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Homeless Services Coalition
of Delaware County
Since 1991

Collaborative Plan to End Homelessness

July 12, 2021

Housing is the solution to Homelessness!

Delaware County Collaborative Plan to End Homelessness

The Delaware County (DC) Continuum of Care (CoC) is dedicated to achieving the goals of ending homelessness among:

~ Veterans ~ Chronically homeless ~ Families with Children ~ Unaccompanied Youth ~ Individuals

The Delaware County Collaborative Plan to End Homelessness focuses on implementing a systematic response that ensures that homeless is RARE, BRIEF and ONE-TIME (if it cannot be prevented or diverted).

The CoC Mission: To have an integrated community-based system of care and resources that prevents homelessness and provides the necessary resources and opportunities to end homelessness for everyone.

The CoC has adopted the objectives from “Home Together”, the USICH strategic plan for 2018-2022

Home, Together's Eight Objectives

Home, Together is focused on federal strategies that will support states and communities to make homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time experience—and that will sustain that success once achieved. That focus is reflected in its structure.

1. Ensure Homelessness is a Rare Experience

Objective 1.1: Collaboratively Build Lasting Systems that End Homelessness

Objective 1.2: Increase Capacity and Strengthen Practices to Prevent Housing Crises and Homelessness

2. Ensure Homelessness is a Brief Experience

Objective 2.1: Identify and Engage All People Experiencing Homelessness as Quickly as Possible

Objective 2.2: Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter or other Temporary Accommodations to All Who Need it

Objective 2.3: Implement Coordinated Entry to Standardize Assessment and Prioritization Processes and Streamline Connections to Housing and Services

Objective 2.4: Assist People to Move Swiftly into Permanent Housing with Appropriate and Person-Centered Services

3. Ensure Homelessness is a One-Time Experience

Objective 3.1: Prevent Returns to Homelessness through Connections to Adequate Services and Opportunities

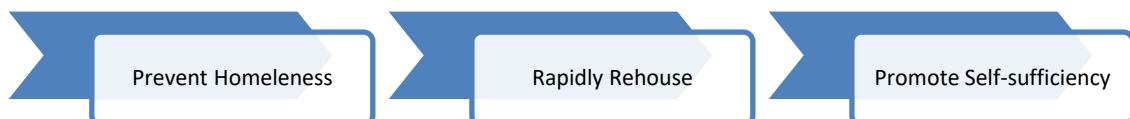
4. Sustain an End to Homelessness

Objective 4.1: Sustain Practices and Systems at a Scale Necessary to Respond to Future Needs

Housing is the solution to Homelessness!

The CoC operates under the following **Guiding Principle** that address solutions for all persons that are experiencing housing crises:

- Prevent homelessness whenever possible; (RARE) (Diversion)
- Rapidly re-house people when homelessness cannot be prevented; (BRIEF) (Housing First)
- Provide wraparound services that promote housing stability and self-sufficiency. (ONE-TIME) (Client Centered)



Delaware County Strategic Initiatives: The following six Strategic Initiatives shape the CoC Collaborative Plan to address and end homelessness:

- I. Through aggressive outreach initiatives, identify, engage and rehouse unsheltered individuals and families as quickly as possible. (Outreach)
- II. Through a comprehensive, client centered Coordinated Entry (CE) System, streamline solutions to solving housing crises experienced by individuals and families. (Coordinated Entry/Crisis Response)
- III. Through the provision of effective individualized services that promote self-sufficiency, foster individual self-sufficiency and transition homeless households to obtain housing and achieve successful tenancy. (Services)
- IV. Ensure access to and availability of affordable stable housing for all persons. (Housing)
- V. Promote leadership, collaboration, and system improvement by allocating resources effectively, growing the resource base and making data informed decisions. (CoC governance)
- VI. Ensure high level CoC System Performance. (Homeless Management Information Services, HMIS & Performance)

Areas of Increased Interest: In continuing our alignment with the Federal Plan, the CoC is dedicated to mirror our actions and work and will incorporate these federal areas of increased focus where applicable:

- Increase affordable Housing Opportunities
- Strengthen Prevention and Diversion Opportunities
- Create Solutions for Unsheltered Homeless
- Help People Who Exit Homelessness find Employment Success
- Learn from the Expertise of People with Lived Experience

Persons with Lived Experience: The CoC Governance holds in high regard, the knowledge of persons with lived experience. The CoC fosters CoC wide engagement of people with lived experience in all aspects of the CoC including program review, governing board voting seats, agency advisory boards, focus groups, surveys and quality improvement activities.

Strategic Initiative I

Through aggressive outreach initiatives, identify, engage and rehouse unsheltered individuals and families as quickly as possible. (Outreach)

GOAL 1: To ensure coordinated and countywide outreach and engagement plan/protocol to the unsheltered living on the streets and in places not intended for human habitation.

Objective 1: Identify unsheltered persons.

