

Paths Toward Housing Solutions

(This chart is not a “strategic plan,” but rather a practical approach to the most viable paths to house people experiencing homelessness.)

(Updated 2/25/23)

Housing Solution	Number of Individuals Housed								
	2021 (actual)	2022 Goal/ (actual)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total 2022- 2028
1. Build Relationships with Existing Apartment Landlords	(4)	4 (11)	4 (6)	4	4	4	4	4	28
2. Set Aside Units in Future Housing Developments			5	5	4	4	4	4	26
3. Purchase Ready-to Rent Small Multi-Unit Homes	(3)	(1)	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
4. Renovate Properties into Multi-Unit Homes			8		6		7		21
5. Creative Solutions, Including Programs with Other Agencies	(13)	6 (11)	6 (4)	6	6	6	6	6	42
6. 24/7 Supervised Housing				15					15
7. Cottage Homes				3		3			6
Total from all Housing Paths	(20)	10 (23)	26 (10)	36	23	20	24	17	Grand Total= 156

Read further for a description of each Path, its opportunities and barriers, and its status.

Paths Toward Housing Solutions

We at the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) are committed to **ending** chronic homelessness* in Concord. To achieve this goal, we are working with numerous partner organizations and vigorously pursuing multiple “Paths Toward Housing Solutions” to make more housing units available.

CCEH estimates that there are 150-175 chronically homeless individuals in the greater Concord area. They may be living in a shelter, in their car, or in an encampment, and some have been homeless for many years. CCEH is in contact with the majority of these individuals through our Resource Center and Emergency Winter Shelter. We are engaged in outreach, and collaborating with other service providers to connect with those who do not use our services, so we can turn our estimate into an accurate, dynamic “prioritization/by name list” of everyone who is chronically homeless in Concord. From there, we can track Concord’s progress to ZERO chronically homeless individuals!

But finding available, affordable housing options is extremely challenging. What follows is a chart of seven different “Paths” that CCEH is working on, along with the number of people we believe could be housed using each Path over the next seven years. Some of the Paths are more clearly defined than others, and CCEH is still learning about the opportunities and barriers for each path. This chart is not a strategic plan, but rather a practical approach to the most viable paths to house people experiencing homelessness.

Some points to note:

- An “affordable” one-bedroom apartment costs about \$1,000 to rent. Most of the individuals we serve are disabled and surviving on disability income of about \$800 per month.
- As more affordable units are made available, chronically homeless individuals will usually need an on-going rental assistance voucher as well. With a voucher, the individual pays 30% of their income towards rent, and the voucher covers the rest.
- Until very recently, the waitlists for vouchers were 5-8 years long, and it was rare for any of our Resource Center clients to have one. The American Rescue Plan and other Covid related funding brought a wave of vouchers, and numerous Resource Center clients were issued one. As of November 1, 2022, 29 individuals working with CCEH are still struggling to find a place to use their vouchers. Some vouchers have a time limit and will be lost if no apartment is found.
- In each of the Paths, CCEH is committed to providing on-going case management to the client to help them follow the terms of the lease, connect with any services they need, and stay stably housed.
- The total financial investment needed to end homelessness will depend on the combination of housing solutions that are ultimately implemented. Some housing solutions require little-to-no upfront costs, especially if the person has their own rental voucher. Solutions involving the new construction of apartments can be as high as \$300,000 per unit. Providing on-going case management will require on-going funding. Every available source of funds will need to be tapped to reach the goal, including federal, state, and local government funding, grants, fundraising events, and donations from generous individuals.

We invite you to join us in making these Paths Toward Housing Solutions a reality, and we welcome any input or questions you may have.

**CCEH is focused on chronically homeless individuals, (homeless for more than one year and have a disability). Only about 20% of all people who experience homelessness are chronically homeless, but getting these people housed makes the entire homeless services system work more efficiently and be better able to serve those who fall into homelessness due to an immediate crisis, such as loss of a job or a medical issue.*

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1. Build Relationships with Existing Landlords

Overview:

In this tight rental market (<1% vacancy when 5% is “healthy”) landlords have their pick of tenants. The rental applications from individuals who are homeless stay at the bottom of the pile, because they don’t have a recent landlord reference and may also have an eviction or criminal record.

CCEH is working to establish collaborative relationships with property management companies and landlords so that they will give these folks a try when one of their apartments becomes available.

The Benefits/Upside

- It does not require the time and money that developing new housing requires, so it could be much faster and cheaper than other Paths.

