



Plan to End Homelessness

Strategic Plan Refresh in Support of Achieving Functional Zero FY 2019 – FY 2021 (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021)

To : Mayor Jim Bouley, and City of Concord City Council

From : City of Concord Plan to End Homelessness Steering Committee

cc : Concord Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH)

Date : June 14, 2018

Re : **“Refresh” of Concord’s Plan to End Homelessness FY 2019 – FY 2021
Executive Summary**

Background

In April 2014 the City Council adopted a Plan to End Homelessness that focused on five (5) goals, as follows:

- I. Increase access to healthy, safe environments for all homeless and precariously housed members of the Concord community.
- II. Increase the number of quality, permanent, affordable rental units for very low income individuals and families.
- III. Increase knowledge about homelessness in Concord, costs to the community, services available and future needs.
- IV. Increase public and private funding available for plan strategies.
- V. Ensure broad representation and engagement of stakeholders in implementation of the Plan to End Homelessness

Accomplishments

There have been numerous accomplishments under the Plan since its adoption, as outlined below. The homeless response system in Concord continues to show progress toward alignment with the “Housing First” model, which is embraced by the Steering Committee. Housing First is a proven approach in which people experiencing homelessness are offered permanent housing with few to no preconditions. Overwhelming evidence continues to show that all people experiencing homelessness can achieve stability in permanent housing if provided with the appropriate levels of services. Housing First yields higher housing retention rates, reduces the use of crisis services and institutions, and improves people's health and social outcomes.

Create an Expanded Homeless Resource Center

In May 2015, the Concord Homeless Resource Center moved to 238 N. Main Street and expanded in both physical size and services offered. The facilities include free shower and laundry facilities, and more service providers are now able to use the Resource Center as a place to access people in need of services, including Concord Hospital’s Downtown Clinic and Riverbend Community Mental Health.

Create Additional Housing First Units and/or Shelter Opportunities for Individuals Who Are Homeless

- The Steering Committee, Mayor Jim Bouley, and the larger community responded to the closing of the winter shelter run by First and South Churches, and an interim winter shelter was operated for 2 years by the Friends Program at St. Peter’s Church. During this time, CCEH launched a campaign to build reliable space for a winter shelter behind the existing Resource Center, and construction is almost complete. CCEH leveraged \$250,000 as a 0%, deferred payment, forgivable loan from New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority; \$431,000 in State Business Tax Credits; and \$143,000 in private donations to purchase the property and construct the shelter. CCEH operated the shelter this past winter (2017-18) at St. Peter’s Church, and operations will move to the new shelter next winter. Funding for shelter operations has been provided by the City of Concord, Merrimack County, Granite United Way, Lincoln Financial Foundation, and private donations.
- CCEH launched “Housing First Concord,” which provides low-barrier access to permanent supportive housing to 14 chronically homeless individuals. Clients either receive federal rental assistance to rent a private apartment, or are housed in public housing through Concord Housing + Redevelopment. All clients receive on-going caseworker support. CCEH leveraged private grant funding through Lincoln Financial Foundation for the start-up phase, and now is leveraging over \$90,000 in federal rental assistance and \$40,000 in State funding for caseworker support annually.
- The Salvation Army McKenna House shelter for individuals built an addition to their building and expanded from 26 beds to 42 beds.
- “Family Promise of Greater Concord” was launched, providing shelter opportunities for up to 3 families at a time. Participating faith congregations provide shelter, meals, and hospitality at their house of worship on a rotating basis, and professional staff utilize a day center to provide case-management and wrap-around supports to help stabilize the families as they move towards permanent housing.
- The Crisis Center of Central New Hampshire received a \$500,000 “extreme renovation” through Building on Hope, and increased its capacity from 13 to 24 beds. The Crisis Center serves survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Increase Knowledge about Homelessness in Concord

The Steering Committee members, the homeless service providers, and the greater community have received education on the Housing First model, an evidence-based model recommended by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness for ending chronic homelessness. “Housing First” is a nationwide model for ending homelessness that is centered on the belief that everyone can achieve stability in permanent housing directly from homelessness, and that stable housing is the foundation for achieving other health or social services goals. People who are chronically homeless often make extensive use of public services, such as shelters, hospitals, emergency rooms, jails and prisons, all at great cost to the community. Permanent supportive housing leads to decreased use of all these public services, which saves money for the community. At the same time, it increases the health and wellbeing of those served.

Increase Public and Private Funding Available for Plan Strategies.

As noted above, significant federal, state and municipal funding has been leveraged to address homelessness in Concord. Additionally, the NH Charitable Foundation, Granite United Way, and Lincoln Financial Foundation have contributed grant funding to enable CCEH to pursue the goals of the Plan.

Establish Executive Level Steering Committee to Advise Plan Implementation

The Steering Committee was appointed by City Council in October 2014, and has been meeting every two months since that time, and over the past six months, the Steering Committee has been meeting monthly.

Refreshing the Priorities under the Goals of the Plan

Consistent with best practices, the City of Concord Plan to End Homelessness Steering Committee, in partnership with CCEH, embarked on a “refreshing” of the priorities under each of the Plan’s Goals. To that end, two group meetings were facilitated by Amy Lockwood of Full Circle Consulting.

The Plan was reviewed against both accomplishments and its continued relevancy within the current operating environment. The group concluded that while the Plan continues to meet the needs of the community, certain areas within the above noted Plan goals should continue to be prioritized as more completely outlined in the attached matrix, and summarized below:

- I. Increase access to healthy, safe environments for all homeless and precariously housed members of the Concord Community
Priority:
 - *Housing First opportunities are expanded, the Concord Winter Shelter for individuals is operated successfully, and the unmet needs of homeless families in winter are assessed and addressed.*

- II. Increase the number of quality, permanent, affordable rental units for very low income individuals and families.
Priority:
 - *Assess and support solutions that provide a range of housing options for people experiencing homelessness.*

- III. Increase knowledge about homelessness in Concord, costs to the community, services available and future needs.
Priority:
 - *The City of Concord, including its administration, elected officials and the broader community are appropriately informed on matters pertaining to homelessness, including the costs and benefits of “Housing First.”*
 - *Education efforts are increased in order to facilitate knowledge-based advocacy.*

- IV. Increase public and private funding available for plan strategies.
Priority:
 - *Funding in support of housing people who are chronically homeless is increased.*

- V. Ensure broad representation and engagement of stakeholders in implementation of the Plan to End Homelessness.
Priority:
 - *Clear governance structure exists for the City of Concord Plan to End Homelessness Steering Committee.*