



**COUNCIL ON
HOUSING STABILITY
STRATEGIC PLAN**

2021-2024

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ADDRESSING HOUSING STABILITY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Dear Members of the Council on Housing Stability,

As you know, housing stability is a significant challenge with an impact that reaches across the entire state, with vacancy rates in rental units near zero percent in some communities. While affordable housing has been a challenge in the Granite State for the last several years, those challenges have been further exacerbated by the pandemic.

Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing has lasting impacts, creating stability for children, adults, and families. Additionally, expanding access to affordable housing is a critical component in further growing our economy by providing new employment opportunities for our citizens and ensuring a strong workforce for our businesses.

To address this critical topic, in November 2020 I created the Council on Housing Stability, which brought together a broad set of stakeholders and diverse perspectives from across the State. Their charge was to take a collaborative, innovative approach to developing a plan to create housing stability for all citizens of the State of New Hampshire.

With a clear vision and guiding principles, the Council has delivered a strategic plan – including a comprehensive statewide plan on homelessness – which represents a significant step forward in addressing housing stability in New Hampshire. The plan serves as a blueprint for our collective efforts – statewide, regionally, and locally – with a focus on alignment, coordination, innovation, and accountability. The end goal: creating improved health, social, educational and economic outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

I would like to thank the dedicated members of the Council, its workgroups, and all those who came together to create a clear path to tackle homelessness and housing stability in New Hampshire.

We must work together to effectively meet the goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in the Council's plan. I look forward to collaborating with the Council, the Legislature, state agencies, regional and local leadership, nonprofits, and businesses to improve the health and prosperity of our residents and communities.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu
Governor

COLLABORATION AND OUR PATH FORWARD

June 30, 2021

Dear Partner,

Housing is a basic human need and the challenge of housing instability in New Hampshire is one we cannot afford to ignore as it concerns the health and prosperity of our fellow residents, and our State. There is no single solution—no one entity or individual—that can solve the social and economic crises brought on by the lack of available, affordable housing.

Our path forward to address this critical issue is a coordinated response that brings together partners from across the State to prevent people from slipping into unstable housing situations or homelessness and help all New Hampshire residents access safe, affordable housing. The impacts of this work are broad and necessary to meet the needs of residents and communities, as well as support continued economic sustainability and growth.

The Council on Housing Stability (CHS) was charged last November with two primary tasks:

- ◆ Complete a full assessment of New Hampshire's housing needs with a focus on those experiencing homelessness; and
- ◆ Use that assessment to deliver a road map that would inform coordinated actions of all partners and the deployment of resources to best meet the housing needs of New Hampshire's residents, especially those who are considered vulnerable and low-income for years to come.

The strategic plan to address housing stability in New Hampshire was unanimously adopted by the Council in June 2021.

The Council is co-led by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Business and Economic Affairs and the Community Development Finance Authority. Together, we worked seamlessly to integrate data and strategies with a whole-person approach across health, economic development and community development areas. The resulting plan shows an increased awareness of housing as a core social determinant of personal health and well-being, as well as a commitment to advancing strategies that are proven to increase housing production and stability with a focus on innovation across a diverse set of partners.

Today, New Hampshire is working more collaboratively than ever before to address housing needs. We thank the Council workgroups and members for their incredible work on this plan and look forward to continuing to work together with partners across the State to implement this necessary work.

Sincerely,



Christine Santaniello
Associate Commissioner,
Department of Health
and Human Services



Taylor Caswell,
Commissioner
Department of Business
and Economic Affairs



Katherine Easterly Martey,
Executive Director
Community Development
Finance Authority

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ON HOUSING STABILITY

MEMBER REPRESENTING

| | |
|--|--|
| ERIC ADAMS | Laconia Police Department (law enforcement agency) |
| JIM BOULEY, <i>MAYOR</i> | City of Concord |
| TAYLOR CASWELL, <i>COMMISSIONER</i> | Department of Business & Economic Affairs |
| DEAN CHRISTON | New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority |
| GEORGE COPADIS, <i>COMMISSIONER</i> | Department of Employment Security |
| REPRESENTATIVE TOM DOLAN | Legislator appointed by the Speaker of the House and Senate President |
| CHRISTINA DOTSON | Department of Education (responsible for programs for children experiencing homelessness) |
| NICK DUFFY, <i>DESIGNEE</i> | Department of Corrections |
| ANNE DUNCAN COOLEY | County Economic Development Council |
| KATHERINE EASTERLY MARTEY | Community Development Finance Authority |
| KATJA FOX | Division of Behavioral Health Services |
| SUE FULTON | Philanthropic community with expertise in housing instability |
| AMANDA GRADY SEXTON | NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence |
| SENATOR JAMES GRAY | Legislator appointed by the Speaker of the House and Senate President |
| GEORGE HANSEL, <i>MAYOR</i> | City of Keene |
| KADYJA HARRIS | Young adult who has current and/or recent lived experience with housing instability |
| MELISSA HATFIELD | Bureau of Housing Supports |
| REBECCA HEBERT | Municipal Association |
| REPRESENTATIVE WILL INFANTINE | Legislator, appointed by the Governor |
| HARRISON KANZLER | Individual or representative of an organization or entity that the Governor deems appropriate to support the work of the council |

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ON HOUSING STABILITY

MEMBER REPRESENTING

| | |
|--|--|
| ERIN KELLY | Manchester Continuum of Care for Housing |
| ANN LANDRY, <i>DESIGNEE</i> | Department of Health and Human Services |
| ROBERT MACK | Municipal Association |
| ELISSA MARGOLIN | Housing Action New Hampshire |
| CAROLYN MCCARLEY, <i>MAYOR</i> | City of Rochester |
| MARIAH MCKENNEY | Parent who has current and/or recent lived experience with housing instability |
| DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL WARREN PERRY, <i>DESIGNEE</i> | Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs |
| MAGGIE PRITCHARD | Representative of the Community Mental Health Association |
| ROBERT QUINN, <i>COMMISSIONER</i> | Department of Safety |
| JOSHUA REAP | Associated Builders & Contractors |
| MICHAEL REINKE | Nashua Continuum of Care for Housing |
| ROBERT RODLER, <i>DESIGNEE</i> | Division of Children, Youth, and Families |
| DEBORAH SCHACHTER | Philanthropic community with expertise in housing instability |
| DOMINIQUE RUST | New Hampshire Catholic Charities (faith based community) |
| CHRISTINE SANTANIELLO, <i>ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER</i> | Department of Health and Human Services |
| STEPHANIE SAVARD | NH Coalition to End Homelessness |
| CHRIS SCHLEYER | NH Landlord Association |
| VICTORIA SHEEHAN, <i>COMMISSIONER</i> | Department of Transportation |
| MARTHA STONE | Statewide Continuum of Care for Housing |
| ALEX TALCOTT | Representative of the business community with an interest in affordable housing |
| ANDRU VOLINSKY | Individual or representative of an organization or entity that the Governor deems appropriate to support the work of the Council |

I. INTRODUCTION

In November 2020, Governor Christopher T. Sununu, through [Executive Order 2020-22](#), established the cross-sector Council on Housing Stability (Council). The Council was established for the purposes of creating and implementing a plan to create housing stability for all citizens of the State of New Hampshire.

Recognizing that creating housing stability is complex and crosses many sectors, the Council is co-lead by the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Business and Economic Affairs, and the Community Development Finance Authority and includes 41-members.



VISION

The Council for Housing Stability developed the following vision statements to inform the work and the creation of this plan for housing stability in New Hampshire, including:

- ◆ Housing ends homelessness and creates stability for children, adults, families, business, and communities;
- ◆ Greater access to affordable housing will assist New Hampshire businesses and strengthen the state's economy;
- ◆ Individuals and families experiencing homelessness and housing instability often have other conditions impacting their circumstances;
- ◆ Housing stability is one of the Social Determinants of Health and is essential for all children, adults, and families to thrive in New Hampshire;
- ◆ Investing in housing is a better solution for individuals, families, and communities creating improved health, social, educational, and economic outcomes;
- ◆ Needed services and support should be delivered in each community, based on the unique assets, resources, strengths, challenges, and needs unique to each area of the state.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles will guide the integrity of the planning and implementation to ensure housing stability to all NH residents.

- ◆ **Person-centered:** Experiences, choices, and goals of people at-risk of and experiencing homelessness are the basis on which services are coordinated and accessed. Policies are designed to support people regaining stability and to reduce and remove programmatic barriers.
- ◆ **Data-driven:** Strategies are rooted in evidence that is publicly reported and based on national best practice models.
- ◆ **Equity-aware:** Stakeholders commit to understanding needs and addressing policies and practices to improve racial equity and reducing disparities within the homelessness and housing systems.
- ◆ **Lead with Lived Experience:** Perspectives and input of people with lived expertise will be actively solicited and used to implement strategies and update goals.
- ◆ **Aligned with other plans:** Statewide goals and strategies will align with other strategic plans that address similar populations including *The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)*, *The NH Governor's Commission on Alcohol and other Drugs Action Plan*, *The 10 Year Mental Health Plan*, and *The New Hampshire Economic Recovery and Expansion Strategy (ERES)*.



