2016 Progress Report on Ending Homelessness

More than Numbers

STRATEGIES TO END HOMELESSNESS
prevent. assist. solve.
**Table of Contents**

4  Proud to be a United Funding Agency  
5  Who is Homeless?  
7  Prevent. Assist. Solve.  
8  Prevent  
12  Assist  
13  Solve  
14  Our Partners  
15  Financial Highlights
Dear Friends

You make a difference every day in the lives of the homeless – a homeless youth who has been kicked out when turning 18-years-old, a homeless mother with children, or a homeless veteran. You do so with your tax dollars, with your time, with your contributions to one of our partner agencies, or simply by understanding how working to end homelessness fits into the bigger picture of a revitalized community.

Our community is in the midst of an exciting renaissance. Revitalized mixed-use neighborhoods, new office buildings, condominiums, and transportation systems have an even greater impact on economic development and on attracting talent when a community’s efforts to prevent, assist, and solve homelessness are visible and measurable.

If you are unfamiliar with our organization, you are not alone. We’ve been working behind the scenes since 2007. Our partner organizations – over 30 nonprofits whose names you may know – are the real heroes. Our role is to allocate federal, state, county, and city funding to our partners; direct homeless people, or those close to becoming homeless, to our partners through our Central Access Point (CAP) hotline; monitor the success of this coordinated effort to achieve better community-wide outcomes, learn from best practices and provide a stable home for individuals and families who have fallen on the hardest of times.

In December 2015, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conferred upon us a very prestigious designation. Strategies to End Homelessness has been named a Unified Funding Agency (UFA). This is a recognition of the strength of our community’s homeless services system. Our system is both high-performing and exceptionally effective in meeting the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. While there are over 410 separate federally funded homeless services systems in communities across the United States, we are one of only five in the nation to be chosen by HUD to receive this top designation.

Being a UFA allows Strategies to End Homelessness to provide our 30 partner agencies with even greater resources for the people who most need our help. Becoming a UFA was not easy. Over the years, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation, and Hatton Foundation made strategic investments in our internal capacity that allowed us to rise to meet HUD’s UFA requirements. We also credit the incredible work of our partner agencies, the support of the community, the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County and other funders for making this achievement possible. We are honored to have received this designation. Ending homelessness is a community-wide effort. Thank you for continuing to invest in helping our homeless neighbors.

Sincerely,

Ron Cramer
Board Chair

Kevin Finn
President & CEO
kfinn@end-homelessness.org
Strategies to End Homelessness administers one of only five homeless services systems in the country to be designated a Unified Funding Agency by HUD. Beginning in July 2016, disbursement of all funding from HUD to our homeless services system ran through Strategies to End Homelessness. With one year as a UFA now under our belt, we can already see early benefits to our community.

Being a UFA provides our partner agencies with greater flexibility, making it easier for resources to be redirected toward areas of greatest need. For example, if we were unfortunate to have an increase in homelessness among youth, families, people with HIV, or victims of Domestic Violence, our community would have the ability to shift resources toward partner agencies that service those specific homeless sub-populations in a way most communities cannot.

Prior to Strategies to End Homelessness becoming a UFA, funding was contracted directly between HUD and almost 50 different programs in Hamilton County. Under that structure, programs with underspent funds returned that money to HUD, and there was no systematic way to redirect such underspent funds to underserved homeless people in another program. However, in our first year as a UFA, we identified hundreds of thousands of potentially underspent funds and have been working to redirect those funds to reach underserved groups before the funding year ends, ensuring maximum impact from such HUD funds in our community. Going forward, we have put processes in place to identify potentially underspent funds earlier in the year to build continuous improvement and maximize every dollar allocated to our system.
Who is Homeless?

More than numbers
Last year in Hamilton County, Ohio, a total of 7,168 people resided in an emergency shelter or were found to be sleeping in places not meant for human habitation, such as on the streets, under a bridge or in a car. This is an increase of 95 people or 1.3% from 2015, and of 3% over the last five years.

