



MEETING THE MOMENT: MAYOR-LED STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

SUMMER 2025 MEETING
JUL. 30 - AUG. 1 • ALBUQUERQUE, NM

As homelessness continues to rise in many communities, cities are stepping up with innovative solutions that prioritize prevention, rapid rehousing, and equitable access to services. This panel will highlight the latest strategies mayors are using to address homelessness at the local level—from coordinated entry systems and housing-first approaches to cross-sector partnerships that improve outcomes and reduce barriers. Panelists will share actionable insights on what's working, what's scalable, and how city leadership can make a lasting impact.



DISCLAIMER

For length, clarity, and printing purposes, many of these sources have been abbreviated and/or edited from their original form. To read the full, unabbreviated resources from this book, please visit our website or view them on the usb drive provided in your meeting materials.

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The Challenge of 2024: America's Mayors Continue to Cite Homelessness as Top Concern



United States Conference of Mayors

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5 min read · Feb 8, 2024

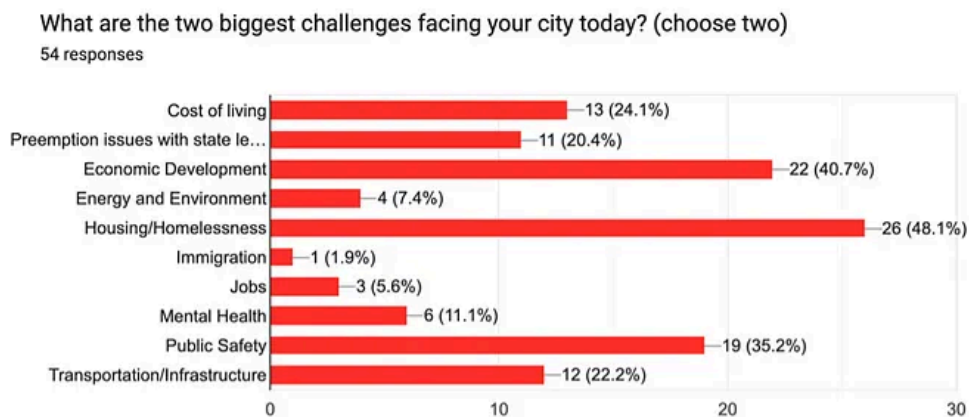


Just listen to America's mayors, and they'll tell you: Homelessness is the most important issue they're confronting today.

The issue is complex. It intersects with economic challenges, mental health, substance abuse, and more, and for each person facing homelessness, it is a personal tragedy.

The topic was at the center of discussions at the U.S. Conference of Mayors recent Winter Meeting, attended by a bipartisan group of more than 300 mayors in the nation's capital. It inspired a national summit last fall in Los Angeles, where mayors like LA's Karen Bass discussed the realities of what cities and residents are facing. And, it topped a new mayoral survey conducted by USCM this January.

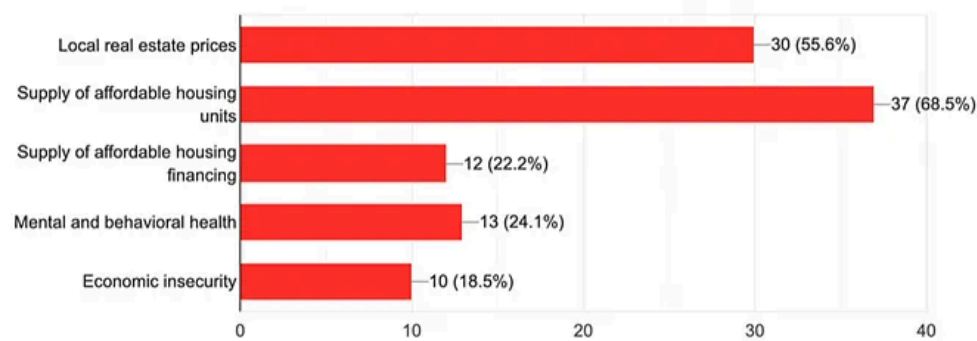
When asked what the two biggest challenges facing America's cities are today, nearly fifty percent of responding mayors said "housing/homelessness." This is the second time that the issue ranked the top concern, following a similar poll conducted last summer at USCM's 91st Annual Meeting in Columbus.



When asked about the causes, most mayors pointed to high rents and a low supply of housing, along with issues of mental health and economic insecurity.

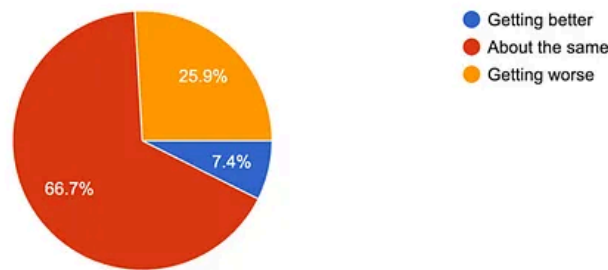
What issues are contributing the most to the housing and homelessness challenge in your city?
(choose two)

54 responses



Compared to one year ago, is the housing and homelessness situation in your city:

54 responses



The challenge is significant and not easily solved. But that's where mayors are taking action. At the local level, mayors are working to increase the nation's supply of affordable housing, implement greater eviction protections, and provide critical wraparound services, as well as call for more robust federal action.

Here are some of the ways that mayors are leading locally on homelessness:

- In Los Angeles, Mayor Karen Bass, chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Homelessness Task Force, announced that more than 21,000 unhoused Angelenos had come inside during her first year in office thanks to a comprehensive approach that has dispelled the myth that people who are unhoused want to sleep outside.
- In Reno, Nevada, USCM President Hillary Schieve has led a 58% reduction in the number of unsheltered residents in Reno by working

with the neighboring city of Sparks to build a Nevada Cares Campus in 2021. The campus, which can accommodate more than 600 people, has helped reduce the number of homeless residents living on the street to 329 this year, down from 780. Mayor Schieve also established the Reno Works program, offering jobs in city departments to people who are living in homeless shelters. After completing the program, participants can continue receiving housing assistance and support from caseworkers. So far, about 100 people have participated.

- In Atlanta, Georgia, Mayor Andre Dickens set a goal to add 20,000 affordable housing units across the city, and construction on more than 8,000 new units has already begun. He joined community partners to support \$2 million for new eviction prevention programs so more Atlanta residents could combat wrongful evictions, and he championed the city's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Mayor Dickens also issued an Executive Order launching the Administration's new Rapid Housing initiative, allocating millions of dollars to provide new quick-delivery housing to individuals experiencing homelessness. The funds were allocated to acquire structures from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) to relocate and install new Rapid Housing units on City-owned property. The containers are renovated to provide units of supportive housing to serve the chronically unhoused. The first site is 184 Forsyth Street, and units are being completed now. Just this month, the Administration and partners broke ground on Ralph David House — the former Atlanta Motel — which will become more than 50 units of affordable housing for previously unhoused residents.
- In Eugene, Oregon, Mayor Lucy Vinis's Housing Implementation Pipeline leverages finite City resources and partners with government and nonprofits to access state and federal funds to support creating all types of shelter and housing. Since 2022, the City has supported the preservation of 59 Affordable Housing units, the creation of 187 new Affordable Housing units, with an additional 285 future Affordable Housing units in progress, and developed more than 250 new shelter spaces.
- In Toledo, Ohio, Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, Chair of USCM's Community Development and Housing Standing Committee, collaborated with local financial institutions and housing agencies to establish a down payment assistance program funded through HUD Low-Income Housing Credits, which has supported 45 new homeowners in

Toledo this year alone. First-time home buyers who qualify can receive up to \$9,500 for a down payment on a home. In 2021, Toledo became one of only 11 municipalities nationwide to codify a right to counsel for residents facing eviction. In the first year of the program, legal aid partners represented tenants in 227 eviction cases. And in 2022, the City of Toledo joined a partnership of local organizations called the Eviction Prevention League, which works to bolster support for residents facing eviction. In the first year, the Eviction Prevention League prevented 69 evictions.

- In Tempe, Arizona, Mayor Corey Woods, Vice Chair of USCM's Community Development and Housing Standing Committee, helped create the Hometown for All initiative, passed by the City Council in 2021. It creates a dedicated funding source to expand affordable workforce housing. For every development project built in Tempe, an amount equivalent to 50% of certain permitting fees is paid to the city's General Fund and then allocated to the nonprofit Tempe Coalition for Affordable Housing. The funds are leveraged to purchase land and existing properties and redevelop city-owned parcels. The work is also supported by voluntary developer contributions. Through the initiative, the City is currently planning two large redevelopments that include affordable rental and homeownership opportunities and community amenities. The initiative has brought in more than \$6 million in its first two years.
- In Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USCM Second Vice President Mayor David Holt launched the Key to Home program earlier this year, which helps place unhoused residents in an apartment where they receive weekly visits by case managers. The program plans to help 500 people find housing over the next two years and aims to reduce the rate of unsheltered homelessness by 75 percent.



Written by United States Conference of Mayors

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The United States Conference of Mayors. Official non-partisan organization of cities 30,000 in population and larger, each represented by their mayor.

State and Local Policy Levers to Address Homelessness & Advance Housing Equity

State and local governments can play a critical role in ending housing instability and homelessness. State and local policymakers should prioritize proven solutions that address the root causes and harmful conditions of homelessness and reject shortsighted and punitive responses that worsen these conditions for their residents and make it harder for them to gain permanent housing.