Photo credit: Cheryl Senter

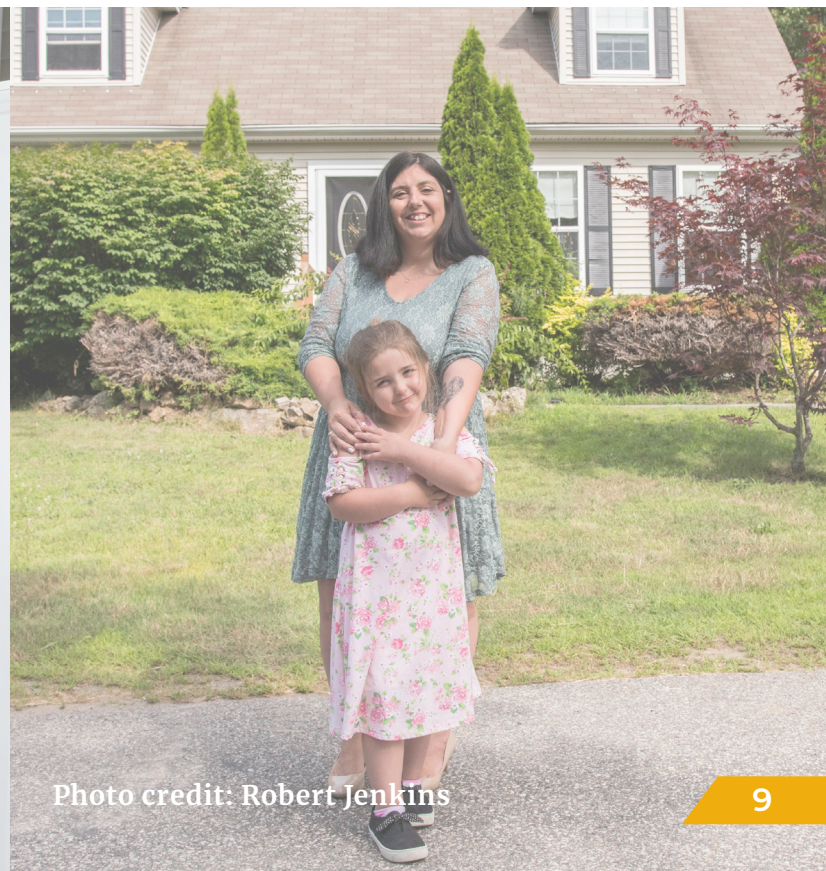


Photo credit: Robert Jenkins

II. OVERVIEW

The Executive Order creating the Council was signed on November 18, 2020 and the Council held its first meeting on December 4, 2020. An initial plan was submitted to Governor Sununu on December 14, 2020, <https://nhchs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CHS-initial-plan-12.14.2020.pdf>. This plan set a strategy for the next six months of the Council's work to 1) create a plan for housing stability for New Hampshire citizens and 2) develop a comprehensive update to the State's plan on homelessness.

The Council established four workgroups to develop the plan:

1. Planning and Regulation;
2. Data Analytics and Integration;
3. Housing Instability and Homelessness System; and
4. Regional Leadership and Coordination.

Task force memberships, recommendations, meeting notices and minutes are available through the Council's webpage www.nhchs.org.

The Council and work groups engaged a broad group of stakeholders through regular, public meetings that attracted over eighty people representing all areas of the state, community roles, and perspectives. The Council also conducted targeted surveys to harness the expertise and voice of the community beyond both the Council and workgroup members. Three surveys were distributed to the State's Mayors, people with lived experience of homelessness, and community-based services providers. In all 162 unique responses received. The voices of the respondents are echoed in the subsequent Goals, Objectives, and Strategies to end the crisis of housing instability that impacts New Hampshire residents. Community stakeholders are advocating a new urgency to address the needs of those that are in the workforce at wages below what is needed to afford the cost of housing, those unable to work due to illness and/or disability which results in a lack of adequate housing options, and communities at-large that are working to meet the needs of their residents. There is overwhelming clarity and consensus on strategies, evidence of successful programs that can be replicated statewide, and the commitment to make lasting changes to benefit the state's housing infrastructure.

This process and subsequent Action Plans were made possible through the support of Endowment for Health and New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. The generosity of New Hampshire's philanthropic partners afforded the Council the opportunity to engage with consultants to assist the Council with the development of this plan. The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) was selected through a competitive process to support the Council with its work.

This plan is a living document to guide work over the next three years to address the following:

- a. Outline of necessary measures to strengthen New Hampshire's housing market and to create housing stability for all citizens.
- b. A plan to conduct an affordable housing needs assessment in each region to determine the housing deficit.
- c. Determination of the barriers to affordable housing and what can be done to remove such barriers.
- d. Strategies for the system of care to support individuals and families to obtain and maintain stable housing.
- e. A framework to integrate and coordinate a housing stability governance structure across state government and connect to local communities by conducting ongoing needs assessment and strategic planning.
- f. Plans to enhance the interoperability of data systems within and across government agencies to inform and monitor program and service access, equity, and quality.
- g. A plan to end homelessness.

This plan has been developed to meet the goals of:

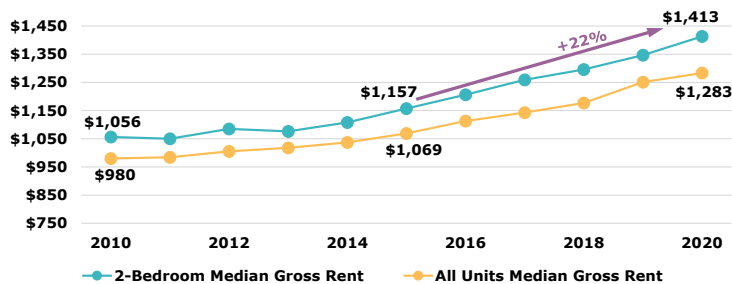
- ◆ **Increased housing availability is critical for NH's future** - New Hampshire must address the supply and demand issues for housing production throughout the state by increasing housing so that options are available throughout citizens' lifespans, based on the needs and choices people have at different times of their life.
- ◆ A comprehensive update to the State's plan on homelessness that when implemented, **Homelessness is rare, brief and one-time.**

Critical to the development of this plan was data, at a statewide, community, and service level. While homelessness, housing instability, and housing access impact the entire state of New Hampshire, each community has strengths, needs, and solutions that can be built upon and enhanced. Throughout the work of the Council, there were multiple references and discussions regarding regional leadership, coordination, responsibility, and planning. The conclusion is that state level leadership is needed to guide the response to affordable housing specifically for New Hampshire residents who live with the lowest incomes and face housing instability, including homelessness. While local autonomy is a hallmark value to meet community needs, a statewide vision and plan is needed to solve the need for affordable housing, increased housing, which will result in increased availability for New Hampshire's workforce, families, and those experiencing homelessness.

III. SNAPSHOT OF HOUSING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

As outlined in the December 2020 plan, New Hampshire is frequently touted as one of the best places to live in the United States, ranking high on several national “quality of life” indicators such as standard of living, child and family well-being, and low unemployment.* For individuals and families facing and experiencing homelessness, there are many barriers to obtaining this quality of life. Housing is one of the Social Determinants of Health, and access to safe, stable housing positively impacts the health and well-being of New Hampshire citizens, yet this is not within reach for many NH residents. Despite its low unemployment of 2.7%, and strong economy, New Hampshire has had a lack of affordable housing for decades. New Hampshire also suffers from a “general” housing shortage. Construction of new housing levels have never recovered from the Great Recession of 2008, yet housing demand has continued to increase. Efforts to increase housing stock has made slight progress in some areas of the state, but it has not been enough to meet demand. The housing market was tight pre-pandemic and the migration of new full-time residents to the state during the pandemic likely exacerbated the shortfall. This migration has resulted in housing units that were rentals coming off the rental market, an increase of second home purchases, and an overall decrease of available units for rent or sale.

