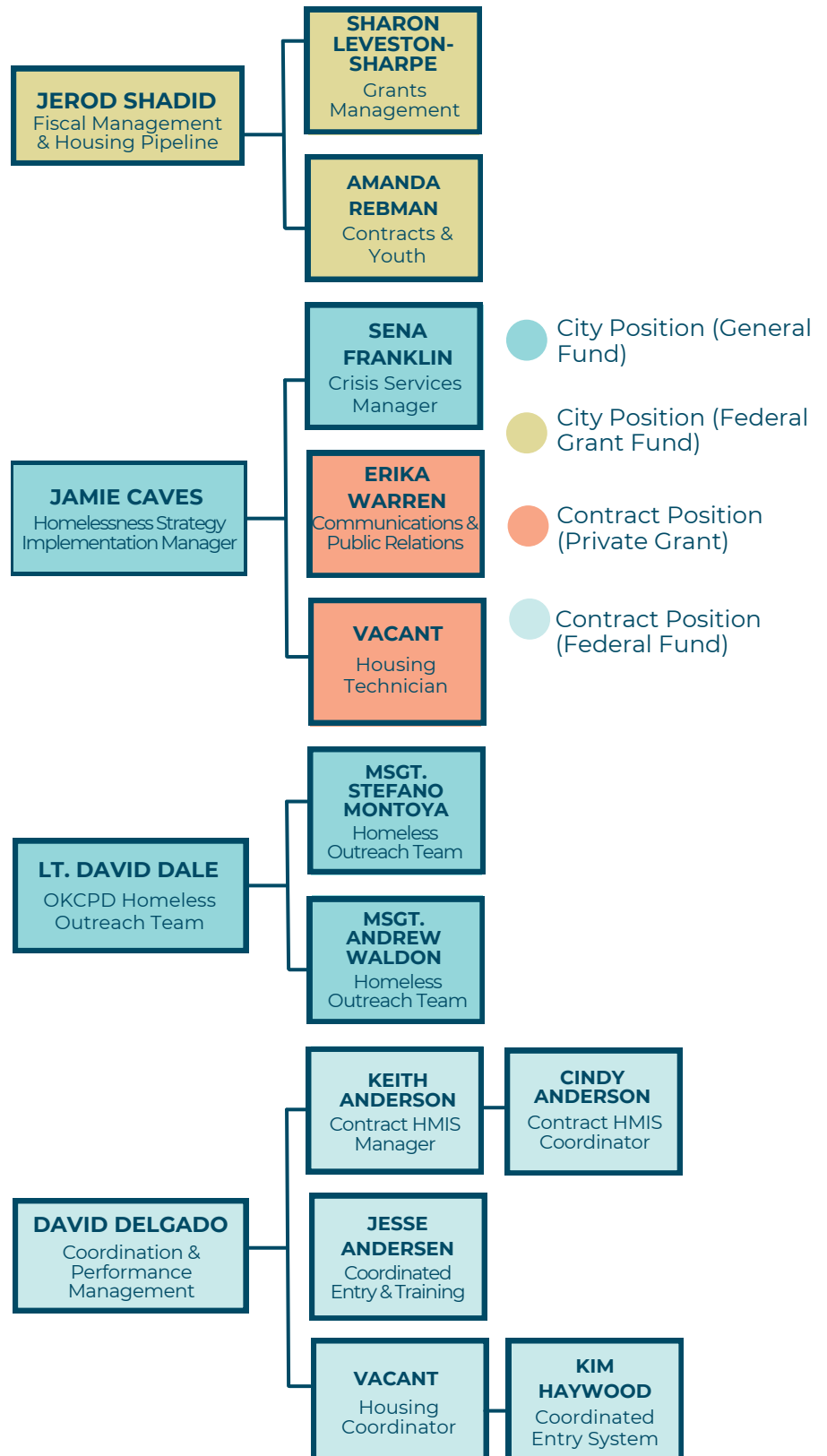


## Management Team

Implementing a coordinated community approach to reducing homelessness is no small feat. It takes a dedicated leadership team to orchestrate the multifaceted strategies and the numerous partnerships required to be successful in tackling such a large issue.

Recognizing the importance of this, the City partnered with private philanthropy to establish a management team embedded at the City of OKC to lead across the partnership. Through this effort, three new dedicated positions were added to the existing Homeless Services team to build capacity to manage system performance, align resources, and more effectively coordinate services.

The team also increases community awareness and education on the issue of homelessness and provides added capacity to the system by offering trainings and support. This team consists of dedicated professionals in the areas of homeless services, fiscal management, compliance, grants management, community relations, communications and marketing, strategy implementation, as well as support from the Homeless Outreach unit of the OKC Police Department.



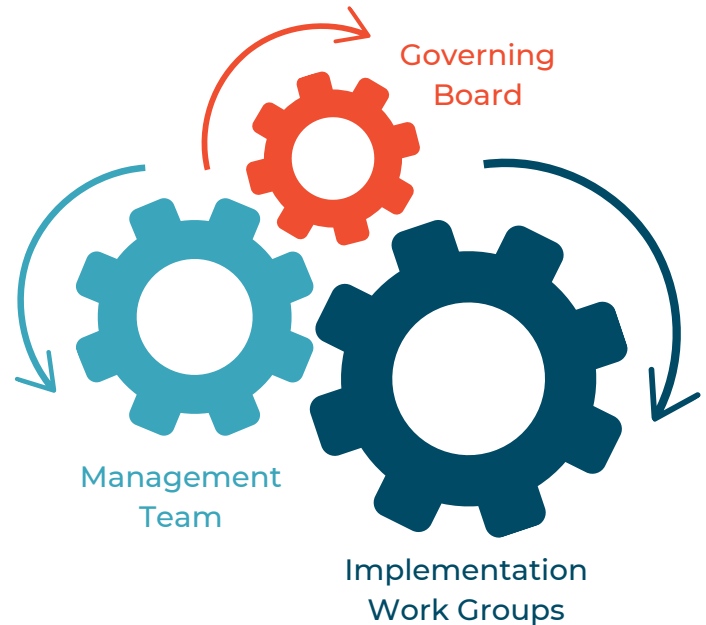
## Implementation Workgroups

The Partnership depends on multiple workgroups to guide the implementation of the Partnership's ambitious goals. These workgroups act as an essential component of the Partnership's governance structure.

Workgroups serve as the operational gears of the Partnership, translating strategic objectives into actionable plans. Workgroups pilot new approaches to addressing homelessness, evaluate their effectiveness, and refine them based on feedback and results. This iterative process allows the Partnership to innovate and adapt strategies to better meet the needs of the individuals being served.

Workgroups are facilitated by a member of the Management Team and are comprised of service providers, individuals with lived experience in homelessness, and stakeholders. This diverse composition helps foster a holistic approach to addressing homelessness that integrates various perspectives and expertise. Implementation workgroups are the backbone of the Partnership's efforts to reduce homelessness in OKC.