This resource aims to support advocates and policymakers seeking to advance housing access and stability for all community members. No one policy can be a “silver bullet,” but taken together, this non-exhaustive list of policies and strategies can play a critical role in preventing and addressing homelessness, promoting public and community health, and advancing racial equity. Most of the strategies highlighted would reform our current systems to help reduce homelessness, minimize harm, and advance equity, while some of the policies would begin to shift power to directly impacted people and pave the way for more transformative changes.

When weighing which of these policies to prioritize, consider:

- Does this policy address the racial inequities of our current housing systems and policies?
- How have or will we engage and center people with lived expertise in the development and implementation of this policy or strategy?
- Does my city/county/state already have programs, resources, or policies in place that this could build on or leverage for this policy? Are there places with existing programs or policies that we could look to as models? How can we secure additional resources if needed?
- Are there partners or coalitions already working on this or who could work with us as allies? What partners do we need to bring to the table? What is needed to build political will?
- Who might oppose this change, and how can we address their concerns without undermining progress – or build power to overcome their opposition?
- How impactful would this policy be and how will we measure this impact? Does this policy primarily mitigate current harm, or could it also advance long-term transformation of our housing system?



THE FRAMEWORK
FOR AN EQUITABLE
HOMELESSNESS
RESPONSE

The Framework for an Equitable Homelessness Response project is being collaboratively guided by the following partners:

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities • National Alliance to End Homelessness •
- National Health Care for the Homeless Council • Housing Justice Collective • National Low Income Housing Coalition •
- Urban Institute • National Coalition for the Homeless • National Homelessness Law Center
- Housing Narrative Lab • Barbara Poppe and associates • Matthew Doherty Consulting •

Strategy

Help people with the lowest incomes afford housing

Why this strategy is important

The gap between incomes and housing costs is the primary driver of homelessness. The gap is fueled by a long history of racist housing and economic policies and practices. Addressing that gap is key to both preventing and resolving homelessness, and advancing equity.

Key state & local policies

- Establish or expand state- or locally funded rental subsidies for the lowest-income and most marginalized households
- Increase benefits for people with disabilities, older adults, caregivers, and low-paid workers through expanding state supplements to programs like Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Earned Income Tax Credit, and other cash or income support programs
- Increase the state or local minimum wage
- Rein in rent increases through rent stabilization
- Create or expand renter's tax credits to reduce rent burdens for low-income renters
- Improve pathways to jobs that pay a living wage

Examples & resources

- [State and Local Rental Programs Database | NLIHC](#)
 - [Rental Assistance as a Homelessness Strategy | CBPP](#)
 - [Federal Rental Assistance Fact Sheets | CBPP](#)
 - [TANF Housing Supplements | CBPP](#)
 - [Rent Stabilization Toolkit | NLIHC](#)
 - [Employment and Income | NAEH](#)
 - [State Child Tax Credit and EITC Expansion | CBPP](#)
 - [State Minimum Wage Tracker | EPI](#)
-

Strategy

Protect tenants and expand targeted homelessness prevention

Why this strategy is important

Homelessness increases when more people are forced into homelessness than exit it. Stemming the inflow is a key part of the solution, and will help to address deep, persistent racial inequities in homelessness and evictions.

Key state & local policies

- Expand and improve access to emergency rental assistance programs that include funds available for back rent, unpaid utilities, or other emergency expenses
- Provide services and housing resources for people exiting institutions — like hospitals, foster care, or prisons/jails — to prevent inflow into homelessness
- Pass a state or local Tenants Bill of Rights (or pass individual policies within it, like just cause eviction protections, application and lease fairness, source of income protections, habitability protections)
- Provide guaranteed counsel and eviction diversion programs for people facing eviction lawsuits
- Establish laws that protect tenants' right to organize

Examples & resources

- [Emergency Rental Assistance Resource Hub | NLIHC](#)
 - [Tenant Protection Resources | NLIHC](#)
 - [Tenant Bill of Rights | NHLP](#)
 - [Housing and Justice System Connections | CSH](#)
 - [Right to Counsel | NCCRC](#)
 - [Tenant Union Federation](#)
-

Strategy

Reduce barriers to accessing housing

Why this strategy is important

Unnecessary documentation and administrative processes can create barriers to housing for the lowest income, most marginalized households, including people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the lack of supportive services and prevalence of policies and practices that discriminate against people based on their race, income, disability, and LGBTQ+ status contribute to deep racial and other inequities among people experiencing homelessness.

Key state & local policies

- Reduce participants' administrative burdens, such as with self-attestation of eligibility, direct-to-tenant assistance, categorical eligibility, and more
- Establish "Source of Income" protections
- Leverage Medicaid or other funding to expand services that help people access and retain housing through resources like supportive housing
- Expand eviction record sealing and expungement
- Advance Fair Chance Housing policies to limit the use of criminal convictions to discriminate against tenants
- Limit tenant screening procedures to minimize housing denials based on credit or housing background
- Limit or prohibit excessive and arbitrary fees required of prospective renters

Examples & resources

- [Source of Income Protections | PRRAC](#)
 - [Using Medicaid to Address Health Related Social Needs | CBPP](#)
 - [Medicaid and Housing Related Services Toolkit | CSH](#)
 - [Fair Chance Housing Toolkit | Root & Rebound](#)
 - [Eviction Record Sealing and Expungement Toolkit | NLIHC](#)
 - [Abuse and Bias in Tenant Screening Harm Renters | NCLC](#)
-

Strategy

Increase the supply and preservation of deeply affordable and supportive housing

Why this strategy is important

There is a severe shortage of rental homes affordable and available to people with the lowest incomes, including supportive housing. While addressing supply alone is not enough to make housing affordable for everyone, increasing housing abundance in ways that prioritize housing for people with the lowest incomes can help narrow the gap.

Key state & local policies

- Establish, preserve, or expand investment in housing that is publicly or community-owned, permanently affordable, and accessible to people with the lowest incomes (e.g. community land trusts, public housing, social housing)
- Establish or expand state- or locally funded project-based/ operating subsidies
- Establish, improve targeting of, or expand a Housing Trust Fund to build or preserve homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes
- Reform zoning laws to incentivize the development of affordable housing, including deeply affordable and supportive housing
- Streamline regulations to make it easier and cheaper to build and preserve affordable and supportive housing
- Require that local jurisdictions plan for, preserve, and build housing for people at all income levels, including people with the lowest incomes and people with supportive services needs
- Establish funds to acquire and preserve affordable housing (both naturally occurring and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits) at risk of market rate conversion
- Create and support a tenant opportunity to purchase

Examples & resources

- [State and Local Housing Trust Funds | NLIHC](#)
 - [By-Right Development Tool | NMHC](#)
 - [Streamlined Permitting Process | Local Housing Solutions](#)
 - [Social Housing | Alliance for Housing Justice](#)
 - [Local Tools to Address Housing Affordability | NLC](#)
 - [Low Income Housing Tax Credits | NLIHC](#)
 - [State Tax Credits to Develop Affordable Housing | Novogradac](#)
 - [Preserving Long-Term Affordability in LIHTC Housing | Bipartisan Policy Center](#)
 - [Saving Affordable Housing | NHLPP](#)
 - [Tenant Opportunity to Purchase | PolicyLink](#)
-

Strategy

Create dignified, low-barrier shelter and interim housing options that connect people to services and permanent housing

Why this strategy is important

People experiencing homelessness want and need accessible, well-resourced, respectful interim housing options that meet their varying and at times changing needs. Shelter and interim housing should be focused on helping people secure permanent housing.

Key state & local policies

- Establish by-right zoning for interim housing projects
- Provide state funding for the conversion of hotel/motels or office buildings into interim and permanent supportive housing
- Establish guidelines to remove barriers to interim housing and ensure it is accessible
Provide robust services to residents of interim housing, including to connect them to permanent housing and health care
- Provide funding for operating costs and services for interim housing settings

Examples & resources

- [By-Right Principles | Institute for Local Government](#)
 - [State Example: CA's Low Barrier Navigation Center Guidelines](#)
 - [State Example: CA's Homekey Program](#)
 - [Reimagining Interim Housing | Framework for an Equitable Homelessness Response](#)
-

Strategy

Address the immediate health, safety, and housing needs of people living outside

Why this strategy is important

While we work on scaling permanent solutions to homelessness, there are concrete ways that we can keep people safer and healthier while they are forced to live outside.

Key state & local policies

- Repeal policies that punish people for being homeless and create more barriers to permanent housing, like anti-camping laws
- Create protocols to ensure no person is displaced from an encampment without being connected to housing
- Pass laws to prohibit discrimination against people experiencing homelessness
- Provide sanitation and trash pickup services to improve health and safety conditions for people sleeping outside
- Establish or increase “street medicine” services to increase immediate access to medical and behavioral health care for people experiencing homelessness
- Create 911-dispatchable, 24/7 available non-police crisis intervention teams
- Establish or increase funding for outreach and case management services for people living unsheltered to help with housing navigation, access to care, and income support

Examples & resources

- [Learning From a Crisis | NLIHC](#)
 - [Unsheltered Homelessness Tools | USCF Benioff Center](#)
 - [Strengthening Homeless Outreach | Community Solutions](#)
 - [Community Toolkit for Addressing Unsheltered Homelessness | CSH](#)
 - [Street Medicine and Outreach | NHCHC](#)
-

Strategy

Generate revenue to advance housing justice

Why this strategy is important

We can fund solutions to housing instability and homelessness by ensuring those who most benefit from wealth and property ownership pay their fair share. Revenue strategies can complement strategic use of federal funding, including HUD programs and Medicaid.