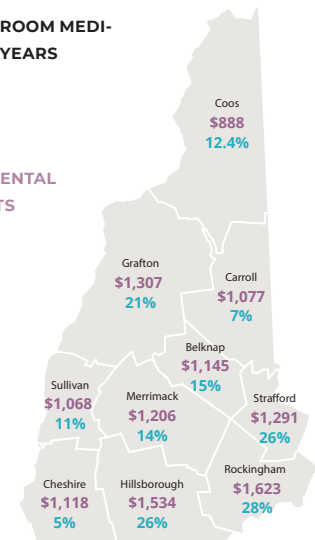
Source: New Hampshire Housing, 2020 Residential Rental Cost Survey



PERCENT CHANGE IN 2-BEDROOM MEDIAN GROSS RENT OVER FIVE YEARS (STATEWIDE, 2015-2020)

MEDIAN MONTHLY GROSS RENTAL COST FOR 2-BEDROOM UNITS

PERCENT CHANGE IN 2-BEDROOM MEDIAN GROSS RENT OVER 2015-2020



Source: New Hampshire Housing, 2020 Residential Rental Cost Survey

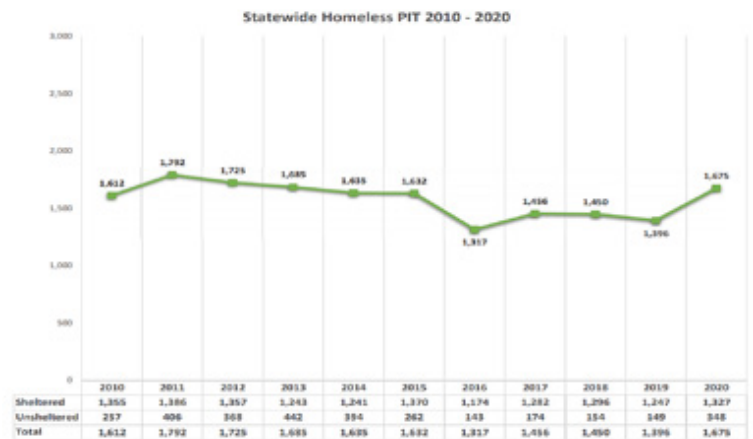
The median gross rental cost has increased at a relatively constant rate for more than two decades and while rents have increased about 20% over the past 5 years, renter income has not increased over roughly the same period. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition’s Out of Reach 2020 report, New Hampshire requires the 15th highest wage in the country to meet the cost of housing. This means that employees need to earn over \$23/hour to afford an average 2-bedroom home. Another way to look at the connection between housing cost and wages is the number of hours an average minimum wage earner needs to work in order to pay for housing. In New Hampshire this figure is nearly 129 hours/week. It is critical to increase affordability to ensure quality of life, maintaining connections to community, school, and work, and to mitigate economic crises that lead to homelessness. The high cost of housing and low availability of housing has a direct connection with the numbers of people experiencing homelessness.

Years of under-production have resulted in a significant supply shortfall. In 2020, New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA) estimated that 20,000 more units were necessary to meet current demand. The contributing factors to the issue of constrained supply are the cost of labor and materials, regulatory barriers and a scarcity of skilled construction labor on which developers depend. Housing supply has significant implications on economic growth and affordability. The low supply and high prices make it hard for employers to hire and retain workers, and the housing demand has the greatest pressure at the lower end of the market – creating unstable housing circumstances for many and a threat of homelessness.

The COVID-19 exacerbated the tight housing market, the fragility of the services system for those experiencing housing instability, and the lack of regional coordination to influence outcomes.

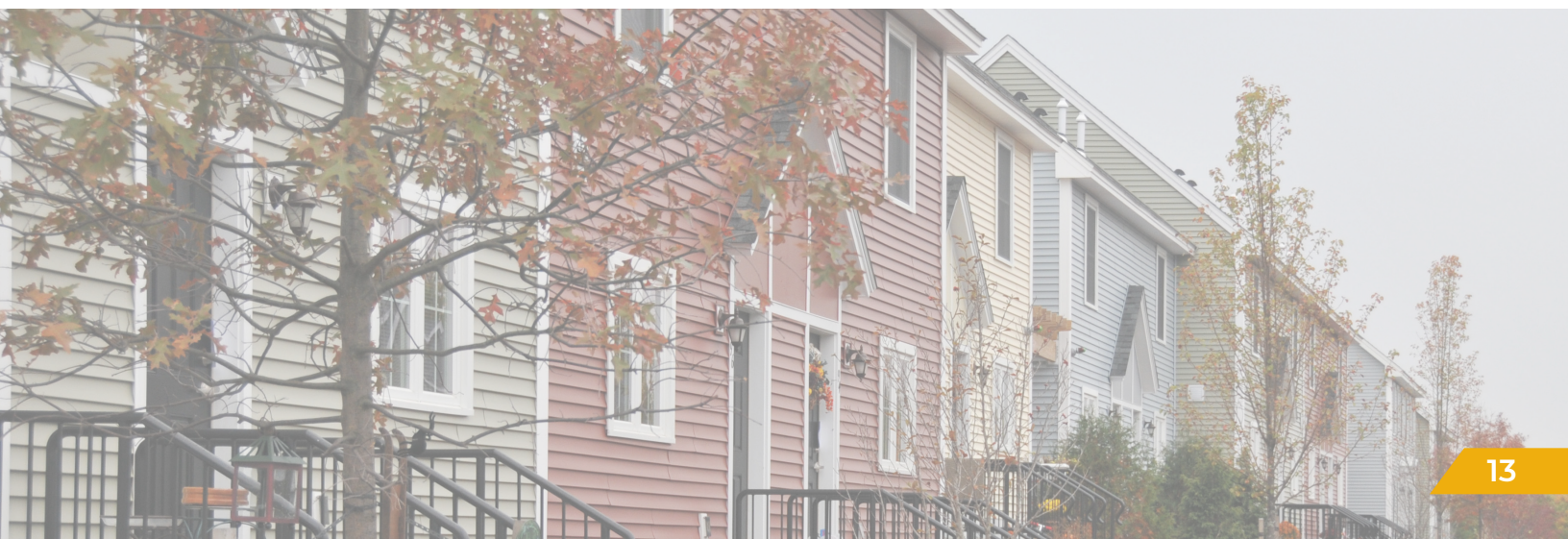
The Point n Time Homeless Count showed an increase in all forms of homelessness except for Veterans. According to the State of Homelessness in New Hampshire 2020 report, the 2020 pre-pandemic Point-in-Time Count documented a 21% increase in homelessness from 2019

Initial conclusions are:



Source: DHHS, Point In Time Homeless Count information

- ◆ **More people are falling into homelessness than can exit permanently or quickly.** As unsheltered homelessness rises it indicates that the emergency response and housing systems are stressed.
- ◆ **Veteran homelessness experienced a decrease** due to the consistent, yearly resources allocated for supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and support services that comes through the U.S. Departments of Veteran’s Affairs and Housing and Urban Development. Currently no other subpopulation of homelessness receives that level of consistent support, although the support need and subsequent interventions are largely the same.
- ◆ **Annual, unduplicated Homelessness Management Information Systems (HMIS) data that showed that over 4,400 persons—including children in families—received homeless services in 2020.** This data confirms the nuances of scale of need beyond the annual winter count and is a more accurate indicator of assistance needed to drastically reduce homelessness in New Hampshire.



IV. HOUSING AS A SOCIAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH-ALIGNING WITH OTHER EFFORTS

The Social Determinants of Health are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks. Housing stability is one of the Social Determinates of Health.

The availability, safety, and quality of housing impacts health outcomes; the quality of housing is impacted by the existing housing stock. Lead-based paint in older buildings can contribute to lead poisoning, especially in children. Indoor allergens, such as mold and dust and residential crowding, can increase the risk for physical illness such as asthma, infectious disease, and psychological distress.

The availability of affordable housing in neighborhoods is considered a critical health-promoting community asset. As we have seen in NH, housing supply that is insufficient to meet demand has led to high housing costs, and consequently, an increased risk of homelessness.

Homelessness and housing instability have an adverse effect on children's educational progress due to challenges accessing school and poor attendance. Also, children experiencing homelessness may experience isolation due to their family circumstances. Children living in inadequate housing conditions also have a higher risk of developing long-term health problems. It is often hard to measure the extent to which homelessness impacts children and families, given the challenge of tracking highly mobile or families experiencing homelessness.

One of the efforts New Hampshire is engaged with that crosses the Social Determinants of health is Whole Families Approach to Jobs (WFATJ). This effort is led by the Administration for Children and Families Region in partnership with the National Council on State Legislators, National Governor's Association, American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and local and national philanthropic partners including New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, and Kresge Foundation. This work focuses on helping New England states find innovative solutions that help parents work and children thrive. Work towards this is collaborative across state government, non-profit organizations, philanthropy, and business to promote the upward economic mobility of families and to strengthen the economy by expanding the labor pool to an untapped resource- people who cannot afford to work, but want to work.

As part of this effort, New Hampshire has been working towards solving the cliff effect. The cliff effect occurs when wages do not make up for what is lost in public assistance, including housing, when a parent accepts a job or a promotion. The work towards solving the cliff effect as outlined in [NH's 2021 report](#), correlated to affordable housing, is the location of such available housing is part of the consideration that one has to weigh before entering New Hampshire's workforce.



V. PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Prior to the pandemic, efforts were being made across the state to increase identification and engagement with persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness in New Hampshire in an effort to combat this. In preparation for the 2020 Point in Time Count, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), through its Bureau of Housing Supports (BHS), hosted a planning collaboration with communities in an effort to strengthen the accuracy of the count. The result of this planning effort was comprehensive canvassing, expansive and substantial stakeholder participation as well as larger community involvement. The increase of Point in Time unsheltered count is a direct result of these efforts. As a result of this work, when the CARES funding came to New Hampshire, these funds were targeted to expand services to those in most need.