The Obstacles/Downside:

- This Path only works if the person has their own rental voucher, so they can afford the rent
- Often, the rent on an available unit is higher than the maximum rent the rental voucher allows
- Some landlords refuse to accept any tenants with rental vouchers.
- The stigma of homelessness makes some landlords very reluctant to be involved
- This Path does not add any much-needed *new* apartments to Concord’s housing inventory

CCEH and other organizations have created landlord incentive programs to encourage landlords to work with local agency partners and rent units to individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.

Landlord incentives typically include some or all the following:

- A one-time “sign-on” bonus of \$1,000-\$2500 per unit.
- Guaranteed rent through the individual’s rental voucher.
- Vacancy loss coverage to hold a unit while the voucher processing is underway.
- A damage mitigation payment, up to \$2,000 per unit, for damages not covered by the security deposit.
- On-going case management to help the tenant understand and follow the rules of the lease, connect with any other services they need, and stay stably housed.

Status and Next Step

In 2022, CCEH was able to house 11 individuals with this Path and 6 people in January and February 2023. This success is in part because of the “wave” of vouchers that were made available under the American Rescue Plan and other programs. Currently, CCEH is aware of 30 individuals with vouchers, and we are working with them to find an apartment.

2. Set Aside Units in Future Housing Developments

Overview:

In this Path, a housing developer promises to have *some* of the apartments in a proposed apartment building “set aside” or prioritized for people experiencing homelessness. CCEH is reaching out to affordable housing developers in our area to see if they will partner with CCEH to do this, with CCEH providing the on-going case management services to help the tenants stay stably housed. Having an organization like CCEH committed to provide these services increases the developer’s score in the competitive application process for funding.

The Benefits/Upside

- We are amid a housing crisis. The state (and the country) never fully recovered from the real estate crash of 2008. There was a tremendous scaling back of housing production, and we are truly feeling the effects of that, as well as many other factors, now. This Path taps into new housing development that will ease that crisis and focuses part of it directly on ending homelessness.
- When an experienced, affordable housing developer partners with CCEH in this way, the impact on CCEH’s time and money is limited to providing the case management support, which keeps us free to seek out more partnerships!

The Obstacles/Downside:

- It can be difficult for developers to braid all the subsidized financing together to make this work. The units set aside for people who are homeless need to either have a “built-in” rental voucher (a “project-based” voucher) or, have other development subsidies that make it possible for the rents on the set-aside units to be only about \$300 so it is affordable without a rental voucher.
- The process is long and expensive. First, the developer must find available land, then it can take one or more years to get all the necessary approvals and funding, and more time to actually build the project.
- Construction costs have skyrocketed, and the availability of materials has become unpredictable since the pandemic.

Status and Next Steps

CCEH has partnered with Dakota Partners Inc., who is developing a 198-unit apartment complex in south Concord over two phases. In each phase, five one-bedroom units will have project-based vouchers and will be prioritized for individuals coming from homelessness. The first phase should be ready for move-in January 2024, and the second phase in the summer of 2024.

In 2021 and thus far in 2022, CCEH attempted to partner with additional developers to create affordable housing with a set-aside for our clients on an existing building in Concord. In that case, the acquisition and renovation costs, and the availability of funding and project-based rental vouchers made the project not feasible.

In 2021 and early 2022 CCEH advocated for a bill that will require the State to inventory and publicly post its underutilized property that could be made available for housing development. The bill did not pass.

In September 2022, CCEH connected with New England Family Housing, which plans to create 600 housing units at the Concord Monitor property on the Merrimack River. CCEH outlined the benefits of setting aside units for individuals exiting homelessness, and we agreed to reconvene when the project was further along.

3. Purchase Ready-to-Rent, Small Multi-Unit Homes

Overview:

The reluctance of many landlords to rent to individuals with a history of homelessness has led CCEH to look for small, multi-unit homes we can purchase and then rent to our clients. One-bedroom and studio units are often ideal for individuals who are chronically homeless. It allows privacy, autonomy, and a manageable-sized space to maintain. If the building is in good shape, and the purchase price is reasonable, CCEH can make a down-payment of approximately \$100,000 and use a private mortgage for the remainder. So long as the tenant has their own tenant-based rental voucher, the rents can cover the operating costs and the mortgage, yet it is still affordable to the tenant.

In this market, finding such a property is challenging, and often the units are not vacant. CCEH is committed to not displacing existing tenants with this Path, so it could mean waiting for the “natural turnover” of tenants before a person coming from homelessness can move in. In 2021, CCEH was able to purchase a triplex using this Path, and two of the three units were vacant, allowing our clients to move in right away!