Key state & local policies

- Make property taxes more progressive
- Tax the sale of very high-value properties to fund affordable housing for people with the lowest incomes
- Raise new, progressive revenue sources and dedicate funding to addressing homelessness and affordable housing for the lowest-income households
- Issue bonds to fund affordable or supportive housing for people with the lowest incomes

Examples & resources

- [State Revenue Options Tool | CBPP](#)
 - [Taxing Very High-Value Home Sales Is an Equitable and Effective Strategy to Raise Revenue and Fund Affordable Housing | CBPP](#)
 - [State funding streams | Local Housing Solutions](#)
 - [State example: DC](#)
-

Built for Zero's Theory of Change

Introduction

Over the past decade, Community Solutions and Built for Zero have shown that ending homelessness is not only possible; it is already happening in communities across the country. Success has consistently hinged on two powerful insights: 1) communities achieve sustainable, population-level reductions when their homeless prevention and response system is grounded in **four foundational capabilities**, and 2) their progress accelerates when the broader environment provides **five enabling conditions**.

This Theory of Change is a synthesis of our learnings from working with over 140 communities, bolstered by findings from the ORS Impact evaluation. It serves as a practical tool—a shared reference point to assess gaps, target strategies, and strengthen collective impact. As Built for Zero scales, this framework guides systems change, coaching, tools, and measurement.

Built For Zero Theory of Change

Four Foundational Capabilities Every Community Needs



Five Enabling Conditions



Together, these elements form a clear, evidence-based checklist for diagnosing barriers, aligning interventions, and sustaining results. Importantly, it also simplifies the [Community Level Theory of Change](#) into a clear, actionable structure, making it easier to communicate, operationalize, and track progress across diverse teams and contexts.

The Four Foundational Capabilities Every Community Needs

#	Capability	Definition
1	Backbone Organization	A central entity (e.g., CoC, local government, community-based organization) that aligns efforts, mobilizes resources, and builds political will to achieve shared community-level goals.
2	Strategic Partnerships	Cross-sector relationships, formal and informal, bringing together housing, health, justice, philanthropy, business, elected officials, government, and people with lived expertise into a coordinated, accountable change effort.
3	Collective Goal Setting	Community-wide, measurable targets embraced by partners, embedded in resource allocation, policy and strategy, and communicated publicly.
4	Comprehensive Data	Real-time, person-level infrastructure tracking inflow, outflow, actively homeless individuals, returns, and time-to-housing. Data must be grounded in shared definitions and quality assurance practices to triage individuals effectively.

The Five Enabling Conditions

#	Condition	Definition
1	Supportive Policy	Local policies that remove barriers, uphold person-centered approaches, and enable coordinated, data-driven responses.
2	Shared Public Narrative	A consistent, widely-held story, reinforced by leaders, media, and institutions, framing homelessness as a systems problem with proven solutions.

3	Funding & Resources	Sufficient, diversified, and flexible capital (public, private, philanthropic), aligned to outcomes and capable of funding emergency responses and system infrastructure.
4	Housing Supply	Adequate, affordable, and appropriate housing units available through zoning reform, production, preservation, incentives, and landlord engagement.
5	Political Will	Committed support and leadership from elected officials and policymakers to prioritize ending homelessness, overcoming barriers, approving policies, allocating funding, and improving cross-agency collaboration.

Ways of Working

To strengthen implementation efforts, communities should integrate the following practices across all elements of the framework:

Equity-Driven Approach: Identify and close equity gaps across populations, using disaggregated data to set targets, track disparities, and ensure equitable progress. Equity should inform all decisions.

Continuous Improvement: Adopt an iterative culture by regularly using data to test changes, identify system gaps, and continuously enhance whole-system performance.

Collaborative Practice: Actively co-develop solutions, coordinate resources, align workflows, maintain open communication, and share accountability with meaningful participation from those with lived experience.

Evidence-Informed Decision-Making: Ground decisions in data and evaluation findings, using internal and external evaluations to identify effective strategies, discontinue ineffective ones, and inform continuous improvements.

Proactive Planning: Anticipate challenges before escalation using forecasting, scenario planning, and risk assessments. Early interventions guided by data can prevent increases in inflow or service delays.

Conclusion

The Built for Zero Theory of Change captures what drives measurable reductions in homelessness. These elements are consistent across successful communities, though implementation must adapt to local contexts. Homelessness is deeply local—shaped by unique histories, geographies, politics, and resources—requiring locally-tailored solutions.

This framework provides a flexible yet structured approach for any community to organize efforts, assess progress, and adapt strategies effectively. As Built for Zero expands, the framework aligns teams and partners, clarifies barriers, and directs collective resources for maximum impact.

Date Updated: 7/1/2025 Contact: Aruege@community.solutions

GATEWAY NETWORK

BUILDING A SUPPORT SYSTEM WHERE NO ONE GOES WITHOUT



GATEWAY CENTER

Campus providing medical, behavioral, and social services including overnight beds, first responder intake, medical sobering and respite.

Annual Impact:
20,200 Individuals
Open Since 2022
more services coming in 2025



GATEWAY WEST

Safe, supportive 660-bed facility for individuals experiencing homelessness, offering specialized resources and case management.

Annual Impact:
5,700 Individuals
Open 24/7 Since 2019



GATEWAY FAMILY

Supportive housing center for families with overnight beds, meals, and case management to help achieve stable housing.

Annual Impact:
987 Individuals
Open Since 2020



GATEWAY YOUNG ADULT

Housing and support for young adults ages 18-25 experiencing homelessness, tailored to their unique needs.

Annual projected Impact:
120 Individuals
Opening Late 2025



GATEWAY RECOVERY

50-resident micro-community offering low-barrier beds, recovery services, and support for 18 - 24 months.

Annual projected Impact:
50 - 100
Opening Early 2025

5 GATEWAY CENTER SERVICES

HOUSING NAVIGATION

overnight beds and support to transition to housing, additional beds in 2024

Open Since 2023

FIRST RESPONDER RECEIVING AREA

overnight drop off to get people inside and connected to services

Open Since 2024

ENGAGEMENT CENTER

support services like case management and job training

Open Since 2023

MEDICAL SOBERING

medical monitoring to gain sobriety

Opening Early 2025

MEDICAL RESPITE

a place to recover from illness or injury

Opened Feb. 2025

Homelessness Action Plan

Learn about what the City is doing to address homelessness.

Our Key Objectives



Prevent

Ensure everyone in Albuquerque has the resources and support they need to have and maintain a home. Addressing homelessness starts with preventing more people from losing their homes in the first place.



Help

Connect people in need to available shelter, supportive housing, and other key resources including mental health care and substance use recovery to help them exit homelessness for good. Listen to and collaborate with our local and national stakeholders to fill gaps in services and strengthen our system of care with evidence-based approaches.



House

Keep Albuquerque affordable to working families by creating more opportunities all over town for mixed-income, affordable housing and affordable home-ownership that meets the needs of our diverse population.

Understanding Homelessness as a Housing Issue

Affordability

Rent and home prices have risen in Albuquerque, especially since the pandemic. Lack of affordable housing development and income inequality compounds this problem. When people lack a strong safety net, losing a job, high medical expenses, or other unforeseen economic hardships can easily lead to homelessness.

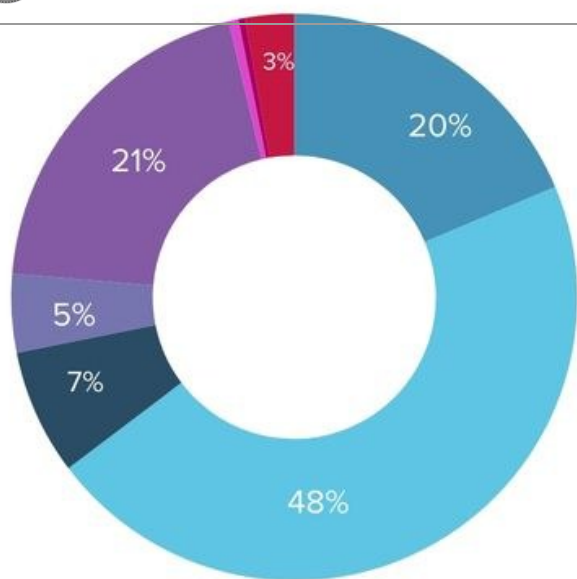
Equity

Generational discrimination and disparity in who has access to housing has led to people of color making up a disproportionate share of the unhoused population relative to their census data in Albuquerque. We are still working to repair the historical trauma that has left our Native American population underserved and provide pathways to housing and home ownership for all marginalized groups.

Health

Physical and mental health challenges, including addiction, can be the result of or compounded by homelessness. We know that half of people experiencing homelessness have serious mental illness and 45% have a substance use disorder. The longer someone remains unhoused, the more help they will likely need to keep their housing.