The following implementation workgroups meet regularly to drive progress toward stated goals. Below is a list of workgroups, their purpose and highlighted accomplishments to date.



### IMPLEMENTATION WORKGROUPS



#### SERVICE PROVIDERS

bring professional expertise and practical knowledge of the homeless services landscape in OKC.



#### PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

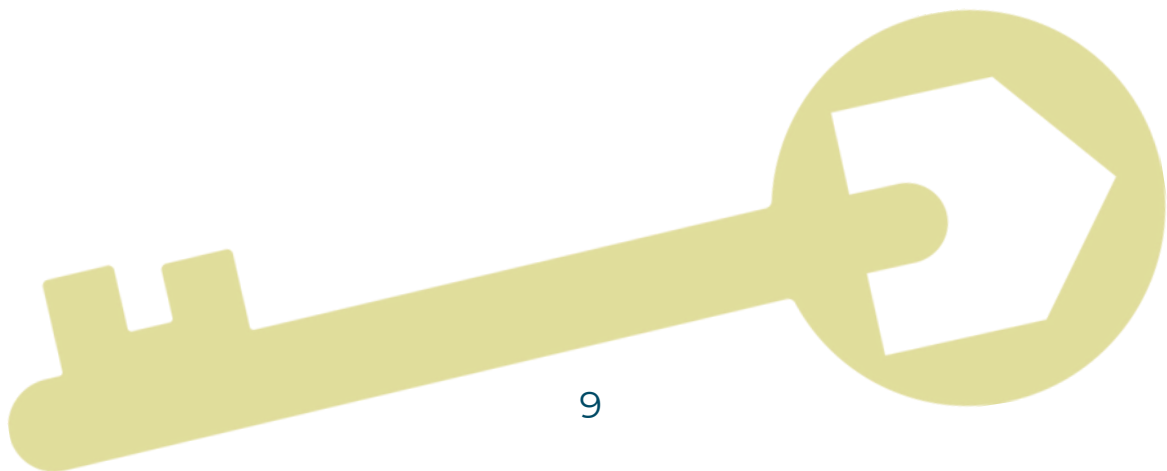
ensure that the workgroups maintain a client-centered approach.



#### STAKEHOLDERS

ensure that the workgroups have the necessary support and resources and that their strategies align with broader community and policy goals.

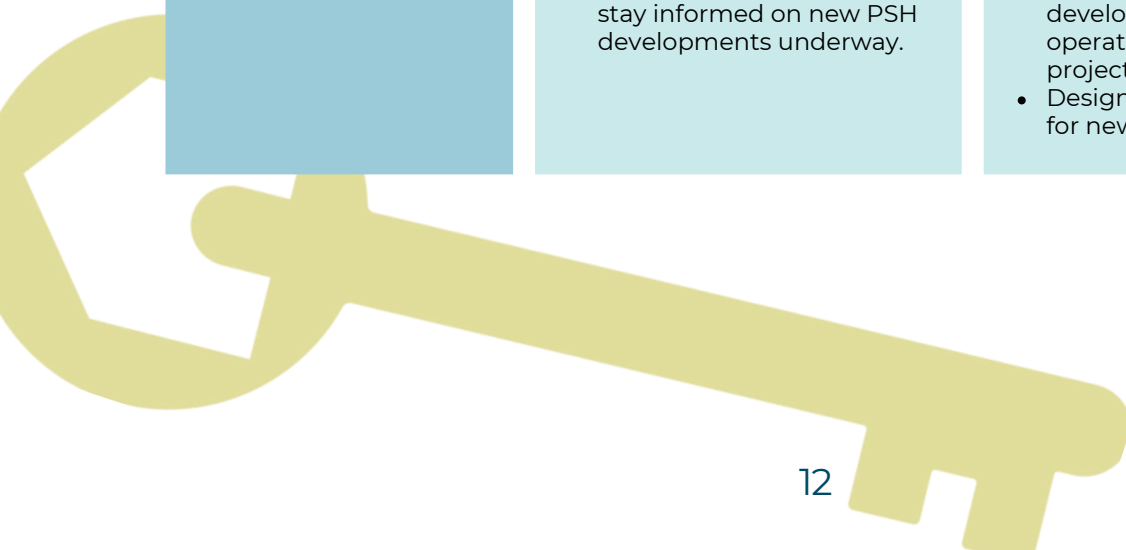
IMPLEMENTATION WORKGROUP	PURPOSE	HIGHLIGHTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<b>Coordinated Entry System (CES)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To create a streamlined, efficient and equitable process for assessing and prioritizing individuals and families experiencing homelessness for housing and services.</li> <li>Unites key stakeholders to collaborate on implementing and continually improving a coordinated entry system that ensures the most vulnerable are served first.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined metrics for success</li> <li>Drafted policies and procedures</li> <li>Refined and expanded prioritization criteria</li> <li>Refined assessment tool to improve data and streamline intake</li> </ul>
<b>Coordinated Case Management - Single Adults</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support case coordination and problem solving, and provide a forum for all providers to review, discuss and prioritize single adult clients for placement in available housing.</li> <li>Meetings focus on aligning resources, sharing insights and developing coordinated strategies to address unique needs of clients.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved client coordination</li> <li>Developed a more accurate and streamlined service and resource matching for clients</li> <li>Enhanced prioritization of clients</li> <li>Increased number of assessments completed</li> <li>Increased utilization of shared database across partner agencies</li> </ul>
<b>Coordinated Case Management - Veterans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support case coordination and problem solving, and provide a forum for all providers to review, discuss and prioritize Veteran clients for placement in available housing.</li> <li>Meetings focus on aligning resources, sharing insights and developing coordinated strategies to address unique needs of clients.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved client coordination</li> <li>Developed a more accurate and streamlined service and resource matching for clients</li> <li>Enhanced prioritization of clients</li> <li>Increased number of assessments completed</li> <li>Increased utilization of shared database across partner agencies</li> </ul>