DHHS received \$7.9M of federal CARES Act dollars through the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) to increase support and services for individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The funds can be used through September 30, 2022. Of these dollars, DHHS invested \$6.5M for increased outreach support and shelter operations. New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA) through the Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR) received \$12M of funding to assist shelters with the increased cost of operations and modifications to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic response. Agencies and partners worked closely and collaboratively to leverage all federal dollars coming to New Hampshire for strategic investments to build out the outreach system and support shelter operations as they transition through the pandemic. These investments targeted supporting individuals and families on a pathway to permanent housing while providing crisis assessments and referrals to address immediate needs and safety planning.

DHHS recognized that those experiencing homelessness were at high risk during community spread of coronavirus, and that a lack of housing contributes to poor physical and mental health outcomes. Expanding street outreach and emergency shelter operations across the state increased identification and equitable engagement to promote more comprehensive housing connections, decrease the number of persons unsheltered and aid in New Hampshire's efforts to prevent, prepare for, or respond to coronavirus.

The remaining CARES Act funds were invested in expanding Rapid Rehousing and Homelessness Prevention projects. These projects assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of homelessness, regain housing stability and provide comprehensive wraparound services with rental assistance to maintain housing stability once achieved. Housing First Rapid Rehousing programs identified and served vulnerable households to quickly enter into permanent housing. Strategic, coordinated and targeted Homeless Prevention was expanded to best leverage federal funds and match those most at risk of entering into the homeless response system with services to avoid this. During the pandemic, BHS reviewed and lifted local restrictions on program duration, case management and rental assistance per household to produce maximum flexibility to sub recipients in their response.

Community service delivery providers collaborated to resolve affordable housing barriers including creating roommate options when appropriate, building relationships with landlords in each region and coordination among housing navigators.

During the pandemic, New Hampshire implemented two rental relief programs aimed at preventing homelessness and keeping people in their homes. The first program, funded by the CARES Act through GOFERR, was administered by the NH DHHS via contract with the five Community Action Agencies.

V. PANDEMIC RESPONSE

This program was in operation from July 1, 2020–December 30, 2020 and 4,788 households were assisted. The second program, Emergency Rental Relief, is currently administered by New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority via the five Community Action Agencies is funded through GOFERR via federal CCRSA funds, began on March 13, 2021 and is currently operational. As of June 7, 2021, 2873 households have been assisted.

The use of these federal dollars have assisted to stabilize the housing and homelessness systems during the pandemic and as New Hampshire enters recovery. The resources have set a foundation to build upon for sustainable change for increased housing availability for all New Hampshire citizens and to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and one-time.

In addition to above, since the creation of the initial plan, the following has been accomplished:

- ◆ The Council has created a website, www.nhchs.org.
- ◆ NHHFA and CDFA have committed to fund 40 additional supportive housing units across the state.
- ◆ Through NHHFA, NH has received:
 - ◇ 281 additional Housing Choice Vouchers;
 - ◇ 70 additional family reunification vouchers; and
 - ◇ 16 additional Foster Youth Independence vouchers.
- ◆ NH DHHS submitted a 1915i State Plan amendment for a Supportive Services Benefit under the Medicaid State Plan. This was posted for public comment on May 24, 2021 and closed on June 22, 2021, <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/ombp/medicaid/public-notices.htm>. The plan was presented to the Medicaid Advisory Council on June 21, 2021 and received overwhelming support. The actual plan was submitted to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid on June 15, 2021 with an anticipated start date of September 1, 2021. This will support 253 individuals the first year, increasing to 315 in year 2 and 447 in year 3 to provide assistance to obtain and maintain housing people with disabilities who are experiencing chronic homelessness, transitioning out of an institutional setting and can live in the community with these services.
- ◆ There has been a commitment to an additional State investment for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in an effort for increased housing development.
- ◆ Data analysis has been expanded through the work of the CHS to focus on the connection of housing need and availability, employment, and economic data for the State.



VI. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The charge of the Council is to “create and implement a plan to create housing stability for all citizens of the State of New Hampshire.” (2020-22 Executive Order). To achieve this, the Council has set the following as its North Star:

**Homelessness is rare, brief and one-time;
Increased housing availability is critical for NH’s future
—Increase housing units by 13,500 by 2024.**

The following objectives and targets were created to achieve and measure the North Star goals.



Objective 1: Promote increased housing stability at the state and local levels by improving crisis response, services infrastructure and policies that support individuals and families to maintain housing in their community.

There are critical first steps that can be taken to help families stay in their homes and in their communities. This objective will support statewide improvements to how existing programs coordinate and communicate together to respond in real time before people lose their home and have compounded difficulties in securing a next stable home. National best practices around foreclosure and homelessness prevention involve flexible resources that can help households for more than one month overcome an economic crisis. Additional policy changes are also needed to empower tenants to get into good standing with a landlord or prepare for future housing needs.



Objective 2: Remove regulatory barriers to affordable housing in order to expand New Hampshire’s housing market for all persons with special emphasis on affordable, accessible options and using innovative approaches.

New Hampshire communities have room to improve the policy and economic environment that promotes the creation of housing that is affordable to all residents. The time is now to work creatively and comprehensively to ensure that each community is contributing to the solutions of the affordable housing crisis, which can begin with improving how, where, and what types development activities are approved at the community level.



Objective 3: Increase production of publicly-financed affordable housing with supportive services.

The solution to an unmet housing need is to spur production through direct financing. Direct investment of existing and new funding sources into housing activities for the lowest incomes is a vital role for the public sector that helps guide the private sector into leveraged investment. In particular for people with no home, New Hampshire will draw upon local and national best practices in financing, capacity building, and operation of supportive housing.



Objective 4: Deploy targeted financial incentives or tax off-sets designed to promote private-market housing production and use of existing structures for rental housing that is affordable to the lowest-incomes and households in need of on-going community support.

New Hampshire's housing economy is a significant stakeholder in achieving housing stability for residents. In recognition of the need to increase the inclusion of tenant populations that fall outside of traditional development activities, the state will consider financing incentives that promote financial feasibility of creating affordable housing.



Objective 5: Achieve a productive legislative strategy for the 2022 session that supports efforts to increase housing production.

Affordable housing has become synonymous with insufficient, undesirable housing that negatively impacts community living. This in turn diminishes the call to action for state policy solutions that set the direction for all other actions on housing stability. In reality, all families need housing that is affordable to them, so that they can afford other costs of living such as child care, health care, transportation, and healthy food. Housing is a foundation for health, wellness, and economic stability in communities. Affordable housing development activities are real economic investments and quality; well-managed properties contribute to community vitality.



Objective 6: Integrate and coordinate a housing stability governance structure connecting state government with local communities through needs assessments, strategic initiatives, and data-driven decision-making.

The Action Plans will require on-going, targeted support to achieve the range and depth of strategies entailed herein. New Hampshire will build upon its regional strengths to support on-going problem solving, planning, and establishing affordable housing priorities across the state.

To realize the goals that **homelessness is rare, brief and one-time** and to **increase housing availability by 2024 with 13,500 additional New Hampshire housing units**, the Council developed this three-year strategic plan based on recommendations made by the Council and its workgroups.

VII. ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

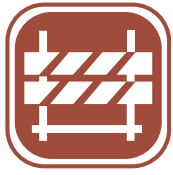
To advance these objectives in State Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022) the following one-year action plan will be executed. The one-year action plan will be updated on an annual basis and published annually by November 30th.



Objective 1: Promote increased housing stability at the state and local levels by improving crisis response, services infrastructure and policies that support individuals and families to maintain housing in their community.

| Action | Lead | Time Goal | Lever for Change |
|---|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Extend the time that a tenant has to “cure” his/her nonpayment, i.e. “pay and stay,” up until a court hearing is held. | 2021 Legislature | 2021/2022 | Legislative |
| Conduct a formal, data-driven assessment of the current welfare model to propose solutions to both the financial and administrative structure based on the assessment. | Department of Health and Human Services | 2021 plan/ 2022 start ARP | Data Analysis Legislative |
| Update system coordination and enhance services referral protocols for families experiencing homelessness in need of behavioral health, educational supports, and other community programs in order to access COVID-19 recovery resources and beyond. | Philanthropic partners Department of Health and Human Services | 2021 plan/ 2022 start ARP | Partnership Development Systems Mapping |
| Repurpose vacant commercial real estate to add to the available housing stock in the state with a priority for affordable housing by leveraging the \$14M HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds and other American Rescue Plan (ARP) infrastructure funds coming to the state. | NHHFA Community Development Finance Authority | 2021–2023 ARP | Appropriations Partnership Development |

VII. ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN



Objective 2: Remove regulatory barriers to affordable housing in order to expand New Hampshire's housing market for all persons with special emphasis on affordable, accessible options and using innovative approaches.