Priorities and Initiatives



City of Albuquerque's Homelessness Response Budget

Emergency Shelter: 20% of the budget.

Supportive Housing Vouchers: 48% of the budget.

Meals: 7% of the budget.

Encampment Outreach and Clean-up: 5% of the budget.

Access to Health Care and Treatment: 21% of the budget

Job Training: 0.6% of the budget

Eviction Prevention: 0.4% of the budget

Transportation: 3% of the budget

City looks to fill empty space at Gateway Center with tenants as majority of services are running

Monica Logroño | KOB

May 21, 2025 - 9:03 AM

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — It's been four years since the City of Albuquerque moved forward with creating the [Gateway Center](#) to help with our homeless crisis. There's been a lot of construction and delays, but city officials say the majority of the services at the center are now open.

But with that said, there is still a lot of empty space in the massive 572,000 square foot facility on Gibson. City leaders say they're trying to fill it up with tenants who can help people specifically in Albuquerque's International District.

Here's what's currently open:

- The Women's Housing, Navigation and Treatment Center
 - Open for more than a year
 - Has 50 beds
 - Goal is to connect women with permanent housing
- First Responder Receiving Area
 - Opened June 2025
 - Serves 15 to 20 people a night
 - First responders can drop off those who need emergency shelter in the middle of the night
- Medical Respite Center
 - Opened February 2025
 - 20 of the 50 beds are operational right now with most filled
 - For people discharged from UNM Hospital who have nowhere else to recover

What's set to open:

- Medical Sobering Center

- Monday, the city announced it's almost ready to open but there's no set date just yet
- First responders can bring people there to be medically supervised as they get sober and staff will provide long-term tools to stay sober
- Men's Housing, Navigation and Treatment Center
 - Will have 42 beds
 - Similar to Women's Center, it will help men find long-term housing

But even with those five services, there's still a lot of free space at the facility. That's where private tenants come in.

"Our goal is not just city services. So I think that's where the misunderstanding is of what Gateway Center is," Gateway Operations Officer Jennifer McDonald said.

Three out of five services in the Gateway Center are currently operating. But to fill all the extra space in the facility, may require private tenants. Right now, Gateway has 8 tenants.

"We've been in the Gateway Center about three months now. It's been amazing," Ideal Options Outreach Peer Specialist Katrina Fuller said.

Katrina Fuller with [Ideal Options](#) says the nonprofit has two other locations in Albuquerque and other parts of the state, but they wanted to expand specifically to the Gateway Center.

"We knew it was an innovative and great opportunity to reach some of the people that need it the most in our communities," Fuller said.

Fuller said the organization has helped dozens get sober through their Gateway space.

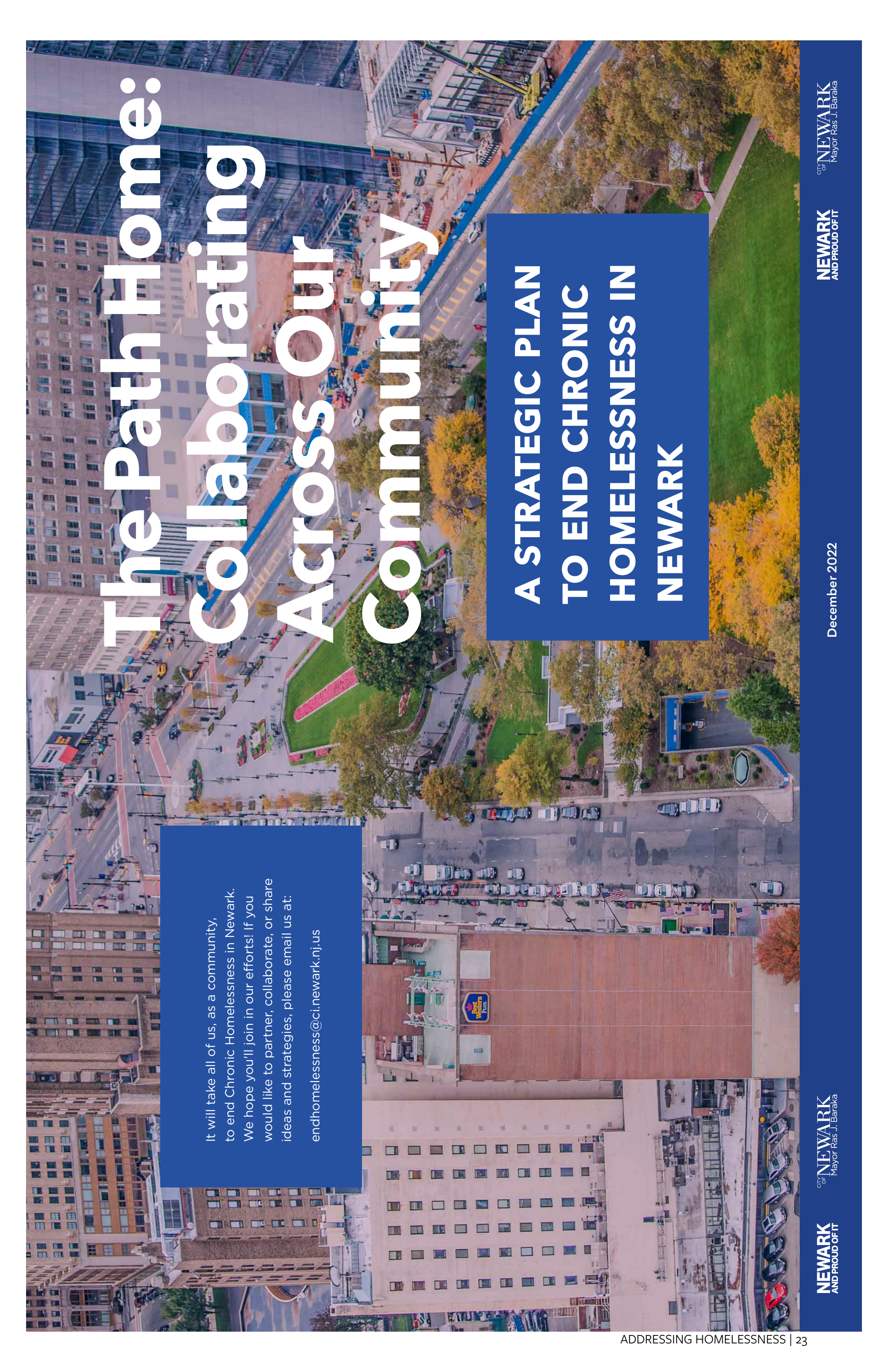
"We've seen 58 brand-new patients since we opened three months ago in this clinic, and we've had over 200 appointments," she said.

Those results are exactly what Gateway's Operations Officer, Jennifer McDonald, wants to see.

"We're a service desert in the International District, and we're trying to change that," McDonald continued. "We're looking for those who will help us with social behavioral health needs, more mental health services here as well even physical health needs."

McDonald would also like a pharmacy to set up in the Center because she says there aren't a lot of them in the area. She also wants potential tenants to know Gateway has 24/7 security. Employees at Ideal Options say they feel safe in their Gateway space but, if necessary, security can escort them to their vehicles.

<https://www.kob.com/news/top-news/city-looks-to-fill-empty-space-at-gateway-center-with-tenants-as-majority-of-services-are-running/>

An aerial photograph of Newark, New Jersey, showing a mix of urban development, including multi-story brick buildings, modern glass-fronted structures, and green spaces with trees. A large, semi-transparent blue rectangular box is positioned in the center of the image, containing white text. The overall scene captures the density and diversity of the city's landscape.

The Path Home: Collaborating Across Our Community

It will take all of us, as a community,
to end Chronic Homelessness in Newark.
We hope you'll join in our efforts! If you
would like to partner, collaborate, or share
ideas and strategies, please email us at:

endhomelessness@ci.newark.nj.us

**A STRATEGIC PLAN
TO END CHRONIC
HOMELESSNESS IN
NEWARK**

Acknowledgments

This plan is the result of meetings, conversations, and input from more than 100 individuals and partners. Their willingness to share their ideas and time has made this plan a truly collaborative effort. A full list of participants can be found at the end of the report. A special thanks to:

- Newark Alliance
- Newark/Essex County Continuum of Care
- Residents of Miller Street Pathways to Housing, Apostle House, St. Rocco's Family Residence, Hope Village I, and Help Center/224
- Unsheltered Newark Residents
- City of Newark Department of Economic and Housing Development
- Newark Community Development Network
- Housing and Community Development Network of NJ
- Mayor's Office of Homeless Services
- Bloomberg Associates
- Community Solutions/Built for Zero
- Monarch Housing Associates
- City of Newark Department of Health and Community Wellness
- Edison Properties
- Newark People's Assembly
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Office of Homelessness Prevention
- City of Newark Office of Tenant Legal Services
- Project Connect Drop-In Center
- Crossroads Drop-In Center
- Miller Street Drop-In Center



“Newark refuses to be a city that accepts that some residents will inevitably experience prolonged homelessness. We know that there are best practices that work to bring people off the streets and into long-term housing, but the City cannot implement solutions in isolation. Lasting progress requires our community to act collaboratively to make system wide reform and we are doing that.”