In 2016, the number of people sleeping on the streets and other places not meant for human habitation decreased by 2% (1,175 in 2015; 1,148 in 2016), while the number of people residing in emergency shelters increased by 1% (6,396 in 2015; 6,456 in 2016). Since the clear majority of homeless people (90%) resided in an emergency shelter during the year, the shelter increase far outweighed the decline in people on the streets. Of those, 16% of homeless people spent part of the year on the streets, and 6% resided both in emergency shelter and in places not meant for human habitation during the year; they are only included in this count once.

The young and the old
In 2016, the data indicates that homelessness is a problem disproportionately impacting the young and those over the age of 55. On one end, homelessness continues to be a problem for young people, with 25% of homeless people under the age of 18, 37% under the age of 25, and 55% under the age of 35. Equally troubling is what we can see in the data on the other end of the age spectrum. In 2016, our community saw a 20% increase in the number of homeless people who were over the age of 55 (840 in 2015; 1,005 in 2016).

Fewer children in shelter, more people in Shelter Diversion
In 2016, the number of children who resided in an emergency shelter declined by 7% (1,863 in 2015; 1,733 in 2016). One explanation is that this decrease is the result of increased funding for and capacity in Shelter Diversion programs, which primarily serve families that are relying on others for a place to stay, are running out of such options, and therefore would be entering shelter soon. In 2016, our Shelter Diversion partner agencies served 18% more families (345 in 2015; 408 in 2016) and 16% more people (1,036 in 2015; 1,202 in 2016), including 14% more children (635 in 2015; 725 in 2016). More information regarding the expansion in Shelter Diversion capacity is available on page 8.
**Increased Rapid Re-Housing**

The Rapid Re-Housing model is a nationally recognized best-practice in assisting homeless households back into housing. Rapid Re-Housing is targeted toward households who need medium-term assistance, paired with intensive case management services, to exit homelessness. In 2016, Rapid Re-Housing programs served 16% more people than in 2015 (2,136 in 2015 and 2,472 in 2016).

**Definitions matter**

The definition of homelessness used makes a difference when looking at data. For example, HUD includes people residing in transitional housing programs in its counts of homeless people, while this report does not. Therefore, if we included transitional housing numbers, our 2016 count of homeless people would increase from 7,168 people to 7,570, but it would also make it appear as if homelessness had declined (from 7,858 in 2015; 7,570 in 2016).

However, this “decrease” is mainly due to reductions in transitional housing program capacity, a shift of resources from transitional housing (which HUD counts as homeless) to Rapid Re-Housing programs (in which residents are not considered homeless as they are on a lease in their own apartment). Similarly, while you and I may consider people who are living “doubled-up” or relying on others for a place to stay to be homeless, such households are very difficult to locate and serve, and therefore to count.

For such reasons, both for consistency and accuracy of data, this report counts only those people who were literally homeless (sleeping in places not meant for human habitation or in an emergency shelter) during 2016 as homeless. Please note that people who were living in doubled-up situations and were provided specifically with Shelter Diversion services, which are preventative in nature, are included in Shelter Diversion numbers, but they are not counted as homeless.

**People sleeping in places not meant for human habitation**

Those who sleep in places not meant for human habitation are older, male and more likely to be white than in the overall homeless population.

- **Age:** in 2016, 12% of people sleeping in emergency shelters were over the age of 55, while 26% of people on the streets were age 55 or older.
- **Gender:** emergency shelter residents were 64% male and 35% female, while people on the streets were 73% male and 25% female.
- **Race:** 64% of emergency shelter residents were Black or African American and 31% were White, while people sleeping outdoors and on the street were 45% Black or African American and 47% White.
Our goal is to prevent as many people as possible from becoming homeless, provide high-quality assistance to those who are homeless, and provide solutions to homelessness through housing. Strategies to End Homelessness coordinates the efforts of more than 30 partner agencies throughout Greater Cincinnati, works to better understand the collective data, and to fill gaps in service.
Impact of Shelter Diversion funding from the City of Cincinnati

While we taxpayers provide significant funding for homeless services, primarily through our federal and state governments, people are often surprised to learn how such dollars can and cannot be used. Of the $20 million that comes into Cincinnati and Hamilton County from HUD and the State of Ohio, only about $500,000 goes toward homelessness prevention efforts, even though homelessness prevention is a quarter of the cost of helping someone after they are homeless.