| Action | Lead | Time Goal | Lever for Change |
|--|--|------------------|--------------------------|
| Use community input through a design charrette to promote and advance the priority of repurposing of vacant commercial spaces. | NHHFA Community Development Finance Authority | 2021/2022 | Partnership Development |
| Use ARP funds to create a statewide online portal to collect data on vacant commercial properties available for redevelopment. | Dept. of Business and Economic Affairs NHHFA Community Development Finance Authority | 2021/2022 ARP | Appropriations |
| Request State Departments to review practices/policies that impede housing production and provide recommended changes by December 30, 2021. | Governor's Office | 2021 | Policy |
| Identify and endorse housing champion communities and commit to developing economic development and resource incentives over time. | Governor's Office | 2021/2022 | Policy Appropriations |
| Reestablish the Housing and Conservation Planning Program. | 2022 Legislature | 2022 | Legislative |
| Reestablish the Commission to Study Barriers to Increased Density of Land Development for additional two years including an examination of planning and zoning enabling legislation. | 2022 Legislature | 2022 | Legislative |



Objective 3: Increase production of publicly-financed affordable housing with supportive services.

| Action | Lead | Time Goal | Lever for Change |
|--|--|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Provide capacity building grants for supportive housing project sponsors, particularly nonprofit services providers. | NHHFA Community Development Finance Authority | 2021–2024 | Capacity Building Appropriations |
| Allocate American Rescue Plan Act resources, especially Homeless Assistance and Supportive Services Program (HASSP) for acquisition and rehabilitation of property for affordable and/or supportive housing. | NHHFA Community Development Finance Authority | 2021 ARP | Appropriations |



Objective 4: Deploy targeted financial incentives or tax off-sets designed to promote private-market housing production and use of existing structures for rental housing that is affordable to the lowest-incomes and households in need of on-going community support.

| Action | Lead | Time Goal | Lever for Change |
|--|---|-----------|------------------|
| Establish tax incentives and tax off-sets for private landlords to promote unit production to meet the housing affordability needs of the lowest-income and households with on-going service's needs, with connection to services. | Dept. of Business and Economic Affairs Legislature | 2021/2022 | Legislative |

VII. ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN



Objective 5: Achieve a productive legislative strategy for the 2022 session that supports efforts to increase housing production.

| Action | Lead | Time Goal | Lever for Change |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Create a coordinated statewide legislative advocacy campaign involving the business community, realtors, homebuilders, homeless/social service groups, housing advocates, environmental groups to advance legislation outlined in these objectives and otherwise that boosts housing production. | Housing Action NH NHHFA | 2021–2023 | Partnership Development |
| Establish a Housing Caucus within the NH Legislature to educate and inform necessary steps to increase housing availability and stability for NH citizens. | Housing Action NH Legislature | 2021/2022 | Legislative |



Objective 6: Integrate and coordinate a housing stability governance structure connecting state government with local communities through needs assessments, strategic initiatives, and data-driven decision-making.

| Action | Lead | Time Goal | Lever for Change |
|---|--|-----------|--|
| Publish a public-facing Homeless System Performance, Coordinated Entry, and Funding Dashboard. | Department of Health and Human Services Institute for Community Alliances | 2021/2022 | Data Analysis |
| Develop a regional planning, oversight, and staffing structure to monitor and implement CHS goals and initiatives and oversee the various strategic planning activities indicated in the CHS and Homeless Plan reports. | NHHFA Community Development Finance Authority | 2021 | Partnership Development Appropriations |

The Council will develop metrics to evaluate the one-year action plan where applicable and measurable in the time frame. The Council will continue to develop measurable impacts and provide update in the November 2021 Council Plan.

VIII. THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

To advance these objectives the following three-year strategic plan will be executed. The three-year strategic plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and published annually by November 30th.

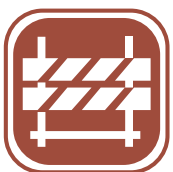


Objective 1: Promote increased housing stability at the state and local levels by improving crisis response, services infrastructure and policies that support individuals and families to maintain housing in their community.

- ◆ Extend the time that a tenant has to “cure” his/her nonpayment, i.e. “pay and stay,” until a court hearing is held.
- ◆ Increasing the notice period for significant rent increases from 30-days to 90-days before lease signing.
- ◆ Prohibit landlords from reporting eviction activity to credit bureaus or landlord reporting services, unless the report includes the result of the eviction case.
- ◆ Propose legislation which aligns with best practices to establish tenant protections for rooming house residents. Consider rooming house residents who have paid rent in 90 of 120 periods, at which point persons will be provided a lease and considered tenants.
- ◆ Conduct a formal, data-driven assessment of the current welfare model to propose solutions to both the financial and administrative structure based on the assessment.
- ◆ Update system coordination and enhance services referral protocols for families experiencing homelessness in need of behavioral health, educational supports, and other community programs in order to access COVID-19 recovery resources and beyond.

During the COVID-19 State of Emergency, NH prohibited landlords from imposing any rent increase on an occupied residential unit and charging or collecting a late fee for any rent payment.

“A statewide approach to preventing and addressing homelessness is needed—including shelter, supportive, and affordable housing.”



Objective 2: Remove regulatory barriers to affordable housing in order to expand New Hampshire’s housing market for all persons with special emphasis on affordable, accessible options and using innovative approaches.

- ◆ Identify strategies to repurpose vacant commercial real estate to add to the available housing stock in the state with a priority for affordable housing by leveraging the \$14M HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds and other American Rescue Plan (ARP) infrastructure funds coming to the state.

VIII. THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

- ◆ Use community input through a design process to promote and advance the priority of repurposing of vacant commercial spaces.
- ◆ Use ARP funds to create a statewide online portal to collect data on vacant commercial properties available for redevelopment.
- ◆ Review inventory and process for disposition of state owned surplus property for potential residential use.
- ◆ Request State Departments to review practices/policies that impede housing production and provide recommended changes by December 30, 2021.
- ◆ Identify and endorse housing champion communities and commit to developing economic development and resource incentives over time.
- ◆ Convene Regional Planning groups to design and implement updated county-level Housing Needs Assessment methodology that incorporates “workforce housing,” single adults, Extremely Low-Income and Very Low-Income Populations, People experiencing homelessness, People with disabilities, People in “Group Quarters” who return home i.e. prison, nursing homes, other institutional care.
- ◆ Develop and publish dynamic housing data dashboards that drive to the community level and Regional Planning Commission geography.
- ◆ Reduce zoning barriers in 10 communities by 2023 that impede mixed use and/or residential development through the NH Municipal Technical Assistance Grant Program (MTAG) and technical assistance.
- ◆ Provide financial support for local communities that make regulatory changes that promote affordable housing development.
- ◆ Establish the Housing and Conservation Planning Program.
- ◆ Reestablish the Commission to Study Barriers to Increased Density of Land Development for additional two years including an examination of planning and zoning enabling legislation
- ◆ Promote streamlined permitting processes for small scale developments (e.g., up to 10 units) and other affordable, innovative housing types such as detached Accessory Dwelling Units, Tiny Homes, Cottage Clusters and Panelized Housing by conducting a feasibility study in select or interested communities, publish results, and pass enabling legislation to promote feasible practices.

Mount Washington Valley Housing Coalition impact – New Ordinances passed in North Conway in April 2020. [MWVHC 2017 Charrette Recap - YouTube](#)



Objective 3: Increase production of publicly-financed affordable housing with supportive services.

- ◆ Provide capacity building grants for supportive housing project sponsors, particularly nonprofit services providers.
- ◆ Recruit and train new project development sponsors in conjunction with public funding cycles and continue to align development and programmatic funding cycles.
- ◆ Update the Qualified Allocation Plan for Low Income Housing Tax Credit applications to set a minimum threshold for supportive housing units or increased point incentives for participation.
- ◆ Allocate American Rescue Plan Act resources, especially Homeless Assistance and Supportive Services Program (HASSP) funds for acquisition and rehabilitation of property for affordable and/or supportive housing.
- ◆ Create a Capitalized Operating Reserve that will lower rental rates for persons earning under 15% and 30% of the Area Median Income.
- ◆ Expand coordinated funding applications for supportive housing by combining capital, operating (rent) and supportive services resources to reduce the production time for supportive housing.

“The most pressing needs are supportive, affordable, and permanent supportive housing options as well as mental health & SUD services in our city and throughout the state.”

Compass House is a supportive group home for low-income women in recovery. Guests can stay for up to two years while focusing on their recovery and preparing to make a go of it on their own. Compass House was developed in 2020 by Lakes Region Community Developers and is operated by Horizons Counseling Center and Navigating Recovery of the Lakes Region. This article in the Laconia Daily Sun chronicles the first year at Compass House, [click here](#).



Objective 4: Deploy targeted financial incentives or tax off-sets designed to promote private-market housing production and use of existing structures for rental housing that is affordable to the lowest-incomes and households in need of on-going community support.

- ◆ Establish tax incentives and tax off-sets for private landlords to promote unit production to meet the housing affordability needs of the lowest-income and households with on-going service's needs, with connection to services.
- ◆ Pass enabling legislation to provide increased flexibility to municipalities to update development approval processes.
- ◆ Develop a statewide landlord program that provides direct one-time incentives to landlords who newly enroll in rental assistance partnerships with Housing Authorities or similar entities.