IMPLEMENTATION WORKGROUP	PURPOSE	HIGHLIGHTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<b>Coordinated Case Management - Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support case coordination/problem solving, and provide a forum for providers to review and prioritize youth clients for placement in available housing.</li> <li>Meetings focus on aligning resources, sharing insights and developing strategies to address unique needs of clients.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamlined access to youth diversion funds</li> <li>Improved client coordination</li> <li>Developed a more accurate and streamlined service and resource matching for clients</li> <li>Enhanced prioritization of clients</li> </ul>
<b>Landlord Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To design and implement the structure and processes needed to build affirmative landlord engagement strategies to increase supply of available rental units in OKC in support of the Encampment Rehousing Initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secured 306 units</li> <li>Forged relationships with 28 properties for housing placements</li> <li>Implemented measures to streamline and centralize communications with landlords to address tenancy issues</li> <li>Secured Padmssion software tool, now in set-up, to better manage inventory</li> </ul>
<b>Community Response Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide timely response to community requests by trained teams in trauma and mental health for concerns about those experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>To connect with unsheltered individuals regularly, providing appropriate information to connect them to housing and supportive resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responded to 1,394 community requests through the Action Center for outreach to a person(s) experiencing homelessness</li> </ul>
<b>Housing Focused Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To engage with people living in encampments to build rapport and trust.</li> <li>To understand and communicate needs of residents as they relate to housing assistance and to work with residents to remove barriers and get them ready to move into housing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined and established new dedicated outreach zones among partners</li> <li>Closed 15 encampments through ERI and connected residents to housing and support services</li> </ul>

IMPLEMENTATION WORKGROUP	PURPOSE	HIGHLIGHTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<b>Encampment Rehousing Daily Briefing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To manage and coordinate service delivery during site closures and drive client progress toward housing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Held daily meetings during encampment rehousing projects to ensure coordination and accountability of all partners to constantly drive the project forward</li> </ul>
<b>Encampment Rehousing Closure - Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review all previously closed sites and identify opportunities for refinement of closure strategies. Includes leadership staff that represent each closure partner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Held bi-monthly meetings to discuss challenges and implement refinements where necessary to ensure smooth closures of encampments</li> </ul>
<b>Encampment Rehousing Site Closure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop plans and problem-solve the closure strategies for specific sites. Includes mid-level staff that represent each closure partner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Held bi-weekly meetings with partner agency staff, Key to Home staff, City Department staff and property owners to discuss and troubleshoot challenges to site closures</li> </ul>
<b>Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Stabilization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To empower PSH Case Managers to enhance their skill sets and refine their approach to delivering supportive services, with the goal of authentically standing beside people as they work to maintain housing and pursue their own sense of recovery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched ad-hoc workgroup tasked with development of ERI Policy and Procedures</li> <li>Held bi-weekly meetings to address barriers to tenancy and develop individualized action plans for clients</li> </ul>
<b>Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To design and implement refinements to PSH service delivery model and support improved PSH performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drafted PSH Outcomes report to monitor and evaluate effectiveness</li> <li>Developed standardized intake and enrollment forms for PSH client packets</li> </ul>

IMPLEMENTATION WORKGROUP	PURPOSE	HIGHLIGHTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<b>Encampment Rehousing Partner Briefings/Debriefings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop an action plan and define coordination structure for upcoming Encampment Rehousing Initiative sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met regularly ahead of encampment engagement to discuss challenges, assign responsibilities, identify potential challenges and coordinate efforts for each encampment site</li> </ul>
<b>Coordinated Community Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To oversee the implementation of activities necessary to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the Community Coordinated Plan and prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness in OKC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined prioritization for action steps</li> <li>Began work on 42 of the 63 action steps outlined in the plan</li> <li>Hosted Adulthood training, sponsored by OCCY</li> </ul>
<b>Youth Action Board (YAB)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To plan, develop and direct YAB goals in accordance with the vision established by the YAB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restructured Board to allow for more self-governance</li> <li>Participated in multiple community fairs advocating for the most vulnerable</li> <li>Established fiscal sponsorship</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To establish and implement the Key to Home comprehensive communications strategy through knowledge, collaboration and collective voice that is timely and effective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established collective voice and messaging for Partnership</li> <li>Developed and approved annual comprehensive communications plan</li> </ul>
<b>Housing Pipeline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To build minimum standards for Permanent Supportive Housing and to stay informed on new PSH developments underway.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met to identify prospects for future PSH developments and identify sources of funding for development, services and operations of current and future projects</li> <li>Designed minimum standards for new development of PSH</li> </ul>



## Public-Private Partnership

A key component of the Partnership's approach to addressing homelessness is the true public-private nature of the partnership. Inviting the community and the philanthropic sector to join us in tackling this issue brings new resources and perspectives to the table to support efforts to reduce homelessness. Raising private funds also allows the system to fully leverage the public dollars allocated from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

While public funds are critical to the deployment of vital services like case management, housing navigation, rapid rehousing programs, and stabilization services across our homeless response system, these dollars can only go so far and have strict limitations in how they can be utilized. For example, public funds can be used to secure an apartment through a housing voucher, but public funds are not always eligible for things like deposits, pet fees, or utility arrears that could prevent someone from accessing housing.



By pairing public funds with private dollars from the community, the system is better able to fill gaps and serve clients more effectively, ultimately setting them up for greater success and stabilization in their housing. The Partnership has raised \$2,758,574 with an additional \$2,000,000 pledged over the next two years.

The Key to Home Partnership established a Flex Fund at Communities Foundation of Oklahoma (CFO) to raise private funds and allow for the collection of tax-deductible donations. The Management Team at the City developed policies and procedures to govern the use of the Flex Fund to ensure this resource is allocated for specific uses that have broad impact and fill gaps in ending someone's homelessness. As of the end of July, \$1,194,261 in private dollars have been donated to Key to Home Partnership to support the system.