The balance of this funding – about $19 million per year – goes toward helping people who are already in a shelter or on the streets get back into housing. This is a very important and significant need, however, with our tax dollars allocated in this way, it is difficult to prevent people, many of them children, from experiencing homelessness.

At Strategies to End Homelessness, we believe that a key to reducing homelessness is to prevent as many people as possible from ever becoming homeless. With federal and state governments providing limited funding for prevention, we’ve had to look elsewhere for resources to build robust homelessness prevention services.

So where does money for our Shelter Diversion programs come from? In late 2015, the City of Cincinnati began funding Shelter Diversion services through the Human Services funds, and the United Way of Greater Cincinnati has also generously provided essential support for prevention services.
While Shelter Diversion services, in their current form, have only been around since 2012, such services have quickly become a vital part of the local homeless services system.

On average, Shelter Diversion programs can prevent a person from becoming homeless for an investment of $1,250. However, as soon as a person becomes homeless and enters a shelter, the cost increases to $1,700. Many homeless people require much more than an emergency shelter stay to get back on their feet, resulting in the average cost of serving a person in the homeless services system being $4,400. It is easy to see why Shelter Diversion is so important – four times as many people can be assisted with the same investment.

Thanks to the City of Cincinnati’s investment of taxpayer dollars into Shelter Diversion services, there has been a significant increase in the number of people receiving these services from late 2015 into 2017. Two-thirds of the people receiving services are children, who do not have to experience homelessness as a result. In addition, Shelter Diversion’s outcomes, in terms of rates of future homelessness, are among the best of any program type in the homeless services system, and other interventions are more expensive.

### Number of people served in Shelter Diversion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recidivism (rate of return to homelessness) for the two-year span between 2014-2016:

- **Shelter Diversion**: 19%
- **Rapid Re-Housing**: 18%
- **Emergency Shelter only**: 23%
Coordinated Entry

Since 2008, Cincinnati’s homeless services system has prioritized people at-risk or imminently experiencing homelessness for placement into prevention programs or emergency shelters through our Central Access Point (CAP) helpline, operated by Strategies to End Homelessness. The CAP Line is a single phone number (513.381.SAFE) anyone experiencing homelessness or who is at risk of homelessness can call to receive information about services and check for space in shelters and other homeless programs. CAP prioritizes people for placement into shelters and prevention programs based on the immediacy of their need.

In 2016, the local homeless services system took a step forward in coordinating the delivery of services, and began prioritizing those who are already experiencing homelessness for placement into available supportive housing programs, a process known as Coordinated Entry. When a person or household enters a shelter, or is encountered by a street outreach worker, a needs assessment is completed that identifies their strengths and potential barriers to stability in housing.

Such prioritization is critical as housing resources are limited, and the majority of people who become homeless are able to self-resolve their homelessness with a little support and guidance from professional staff. However, others will need assistance as they return to housing. For those who are unlikely to exit on their own, our Coordinated Entry Specialists use the results of this needs assessment to match people to the most appropriate housing to meet their needs as space becomes available. This process ensures that people with the most severe needs and those who have been homeless the longest are offered housing first.

2016 was the first year for our Coordinated Entry process in Hamilton County, yet the process has made more than 1,000 housing matches, resulting in hundreds of families and chronically homeless individuals being housed. This system is not, however, without its challenges. At any given time, there are over 100 households in the community who have been identified as the most vulnerable in our system (and offered space in a housing program which will provide them with a rental subsidy) yet they are still homeless because they cannot find a landlord who will rent a unit to them. While Coordinated Entry does prioritize households for housing across the homeless services system, it does not create more affordable housing capacity for people in need, which is in very short supply.
Addressing Homelessness as a Regional Issue – Coordinated Entry in Northern Kentucky

Homelessness is truly a regional issue, and like Hamilton County, Ohio, homelessness is also a pressing issue in Northern Kentucky. A January 2016 point-in-time count of homeless people identified 342 homeless individuals in Kenton, Campbell, and Boone Counties. This number only includes those who could be reached and identified on the single day of the count. But from this number we are able to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness in these counties is about 2,400 per year.