Objective 5: Achieve a productive legislative strategy for the 2022 session that supports efforts to increase housing production.

- ◆ Create a coordinated statewide legislative advocacy campaign involving the business community, realtors, homebuilders, homeless/social service groups, housing advocates, environmental groups to advance legislation outlined in these objectives and otherwise that boosts housing production.
- ◆ Support and enhance existing models that provide support to people with lived experience to positively impact programs and policies that influence housing stability supports.
- ◆ Establish a Housing Caucus within the NH Legislature to educate and inform necessary steps to increase housing availability and stability for NH citizens.



Objective 6: Integrate and coordinate a housing stability governance structure connecting state government with local communities through needs assessments, strategic initiatives, and data-driven decision-making.

- ◆ Align Coordinated Entry processes and standards across all three homeless Continuums of Care (CoC's) including the creation of a statewide "By-Name List" of households in need of housing placement and cross-geography referral protocols.
- ◆ Publish a public-facing Homeless System Performance, Coordinated Entry, and Funding Dashboard.
- ◆ Initiate planning for data sharing agreements or other cross-sector data matching to inform new practices and interventions for people who touch multiple public systems in need of housing and services.
- ◆ Support local planning and decision-making with a public-facing data dashboard to provide transparent and accessible data related to statewide housing information to include, but not be limited to: vacancies, new production, permits, and homelessness. NHHFA will create and organized data sets by county and/or Regional Planning Commission geography and include the following: Unemployment and Writs of Possession; Housing Permits and Contribution to Multifamily Development; Ratio of Units created that are "Affordable" by County and Statewide (for incomes at and below 60% AMI); Vacancy Rates and Housing Cost; Units created by statewide and county; General Housing and Income Landscape.
- ◆ Endorse the Balance of State (BoS) SoC to formalize regional subgroups to create structure around policy and funding priorities of the BoS CoC as well as support informing next steps in the State Plan on Homelessness. Identify a regional/local point of contact to liaison with the BoS CoC to facilitate bidirectional information sharing.
- ◆ Develop a regional planning structure that includes: oversight, and staffing structure, is inclusive of the CoC process outline above to implement and monitor the goals and objectives of this plan.

Focusing and implementing the strategies outlined above will increase the housing availability and retention of existing housing in NH. This will support business by increasing the housing availability to support the current and future NH workforce. Coupled with the comprehensive statewide plan on homelessness, these efforts will support the work to **ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time.**

IX. COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE PLAN ON HOMELESSNESS

The broader CHS priorities and strategies build a foundation for affordable housing for all income levels throughout the state. The strategies and intended outcomes, if carried out, will change the nature of the housing market so that it is more equitable, predictable, consistent across the state, and is intentionally addressing housing shortages at all income tiers. The CHS plan asserts the importance of housing production for the state's economy; if working families cannot afford housing, there is not a thriving future for residents.

The transition from housing to homelessness has stagnated at an unsustainable level in New Hampshire. 70% of people experiencing homelessness are for the first time and few households have been able to permanently leave homelessness. This is in large part due to lack of housing that is both affordable and available.

The State Plan on Homelessness focuses on the need to understand the nuances of the homelessness experience. The plan focuses into the delivery of homelessness prevention assistance, street outreach and service coordination efforts, targets housing needs and strategies for various subpopulations, and enhances the connections and collaboration between the many systems of services that touch those experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness in New Hampshire impacts less than 1%¹ of the state's population but has persistently impacted upwards of 4,000² households per year and approximately 1,300 at any given point in time. Within these figures is a story; the number of people who are long-term homeless with at least one disability is on the rise, and at the same time on average 70% of people experiencing homelessness in each of the past four years were considered "new," with no prior homeless service experience.

And while the Point in Time Homeless Count, required annually by HUD, documents a relatively low number of youth and young adults aged 18-24 experiencing homelessness, there is cause for concern. Nearly 4,000 students identified in New Hampshire Public Schools as homeless. While the Department of Education has a much broader definition of homelessness, including school children experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, this number is concerning for the children of New Hampshire today and for the future. As noted by the New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness in the 2020 State of Homelessness Report, "research shows that the stress, uncertainty, and instability of one or more homeless experiences can have long term impacts on the physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and behavioral development of children." These figures are an indicator of severe housing instability that is likely to be a source of ongoing need for affordable housing and a coordinated homelessness response both now and as these students age to their own independence.

This data points to real challenges that create new and increased opportunities for change. The pandemic revealed issues already known to providers of homelessness response services – that housing is a public health response. The pandemic also provided a clear and urgent necessity to collaborate and respond in new ways without delay. Many of these practices are described in the strategic plan below to sustain and retain lessons learned for a more proactive response.

¹ <https://www.usich.gov/homelessness-statistics/nh>

² <https://www.nhceh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2020-State-of-Homelessness-in-NH-Report-Online-Final-compressed-1.pdf>

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

This plan proposes an array of priorities and strategies that use varying combinations of housing and services to both prevent homelessness, to transition people in shelters and on the street as quickly as possible to housing and ensure long term housing stability. Guided by person-centered principles and the overarching goal to have homelessness **rare, brief and one-time**, the strategies lead to measurable changes in reduction of homelessness and housing instability. This will not happen overnight, and there must be a deep commitment at the state and local-level of leadership, providers, and stakeholders. Homelessness is a complex issue that necessitates a statewide vision to guide the local response by reshaping resource pathways and coordinated actions. This plan is informed by people with lived experience of homelessness, direct services providers, advocates, policy makers, and community developers.

The belief is that New Hampshire can take action to make changes needed to ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time.

Addressing and ultimately ending homelessness in New Hampshire requires the development of a highly coordinated response by leaders at all levels for resources to be easier to access by people and communities, improve coordination and collaboration, reduce duplication, and improve outcomes together. This can be done by committing to a growth plan for interventions that promote housing options that enable people to remain in their community, updating policies that inhibit housing stability, which result in the uneven distribution of options for affordable housing and safety net support across the state, and using data to drive decision-making at local and state levels.

The strategic plan will guide the actions, investments, and policy changes that improve the state's human resources and housing infrastructure beginning July 2021 through June 2024. The purpose of the shorter-term strategic plan is to keep stakeholders engaged to evaluate progress and modify goals and strategies in an effort to respond to the data and experience in the community.

Direct Feedback Shaped the Plan including that CSH conducted three surveys to establish priorities, gather feedback on how the current systems function, and what will propel change moving forward. In all 162 people responded, including 8 Mayors, 85 system stakeholders, and 69 people with lived experience. Each set of responses built on similar themes, all with a call to action for increased housing that is available and affordable, quality services that are person-centered, increased services that are easy to access in communities; organized and coordinated across networks, cities, and regions.

People with Lived Experience reflected an overwhelming need for more housing units that are available to move out of shelters. Respondents remarked that in communities where there are jobs, housing is not available. There is a need for jobs that pay a living wage. For the resources that do exist there are waiting lists and it is difficult to navigate. During the service navigation process people expressed a feeling of dehumanization and fear at the prospect of being homeless, especially for those with children.

System Stakeholders provided a similar view on housing and services—that more of both are needed. In addition to more housing resources available to people exiting homelessness, there is a need to address how landlords treat people with poor credit and criminal records; engagement of landlords needs to be done with incentives

Rent is ridiculous. And there's hardly any all year around shelters. Subsidized housing or vouchers take forever to get.

and support of those participating in partnerships. Stakeholders noted that capacity is low within provider agencies meaning that staff are stretched thin, service caseloads are high, and there is not enough agency leadership to expand programming that is badly needed in the community. Addressing encampments in a compassionate and strategic way was a common theme, along with building upon coordinated efforts across street outreach teams that had been successful during COVID-19 response. Stakeholders identified key policy areas to address around funding, removal of barriers to housing development, cross-systems partnerships, and rely on data and the voice of people with lived experience to guide decision-making.

I don't think it's a training issue—I think it's a “having enough people to do a thorough job on an individualized level with vulnerable individuals and families” issue.

Mayors from a subset of communities in seven of ten counties responded. This group expressed a strong feeling of both responsibility, concern, and yet disconnection from the main source of resources and policies that shape the majority of the response to homelessness. Those who responded are seeking leadership from the state level and within counties, who are viewed as having more financial leverage, and can assist with the

localized response. While all communities are required to respond to residents in financial crises, there are uneven and inconsistent responses across all towns and as a result the participating Mayor's feel their communities are shouldering a disproportionate amount of financial responsibility through local welfare. Some ideas from respondents include homeless day centers in each county with 24/7 homeless prevention access, enhanced case management support, and increased affordable and supportive housing options. There are deep needs for mental health capacity as well as services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The crux of the mayoral responses is that their local welfare systems are not designed to meet the deep and varying needs of those presenting in financial and social crises in the community, and this necessitates a higher level of leadership and response.