### WAYS TO GIVE

**Credit Card:** Visit [cfok.org/keytohome](http://cfok.org/keytohome)

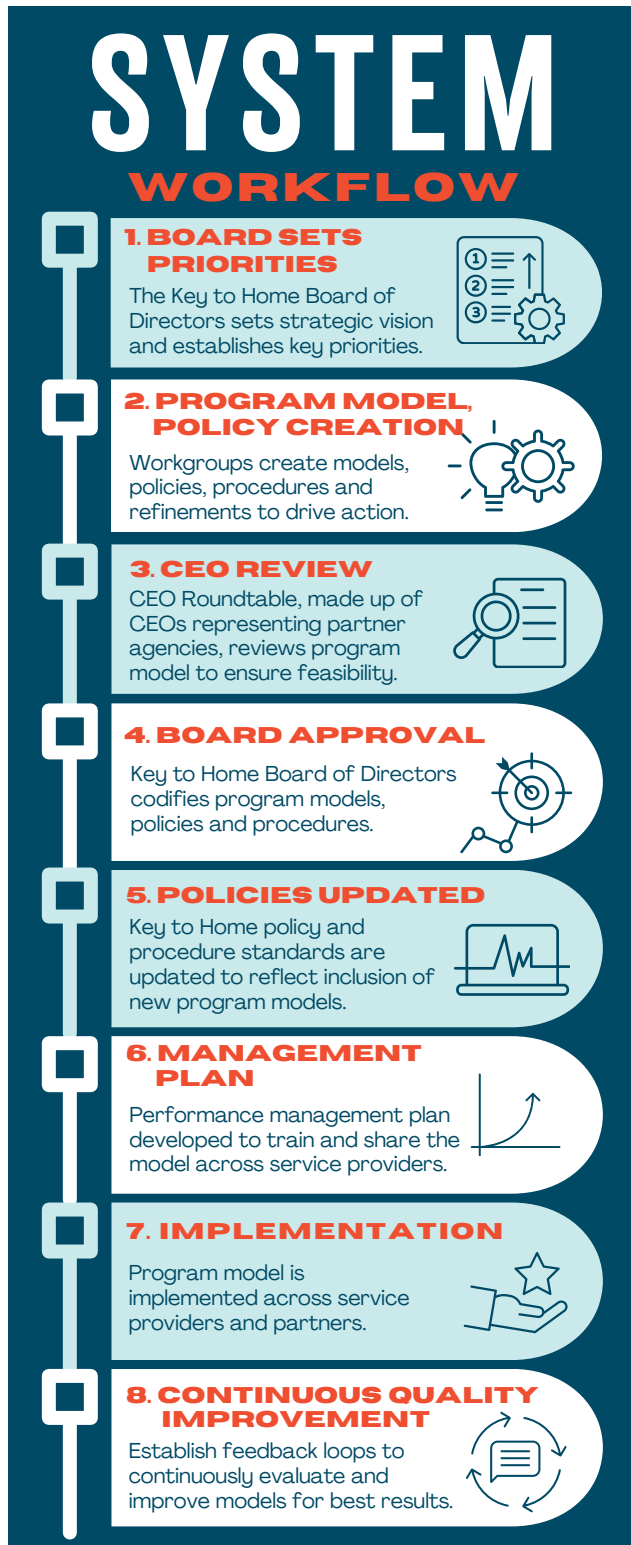
**Gifts of Stock:** Donate marketable securities by contacting CFO at 405-488-1450.

**Check or Cash:** Mail to PO Box 21210  
OKC, OK 73156.

(Make checks payable to CFO. Include "Key to Home Flex Fund" in the memo line.)

## GOAL 2: ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS DIFFERENTLY

The second goal of the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan is to improve infrastructure and capacity to enhance the system’s ability to serve the unhoused population effectively. This goal includes three key initiatives aimed at strengthening our organizational structure, data management, and resource utilization.



### Organizational Structure

One of the key functions of a successful homeless response system is having a streamlined access point for individuals experiencing homelessness to connect to housing and supportive services.

A Coordinated Entry System (CES) centralizes intake and assessment processes, ensuring that those in need are directed to the most appropriate resources efficiently, reducing time spent navigating the complex service networks across the community. Through deep analysis of the current system, CES was identified as a component of the homeless response system that needed enhancement.

Over the last year, teams worked to identify and improve processes to expedite referrals that result in more appropriate matches to housing and resources. Staff stood up a workgroup to analyze assessment procedures for individuals versus families, equity in assessments, and overall workflows within the coordinated entry processes.

From this analysis, staff and the workgroup identified several areas for improvement including refining the assessment questions and opportunities for automation to reduce manual and time-intensive workflows for staff. Staff continue to drive progress on identifying improvements for the Coordinated Entry System and implementing those enhancements.



## Data Management

Improving the quality of data is crucial for making informed decisions and understanding the current state of homelessness in real-time. The management team has taken measures to improve data collection with the goal that data collected is accurate, timely, and comprehensive. In a highly efficient homeless response system, data is updated frequently in the community's Homeless Information Management System (HMIS), a database designed to share client data between service providers to ensure streamlined service delivery for clients.

Assessments and referrals done through the Coordinated Entry System are now running through HMIS. This increase in data points available to the system allows for better tracking and monitoring for efficiency.

Encouraging widespread participation in HMIS will provide real-time access to accurate data. System-wide data integration will enable better tracking of services and outcomes--resulting in people accessing housing and resources more quickly.

## Resource Management

Leveraging federal rental subsidies and pairing them with Medicaid-funded health services is a goal the Partnership is working toward. This would be beneficial in providing comprehensive support to clients in need of permanent supportive housing.

Pairing permanent housing with supportive services to address both physical and mental health related needs provides stability for some of the most vulnerable residents of the community. We are working toward this goal by developing new permanent supportive housing units through MAPS4. The Affordable Housing / Homelessness Program of MAPS 4 will provide 500 new supportive housing units, which will significantly increase Oklahoma City's supply of stable housing units for those experiencing chronic homelessness. The first allocation of MAPS 4 funding for homelessness will create two supportive housing projects with an estimated 200 units of housing paired with supportive services.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- **Increased utilization of shared database in Coordinated Entry across Partnership**
- **Increased trainings and support for data management**
- **Improved data collection practices**



- **Work started on conversion of 81-unit motel into a dedicated permanent supportive housing facility**

## Resource Management, continued

The Vita Nova Permanent Supportive Housing Project is a conversion of an 81-unit motel into a dedicated permanent supportive housing facility. This project is currently going through analysis to ensure compliance with current codes and permitting requirements to define the final scope of work.

The budget is currently projected at \$13M - \$15M for Total Development Cost. \$3M for acquisition came from MAPS 4 and the remainder will be from other sources. This project will target chronically homeless people with disabilities who may have histories of convictions that are keeping them out of the housing market. The project will be 80% Project-Based Vouchers and 20% Housing Choice Vouchers to ensure affordability.

The Oklahoma City Housing Authority (OCHA) will pilot a "no lookback period" program which will accept persons usually determined to be ineligible for Section 8 housing subsidies due to conviction histories. The only two exclusions will be two federally mandated categories: a conviction for manufacturing methamphetamine on a federally funded property or being on the lifetime sex offender registry.

Services will be offered on-site with case management, physical and mental health services provided by local service providers. Work will commence before the end of 2024 with a projected timeline of 9 months for construction.

Site search for the second supportive housing project is currently underway. This project includes supportive housing units for homeless veterans and could be another hotel/motel conversion or an assisted living facility conversion.

The VA will provide services on site and the project will have up to 125 total units, which could be on one site or a combination of scattered sites. The units may be 100% for veterans or a mix of veterans and other chronically homeless families or individuals. Additional community partners will be identified to provide services for any non-veteran residents.

\$1.5M of MAPS 4 funding is allocated for this project and the process of identifying and securing other funding sources is in progress. Acquisition of a site is expected to take place by the end of 2024.



## Community Response Outreach

### MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OKLAHOMA

#### Contact MHAOK directly

- Call: 405-252-0218
- Email: [info@mhaok.org](mailto:info@mhaok.org)
- Visit: 915 N. Robinson Ave. Oklahoma City, OK 73102

#### Contact Community Response Outreach through the Action Center

- Call: 405-297-2535
- Text: 405-252-1053
- Email: [action.center@okc.gov](mailto:action.center@okc.gov)

#### Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

- Dial 988 for 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors for help with suicidal thoughts, substance use, mental health crises or emotional distress

#### Other emergencies

- Dial 911 for all other emergencies



Staff members engage with encampment resident

Homeless service providers, along with the City of OKC, identified the need for a new approach to addressing homelessness in Oklahoma City, particularly those sleeping outside. Additionally, the City recognized that new and innovative approaches to service delivery and an increased investment were going to be crucial to expanding the homeless response system's capacity to implement new solutions.

