BEST PRACTICES FOR ENDING AND PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines best practices for ending and preventing homelessness and reducing housing instability. The list of best practices includes strategies and interventions that are currently in place in Charlotte-Mecklenburg as well as new opportunities for consideration. Where applicable, links and additional information are provided about the location and programs that use the best practice strategies.

PRACTICES ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

BEST PRACTICE	WHAT IT MEANS	WHY IT MATTERS	EXAMPLES
HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING INTERVENTIONS & SERVICES			
COORDINATED ENTRY	Coordinated Assessment – also known as Coordinated Entry or Intake – is a system-wide process that connects individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to the best available resource. It is a requirement of our CoC[1].	1) It can reduce the amount of time persons spend going from program to program. 2) It can reduce new entries into homelessness. 3) It helps the system quantify need.	• In addition to Charlotte-Mecklenburg, communities across the United States utilize or are in the process of setting up a coordinated assessment process. • NAEH library on CA Sites
DIVERSION	Shelter diversion prevents homelessness by helping individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis and seeking shelter to preserve their current housing situation or make immediate alternative arrangements without having to enter shelter.	1) It can reduce the number of people entering the shelter. 2) It can help the system to target shelter resources more effectively. 3) It helps households safely avoid a traumatic and stressful homeless episode.	• Your Way Home Diversion Pilot, saw 64% success rate, diverting 217 people from shelter • Charlotte-Mecklenburg Coordinated Assessment conducted a pilot in 2015, diverting 99 households in 4.5 months. • In FY18, Community Support Services reported 276 individuals diverted.

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[1] Charlotte-Mecklenburg Continuum of Care

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RAPID RE-HOUSING (RRH)	Utilizing the Housing First approach, RRH is a permanent housing intervention designed to help households quickly exit homelessness, return to housing in the community and not become homeless again in the near term. There are three core components: housing identification, rent and move-in assistance up to 24 months, and case management services to help with stabilizing housing.	1) Research continues to show that RRH allows a very high percentage of households with the highest barriers to secure permanent housing and not re-enter homelessness. 2) Funding sources like HUD[2] are shifting their funding prioritization toward this intervention.	• Community Link, Men's Shelter of Charlotte, Supportive Housing Communities, The Relatives, and Salvation Army operate RRH models utilizing the Housing First approach • Two large-scale evaluations are underway: The Rapid Re-housing for Homeless Families Demonstration Project and the Family Options Study
PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (PSH)	Utilizing a Housing First approach, PSH is a permanent housing intervention designed to provide housing and supportive services on a long-term basis. In 2015, our CoC adopted the notice issued by HUD to prioritize individuals and households who are chronically homeless for permanent supportive housing units.	1) Funding sources like HUD are shifting their funding prioritization toward this intervention. 2) Research continues to show that it reduces chronic homelessness, promotes housing stability and increases cost savings to the community.	• Carolinas Care Partnership, Shelter Plus Care, Supportive Housing Communities, Urban Ministry Center and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership operate PSH models utilizing the Housing First approach • In 2014, Moore Place conducted an evaluation, looking at program outcomes and cost savings • In 2014, the Mental Health Commission of Canada released a report, which is currently the world's largest trial of PSH

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[2] HUD stands for the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

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FREQUENT USERS SYSTEM ENGAGEMENT (FUSE)	Started by the Corporation for Supportive Housing, FUSE is a national model that helps communities break the cycle of homelessness and crisis among individuals with complex behavioral challenges who are the highest users of public systems like emergency rooms, jails, shelters, and clinics.	1) Research continues to show that FUSE reduces costs associated with frequent use of public systems while increasing housing stability.	• MeckFUSE is operated by the Urban Ministry Center with funding from Mecklenburg County Community Support Services • FUSE programs exist in over 20 communities across the United States
CHILD WELFARE AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING	An intensive approach to serving families who come to the attention of the child welfare system because of problems with chronic or recurring homelessness and other serious, persistent issues.	1) Emphasis on integration and partnership to create a holistic approach for high-risk, vulnerable families.	• Through Corporation for Supportive Housing, there are 5 programs across the United States who are piloting this approach
HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING STRATEGIES			
HOUSING FIRST APPROACH	In contrast with housing readiness, this approach centers on providing housing to people experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible and then providing the services to help them stay housed.	1) Funding sources like HUD are shifting their funding prioritization toward models using this approach. 2) It can reduce the amount of time a household remains homeless.	• Housing First Charlotte-Mecklenburg which consists of multiple, local permanent supportive housing providers • Local rapid re-housing providers including Salvation Army and Community Link