Equip the smaller towns for responses so issues don't overwhelm large cities.

A Note of Comparison to the 2006 Plan

Innumerable things have changed since 2006, the last time New Hampshire had a framework to address homelessness. In reflecting on the 2006 plan, many issues and strategies appear in this 2021 strategy road map. Both plans recommend the need for more housing and additional and coordinated services. The need to look at different ways of financing and funding, as well as addressing special populations. The 2021 plan adds new strategies and connections in an effort to ensure homeless is rare, brief, and one-time. The strategies focus on the connection between street outreach and housing assessments and housing placements. Services in housing are proposed with Medicaid as a funding stream which has the potential for a stable source of funding. Data is a component, looking at system performance measures across the three Continuum of Care's (CoC's). Best practices such as Housing First and low barrier shelter are guiding practices instead of new concepts. There is a greater recognition of the perspectives and needs of people with lived experience in shaping program and policy improvements.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

New Hampshire use a single goal as its north star over the next three years

Ensure that homelessness in New Hampshire is rare, brief, and one-time.

The following objectives were created to achieve and measure the North Star goal.



Objective 1: Improve housing stability focused on those at risk of homelessness.

In addition to the strategies outlined in Objective 1 of the Council Plan, the Council determined it is necessary to intentionally improve housing stability for those at risk of homelessness. Approximately 70% of households that enter homelessness each year are new. The data demonstrates the need for additional resources for short and medium term financial assistance for rent and utilities for people in economic crises as well as enhancing transitions for people as they maneuver through the different system of care. This challenge presents opportunities to stem the tide through strengthened safety net support and cross-agency planning to promote stable housing without accessing emergency shelter.



Objective 2: Invest in a range of housing options to increase the number of people leaving homelessness to stable housing.

As the State increases production of housing with the implementation of the strategies outlined in Council Plan objectives, the Council determined it is necessary to intentionally build options for housing people leaving homelessness. Over the past five years, the rate of households leaving the homeless system has declined, to where only 37% of households were able to leave homelessness for permanent, stable housing in 2019. This data is embedded in the trends of an overall housing deficit throughout the state, tight and costly housing market, and reluctance from current owners to lease to people with challenges. Permanent, affordable housing is the foundation on which sufficient and quality services are most effective for people in transition along with other specialized interventions. In addition to the scale and type of housing models needed, capacity is needed throughout the state. According to the State of Homelessness 2020, “43.5 percent of New Hampshire’s overall homeless population residing in smaller, more rural communities, it is important that a statewide plan includes comprehensive initiatives that focus on local and regional solutions in all areas of the state.”

“We need affordable housing, rent caps, better public transport, and training for landlords to not be discriminatory. Housing availability for individuals with eviction/criminal history.”



Objective 3: Create a Coordinated and Person-Centered Response System.

Data drives solutions, partnerships, and resource appropriations. National data on homelessness has become highly sophisticated and has led to innovative strategies in particular for people with multiple complexities. It has also revealed that homelessness does not impact all groups equally, and that even in a state like New Hampshire, people of color have a disproportionate over representation. Behind the data are real people, with real expertise to improve programs, policies, and processes intended to end homelessness. As noted in the State of Homelessness 2020 report, the pandemic propelled cross-agency and system partnerships that were taking significant time to execute. Out of necessity, agencies responded very collaboratively to meet the needs of all residents and are seeking to maintain those operations moving forward post-pandemic.

COORDINATED ENTRY

New Hampshire has a statewide effort to improve how people facing homelessness are assessed for and connected to the available housing option that is right for their needs. This effort called “Coordinated Entry” is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development so that community agencies work together to establish community priorities and ensure that people with high housing and services needs are offered available resources first. This is a movement away from “first come, first served,” which often left behind those experiencing long-term and unsheltered homelessness.

Across the three Continuums of Care there are 22 physical Coordinated Entry locations statewide, and residents can call 211 to be connected to the most appropriate location. Assessments and referrals are tracked in the Homelessness Management Information System. Data from 2020 demonstrates the deep unmet need for rental housing to help people exit homelessness.

In 2018, New Hampshire’s Continuums of Care began the rollout of a universal housing assessment that is also the process by which people are prioritized and matched to units within the homelessness system as they become available. The Department of Housing and Urban Development initiated the Coordinated Entry framework so that people who experience homelessness can have their needs and experiences consistently reflected and understood, that households will access housing resources that both meet their level of need, and ensure that homeless response systems are attending to people who experience long-term and chronic homelessness. The majority of persons touching the homeless CoC’s will receive a Standard Housing Assessment in Coordinated Entry; this data is also tracked in the Homelessness Management Information Systems.

Statewide Data for 2020 demonstrated that:



- ◆ 1,232 households were assessed for housing.
 - ◇ 283 persons experiencing chronic homelessness
 - ◇ 924 single adults
 - ◇ 120 Families with children
 - ◇ 126 Youth 18-24
- ◆ Of those assessed, 164 households were matched to available supportive housing.






As noted in the action plan, a full data dashboard of Coordinated Entry activity and outcomes is in development.

IX. PLAN ON HOMELESSNESS

ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN ON HOMELESSNESS

To advance these objectives in State Fiscal Year 2022 (June 30 2021–June 30, 2022) the following one-year action plan will be executed. The one-year action plan will be updated on an annual basis and published annually by November 30th.

| Action | Lead | Time Goal | Lever for Change |
|---|---|-----------|--|
|  <p>Use ARP funds to increase homelessness prevention funding as an incentive to implement best practices for shelter diversion.</p> | Department of Health and Human Services CoC's | 2021–2023 | Appropriations |
|  <p>Use ARP funds to increase shelter funding to promote best practice for shelter operations and for those those that increase and improve transitions to permanent supportive housing.</p> | Department of Health and Human Services | 2021–2023 | Appropriations |
|  <p>Develop a workflow and operating policies to support homelessness prevention, shelter placement, and re-housing activities between Local Welfare, shelters, housing providers, and municipal and county leaders.</p> | CoC's Community Action Programs (CAP)/ Regional Access Points | 2021–2022 | Partnership Development Capacity Building |
|  <p>Use ARP funds to launch a statewide campaign to recruit private landlords and provide a financial incentive for leasing to households using rental assistance vouchers.</p> | NHHFA | 2021–2022 | Appropriations |
|  <p>Use ARP -Homeless Assistance and Supportive Services Program (HASSP) to immediately acquire and repurpose property for affordable and supportive housing that will take referrals directly from Coordinated Entry in that region.</p> | NHHFA Community Development Finance Authority CoC's | 2021–2023 | Appropriations Partnership Development |

| Action | Lead | Time Goal | Lever for Change |
|--|--|---------------|--|
|  <p>Create a services funding plan that sets an expected budget per household for new units created in the housing plan, with anticipated or identified sources of funding.</p> | <p>Department of Health and Human Services NHHFA Community Development Finance Authority</p> | 2021–2023 | Appropriations |
|  <p>Build community capacity to bill Medicaid for Housing Tenancy Supports through training, policy development, and recruitment of appropriate providers.</p> | <p>Department of Health and Human Services</p> | 2021–2023 | Capacity Building Partnership Development |
|  <p>Developing training and resource material for first responders to have the tools necessary to assist individuals experiencing homelessness with immediate access to services.</p> | <p>Department of Health and Human Services Department of Safety</p> | 2021-2023 | Partnership Development Capacity Building |
|  <p>Apply to HUD for Youth Homelessness Demonstration funds to enhance and develop a statewide system to respond to youth and young adult homelessness.</p> | <p>Department of Health and Human Services</p> | Apply in 2021 | Appropriations Capacity Building |
|  <p>Create a dedicated budget allocation in the BHS supports and DCYF that supports a statewide system to respond to youth and young adult homelessness.</p> | <p>Department of Health and Human Services</p> | 2021–2022 | Appropriations Capacity Building |

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN ON HOMELESSNESS

To advance these objectives the following three-year strategic plan will be executed. The three-year strategic plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and published annually by November 30th.



Objective 1: Improve housing stability focused on those at risk of homelessness.

- ◆ Use ARP funds to increase homelessness prevention funding to incentivize best practices for shelter diversion and demonstrate effectiveness, including:
 - ◇ Align definitions of homelessness prevention, shelter diversion, and eligibility across entities;
 - ◇ Update workflows and operating policies across entities that support prevention;
 - ◇ Track the number of individuals receiving prevention services by source;
 - ◇ Test and implement a shelter diversion assessment and program for people seeking homeless assistance at shelters, Local Welfare Departments, and 211;
 - ◇ Provide training on assessing, referring, and delivery of revised prevention and shelter diversion strategies;
 - ◇ Build public awareness of resources and how to access them through targeted outreach campaigns;
 - ◇ Direct funding for short-term financial and housing stability supports in collaboration with school systems to help homeless students.
- ◆ Develop a workflow and operating policies to support homelessness prevention, shelter placement, and re-housing activities between Local Welfare, shelters, housing providers, and municipal and county leaders. Design and implement consistent outcome measures and program goals at the local, county, state, and CoC levels for all homeless response programs from prevention/diversion, shelter, outreach, supportive housing.
- ◆ Provide housing system navigation services targeted to people experiencing chronic homelessness assessed by Coordinated Entry.