As a result, the City allocated funding to contract with the Mental Health Association Oklahoma (MHAOK) for community response outreach, enhancing the capacity of existing outreach teams to effectively reach and support more people in need of housing and supportive services.

Through this contract, MHAOK's outreach team is on stand-by during business hours to respond to community requests through the City of OKC's Action Center for outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness, and in urgent situations can respond to community concerns within an hour.

In fiscal year 2024, the Community Response Outreach team through MHAOK responded to 1,394 community requests for outreach.

## Inclement Weather Contingency Plan

When the temperature outside is forecasted below 32 degrees, emergency shelters open extra beds to offer respite from dangerous temperatures for those sleeping outside or in cars.

The shelters include Salvation Army, City Rescue Mission, City Care, Jesus House, Grace Rescue and Sisu Youth Services. The five shelters together offer about 161 overflow beds for the winter contingency plan. In recent years with the increase in individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, this capacity has not been adequate and additional overflow has been needed at Grace Rescue Mission and the Homeless Alliance day shelter.

In November of 2023, the Homeless Alliance began operating a new winter shelter that was available each night through March of 2024. This added an additional 300 beds to the capacity of winter shelter in Oklahoma City.



Photo provided by Curbside Chronicle.

## Community Education and Awareness

Addressing the complex issue of homelessness requires a multi-pronged approach across various systems, sectors and levels of government. Reducing homelessness is a critical component to creating a healthy and vibrant community for all residents, and achieving the Key to Home Partnership's strategic goals will take a community-wide effort.

Ensuring the public is educated on the issue of homelessness results in a community of informed citizens with a better understanding of challenges, potential solutions, and reduced stigma. It also fosters collaboration and leads to a more proactive community response focused on solutions. Public education and awareness campaigns play a vital role in a community's ability to effectively address homelessness, as they help to change perceptions, mobilize resources, and foster a more compassionate community response.

In late 2023, a dedicated position was created to focus on communications strategies to include the development and implementation of a community-wide education and awareness campaign. This position has led a work group composed of communications and marketing professionals from partner agencies to develop overall messaging and a strategy for a community education and awareness plan.

The work group's goals are to provide consistent, reliable education to the community on the issue of homelessness

and to be transparent about the Partnership's efforts, challenges and system performance in preventing and ending homelessness in Oklahoma City.

Efforts are being directed through various channels, including a website, video content, social media, billboards, bus stop ads, radio ads, OKC water bills, reports, press releases and media interviews and speaking engagements.

The work group is also focused on increasing brand recognition and awareness of the Key to Home Partnership and to ensure those looking for help have access to the information they need. Staff has developed unique branding with a new logo and tagline for the Key to Home Partnership. Branded collateral, including a free Pocket Resource Guide, has been produced and a Quarterly Leadership Report goes out to key stakeholders.



**HELP OTHERS IN OKC**

**Resource Guide for Homeless Assistance**

## Community Education and Awareness, continued

Partnerships have been forged with Tyler Media to place bus stop and radio ads for broad community awareness and improved brand recognition.

An updated website has been designed to provide more transparency and information on the Partnership's goals, activities and progress toward reaching milestones. New video content has been released to illustrate work that is underway.

Staff are participating in community conversations, panel discussions, neighborhood meetings and other speaking engagements including media interviews to continue education efforts with the public.

Planning for upcoming events in 2025 is underway to inform and rally the community to join us in creating long-term solutions for our unhoused neighbors.



Staff Jesse Andersen and Erika Warren speaking at West OKC Community Conversations Event



Bus bench ads donated by Tyler Media and OKC Metropolitan Association of Realtors.

2.5K+  
followers on  
social media



New website  
launching  
soon!

Follow Us !



KEYTOHOMEOKC.ORG



## GOAL 3: REDUCE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

The City of Oklahoma City applied for and received the HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) grant to bring much needed funding to the community to address increased youth homelessness. The \$3,028,026 grant supports services designed to meet housing, education, employment, transportation and social and emotional needs of youth experiencing homelessness.



Youth with lived experience of homelessness helped inform the program's design, and a Youth Action Board was established to provide ongoing feedback and recommendations.

YHDP is a housing first model, focused on getting youth into safe housing including permanent supportive housing, transitional and rapid rehousing, and host homes. Once housed, youth are connected to supportive services to increase stability in other areas of life, increase self-sufficiency and develop necessary life skills. The YHDP project has seen success in connecting more youth to housing and supportive services

**154**

Youth served by housing or diversion programs



because of strong partner agencies working directly with homeless youth. Sisu Youth Services and Pivot both operate drop-in centers where youth can access services and meet immediate needs like showers, laundry, clothing, access to hygiene items and hot meals. Through drop-in services, youth can also get connected to case management to help them self-identify goals and make individualized, actionable plans to achieve their goals and create the life they want. Both agencies also operate overnight emergency shelters specifically for youth. These partners have been instrumental in deploying critical services to youth in need, collectively serving over 500 youth through drop-in services alone.

Through YHDP, these agencies also provide low-barrier access to crisis housing and the Homeless Alliance provides Permanent Supportive Housing.

**500+**

Youth served through drop in services like showers, laundry, food and clothing

Additionally, Hope Community Services piloted a diversion program that was designed to be an intervention that addresses the needs of youth who have recently lost housing and are on the brink of homelessness.

Diversion services can remove barriers for youth to access housing and can be used for security deposits, rental and utility arrears, internet access, transportation, job training and education supports, among other services. Diversion screenings are being completed at all emergency youth shelters and partners serving youth.

Funding for the YHDP project was part of a \$2.4 million increase in funding to the City of Oklahoma City from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

A portion of the YHDP grant was earmarked for planning and developing new programs to support critical services to address youth homelessness. These planning dollars were allocated over two years and will expire September 30, 2024.

The grant also includes programming dollars to bolster support of critical services to address youth homelessness and can be added to the annual Key to Home budget moving forward for ongoing refinements and improvements for supportive services through the YHDP.



I'm so proud of the work being done by [the] Key to Home Partnership, and I'm proud of HUD's support of their mission. Homelessness has increased nationally, but much less so here in Oklahoma City, and that's due to great leadership, vision, and the hard work of the community and the Partnership's homeless service providers.