The Benefits/Upside:

- This is a relatively quick and cost-effective Path to making housing available to our clients.
- It makes existing housing stock available to people experiencing homelessness (though it does not add “new” housing).

The Obstacles/Downside

- The real estate market is extremely tight right now. To be competitive, CCEH must act very fast and forego detailed inspections on the property.
- CCEH needs approximately \$100,000 as a cash down-payment, and we must either have a credit line available or work with a seller who supports our mission and is willing to wait while CCEH secures a mortgage.
- This Path only works when our clients have their own tenant-based rental voucher.
- If units are already occupied, there is no way to know when “natural turn-over” will occur and one of our clients can move in.

Status and Next Steps

CCEH purchased a triplex in October 2021; two vacant units provided homes for two households experiencing homelessness. In September 2022, the third unit became available and is now providing a home to an individual who was experiencing homelessness.

- Our Resource Center staff are focused on tracking which clients have a tenant-based rental voucher and understanding their specific housing needs and barriers.
- In May 2022, CCEH submitted a Congressional Discretionary Spending grant request to Senator Shaheen’s office for \$1,000,000. In part, the grant request is for the mortgage down payment money for multi-unit homes. In January CCEH received the award decision in January 2023 and anticipates, receiving funds in the summer of 2023. At that time, CCEH hopes to begin searching for and acquiring properties.
- In September, CCEH concluded that we do not have enough working capital to purchase more multi-family properties at this time. Although several properties that have come on the market appear to fit CCEH’s parameters, we have passed on evaluating the properties.

4. Renovate Properties into Multi-Unit Homes

Overview:

Government funding is available on a competitive basis to create new permanent supportive housing, and this includes converting non-residential buildings into apartments, or increasing the number of apartments in an existing apartment building. This funding can be coupled with Project Based Section 8 rental assistance, which is the “golden ticket” for ending homelessness. It allows the rents to cover all the operating costs of the apartment yet remain affordable to a tenant whose only income may be disability payments.

This was the Path CCEH used to create our Green Street Apartments, which have four one-bedroom units, all with Project-Based Rental Assistance, and all prioritized for people coming from homelessness. Green Street Apartments were completed in December 2020.

Benefits/Upside:

- New, affordable units are added to Concord’s housing stock.
- New Section 8 rental vouchers are added to Concord’s inventory.
- The new units are prioritized specifically for people experiencing homelessness.

Challenges/Downside:

- The funding is extremely competitive.
- The process is long and takes a great deal of staff time.
- The overall cost per unit can be very high (\$280,000- 300,000) because of the rigorous subsidy requirements (but these costs are generally covered by the subsidized financing).
- Finding and securing an appropriate site is challenging.

Status and Next Steps

In February 2022, CCEH purchased a 4-unit property and plans to convert it into 8 one-bedroom apartments. The apartments will be managed by Concord Housing + Redevelopment.

Below is a timeline for this project. If all goes well, the apartments will be ready for move-in by summer 2023.

- April 2022 received all requested variances from the Zoning Board of Approval; applications were submitted to NH Housing Finance Authority and Community Development Finance Authority for funding and Project-Based Section 8.
- June 2022, CCEH received Planning Board approval for the project.
- June 2022, CCEH learned that all funds from New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority had been allocated for this funding cycle.
- In early November 2022, when a new funding round became available, CCEH resubmitted our application for the proposed building with one-bedroom apartments.
- On 1/5/23 CCEH received notification that we received a Conditional Funding Reservation for our applications for funding. Construction is anticipated to start 3/15/23.

In early 2022, CCEH began exploring the feasibility of another project that is similar to the previously discussed 8 apartment project. This property has an 1896 home with an attached carriage house. CCEH would convert the living space to 8 one-bedroom apartments. CCEH is now pursuing the funding needed for the project. In October 2022, CCEH submitted a letter of interest for a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant. In November we applied to NH Housing Finance Authority for funding and Project Based Section 8 rental vouchers. In January 2023, CCEH received a Conditional funding reservation for the project. In March 2023, CCEH will apply for state tax credits as an additional source of needed funds.