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MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING	Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a person-centered, goal-oriented method for working with a person that focuses on allowing the person to direct the change rather than telling them what they need to do. "It is a way of helping people talk themselves into changing."	1) The issue of homelessness overlaps with mental health, trauma and substance use. Focusing on ambivalence to change is important for the provider-client relationship to achieve housing-related goals.	• Homelessness: Knowledge at work—Guide to Motivational Interviewing • The Center for Social Innovation developed a guide for applying Motivational Interviewing with family homelessness
HARM REDUCTION	This approach helps a person reduce the harmful consequences of substance use and other risky behaviors without requiring abstinence as the end goal. It also seeks to understand the thought process and action steps needed to change a behavior.	1) Homelessness and drug use often overlap, and the harmful effects of substance use are exacerbated by homelessness. 2) Traditional approaches to treatment are not always effective.	• In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Moore Place has pioneered this approach. • National examples via Harm Reduction Coalition
TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE	Trauma-informed care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors.	1) The prevalence of traumatic stress in households experiencing homelessness is high. Ongoing exposure to traumatic stress can impact all aspects of people's lives, 2) A trauma-informed response can help support recovery and movement toward housing related goals.	• National Center on Family Homelessness has been a leading voice for trauma-informed care settings within the homeless services field

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PAY FOR SUCCESS (PFS)	PFS leverages private investment to cover the cost of front-end implementation for an intervention and pays back the initial investors only when the results are achieved.	1) Increasingly being applied with PSH, with over $8.5M made available in federal dollars for PFS initiatives.	• City of Denver released results of work targeting individuals who frequently touched public systems, driving up costs of through police contact, arrests, jail use and detox centers
DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH	Utilizing data-driven strategies to inform policy, program design and funding. This includes the use of by-name registries to track individuals entering and exiting homelessness.	1) A data-driven approach is critical for creating effective and efficient systems and programs that benefit households and the community.	• Charlotte-Mecklenburg utilizes a by-name registry to track the inflow and outflow of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and veterans. • The Community Shelter Board in Columbus, Ohio employs a Performance Measurement plan that aligns with the overall community strategic plan to end and prevent homelessness. Programs receiving funding are held accountable to community outcomes.

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PRACTICES ADDRESSING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

BEST PRACTICE[3]	WHAT IT MEANS	WHY IT MATTERS	EXAMPLES
HOUSING TRUST FUND (HTF)	HTF is funded from voter approved housing bonds and administered by Neighborhood & Business Services, Housing Services Division. The HTF is a dedicated funding source, established in 2001 to provide gap financing for affordable housing to households earning up to 60% of the area median income.	1) Shows public support. 2) Provides dedicated funding source to sustain development of affordable housing.	• City of Charlotte Housing Trust Fund
MANDATORY INCLUSIONARY ZONING	Requires developers to set aside a percentage of new housing units for residents earning up to 80% of the area median income. That means workers such as elder-care providers, line cooks and valets could afford to live in a new building.	1) The Department of Housing and Urban Development says 34,000 affordable housing units are needed in Charlotte.	• Montgomery County, MD
LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT	The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit is the most important resource for creating affordable housing in the United States today. It is the federal government's primary program for encouraging the investment of private equity in the development of affordable rental housing for low-income households.	1) Creates properties that can only be rented to families whose income is at or less than 60% of the area median income. 2) Tenants' rent payments are capped at 30% of the AMI based on bedroom size minus the utility allowance if applicable. 3) Investors help to revitalize the communities in which they work and live.	• North Carolina Low-Income Tax Credits • City of Charlotte

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[3] Also includes promising practices

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BEST PRACTICE[3]	WHAT IT MEANS	WHY IT MATTERS	EXAMPLES
RESERVE LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING	Land banking that enables communities to repurpose properties to create affordable housing.	1) Increases the availability and access to housing for individuals and families with varying incomes.	• Annapolis, MD – Wiley H. Bates Heritage Park
PERMANENT AFFORDABILITY	Rental or ownership units created by nonprofits having legal authority to permanently remain affordable.	1) Housing units are created for long-term sustainability for individuals and families.	• The Town of Chapel Hill, NC
EMPLOYER ASSISTED HOUSING	A number of ways an employer's investment in workplace housing solutions, e.g., home buyer education, down payment assistance, loan guarantees.	1) Helps with recruitment and retention of employees. 2) Employers have a stake in creating housing opportunities. 3) Can help revitalize neighborhoods.	• Asheville, NC – Mission Hospital
CODE REVIEW AND SIMPLIFICATION	Amending regulations that are an impediment to construction thereby encouraging more development of affordable housing.	1) The Department of Housing and Urban Development says 34,000 affordable housing units are needed in Charlotte.	• City of Asheville, NC
REZONING	Often done by increasing allowed density in areas or creating density bonus ordinances e.g., Transit-oriented development.	1) Can encourage the development of more affordable housing.	• City of Charlotte • San Francisco, CA • City of Asheville, NC
PRESERVATION	Keeping housing affordable to provide stability to low-and moderate individuals and families.	1) Preserves, creates and restores affordable housing units.	• City of Charlotte • City of Asheville Battery Park Apartments

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PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS	Innovative partnerships to help communities develop affordable housing.	1) Brings additional resources and skills to the development process.	• City of Charlotte with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership • e.g., HouseCharlotte – down payment assistance & assistance with closing costs.
PURPOSE BUILT COMMUNITIES	Holistic communities built to transform and improve the lives of residents living in them.	1) Revitalizes neighborhoods. 2) Creates quality mixed income housing. 3) Creates cradle to college educational opportunities. 4) Enriches community wellness.	• City of Charlotte – Renaissance West Community initiative.