*Candace Valenzuela  
HUD Regional Administrator*



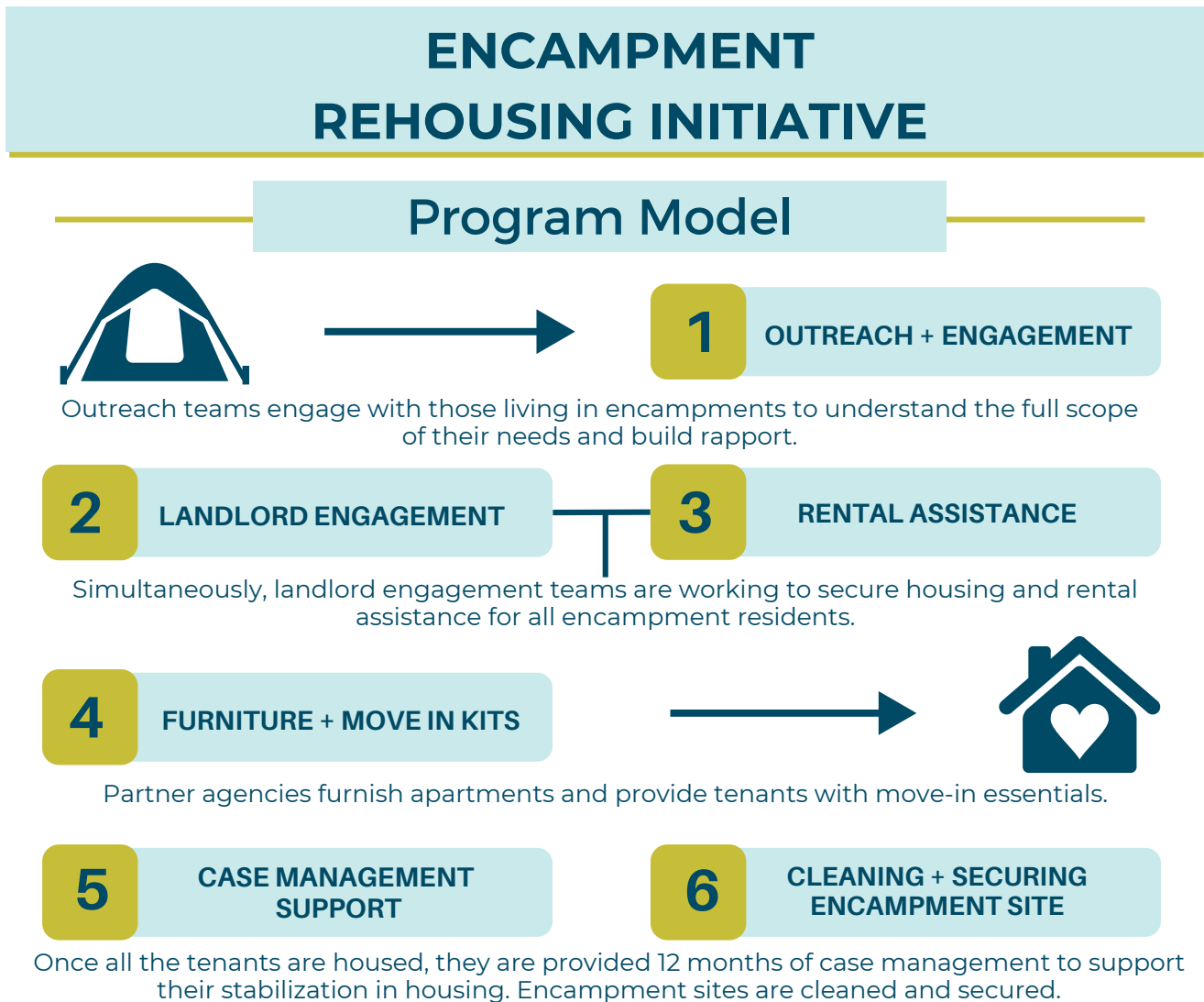
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the City of Oklahoma City a \$7.1 million grant to provide housing for people experiencing homelessness. The award was \$2.4 million more than last year's grant.



## GOAL 4: REDUCE UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

Housing is proven to be the most effective way to end homelessness and stabilize people's lives. Following the increase in individuals experiencing chronic and unsheltered homelessness in recent years, the Key to Home Partnership adopted a plan that set a goal to rehouse 500 unsheltered individuals by the end of 2025. This will be achieved through the Encampment Rehousing Initiative (ERI), which brings outreach and services directly to encampments with the goal of housing everyone residing there within 4-6 weeks.

Following national best practices, the Partnership adopted the method within Oklahoma City's homeless response system in September 2023. The program model consists of several unique components that have led to its success, many of which harness existing community strengths.



## Landlord Engagement



A centralized Landlord Engagement team, embedded at City Rescue Mission, was established to locate and secure housing units across the city, build relationships with landlords and to ensure adequate housing inventory is readily available.

Centralized landlord engagement efforts enhance the effectiveness of the Encampment Rehousing Initiative by streamlining the housing process, building strong partnerships with landlords, and increasing housing opportunities for those experiencing homelessness. Additionally, landlord engagement specialists have the unique opportunity to scale their efforts to build relationships with higher level property management that have the ability to leverage entire portfolios for use by the Key to Home Partnership.

By actively recruiting and engaging landlords, specialists can expand the pool of available housing units, making it easier and faster to find suitable housing options for homeless individuals and families.

Landlord Engagement Specialists, along with their case management counterparts, can quickly address and resolve issues that arise between landlords and tenants, such as maintenance concerns or behavioral issues which decreases evictions and helps ensure stable housing.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- **Secured 306 housing units**
- **28 properties across OKC working with the Key to Home Partnership**

## Coordinated Housing-Focused Outreach

Another key component to the Encampment Rehousing Initiative is coordinated outreach services, designed to provide integrated support and access to resources for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness with the goal of getting them into housing.

Outreach and engagement services are provided by the Mental Health Association Oklahoma, Hope Community Services, Homeless Alliance and City Care. Outreach teams from these agencies engage with individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness using trauma-informed principles to build rapport and trust so that encampment residents can take the first steps in their housing journey.

To improve efficiency, existing outreach efforts needed enhanced coordination. As a result, outreach teams created four dedicated geographic zones across the city. By designating zones for each agency, organizations can build increased trust with homeless individuals because they are more likely to engage with services when they have built a relationship with the outreach workers over time. In addition to increased client rapport, the zones decrease time spent traveling to allow for more time directly with clients and improve accountability measures. With the reduction of duplicated efforts, outreach teams are able to spend time focusing on housing opportunities that make the overall system more efficient and effective.

## Housing Assistance

The Encampment Rehousing Initiative focuses on providing housing and resources for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. In many cases, the individual getting housing may have spent months or even years living outside. Signing a lease and moving into a new home is only the first step in their journey. Providing adequate services and opportunities for community integration is vital to stabilization in housing.