5. Individualized Creative Solutions, Including Programs with Other Agencies

Overview:

CCEH's Resource Center staff have always worked with clients to help them apply for housing programs offered by other agencies, but the unfortunate truth is that there are not enough housing programs or rental subsidies to help everyone who qualifies. Our staff have also always worked with clients to see if there is someone within their personal network of support who could provide the boost, they need to find a safe, stable housing situation. For example, there may be a relative in another part of the state or country who would take them in, if they could afford transportation to get there. Or, if they could get their car fixed, there is someone outside of town they could share an apartment with. Our case managers collaborate with numerous other local and regional agencies to access their programs, and problem-solve with our clients to find these individualized, creative solutions.

Due to the "drop-in" nature of our Resource Center, it has been challenging to accurately track how many people are successfully housed through other agencies or other creative solutions. CCEH has initiated focused "case conferencing" on specific clients to keep them moving forward towards a housing solution. We are also sharpening our data-collection system, so we can make sure that clients who get housed through this Path are accurately included, so we can track our progress towards reducing the number of people on the "prioritization/By Name List" to zero!

Benefits/Upside:

- This approach is low-cost to CCEH (case manager staff time is the primary cost).
- This approach acknowledges that there are not enough subsidy resources available, and it is empowering to a client when they can resolve their homelessness through a creative solution.

Obstacles/Downside:

- It is not a "clear-cut" Path, so clients and case managers need to be flexible problem-solvers.

Status and Next Steps

The State Bureau of Housing Supports is currently providing training to help homeless service agencies collaborate more effectively within their local region and use "case conferencing" to find housing solutions for the people they serve. CCEH is working with our local Belknap-Merrimack Community Action Program and many other local agencies on this effort. The State has also shifted to a new database for tracking the people who are experiencing homelessness in each locality, and prioritizing people for the housing programs and subsidies that are available.

CCEH staff continues to invest considerable time entering client information into the database. It is through these efforts that staff have been able to more clearly identify and focus on housing individuals with rental assistance vouchers and to utilize creative methods to find housing. In 2023, CCEH successfully housed 11 people through the path. (Individualized Creative Solutions, Including Programs with Other Agencies). As of 1/25/23, four people have been housed this year through this path.

6. Structured, “24/7” Supervised Housing

Overview:

Most people coming from long-term homelessness can be successful moving into their own apartment, so long as they have supportive services to address any underlying issues (this is the “Housing First model”). However, some people will require a more structured environment to stay successfully housed. This includes things like a “recovery house” with live-in peer support, or an apartment building with on-site case management, or a nighttime security guard to prevent the tenant from allowing numerous other people to stay with them in the apartment.

Benefits/Upside:

1. For people who need this level of structured support, this is a life-saving resource.

Obstacles/Downside:

2. This type of housing can be extremely expensive to operate year after year, and there are not any readily available sources for operating subsidies.
3. Some models, such as a “recovery house,” require training and expertise to manage properly (and CCEH currently lacks this expertise.)

Status and Next Steps

CCEH continues to look for properties that could serve as a Recovery House, and to reach out to potential partners who could operate such a house. Although CCEH has not identified a partner, we more clearly understand and will continue to pursue the limited opportunities for partnerships.

7. Cottage Homes

Overview:

CCEH is working to find lower-cost methods of creating new housing units, and prefabricated homes can meet this objective. This Path envisions a “pocket community” of 6-15 small, prefabricated cottage homes on a site, with some units rented at market rates, and the remainder set aside for people experiencing homelessness, utilizing either Project-Based or tenant-based rental assistance. We envision high quality, energy efficient homes that are 500 square feet or even smaller. They would be prefabricated in a factory with an estimated cost per unit of \$100,000- \$125,000, excluding land and infrastructure costs. The model floorplan would be made available to the general public, to encourage people to add an accessory dwelling unit to their property, which further eases the housing crisis.

Benefits/Upside:

- Lower per-unit cost for new housing units.
- This Path integrates individuals coming from homelessness into a mixed-income “pocket community.”
- Potential for community members to use the model plan for an accessory dwelling unit, which adds new units to Concord’s overall housing stock.

Obstacles/Downside:

- Finding available land for a pocket community is challenging.

Status and Next Steps

In 2021, CCEH convened a small Cottage Home Committee of professionals. They drafted a model home floorplan and searched throughout New England for cost estimates from prefabrication manufacturers. In July 2022, CCEH received a favorable quote from New England Homebuilders and subsequently toured their manufacturing facility in Claremont, NH.

In July 2022, CCEH identified a parcel that we believe could support 15 cottage homes, and in September 2022, Wilcox and Barton created a draft site plan *pro bono*. After considerable dialogue, in October, CCEH was advised that the property owner was not interested in selling to CCEH.

CCEH continues to look for partners and a site to implement the cottage home model.