Objective 2: Develop and maintain a database of unsheltered homeless.

Objective 3: Maintain an outreach stakeholder group to coordinate all outreach efforts including the point-in-time unsheltered count.

GOAL 2: To ensure unsheltered individuals and families have no barrier access to coordinated entry, emergency shelter and permanent housing by providing immediate support, interventions, and connections with the CoC homeless assistance programs and social services.

Objective 1: Identify and implement best practices for engaging unsheltered families and individuals.

Objective 2: Develop procedures within the Coordinated Entry (CE) system to assure rapid and appropriate referrals to housing and services for unsheltered individuals and families.

GOAL 3: To assist unsheltered homeless individuals and families to obtain housing as quickly as possible.

Objective 1: Utilize the CE system to identify the services and housing opportunities that are most appropriate for rapidly re-housing unsheltered individuals and families.

Objective 2: Remove system and provider barriers to ensure that unsheltered are housed without delay.

GOAL 4: To ensure adequate level of outreach and engagement resources

Objective 1: Evaluate Coordinated Entry and PATH funding to ensure most effective use.

Strategic Initiative II

Through a comprehensive, client centered Coordinated Entry System, streamline solutions to solving housing crises experienced by individuals and families. (Coordinated Entry/Crisis Response).

GOAL 1: To implement a crisis response Coordinated Entry system where each household is assessed for vulnerabilities and barriers and develop a housing stability plan that is client centered, needs-based and addresses the most appropriate level of housing interventions.

Objective 1: Establish and maintain coordinated assessment system that is client-centered, trauma informed and easily accessible.

Objective 2: Assess every household and create a Housing Stability Plan based upon their individualized needs and barriers.

Objective 3: Through the Coordinated Entry System, prioritize the most vulnerable households and assign permanent housing placement based upon need.

GOAL 2: Provide temporary shelter and supportive services for those who are homeless when an immediate permanent housing option is not available

Objective 1: Use HMIS to maintain a "real time" inventory of shelter bed availability.

Objective 2: Create Housing Stability Plans for all and ensure barriers to housing are addressed.

Objective 3: Assist those in shelters to obtain permanent housing/permanent supportive housing as quickly as possible.

GOAL 3: Prevent homelessness whenever possible.

Objective 1: Ensure stable funding for homeless prevention activities such as rental assistance to prevent eviction, arrears and utility shut offs.

Objective 2: Ensure resources are provided to the most vulnerable households.

Objective 3: Divert people from entering emergency shelter whenever possible.

Objective 4: Enhance discharge planning across service systems to prevent people from becoming homelessness.

Strategic Initiative III

Through the provision of effective individualized services that promote self-sufficiency, foster individual self-sufficiency and transition homeless households to obtain housing and achieve successful tenancy. (Services)

GOAL 1: Implement Housing First principles on a CoC-wide basis

Objective 1: Improve the effectiveness and impact of housing based-case management.

Objective 2: Improve case management performance through increased education and training for case managers.

GOAL 2: Increase the economic self-sufficiency of near homeless, homeless and formerly homeless households

Objective 1: Assure that all households have enrolled in all mainstream benefits for which they are eligible.

Objective 2: Maximize employment among near-homeless, homeless, and formerly homeless households.

Objective 3: Support near-homeless, homeless and formerly homeless individuals in increasing their education so that they are more competitive in the job market.

Objective 4: Collaborate with the Workforce Development Board to expand employment and job opportunities for homeless persons.

GOAL 3: Assure that homeless individuals with disabilities have access to needed health and behavioral health resources and services.

Objective 1: Establish priority intake for health and behavioral health services for homeless individuals.

Objective 2: Utilize Medicaid funded behavioral healthcare services to enhance intensive services to homeless persons with behavioral health care needs.

GOAL 4: Provide vital services to all households who need to maintain their housing (childcare, life skills, transportation, domestic violence survivors, ex-offenders etc.)

Objective 1: Ensure availability of a full range of services to support housing stability.

Objective 2: Ensure access to services is barrier free.

Strategic Initiative IV

Ensure access to and availability of affordable stable housing.

GOAL 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing options to homeless individuals and families

Objective 1: Increase the availability of rental assistance available to homeless individuals and families and unaccompanied.

Objective 2: Increase the availability of Permanent Supportive Housing for chronically homeless and other households with a disabling condition.

Objective 3: Increase the supply of affordable accessible rental housing in Delaware County.

Objective 4: Explore alternative housing options; partner with private market landlords and developers.

GOAL 2: Facilitate access to affordable housing for homeless individuals and families

Objective 1: Develop universal Permanent Supportive Housing criteria and selection process to facilitate unsheltered and sheltered homeless individuals and families to obtain permanent/permanent supportive housing (Permanent Housing Clearinghouse).

Objective 2: Reduce barriers and prioritize access to permanent housing for those with the greatest need (VI SPDAT, SPDAT)

GOAL 3: Promote Housing stability for those in permanent housing through system level initiatives.

