Every year, families across America experience homelessness, including more than 2.5 million children*. Family homelessness is widespread, complex, and often hidden. While some families may be hidden from view, they are still very present in our own communities. Many have to sleep in cars or send their children to stay with relatives while parents enter shelter. Homelessness increases the likelihood that families will separate or dissolve.

**Family Homelessness is a complex issue. Contributing factors include:**

- Lack of affordable housing
- Physical and mental health issues
- Challenges of a single parent household
- Generational poverty
- Domestic violence
- Lack of social support

**Local Families Feel Impact of Strained System**

When families first realize that their housing is in jeopardy, they must navigate a network of services that has many layers, including emergency assistance (food, clothing, rent and utility assistance), shelter diversion, emergency shelter and supportive housing. In recent years, the level of coordination within each of these layers has increased but the system does not yet have the capacity to meet the needs of all families.

In addition, because of the growing number of homeless families, our local system is over capacity. In 2015, 621 families entered an emergency shelter in Hamilton County, with many more families turned away due to lack of shelter capacity.

* National Center on Family Homelessness
Solutions for Family Homelessness Plan

To address the inadequacies of the current system, Strategies to End Homelessness joined the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Family Housing Partnership (Bethany House Services, Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati, Salvation Army and the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati) to develop a community-wide plan for addressing family homelessness.

Since the plan was released, the Steering Committee has continued to implement the plan’s key elements of prevention, capacity building, policy change, and housing.

Early Accomplishments

Collaboration with Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority

Starting in 2015, with expansion in 2016, CMHA has begun prioritizing homeless families to receive housing. So far, 79 homeless families have received a CMHA voucher. Of those families, 76 (96%) were able to successfully exit homeless services, and remain stably housed with a CMHA voucher.

Expanded Homelessness Prevention

New funding has been secured for Emergency Assistance programs through the Liz Carter Homelessness Prevention Fund, administered by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Over $1,327,700 will be provided to at-risk families through the Liz Carter Homelessness Prevention Fund, including an 18% increase in funding over the last year. In addition, with support from the City of Cincinnati, Shelter Diversion services have been increase by 40%.

Establishing Critical Partnerships with Landlords

A new Landlord Advisory Group was formed in 2016 to expand partnerships between private landlords and agencies working with homeless families. Agencies providing shelter and services are developing new efficiencies to better support responsible tenants in the community.

Unless otherwise noted, all data presented in this report was gathered by Strategies to End Homelessness from VESTA™, our community’s Homeless Management Information System, which is operated by The Partnership Center, Ltd.

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