The Oklahoma City Housing Authority (OCHA) provides rental assistance and administers rapid rehousing payments on behalf of clients. Additionally, OCHA and the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) have each committed 100 dedicated housing vouchers for the Initiative.

Focus on Home ensures that each person has furniture and move-in kits to settle into their new home. These furniture packages include items such as a couch, mattress, blanket, two towels, two plates and a few items to prepare a meal.



## Stabilization Services

Recognizing the importance of ongoing support for these clients, case managers were hired to provide supportive services to Encampment Rehousing Initiative clients for 12 months. Staff from City Care, Catholic Charities, Homeless Alliance, and Northcare provide vital case management services to clients, connecting them to additional supports and resources that contribute to stabilization and community integration.

Case managers offer clients support to maintain their housing and work toward establishing their own systems of support within the community.

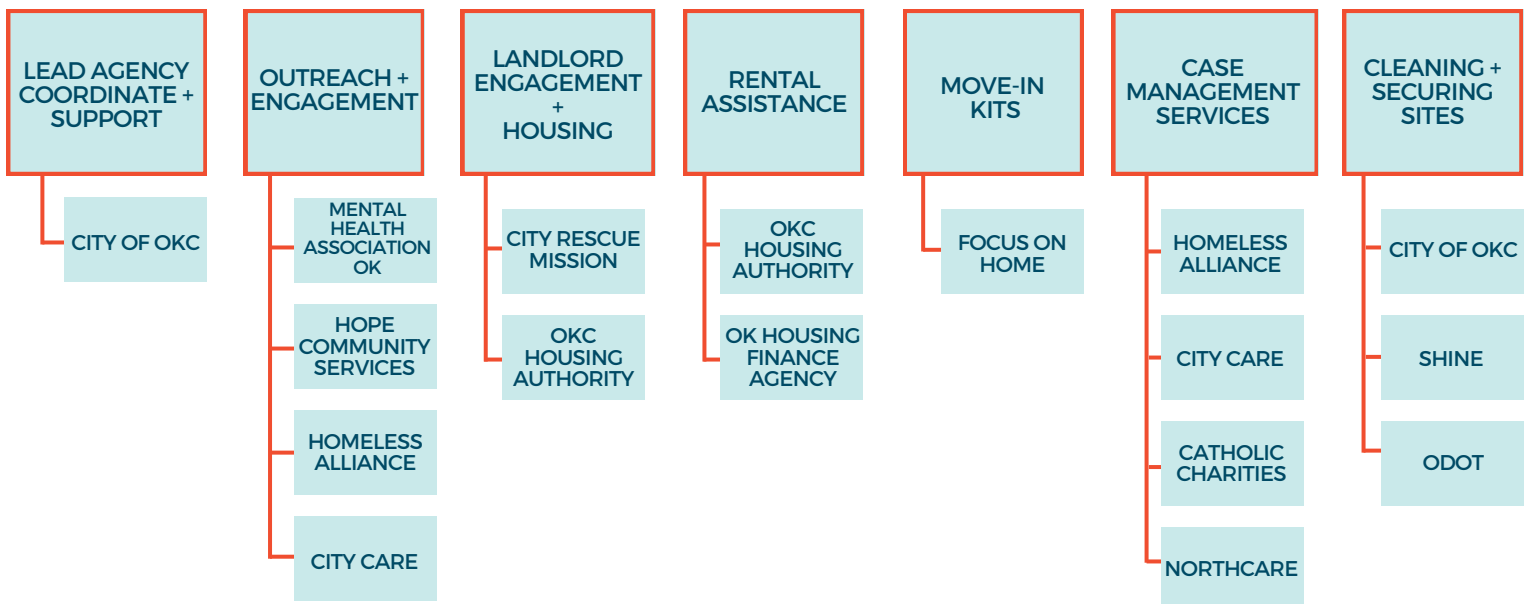
## Securing Sites

Lastly, the City of Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma County SHINE program and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation collaborate to address any health and safety concerns at encampment sites after residents have exited into housing.



## PROGRAM PARTNERS

The Initiative's novel approach to addressing unsheltered homelessness would be ineffective without the strength and dedication of the partners and service providers implementing it. Each component of this model requires intense focus on shared outcomes, deep knowledge and expertise of the challenges associated with working with unsheltered populations, as well as intentional coordination efforts and a commitment to continuous quality improvement. The success of the Encampment Rehousing Initiative is due to the high standards of excellence set by our partners and service providers in their respective roles.



## Program Outcomes

Through innovative approaches to working with unsheltered individuals and families, the Encampment Rehousing Initiative has made strides in meeting stated goals. In just under a year's time, the program has moved from working with one encampment per month to an average of three encampments per month and increased case management capacity from 12 to 16 case managers.

The program has successfully closed 15 encampment sites across Oklahoma City and housed 214 individuals who were formerly sleeping outside. Between September 2023 and June 30th 2024, 91% of people in encampments have accepted housing when offered and none have returned to the homeless response system. The Initiative is on track to hit the goal of housing 500 unsheltered individuals by the end of 2025.



**15**

Encampment sites closed



**214**

Encampment residents housed

### Closed Encampment Sites

- SW 15th & Meridian Ave.
- I-44 & Pennsylvania Ave.
- I-40 & Martin Luther King Ave.
- S Santa Fe & SE 27th St.
- S. Santa Fe & SW 44th St.
- S. Robinson & SW 37th St.
- McArthur Ave. & SW 13th St.
- S. Agnew & Oklahoma River
- Pennsylvania Ave. & SW 25th St.
- NW 7th St. & Villa Ave.
- SW 7th St. & S. Broadway
- General Pershing Blvd. & Pennsylvania Ave.
- SW 79th St. & S. Shartel Ave.
- NW 7th St. and Pennsylvania Ave.
- Melrose Ln. & N. MacArthur Blvd.



## ERI Funding Breakdown



This two-year initiative was estimated to cost approximately \$12.5 million to house 500 unsheltered individuals. The City of OKC has secured funding through a combination of federal grants and general municipal funds that can be applied to specific program components. Private funding has also been dedicated to program activities, some of which cannot be covered with public funds. The following budget reflects the allocations to date for the ERI program.

COMPONENT	PRIVATE FUNDS BUDGETED	PUBLIC FUNDS ALLOCATED
Rental Subsidies	\$1,383,248	\$5,519,752
Stabilization Services	\$101,309	\$3,343,483
Landlord Incentives and Move-In Kits	\$1,224,125	
Expanded Management Team	\$500,000	
Administration	\$355,631	\$679,148
Totals	\$3,564,313	\$9,542,383
Total Program Funding Budgeted	\$13,106,696	

# COLLECTIVE IMPACT

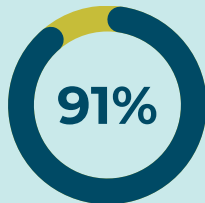
## Encampment Rehousing Initiative



New housing units secured through the Encampment Rehousing Initiative



Properties providing units for Encampment Rehousing Initiative clients



% of encampment residents who have accepted housing



% reached toward rehousing goal of 500 unsheltered people



% of encampment residents who have left housing with an exit destination "place not meant for habitation"

\* We track both "positive exits" (such as moving to another location, reuniting with family, etc.) and "negative exits" from the program. For the sake of this report, this number refers to those who have an exit destination indicating a return to homelessness but does not reflect a confirmation of a return to homelessness.