Objective 1: Collaborate with housing partners to develop an Early Warning System with appropriate interventions to ensure people have every opportunity to stay housed.

Objective 2: Encourage client level provider collaboration meetings.

GOAL 4: Promote successful tenancy

Objective 1: Implement Landlord Engagement strategies that promote communication and problem resolution.

Objective 2: Certify all homeless households participate in the Prepared Renter Education Program (PREP).

Strategic Initiative V

Promote leadership, collaboration, and system improvement by allocating resources effectively, growing the resource base and making data informed decisions. (CoC Governance)

GOAL 1: Build community awareness and support for a system focused on housing stability and the changes needed to prevent and end homelessness in Delaware County

Objective 1: Educate leadership and stakeholders about the needs of homeless individuals and families and advocate for their participation in change.

Objective 2: Increase public awareness about homelessness and engage the wider community in helping to end homelessness.

GOAL 2: Develop a system to assess and evaluate Delaware County's progress in ending homelessness

Objective 1: Determine performance measures for each CoC Component (Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid-Rehousing and Permanent Housing).

Objective 2: Use the HMIS to track and measure progress in achieving system goals.

Objective 3: Use system level and program level performance data for making decisions on allocating resources, and improvement of systems.

GOAL 3: Evaluate utilization of all homeless services and housing resources to determine whether resources are being used effectively and efficiently by all providers.

Objective 1: Implement annual monitoring of all CoC services. Identify programs and services that are high performers and low performers. Consider funding reallocation for consistently low performers.

Objective 2: Ensure that all resources are cost effective.

Objective 3: Identify and pursue additional resources/funding sources.

GOAL 4: Enhance discharge planning across service systems to prevent homelessness

Objective 1: Improve discharge planning from the foster care and juvenile justice to connect youth to education, housing, health and behavioral health support, income supports and health coverage prior to discharge.

Objective 2: Improve discharge planning in jails and prisons to connect people to housing, health and behavioral health support, income and work supports and health coverage prior to discharge.

Objective 3: Improve discharge planning from hospitals to prevent people from being discharged into homelessness.

Objective 4: Improve discharge planning from mental health and substance abuse recovery facilities to prevent people from being discharged into homelessness.

GOAL 5: Ensure all homeless children are enrolled in early childhood education programs or school, as appropriate

Objective 1: Maintain participation by the Homeless School Liaison on the Homeless Services Coalition.

Objective 2: Educate all programs that serve families with children on educational resources for homeless children.

Strategic Initiative VI

Ensure high level CoC System Performance (HMIS and Performance)

Goal 1: Ensure the CoC is performing at a high level

Objective 1: Decrease the number of days homeless

- Manage a by name list of those with the longest length homeless and end their homelessness as quickly as possible.
- Resolve Utility arrears issues ASAP; ensure ample level of utility funding to assist with arrears.
- Increase the number of landlords who will work with the CoC clients (Landlord Engagement, Landlord Relief Fund).
- Role model how to talk with a landlord.
- Rely on Legal Aid when needed.

Objective 2: Increase the number of persons with any income and increase the income

- Ensure Income is updated and accurate at all times in HMIS.
- Develop an action plan to increase income for each homeless adult.
- Add a representative from Workforce Development to Governing Board.
- Utilize Peer Support Programs.
- Promote job attainment
- Empower people: Find their spark!
- Emphasize quality of life.
- Make referrals to trades and skilled employment programs.
- Obtain assessments at Career Link.
- Increase referrals for Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Objective 3: Increase exits to permanent housing from Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH) and Rapid Rehousing (RRH).

- Evaluate Shelter rules and the number of exits for non-compliance; consider relaxing discipline for minor non-compliance.
- Promote streamlined services by clearly defining the roles of all support staff involved while sheltered and transitioning to PH (ES, RRH, Housing Navigator staff).
- Ensure ample PH resources.
- Develop and implement a Landlord Engagement Strategy.
- Ensure Housing Navigators are negotiating with landlords.
- Provide Life Skills training and PREP.

Goal 2: Implement an aggressive Data Quality Plan to ensure the highest quality data possible in the HMIS. a high level of data quality:

Objective 1:

- Decrease user data entry error.
- Choose correct data cells.
- Review HMIS data monthly.
- Decrease use of “don’t know.”
- Decrease use of “Other” – take time to ensure that a canned response is applicable or not.
- At discharge, if client was not successful in program, and a referral to ES was provided, that is not the discharge destination. “Don’t know” is appropriate response here. A referral is not an exit destination unless you have confirmed the entrance to another shelter.
- Enter Data timely.
- Enter correct date for “date housed.”

Objective 2: Ensure data is entered timely

Objective 3: Ensure data accuracy by incorporating regular data quality reviews.

Objective 4: Provide program level data quality to all CoC providers.