— Luis Ulerio,
Newark Homelessness Czar



Summary of Key Strategies

”I appreciate being a part of the Newark homelessness strategic planning process, as the work we do cannot be done in a silo anymore. Having a more collaborative and systematic approach allows us to rapidly exit members of our community that are experiencing homelessness and ensure that they are able to thrive with the support that is needed.”

— Shahilda Boynes, Bridges Outreach, Inc.



ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS | 25

STRATEGY 1: BETTER ADDRESS STREET HOMELESSNESS

- Create a real-time Data Dashboard for the street homeless population
- Enhance street outreach efforts
- Create multiple entry points to connect to shelter and services
- Coordinate with mobile behavior health services to reach street homeless
- Expand diversion efforts
- Improve targeted support and engagement efforts around Penn Station
- Create a citywide crisis response hotline
- Strengthen healthcare partnerships

STRATEGY 2: IMPROVE ACCESS AND SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE SHELTER SYSTEM

- Develop city-wide shelter standards of practice
- Improve training for homeless services employees and emergency shelter providers
- Better integrate employment programs for shelter residents
- Expand Housing Navigators across emergency shelters
- Integrate coordinated entry into emergency shelters
- Improve access to behavioral health services in shelters
- Develop more flexible space options in shelters
- Collaborate with the Newark Reentry Council Partnership

STRATEGY 3: EXPAND PREVENTION AND HOUSING SERVICES

- Develop a public and private funding plan to expand housing and services
- Increase awareness of Homeless Prevention Services
- Create a Landlord Task Force
- Secure additional Rental Subsidy Vouchers
- Increase Low Barrier Housing
- Support Creative Housing Solutions
- Expand the number of Permanent Supportive Housing units
- Deploy an Housing Stability Pilot Program
- Develop an Advocacy Agenda with local and state partners

Planning Process

Mayor Baraka launched the strategic planning process during a town hall meeting on May 9, 2022. The public shared their thoughts and ideas on how to best address homelessness. In addition, the City appointed a new Chair of the City of Newark Commission on Homelessness, Jim Pelliccio, who along with the Commission, provided valuable guidance and support to develop this plan.

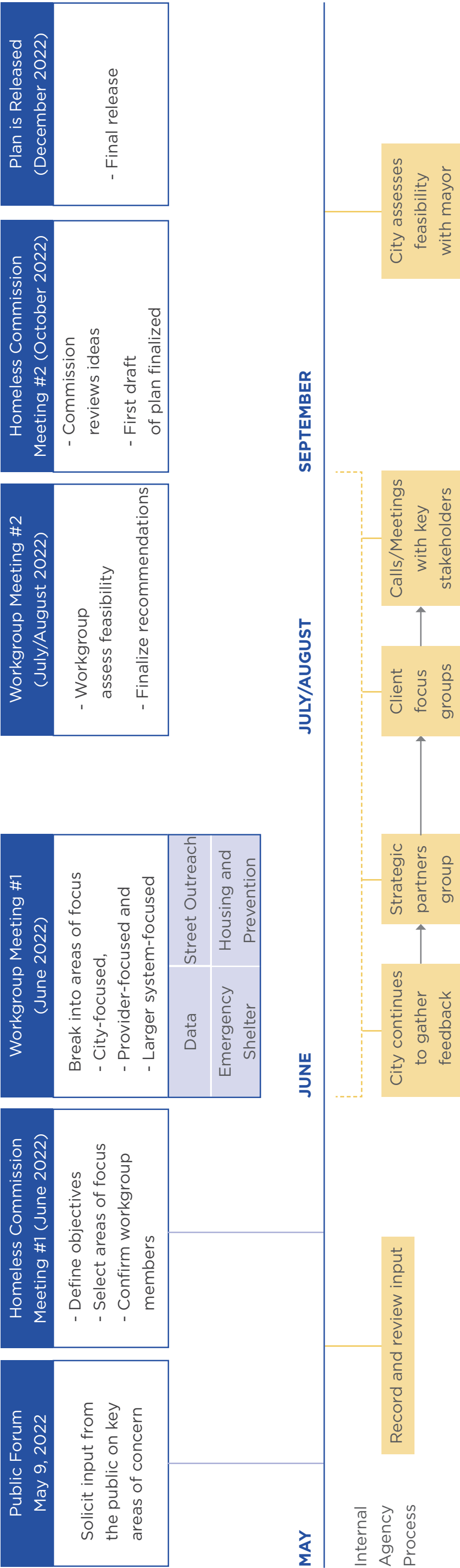
- Over this past summer, four working groups were assembled to focus on:
- 1. Better addressing street homelessness,
 - 2. Improving access and services throughout the shelter system,
 - 3. Expand prevention and housing services, and
 - 4. Improving data.

As part of this process, there was an extensive review of existing and potential resources to diversify and increase public and private investments to aid in the city's efforts to achieve a functional end to chronic homelessness. Additionally, a careful examination was made of the City's current contracted or directly operated shelter programs, physical conditions, programming, and more broadly, shelter policies and administrative requirements

by the State, Continuum of Care (CoC), and the City were reviewed as well.

More than one hundred people who represent residents, including those with lived experience, business leaders, philanthropic organizations, and institutional leaders from our medical and educational community, were involved in developing recommendations that shaped the Newark Homelessness Strategic Plan Process.

THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE PLAN INCLUDED SEVERAL SEPARATE BUT INTERRELATED ACTIVITIES



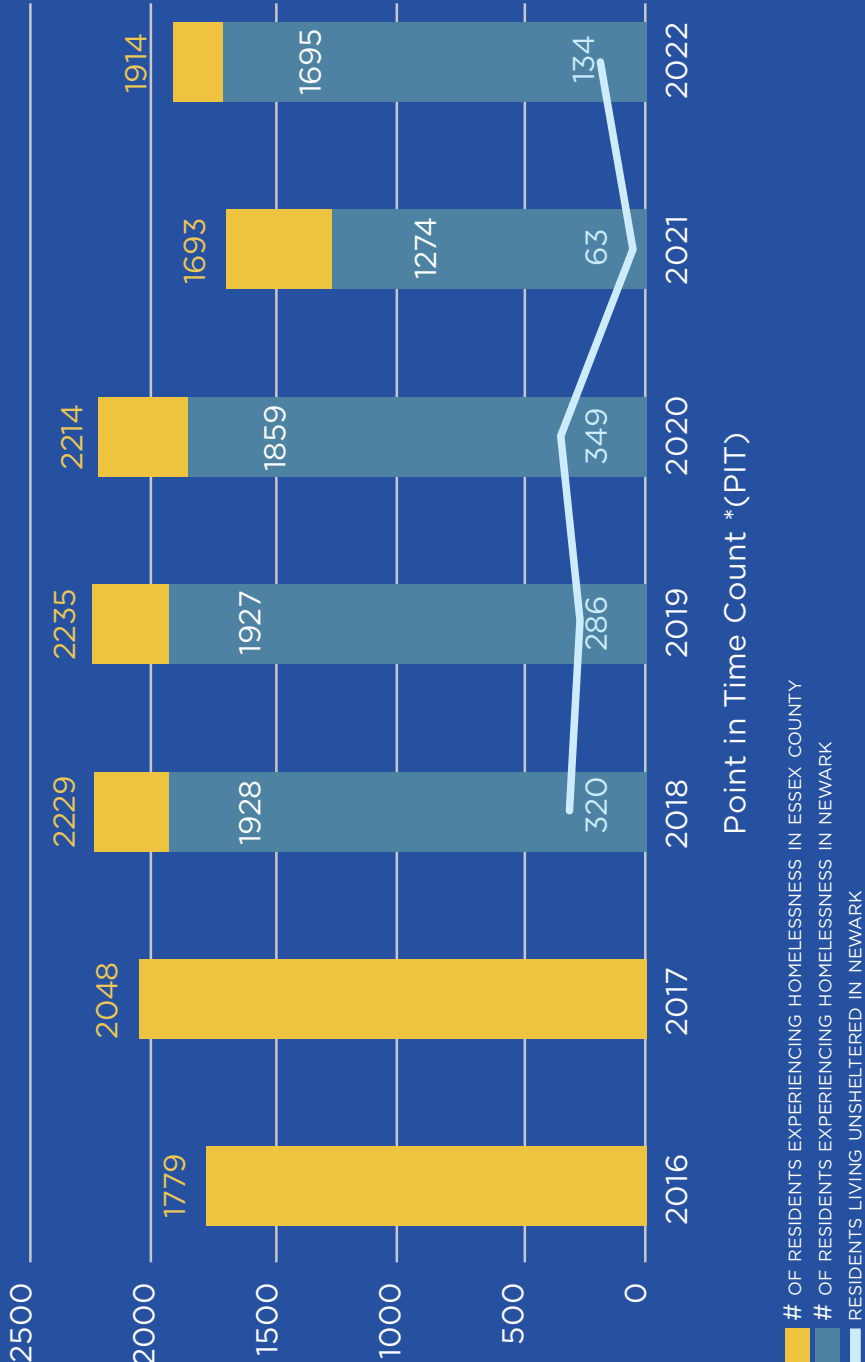
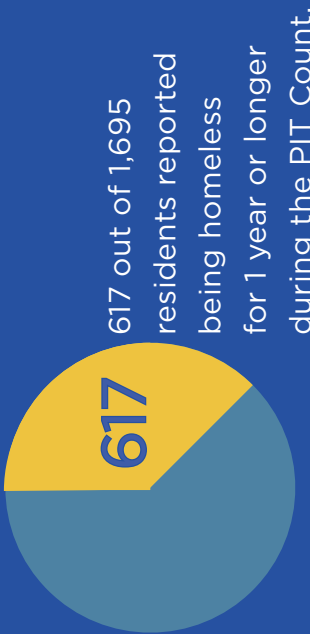
Data

Real time updated data is essential in understanding who is homeless and how best to serve them. Accurate and reliable data is the cornerstone of a successful plan. Newark is committed to bringing all the partners together who hold a piece of the data puzzle to create an integrated command center we can all use to tackle and overcome homelessness. Embedded in each strategy and initiative is a data-driven understanding of the people who are unhoused, their names, and their stories. The plan is a strategic and tailored solution to solving their unique challenges. Together we can end chronic homelessness in Newark and it starts with sharing our data.