Objective 2: Invest in a range of housing options to increase the number of people leaving homelessness to stable housing.

- ◆ Use ARP funds to launch a statewide campaign to recruit private landlords and provide a financial incentive for leasing to households using rental assistance vouchers.
- ◆ Use ARP -Homeless Assistance and Supportive Services Program (HASSP) to immediately acquire and repurpose property for affordable and supportive housing that will take referrals directly from Coordinated Entry in that region.
- ◆ Create at least three regional Medical Respite/Recuperative Care programs as a cost effective alternative to extended hospital stays for those experiencing homelessness.

- ◆ Establish coordinated street outreach partnerships with a lead entity in each region to engage with unsheltered households into services and coordinate with police and fire.
- ◆ Expand funding and programming of evidence-based and evidence-informed services models that are designed to help people access and maintain housing as well as establish on-going community-based service connections from health, mental health, employment, and education.
- ◆ Create a services funding plan that sets an expected budget per household for new units created in the housing plan, with anticipated or identified sources of funding.
- ◆ Build community capacity to bill Medicaid for Housing Tenancy Supports through training, policy development, and recruitment of appropriate providers.
- ◆ Recruit existing affordable housing resources to take direct referrals from Coordinated Entry to increase people exiting homelessness to stable housing.
- ◆ Create Moving On initiatives to create resource pathways for supportive housing tenants to move on to other affordable housing.
- ◆ Develop a flexible rental assistance program using private foundation, healthcare, or general revenue funding that pays for a combination of rent and services to increase exits out of homelessness.



Objective 3: Create a Coordinated and Person-Centered Response System.

- ◆ Increase leadership opportunities for people with lived experience of homelessness by creating a Statewide Lived Experience Advisory Board/Council (10-20 members), increasing minimum participation standards within each Continuum of Care, and ensure the Lived Experience Advisory Board has formal voice in CoC affairs and the ongoing work of the Council on Housing Stability.
- ◆ Engage and train across systems about discharge planning and how to avert from homelessness.
- ◆ Increase statewide adoption of harm reduction, trauma informed care, and other service modalities at every stage of engagement, including the expansion of low-barrier shelter capacity.
- ◆ Create a dedicated budget allocation in the BHS supports and DCYF that supports a statewide system to respond to youth and young adult homelessness.
- ◆ Assess and refine Coordinated Entry processes at least annually.
- ◆ Develop harm reduction and low-demand shelter capacity for people with active behavioral health needs.
- ◆ Sustain the Ending Veteran Homelessness initiatives.
- ◆ Expand the partnership between the Doorways substance use system and the homeless systems to improve housing and service outcomes for unsheltered homeless with substance use issues.
- ◆ Use data to inform racial disparities in service delivery and resource access and address issues.

IX. PLAN ON HOMELESSNESS

- ◆ Publish a dynamic Coordinated Entry Data Dashboard for all three Continuums of Care (CoC) to demonstrate real-time data on housing needs and housing outcomes by regions.
- ◆ Create regional subgroups within the CoC's to understand data, troubleshoot and improve local resource deployment, support Coordinated Entry, and implement strategies in the State Plan.
- ◆ Develop a data integration or data sharing partnership to support changes in policy and programming between homelessness, corrections, and state Medicaid.

HOMELESS MEASURES AND TARGET METRICS

The Council will consider the following metrics to evaluate the New Hampshire State Plan 2021–2024 where applicable and measurable in that time frame. The Council will report on measurable impacts and update annually in November as part of the Council Plan.

| Measure | Current Metric | Target Metric |
|--|--|--|
| Increase the number of individuals diverted from homelessness via prevention programs. | No current metric exists | Compile existing data sources to establish a baseline; Propose metrics for change |
| Reduce overall homelessness. | 4,451 individuals were served in the homeless system in FY20 | By 2024, reduce overall homelessness by 30%, or 1,386 households |
| Continue to reduce the number of households experiencing homelessness for the first time. | 3,422 households in 2019, down from 4,246 in 2015 | By 2024, reduce first-time homelessness by 30% or 1,000 households |
| Reduce unsheltered homelessness. | 348 households in 2020 Point in Time Count | By 2024, reduce unsheltered homelessness by 30% or 104 households |
| Accelerate the trend of reducing the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. | 264 in 2020, including 77 families with children | By 2024, reduce unsheltered homelessness by 30%, or 125 households |
| Increase the rate in which individuals and families are exiting from homelessness to housing. Known as a “positive system exit”. | 37.4% in 2019, a steady decline since 2015, at 50.8% | By 2024, increase exits to permanent housing to 50%; reverse the trend (do not decrease in positive exits) |

IX. PLAN ON HOMELESSNESS

| Measure | Current Metric | Target Metric |
|--|---|---|
| Increase the number of available Permanent Supportive Housing units. | 1,131 homeless-dedicated supportive units in 2019 | By 2024, add 200 new units to the production pipeline |
| Increase the number of RRH Units. | 213 units in 2019 | By 2024 double the Rapid Rehousing Capacity to 425 units available |
| Increase the representation of people with lived expertise on the CoC Board. | Requirement is at least 1 on the governing board - Client action board/Lived Experience | Establish 1 statewide Lived Experience Advisory Board/ council (10-20 members); increase local representation —increasing minimum participation—marching toward balanced/equal representation |
| End Veterans homelessness by the year 2022. | Currently one measure outstanding to achieve status of ending Veteran homelessness | Align metrics with Ending Veteran Homelessness Initiative; Establish Functional Zero definition |
| Increase discharges from public institutions directly into stable housing, averting homelessness. (i.e. corrections, recovery homes, mental health facilities. | No current metric exists | Assess data and set measure |
| Reduce family homelessness by 10% by 2024. | 1,577 families experienced homelessness in 2019 | Reduce by 10% to 1,420 annually by 2024 |
| Reduce Youth Homelessness by 25% by 2024. | 84 unaccompanied youth during 2019 Point in Time Count | Establish a baseline through a specific Youth Homeless Count |
| Reduce homelessness among school students/re-enrollment into U.S. Department of Education McKinney-Vento homeless services. | School Year 2017-2018: 3,982 New Hampshire public school students were reported as homeless, 75% of which were doubled up | Metrics to be determined |

X. EXECUTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan will succeed by having a dedicated cross-agency team that is led by a dedicated project manager. While this plan has multiple entities accountable to taking action, many efforts exceed current capacity and also require on-going support to ensure close coordination and integration of change. Furthermore, this plan which encompasses both a targeted homelessness strategy as well as a comprehensive affordable housing strategy will need to coordinate across public and private entities and engage with citizens, philanthropic partners, municipal leaders, county leaders, nonprofit organizations, and elected officials.

The dedicated leadership will work with a network of deputized local leaders, consultants, and other contracted partners to carry out specific implementation efforts.

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) provides a unique, one-time opportunity to invest in programs that will make a lasting impact on housing availability for all New Hampshire citizens, especially those that are lower income or those experiencing homelessness. The Council recommends that pending the finalization of Federal guidance that if allowable, ARP funds be used in the following ways:

- ◆ Continuing the work of the Council on Housing Stability with the use of consultants.
- ◆ Funding a project manager for 3 years to lead the work as outlined in the plan.
- ◆ Providing funding to immediately acquire and repurpose property for affordable and supportive housing.
- ◆ Launch a statewide campaign to recruit private landlords and provide a financial incentive for leasing to households using rental assistance vouchers.
- ◆ Increase homelessness prevention funding as an incentive to implement best practices for shelter diversion.
- ◆ Increase shelter funding to promote best practice for shelter operations and for those that increase and improve transitions to permanent supportive housing.
- ◆ Create bridge funding for those waiting for housing vouchers, those needing first month's rent and security deposit.
- ◆ Provide capacity building grants for supportive housing project sponsors, particularly nonprofit services providers.
- ◆ Develop a statewide landlord program that provides direct one-time incentives to landlords who newly enroll in rental assistance partnerships with Housing Authorities or similar entities.
- ◆ Provide financial support for local communities to make regulatory changes that promote affordable housing development and economic development incentives.
- ◆ Create a statewide online portal to collect data on vacant commercial properties available for redevelopment.

At least \$45,000,000 will need to be appropriated in ARP funds and other new resources to support these strategies.

XI. CONTINUED WORK OF THE COUNCIL

The Council will continue to meet to monitor and adjust the plan as needed. An annual report will be developed in November of each year. This report will include, but not be limited to:

- ◆ Progress on the outcomes;
- ◆ Increase and changes to housing availability across the state;
- ◆ Progress on the effort to reduce homelessness as outlined in the plan;
- ◆ Barriers to successful completion of the outcomes and recommended strategies; and
- ◆ Any changes to the objectives, strategies and outcome metrics.