JULY 1, 2023  
to  
JUNE 30, 2024

## System-Wide

Partner agencies represented in the Key to Home Partnership



Outreach responses by the Homeless Outreach Team and Community Response Outreach through the OKC Action Center



Individuals assisted in ending their homelessness



## Housing Placements Coming in 2025

Permanent Supportive Housing

Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Exit / Self Resolution

# LOOKING AHEAD



Through system modeling, the Key to Home Partnership reviews and adopts priorities to drive system change and align resources to achieve strategic goals. In 2024, The Partnership adopted the following seven Key Priorities to build on work accomplished, or set in motion, this past year. These priorities will be a focus over the next three years.

## SCALE DIVERSION

Data from the 2024 Point in Time count revealed an increase in the availability and utilization of overflow winter shelter beds. However, service utilization across the homeless response system did not rise correspondingly. This suggests that some of the additional shelter use was likely by individuals who were housing insecure rather than literally homeless, highlighting the need for more diversion services to assist those on the brink of homelessness.

When combining this data with a clear need to reduce inflow, or the number of people entering the homeless response system, the Key to Home Board of Directors determined that developing a system-wide diversion program was a key priority.

Diversion services are designed to be an intervention that immediately addresses the needs of someone who has just lost housing before they enter the homeless response system.



A workgroup has been established to review best practices from other communities and create a program model to implement in Oklahoma City. After the program model is complete and has been reviewed by the CEO Roundtable and Key to Home Board of Directors, a pilot will begin. Diversion is both a cost-effective and human-centered intervention to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in our community.

### What is “Diversion?”

An intervention designed to immediately address the needs of someone who has just lost their housing and is on the front steps of homelessness.



## SUSTAIN RAPID REHOUSING

Through the Encampment Rehousing Initiative, the Partnership has established 300 new units of Rapid Rehousing in scattered sites across Oklahoma City, operated by the Oklahoma City Housing Authority. Rapid Rehousing is a housing assistance program designed to quickly connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness with permanent housing. By quickly securing permanent housing, Rapid Rehousing minimizes the duration of homelessness, which can reduce the negative impacts on physical and mental health. Looking ahead, The Partnership is committed to sustaining the inventory of Rapid Rehousing units brought online through the Encampment Rehousing Initiative and is exploring various avenues to secure sustainable funding to continue utilizing this vital pathway to housing for those experiencing homelessness.

## PATHWAYS TO HIGHER LEVELS OF CARE + RESPITE



The Key to Home Partnership has identified a growing need for higher levels of care for those experiencing homelessness and discharged from hospitals with ongoing health care needs. Currently, there are very few respite care facilities designed to provide temporary housing in combination with medical support to ensure safe recovery for these individuals. Dedicated respite facilities for homeless individuals discharged from hospitals provide a safe environment for recovery, reducing the likelihood of complications that lead to readmissions; provide economic benefits to the community by offering an alternative to expensive emergency room visits; free up hospital beds for other patients, optimizing hospital resources and reducing strain on emergency services; and help individuals experiencing homelessness transition safely to more permanent housing solutions and stabilization. The Key to Home Partnership plans to explore new pathways to higher levels of care and respite care for this vulnerable population.

## RAPIDLY DEVELOP PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING UNITS



Rapidly developing permanent supportive housing (PSH) units is crucial in reducing homelessness because PSH provides stable, long-term housing combined with supportive services tailored to individual needs. This approach addresses many factors contributing to homelessness, such as mental health, substance use, and chronic illness by offering a secure environment where individuals can access necessary resources. By prioritizing the quick development of PSH units, we can provide a cost-effective solution to respond to homelessness, reducing the use of costly emergency services and other public resources.

## PAIR PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING WITH BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE



Integrated behavioral health services and permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals addresses the complex needs of this vulnerable population. Typically, the longer a person remains homeless, the more barriers exist for that person to resolve their homelessness. As these barriers grow and become more complex, a higher level of support is needed to assist with stabilization once the person acquires housing. Pairing behavioral health services with permanent housing is an approach that leads to better mental and physical health outcomes for the client, greater housing stability over the long-term, and reductions in returns to homelessness, ultimately benefiting both the individuals and the broader community.

## EXPAND FLEX FUND SYSTEM-WIDE



The benefits of a public-private partnership for a homeless response system have been described in this report but can't be over-emphasized. Community support and private donations to fill funding gaps are essential for the successful execution of the Key to Home Partnership's objectives. Thus far, private dollars have been raised and placed in a flexible fund to support the efforts of the Encampment Rehousing Initiative's goal to rehouse 500 unsheltered individuals by the end of 2025. Due to the success in raising private funds, limited support has also been made available system-wide for expenses such as deposits.

The flex fund predominately removes barriers to housing in a few different ways. This fund provides incentives to landlords that give clients access to housing units and it covers small barriers that cannot be covered with public dollars such as utility arrears, furniture and deposits. Raising private dollars helps the system fully utilize the public funding available and move more people into housing.

## CENTRALIZE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Management Team, embedded at the City of Oklahoma City, is tasked with monitoring performance for the breadth of work and various coordinated strategies for reducing homelessness under the Key to Home Partnership. Ensuring the Partnership continues to drive forward on reaching milestones and achieving the goals laid out in the strategic framework is of utmost importance.

The Management Team continues to explore additional strategies for continuous quality improvement within our framework for reducing homelessness as well as innovative methods for improving the overall performance of the system.

# CONTACT US

## Contact the OKC Action Center

To report concerns regarding homelessness, please contact the OKC Action Center:

- **Call** (405) 297-2535 during operating hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Mobile App:** Download the 'OKC Connect' app available on Android or Apple devices. This app allows you to submit service requests and stay updated with City news.
- **Text Message:** Text your concerns to (405) 252-1053. Include the address or closest intersection and a detailed description of the issue. Standard carrier rates and fees apply.
- **Email:** Send your questions or concerns to [action.center@okc.gov](mailto:action.center@okc.gov)

### Phone

+405-297-3251

### Email

[jamie.caves@okc.gov](mailto:jamie.caves@okc.gov)

### Website

[www.keytohomeokc.org](http://www.keytohomeokc.org)



**KEY TO**  
**HOME**  
PARTNERSHIP