Key Data on Newark Homelessness

The Essex County Point in Time (PIT) Count in January 2022 was 1,914. Of that, 1,695 homeless people were counted in Newark and 134 were unsheltered.

Number of Newark Residents Homeless for 1 Year or Longer, 2022



The Important Role of Data

Newark strives to implement a data-informed plan, but this cannot be accomplished without consistency in data collection metrics, practices, and management that cuts across institutions, services, and sectors. A collaborative, strategic, data-driven approach must be undertaken by all partners to make chronic homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurrent. Data comprised a fourth working group as part of the planning process. Data is a necessary tool to achieve our goals, and therefore, it is embedded among the three key strategies of the plan.

Newark Residents who are chronically homeless are among the most vulnerable in our community. They experience prolonged homelessness and often have a disabling condition such as a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability.



City Accomplishments

Mayor Baraka, with the collaboration of several community partners, has already implemented many recent innovative projects, programs and strategies to address homelessness. For planning purposes it is important to understand what has already been done, some of it currently in progress. This plan builds upon that progress, and in some cases enhances these existing efforts.

Newark Commission on Homelessness

Mayor Baraka and the Newark Municipal Council reestablished the City of Newark Commission on Homelessness in September 2018, tasked with helping people experiencing homelessness transition to independent living and self-sufficiency, making related recommendations on city policies, plans and funding, and advocating for state and federal policies that affect the homeless in Newark.

Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services

Mayor Baraka and the Newark Municipal Council created through legislation the Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services, on March 16, 2022, to provide viable options for persons at risk of homelessness, those who are homeless, minimize the negative effects and stigmas associated with homelessness, and to end homelessness in the City of Newark.

Making Housing Homes Challenge

The city launched an expansive program to develop 100 units of permanent supportive housing in Newark.

Newark Hope Village

A 20-bed emergency shelter was developed using shipping containers, offering private rooms, and successfully piloting an innovative low-threshold model to better meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents without addresses.

Miller Street Shelter

A “state-of-the-art” 166-bed shelter was developed and expands the use

of a low threshold model, serving 84 men, 44 women, 21 cold weather shelter beds, 17 beds for families or usable for isolation of single adults.

A Drop In Center

A Drop-in area was carved out of the Miller Street facility that offers individuals from the area community access to bathrooms with showers, washers and dryers, meals, a recreational area, and an opportunity for staff to engage and connect individuals to support.

Newark’s Housing goals

The City’s housing goals were announced in August 2021 and include commitment to support 10,000 vulnerable or unsheltered households annually by 2026, through actions such as promoting rent control compliance, connecting renters to legal assistance and eviction prevention services, disbursing federal emergency rental assistance funds, providing temporary and transitional housing, and developing supportive services to special populations.



Equitable Growth Commission

Mayor Ras Baraka created the Equitable Growth Advisory Commission in 2018 to prevent gentrification and assure equitable growth. The 15-member commission consist of experts drawn from the city’s community, academic, business, and non-profit sectors to ensure that development policies and projects in Newark incorporate the principal of equitable growth.

Newark360 Master Plan

The City’s 10-year blueprint for equitable physical development was released in September 2022 and recommended that the city should develop Newark’s Homelessness Strategic Plan via broad citywide participation and partnership with service providers.

Key Strategies

STRATEGY 1: BETTER ADDRESS STREET HOMELESSNESS

Reduce the number of people living on the street through new approaches to engagement, better coordination among stakeholders, and alignment on outcomes.

1.0 DATA DASHBOARD:

Coordinate and leverage data to develop a real time dashboard for the street homeless population and implement a collaborative management structure that reviews, tests, and prioritizes solutions. Critical to the success of ending chronic homelessness is understanding the ever-changing population of the street homeless and using accurate and real time data through tools like a “By Name List”, a “Hot Spot” heat map and case conferencing models.

1.1 ENHANCE STREET OUTREACH EFFORTS:

Enhance the effectiveness of street outreach teams through technology, training, and coordination. Better technology like handheld devices will allow outreach workers to capture and analyze data on the street population. Additionally, culturally competent training, peer outreach workers and the addition of staff with clinical skills will help to improve the success of engagement efforts.

1.2 MULTIPLE ENTRY POINTS:

Create clear and accessible entry points throughout the community to make it easier for residents to connect to shelters and services. Allow housing navigators to make direct referrals to shelter and add additional locations with staff to support people experiencing street homelessness to enter shelters.

1.3 MOBILE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES:

Partner with behavioral health service providers to bring services to the highest needs persons experiencing street homelessness. Coordinate with mobile medical, behavioral, and social service providers to reach unsheltered individuals living on the street in hotspot areas.

1.4 EXPAND DIVERSION EFFORTS:

Leverage existing and new diversion programs to strengthen and expand diversion efforts that connect individuals and families to homeless response systems statewide.



1.5 IMPROVE EFFORTS AROUND PENN STATION:

Tackle the complexity of homelessness at Newark Penn Station by increasing support and engagement. Open a new drop-in center nearby, study the causes and motivation, and pilot incentives for the hardest to house.

1.6 CRISIS RESPONSE HOTLINE:

Develop a city-wide Homeless Hotline for street outreach and other homeless

services so residents can report concerns and street homeless can get help when in crisis.

1.7 HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIPS:

Develop partnerships with Hospitals and Health Centers to increase service coordination for individuals experiencing homelessness with health needs. Improve coverage, training and access to link frequent users of crisis and inpatient care to community support services.

STRATEGY 2:
IMPROVE ACCESS AND
SERVICES THROUGHOUT
THE SHELTER SYSTEM

Improve access for the unsheltered and transform the culture in shelters to better support residents in their transition to housing stability.

2.0 CITY-WIDE SHELTER
STANDARDS AND PRACTICE:

Develop city-wide standards of services for Emergency Shelter providers. Improve shelter conditions and experience with clear expectations and policies that include regular site assessments, consistent and accessible grievance policies and protocols, and expectations for length of stay.

2.1 HOMELESS SERVICES TRAINING:

Improve training for homeless services employees and emergency shelter providers to increase effectiveness and create a baseline for performance. Re-think engagement to follow best practices and include training for staff beyond just case managers.

2.2 EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
FOR SHELTER RESIDENTS:

Integrate employment and income resources at emergency shelters. Develop an employment program and provide professional development services for the clients while in shelter to support their transition to housing.

2.3 HOUSING NAVIGATORS:

Implement a housing-focused model across all emergency shelters. Create a cohort of trained housing navigators to help clients find housing and move out of shelter. Create performance outcomes tied to the city’s efforts to reduce homelessness, in areas like reducing the average length of stay, improving exits to permanent housing, decreasing recidivism, and increasing income.

2.4 COORDINATED ENTRY:

Integrate Coordinated Entry into the emergency shelters to improve access to housing options for shelter clients. Partner with the Essex County Continuum of Care to train shelter providers to use Coordinated Entry to access CoC funded programs, services, and housing.

2.5 ACCESS TO BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH SERVICES IN SHELTER:

Facilitate behavior health services onsite or via telehealth at emergency shelters through partnerships.

2.6 MORE FLEXIBLE SPACE
OPTIONS AT SHELTERS:

Expand private room options at emergency shelters through existing or new programs for the hard to house street homeless.

2.7 REENTRY COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP:

Collaborate with Newark’s Reentry Council to understand and enhance efforts to provide emergency housing for returning residents experiencing homelessness.

STRATEGY 3:
EXPAND PREVENTION
AND HOUSING
SERVICES

Align existing resources to support residents in maintaining current housing and support the creation and access to new housing models and services.

City of Newark Housing Goals:

Add **3,000 new homes** across all five wards by 2026 and 8,000 homes by 2032

Fund the creation or **preservation of 6,600 affordable homes** by 2026, prioritizing affordability at or below 30% AMI

Convey all city-controlled properties by 2026, with **at least 30% affordable units**

Support **1,500 new and 200 existing low- and moderate-income homeowners** by 2026

Support **10,000 vulnerable or unsheltered households** annually by 2026

3.0 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS:

Develop a public and private funding plan to expand housing and services to serve more vulnerable or unsheltered Newark residents.

3.1 INCREASE EVICTION PREVENTION EFFORTS:

Partner with the Mayor’s Office of Tenant Legal Services and other community and legal service providers to increase awareness of tenant rights, emergency rental assistance, and available legal assistance.

3.2 LANDLORD TASK FORCE:

Create a Landlord Task Force to better incentivize participation in government programs and increase available apartments to the homeless.