Due to restrictions on resources, with federal, state and local government funding not able to extend across the Ohio River, the Northern Kentucky and Hamilton County homeless services systems have historically operated as if they were hundreds of miles apart. Meanwhile, a homeless person can walk across the river in either direction in about 10 minutes in an attempt to find the resources they need. In Hamilton County each year 3-5% of the homeless population is made up of people whose last residence was in Kentucky.

To address the issue of homelessness in a more regional way, in 2016 Strategies to End Homelessness worked with valuable new partners in Northern Kentucky, including Brighton Center, the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky, Transitions, and Welcome House to develop a Northern Kentucky Coordinated Entry system. Like the system started in Hamilton County, this system ensures that the most vulnerable, longest term homeless people in Northern Kentucky receive housing first.

Through this collaboration, Northern Kentucky became one of the first regions in the Commonwealth of Kentucky to implement a Coordinated Entry system. As a result, the Kentucky Housing Corporation, which coordinates homeless services across the Commonwealth, named Kenton, Campbell, and Boone Counties as a pilot area for the Kentucky Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) in developing a Coordinated Entry system for the Commonwealth. In short, these counties now serve as a model for 115 other counties in Kentucky.

First housing, then employment brings self-sufficiency for mother

Ms. Lewis and her four children (aged infant to 13) rented a house sharing expenses with a cousin. After a year and a half, her cousin decided to move out leaving her with the entire expense, which she could not afford. She moved in with her grandmother and after two weeks living in her subsidized two-bedroom apartment, Ms. Lewis reached out for help. Not being on the lease and living there was putting her grandmother at risk of being evicted. Staying was not an option, but she had no income.

Ms. Lewis was then referred to Shelter Diversion after calling the Central Access Point hotline. Once she was referred, and accepted into the Shelter Diversion Program, Ms. Lewis worked with the Housing Specialist and Case Manager to secure an apartment. The team was also able to assist with furniture and other needed supplies.

After getting settled, she attended the Cincinnati Cooks program through the Freestore Foodbank, one of our partner agencies. She completed the program and now works part-time there and as a full-time shift supervisor at a fast food restaurant. She is very excited about her new job and is grateful for all the support to help her achieve independence and achieve her goals.
Homeless to Homes Shelter Collaborative

The Homeless to Homes Plan, adopted by Cincinnati City Council and the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners and implemented by Strategies to End Homelessness, articulates a shared vision and course toward ending homelessness for single individuals. A cornerstone of the Homeless to Homes Plan was to dramatically improve the local emergency shelter system. The result is five new service-enriched facilities that provide on-site medical, mental health, and daytime services targeted toward assisting residents out of homelessness and back into housing, and reducing the return to homelessness.

The Homeless to Homes Shelter Collaborative worked to develop the new City Gospel Mission, Lighthouse Youth and Family Services’ Sheakley Center for Youth, Talbert House Parkway Center and Shelterhouse’s two new facilities: the Esther Marie Hatton Center for Women and the David and Rebecca Barron Center for Men.

The last of these facilities opened in October 2015, and all are producing positive outcomes. Despite serving 3,484 people in 2016, an increase of 4% from 2015, the percentage of residents exiting to permanent housing has increased from 53% to 75%, and the rate of return to homelessness (recidivism) for residents has declined from 31% to 25%.

Solutions for Family Homelessness Plan

Beginning in 2014 and carrying into 2015, Strategies to End Homelessness, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Family Housing Partnership (Bethany House Services, Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati, The Salvation Army, and YWCA of Greater Cincinnati) led a comprehensive community process to finalize a systemic plan to address issues affecting homeless and at-risk families. The result is the Solutions for Family Homelessness plan, which identifies strategies through which our community can proactively address the needs of families in each of four key focus areas – prevention, capacity building, policy change, and housing.

In July 2016, the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation awarded a $1 million grant to Strategies to End Homelessness to provide critical funding to implement the plan. This grant will be awarded over a five-year period, and will support the capacity needed to improve the delivery of services using a cross-system case management model.
Collaboration with the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA)

Coordinated Exit to Self-Sufficiency

Through Coordinated Entry, homeless households that are most vulnerable to chronic homelessness are placed into housing programs that can meet their needs with a combination of intensive services and a rental subsidy. Once these households have been successfully re-housed and are stable in their own homes an exit plan is needed to ensure housing stability and allow the housing program to help another household that is still homeless.