3.3 SECURE ADDITIONAL RENTAL SUBSIDY VOUCHERS:

Partner with local and state agencies to designate rental vouchers for people experiencing homelessness.

3.4 INCREASE LOW BARRIER HOUSING:

Add an additional 50 units of the Hope Village low-barrier housing model for a total of 70 units and explore other models such as safe havens and tiny homes to serve the most vulnerable unsheltered Newark residents.

3.5 CREATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS:

Support creative housing solutions that could help close the housing gap for homeless residents like, Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units, and Master Leasing models.

3.6 SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:

Develop a pipeline of Supportive Housing units, starting with 100 units through the Making Housing Homes initiative. This important housing model combines affordable housing with services that help people who face the most complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy and dignity.

3.7 SUPPORT HOUSING STABILITY:

Develop an aftercare pilot that will provide supportive services to chronically homeless residents moving into permanent housing using evidence informed programming.

3.8 ADVOCACY AGENDA:

Collaborate with the Newark Community Development Network and Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey to create a policy and advocacy agenda focused on ending homelessness in Newark.

Newark expands homeless outreach, launches texting hotline

Updated: Jan. 16, 2025, 11:43 a.m. | Published: Jan. 16, 2025, 10:15 a.m.



By [Steve Strunsky](#) | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

Two years after Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka announced a plan to [“end chronic homelessness”](#) in his city, he and others gathered on Wednesday to announce an expansion of outreach efforts encouraging unsheltered people to accept help and a new texting hotline enabling citizens to summon outreach workers when they encounter people living on the street.

“Some of us are comfortable with going to get the things left over in their refrigerator or the stuff people didn’t eat at their restaurant,” Baraka said during a press conference at the Newark Police Department Metro Division Substation on Market Street. “It makes our conscience feel better. It makes us feel good that we have done something for people who we think are in less (fortunate) situations than we are. But we really haven’t done anything to fix a situation that creates homelessness.”

To do just that, Baraka launched a plan in December 2022 titled [“The Path Home: Collaborating Across Our Community,”](#) with a multi-pronged

approach aimed at better tracking and sheltering people living on the street, making better use of shelters as entry points for mental health, employment, and housing placement services, and developing more affordable housing. For example, an ordinance adopted under Baraka requires [20% of new apartments](#) in large projects to be reserved for people with low and moderate incomes.

The plan relies on a combination of existing and new initiatives at all levels of government and the participation of local businesses and nonprofit organizations.

Wednesday's announcement included an expansion of the outreach services that have been handled by staffers from the Mayor's [Office of Homeless Services](#), more than a dozen of whom were at the event dressed in their sky-blue "Homeless Outreach Team" sweatshirts and parkas, intended to be recognizable to the population they serve.

Example of that expansion includes a mobile health care unit operated by Rutgers Community Health and a camper van that will park in homeless hot spots like Newark Penn Station, where outreach workers will fan out on foot, engaging with people on the street and asking if they need or would like free medical treatment or screenings.

The new [Texting hotline](#), created in partnership with the [NJ 21](#) nonprofit referral center, allows anyone to text the words "PATH HOME" to the number 855-11, to report an unhoused person who needs assistance. The texts are relayed to outreach teams trained to assist homeless people and connect them with necessary services.

Other new services announced under the expansion include:

- A newly formed Clinical Downtown Metro Outreach Team, in partnership with nonprofits, including the Newark Alliance, a business group involved with the Path Home plan since its launch. It's intended to provide stabilizing street treatment for people experiencing psychiatric episodes, specifically in Newark's downtown, and to connect those individuals with housing and support services.
- An expanded 24/7 outreach program involving staff from Bridges Outreach and the Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey, which will respond to situations throughout the city, and work with NJ Transit Police at Newark Penn and other stations.

- The addition of licensed social workers and drug counselors to the Office of Homeless Services Street Outreach Team.

Although a [ruling last June](#) by the U.S. Supreme gave municipalities the power to dismantle tent cities or fine people for sleeping on public property, there are no such local laws in Newark, and unhoused people in the city must agree voluntarily to move off the street and into a shelter or treatment program.

So outreach workers say they must earn the trust of people sleeping on sidewalks, park benches or bus shelters. Some people on the street are wary of homeless shelters due to past experiences, or they mistrust authority, or they have addictions they don't feel ready to overcome. Yet they fear they would have to if they accepted shelter, outreach workers say. And, they say, Many people living on the street have emotional or psychological-related issues.

So an oft-repeated theme of Wednesday's event was that outreach work requires patience and persistence, a kind of courtship to establish the rapport outreach workers needed to convince people on the street to go with them to a hospital, shelter, referral center or another first-stop on the way to permanent housing.

"It does take time. It's not like a one-day thing," said Erica Graham, an outreach community coordinator with Rutgers Community Health, who had already been making runs on the mobile unit before Wednesday's announcement. "They see us. They talk to us. They believe in us. And then, you know, they come."

<https://www.nj.com/essex/2025/01/newark-expands-homeless-outreach-launches-texting-hotline.html>

RESOLUTION NUMBER 8858

A Resolution of the Missoula City Council Adopting On Our Way Home: Missoula Community Houselessness Strategy (2025-2028).

WHEREAS, the City of Missoula recognizes housing as a basic human need and affirms that every person deserves access to safe, stable, and affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, houselessness in Missoula is a complex and urgent challenge requiring coordinated action across government, non-profit, business, and community sectors; and

WHEREAS, On Our Way Home: Missoula Community Houselessness Strategy has been developed through a collaborative, community-driven process involving individuals with lived expertise, service providers, advocates, local government, and concerned residents; and

WHEREAS, this strategy outlines clear goals, evidence-based solutions, and actionable steps to reduce houselessness in Missoula through right-sizing the number of beds dedicated for people who are houseless and the services that support housing retention to meet the needs of the houseless population, securing funding for high priority activities as detailed in the action items, and supporting an increase in capacity for provider organizations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Missoula and its community partners previously created and implemented Reaching Home, the community's first comprehensive strategy to address houselessness, which laid the foundation for coordinated, system-level approaches; and

WHEREAS, the City of Missoula continues to serve as a key backbone agency, providing critical leadership and operational support for the Missoula Coordinated Entry System, ensuring that services are equitable, person-centered, and aligned across providers; and

WHEREAS, this new strategy, On Our Way Home, builds on the success and lessons learned from Reaching Home, outlining clear goals, evidence-based solutions, and actionable steps to reduce houselessness in Missoula through prevention, outreach, supportive housing, emergency shelter, and system-level coordination; and

WHEREAS, the successful implementation of On Our Way Home will promote public health and safety, increase housing stability, and enhance the well-being of the entire Missoula community; and

WHEREAS, adopting this strategy reflects the City of Missoula's commitment to equity, dignity, and compassion in addressing the needs of its most vulnerable residents;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Missoula City Council hereby adopts On Our Way Home: Missoula Community Houselessness Strategy as the City's guiding framework for addressing houselessness in Missoula; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council directs City staff to collaborate with local partners in the implementation of this strategy, to pursue funding opportunities, and to regularly report progress to the Council and the public.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of May, 2025.

Attest:

Approved:


Claire Trimble (May 28, 2025 10:00 MDT)

Claire Trimble
City Clerk



Andrea Davis
Mayor



On Our Way Home: Missoula Community Houselessness Strategy 2025-2028

Executive Summary



GOAL OF HOUSELESSNESS STRATEGY

The primary intended goal of our houselessness strategy is to make houselessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.



OVERALL MEASURES OF PROGRESS

- Reduction of overall houselessness
- Reduction of chronic houselessness
- Reduction of unsheltered houselessness
- Housing stability for formerly houseless people



RESPONSIBLE ACTORS

This is a community plan, developed and implemented by Missoula community members. A Coalition will lead the implementation process, but all of the **businesses, organizations, and individuals that are part of Missoula** will impact the results of this strategy.

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

STRATEGY A

Right-size the number of **beds** dedicated for people who are houseless and the **services that support housing retention** to meet the needs of the houseless population

STRATEGY B

Secure **funding** for high-priority activities as detailed in the action items

STRATEGY C

Support increase in capacity for provider organizations

STATE OF HOUSELESSNESS IN MISSOULA

On a single day in 2024:



644 people experienced houselessness

25% were living unsheltered

162 people experienced chronic houselessness

1484 people experienced houselessness over the past year

Missoula, Montana, reaches quality data milestone for all single adults experiencing homelessness

The community boosted provider involvement and focused on sustainability to develop a data-focused approach to solving homelessness.

[Kaitlyn Ranney](#) | January 18, 2024



The Missoula team gathers to celebrate achieving quality by-name data for all single adults experiencing homelessness.

"Missoula loves to come together and collaborate," states Samantha Hilliard, Coordinated Entry Specialist for Houseless Programs at the [City of Missoula](#).

This collective commitment and shared purpose have propelled the community to a significant accomplishment — achieving Built for Zero's quality data milestone.

Reaching [quality by-name data](#) is more than just a statistical benchmark; it recognizes that [Missoula](#) has a comprehensive by-name data source of every person experiencing homelessness within a specific population, updated in real-time. Using information collected and [shared with their consent](#), each person on the list has a profile that includes their name, homelessness history, health, and housing needs.

Missoula has become one of the few [Built for Zero communities](#) to reach the quality data milestone for all single adults experiencing homelessness. This broader category includes the subpopulations of veterans and people experiencing chronic homelessness, along with other single adults not part of those groups.

With this aggregate data, Missoula can see how the demographics of its homeless population change over time. For example, they can drill down to find out if their community is experiencing an increase in homelessness among older adults or whether new resources have helped decrease veteran homelessness. This big picture helps them understand trends, decide where to focus support or investments, test system improvements, and determine if their efforts are actually reducing homelessness on their way to a bigger milestone — [functional zero](#).

Missoula's commitment to data is more than a commitment to numbers — it's also about being accountable to everyone experiencing homelessness and the larger community.

As Liam Seymour, Coordinated Entry Specialist at [Poverello Center, Inc.](#), said, "It's so important for a community to be able to be confident in the information they work with, both to be able to celebrate the accomplishments and also to be able to dig into how the systems are working. Knowing that we have quality data has let us try new programs and processes, and see if that results in better serving the people we work with in Missoula!"

"It's so important for a community to be able to be confident in the information they work with, both to be able to celebrate the accomplishments and also to be able to dig into how the systems are working."

– Liam Seymour, Coordinated Entry Specialist at Poverello Center, Inc.

"Scrappy problem-solvers"

The City of Missoula is the lead agency for the coordinated entry system (CES), meaning they are responsible for the overall view of the homeless response system's projects and programs. In addition, all City Houseless Programs staff work with the entire state's [Continuum of Care](#), influencing policy and process at that level.

But it didn't start that way. The community first started utilizing [a coordinated entry system](#) in 2017, and they used the next couple of years to build relationships among their network of service providers. At that time, the data on their homeless populations was "very hit or miss." However, they continued strengthening their data collection practices among the many providers across the [homeless response system](#).

Seymour explained, "We've got a ton of great providers and staff getting people housed all the time, but some of the systems weren't set up to track those changes, and so we weren't always giving ourselves credit for the great work being done."

In 2022, the community decided to join the Built for Zero movement and began efforts to achieve the quality data milestone.

"We were really fortunate to have a strong foundation, and I think Built for Zero just rocketed us towards where we were always meant to be going," Hilliard said.

In pursuit of that goal, the community knew they had to understand the full scope of the problem. You can't solve a problem you can't see, and data is a powerful tool for identifying and implementing effective solutions as well as charting and communicating progress toward ending homelessness.

"It's just very important to show what the need actually is," said Sophia Shrom, Homeless Outreach Team Member and Community Outreach Team Lead at Poverello Center, Inc. "When we're looking at how to help people, we need to know what it actually looks like so it needs to be accurate if we want to provide the support."

This data-driven approach allows leaders at the City of Missoula to be even better stewards of their funding and begin applying strategies that are as dynamic as the problem.

"We are, as I'm sure many communities are, a bunch of really hearty, scrappy problem-solvers, but we're working with really limited resources," noted Emily Armstrong, Houseless Programs Manager at the City of Missoula.

"Having the data that we can trust to tell us who needs the resources and what kind so that we can target those resources and funding specifically benefits the whole community. It eliminates some of that guessing and makes it so that we can create actual solutions that we've been told are the solutions folks need."

Full participation among providers

Communities in Built for Zero have demonstrated that having real-time, person-specific data on homelessness is crucial for making it rare and brief. One essential component to achieving and maintaining quality data is having full participation among all entities working to end homelessness. All providers — nonprofits, government, housing system, and faith communities — should actively take part in and collaborate within the homeless response system.

Over the past three years, Missoula's homeless response system has brought in around 30 different providers and agencies, all working across programs and contributing client data to a single source, their coordinated entry system. Shifting from isolated assistance to community-wide care ensures greater visibility of individuals' needs and the overall progress in reducing homelessness.



Emily Armstrong (L), Samantha Hilliard (center), and Becca MacLean (R) of the Missoula team at the 2022 Built for Zero Learning Session in Chicago.

Organizations and agencies across the Missoula homeless response system gathered in 2023 to celebrate their all single adults quality data milestone.

"It can be hard as a service provider to feel like the system is a 'black box' that you put effort and information into and get nothing back," Seymour said. "Once we started sharing details and info about how things were changing in spaces like [case conferencing](#), people felt much more empowered to contribute."

Involvement isn't limited to only official organizations of the homeless response system. Partners working to address homelessness also meet monthly with the greater Missoula community to find out pressing needs among those constituents and share information about available resources.

"We have partners from the library and the university — different places that might be affected by the unhoused folks — or those who are in contact with them," Shrom said. "It's been growing, which has been really great."

Hilliard sees this increase in participation from providers as a testament to the unique collaborative nature of Missoula. It's the foundation of knowing by name all of the people experiencing homelessness in their community, whether they are students camping in their cars for shelter or refugee families experiencing housing instability.

"We identified partners that we weren't engaging with yet or populations that we were missing," she explained.

With accurate and reliable real-time data, partner organizations can make informed decisions and have confidence in the outcomes and results. According to Hilliard, leaders in the various provider agencies are excited to receive monthly quality data reports from them.

"They want the data to be just as good as the rest of us do," she noted. "And I think that all is centered around the idea that we genuinely want to make changes that are going to impact unhoused neighbors. And to do that, we have to have an understanding of who is unhoused in our community already."

Proceeding with stability

Establishing and defining clear policies and procedures is another vital part of reaching quality by-name data. While focusing on the minutiae of documentation may not be the most exciting task, it helps to create a shared understanding, guide operations, and ensure sustainability among critical participants of the homeless response system.

In Missoula, city staff and community partners collectively knew everyday processes and activities but had not officially documented them. The coordinated entry system would often lose crucial institutional knowledge when inevitable personnel transitions occurred. Staff spent time "putting some tangibles to all the work that they're doing every day," developing policies and procedures that would maintain knowledge and help onboard new staff.

As Hilliard explained, "We wouldn't really have the structure in a document, or we would have a lot of centralized spaces but not many guides to help cultivate those spaces. All these things were happening, and connections existed in our community, but there wasn't anything referencing exactly who those partners were and what days of the week they were where."

By introducing this framework, the team could formalize operations that had been happening informally or organically, whether around outreach practices or by-name data collection. The Missoula team and community provider partners spent significant time developing and refining policy and procedure manuals.

"It was a lot of work in the initial year — a lot of seemingly unglamorous work — because it was all very policy-based," Hilliard said. "But the benefits of having that addition to our foundation has been really invaluable."

Solidifying the nuances of policy and procedure has also had a secondary effect. It's given the team and partners an even clearer sense of purpose and confidence they are headed in the right direction.

"I think before, we were all really motivated by value and service, and we were doing the best that we could," Hilliard said. "And now, we are doing the best that we can for the people that we're serving, and we do that by maintaining this stability."



"Look at the system improvements we can make. Look at how many people we got to stand up at a meeting and say they want to achieve this community aim together."

**– Emily Armstrong, Houseless Programs
Manager at the City of Missoula**

Hopeful and solvable

The Missoula team's journey to reach quality by-name data for all single adults has been a long process. But now, with robust provider participation and sustainable policies, they are prepared to make significant strides forward.

"This is why we've spent the last year and a half with our heads down trying to figure this out, because now look what we can do because of it," Armstrong said. "Look at the system improvements we can make. Look at how many people we got to stand up at a meeting and say they want to achieve this community aim together. I don't think we could have done that a year ago."

Next on the docket is to craft a strategy with and for the Missoula community to address homelessness collectively. The intrinsic collaborative spirit of the community will once again be pivotal as they pursue a longer-term goal of achieving functional zero for veterans.

Seymour believes it's possible: "It's going to take a lot of

transparency and collaboration, but I do believe that Missoula believes that we can end homelessness!"

Echoing this sentiment, Hilliard and the rest of the team find confidence in their cooperative efforts. "It doesn't feel like we're taking on this unachievable thing," she said. "It feels very achievable. It's all very hopeful. It gave us a lot of hope. It *is* solvable."

The Missoula team would like to thank all of the community agencies, organizations, and service providers who contribute data to their shared database in the collective work to end homelessness.

City of Missoula City Council

City of Missoula Houseless Programs

City of Missoula Municipal Court

Crosswinds Recovery Center

Homeward

Hope Rescue Mission

Human Resource Council District XI

Missoula Aging Services

Missoula's At-Risk Housing Coalition (ARHC)

Missoula County Commission

Missoula County Office of Public Defenders
Missoula Food Bank and Community Center
Missoula Housing Authority
Missoula Interfaith Collaborative's Housing Advocate Network
Missoula Police Department Crisis Intervention Team

Mobile Support Team
Mountain Home Montana
Open Aid Alliance
Pathways – MISI
Poverello Center
Poverello Center's Homeless Outreach Team
Providence Community Health Investment
Senator Tester's Office
United Way of Missoula County
VA Behavioral Health
Veterans Affairs, HUD/VASH
Veterans, Inc.
Volunteers of America
Western Montana Mental Health Center
Winds of Change
YWCA Missoula

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COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS



Community Solutions is a non-profit organization that works to achieve a lasting end to homelessness that leaves no one behind. Our initiative [Built for Zero](#) is a movement of 100+ communities working to measurably end homelessness.

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