To this end, Strategies to End Homelessness has developed a partnership with the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), which has implemented a preference system for providing public housing for households that have been homeless. Households graduate from supportive housing for the homeless into a CMHA housing program, greatly increasing access to public housing resources for homeless households and allowing supportive housing programs to serve more people with the same level of resources. Strategies to End Homelessness works with its partner agencies to identify appropriate households and prioritizes them to best meet their needs.

In its first 18 months, this partnership has resulted in the number of homeless households referred to CMHA increasing from 25 per year to 200, an increase of 800%. Because of STEH’s leadership and expertise in stewarding such collaborations, CMHA has continued to increase the number of vouchers available to STEH, which is hoping referral numbers will go as high as 500 households in 2017.

More than Numbers

Coordinated Entry tackles chronic homelessness

Marvin was no stranger to living on the streets. He had been homeless on 19 separate occasions, which was documented in the community’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) over the course of 50 months without any opportunities for him to secure housing.

Though suffering from severe mental health, drug and alcohol issues, the system did not give up on him. After paired with a housing program through Coordinated Entry, Marvin finally got an apartment. Once in stable housing, he sought treatment for his drug addiction, completed rehab, and is clean and sober. He later completed his Social Security application and now receives benefits and income.

He is a model tenant and a success story for Coordinated Entry, Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Services, and permanent supportive housing.
Our Partners

Funding Partners
Butler Foundation
CareSource Foundation
Christ Church Cathedral
The Greater Cincinnati Foundation
The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation
Hatton Foundation
Interact for Health
Mercy Health
Ohio National Foundation
The P&G Fund of The Greater Cincinnati Foundation
Scripps Howard Foundation
Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee
Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trusts, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
United Way of Greater Cincinnati

Coordinating Partners
Cincinnati Health Network
Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority
Cincinnati Public Schools – Project Connect
Cincinnati Veterans Administration
City of Cincinnati
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO)
Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services
Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition
Hamilton County
Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board
Human Rights Campaign
Northern Kentucky University
Our Daily Bread
Pro Bono Partnership of Greater Cincinnati
The Safety Net Alliance of Northern Kentucky
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

2016 Board Members
Ron Cramer
Board Chair
Jeff Holtmeier
Vice Chair
Scott Knox
Secretary
Jillian Brown
Treasurer

Edward Buyniski
Dwendolyn Chester
Michael Head
Fanni Johnson
Jamie Lancaster
Mary Carol Melton
Mary Pater
Chris Schweikert
Sabrina Shattles
John Young
Financial Highlights*

Year Ended December 31, 2016

Condensed balance sheet

Assets
Cash and cash equivalents $ 864,854
Grant and contributions receivable 3,738,024
Other assets 55,618
Total assets $ 4,658,496

Liabilities and net assets

LIABILITIES
Accounts payable and accrued expenses $ 2,260,300
Grants payable 474,219
Deferred revenue 98,086
Total liabilities 2,832,605

NET ASSETS
Unrestricted 460,939
Temporarily restricted 1,364,952
Total net assets 1,825,892

Total liabilities and net assets $ 4,658,496

Activities highlights

Revenues and support
Government grants $ 15,248,543
Foundation grants 1,168,478
Contributions 236,750
Agency fees 83,904
Other 100,132
Total revenues $ 16,837,807

Expenses
Program** $ 15,424,767 **
Administrative 266,076
Development 138,693
Total expenses $ 15,829,536

**Program detail
Shelter/Housing $ 11,710,497
Prevention/Rapid Re-housing 1,087,605
Homeless Management Information Systems 485,194
Central Access Point 136,368
Homeless to Homes 2,005,103
Total program costs $ 15,424,767 **

*From Financial Statements Audited by Barnes, Dennig & Co., Ltd.
Get Involved

To learn more about how to donate or volunteer, please visit us at www.strategiestoendhomelessness.org

Strategies to End Homelessness is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, is a United Way Agency Partner and a Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity.

info@end-homelessness.org | 513.263.2780

@toEndHomeless Strategies to End Homelessness Download the Street Reach app