

ULSTER COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE STRATEGIC PLANNING

GOAL #1: Reducing/Ending Chronic Homelessness (CH)

Strategy #1: Increase the number of permanent supportive housing beds by 50% for persons who are chronically homeless.

Action Steps:

1. Utilize Reallocation and Bonus CoC funding to prioritize funding new PSH units dedicated to the chronically homeless.
2. Increase the number of beds dedicated to those who are chronically homeless within the CoC by dedicating beds to the chronically homeless (i.e. provide additional Rank & Review points to those projects who dedicate beds to the chronically homeless).
3. Engage Public Housing Authority's to increase the number of homeless households served by PHA units, such as by providing case management services to households in those units.
4. Advocate and support effort to create new PSH units from non-profit or private affordable developers.
5. Ensure permanent supportive housing beds are prioritized for the most vulnerable through Coordinated Entry, including Veterans who are not eligible for VA services.

Strategy #2: Support CoC programs in operating as a Housing First model.

Action Steps:

1. Implement an education initiative with local elected officials by presenting the cost savings and community benefits of developing PSH and Affordable Housing.

Strategy #3: Maintain and enhance the advance notification protocol between homeless service providers and hospitals, rehabilitation centers and the criminal justice system.

Action Steps:

1. Formally join the ReEntry Task Force to increase communication and coordination efforts between the Task Force and the CoC.
2. Work in coordination with the Sequential Mapping Housing and Support Services Workgroup to collect information related to hospital discharges.
3. Engage substance abuse rehabilitation centers to create an advanced notification protocol with DSS to ensure those exiting rehabilitation programs have housing.

Strategy #4: Increase access to and raise success rates for homeless persons applying for SSI/SSDI, specifically for those who are chronically homeless or mentally ill.

Action Steps:

1. Support CoC members in becoming SOAR trained.

2. Reengage the CoC's relationship with the Social Services Administration, with the goal of hosting the Social Services Administration out of a site in Ulster County at least 1 day a week.
3. Increase the number of access points for SSI/SSDI across the county.

Strategy #5: Increase access to mental health and substance abuse services for persons who are homeless in Ulster County, focusing on the chronically homeless.

Action Steps:

1. Evaluate access issues for the chronically homeless, such as current wait times for new patients, accepted insurance policies, and flexibility of hours to see Social Workers and Psychiatrists at Hudson Valley Mental Health and other sites.
2. Create a taskforce with representatives from the CoC, Hudson Valley Mental Health, and County Community Services Board to collaboratively address access issues for the chronically homeless (such as utilizing technology to increase access to psychiatrists).
3. Coordinate with hospital staff to guarantee appointments are made and kept with psychiatrists upon discharge, ensuring there is no interruption in medication availability.
4. CoC will identify mental health providers who accept Medicaid to ensure all resources for Veterans and other groups are fully utilized.
5. Facilitate a meeting with Ulster County Veterans Agency, SSVF, the VA Clinic, and VA hospitals to develop protocols for supporting Veterans who need mental health and substance abuse services and who were not honorably discharged.

Strategy #6: Support homeless service providers in finding appropriate housing for chronically homeless sex offenders.

Action Steps:

1. Connect homeless service providers with training, such as with parole officers, to clarify restrictions on housing for various levels of sex offenders.

GOAL #2: Reducing/Ending Youth Homelessness

Strategy #1: Promote services available in the community that prevent youth homelessness.

Action Steps:

1. Work with McKinney Vento Liaisons to communicate resources available at Family of Woodstock walk-in centers, Families Now, Child Coordinated Services, Multi-System Therapy and DSS Safe Harbour Program.
 - a. Create a resource list to assist McKinney Vento liaisons and other school officials to facilitate referrals to community resources.
 - b. Promote the use of TextMeBack among McKinney Vento Liaisons, a County-wide hotline Family of Woodstock uses that allows inquiries about services.
2. Work with McKinney Vento Liaisons to build on the process for education staff to identify homelessness among youth and link youth to the appropriate resources.
3. Work with Juvenile Justice System stakeholders, such as SIM, to identify and implement diversion strategies including improved discharge planning.

Strategy #2: Increase education to homeless service and educational providers regarding equity of access to services among different populations.

Action Steps:

1. Host CoC-wide diversity trainings.
2. Promote trauma-informed care training for support service systems.
3. Coordinate with LGBTQ organizations to host LGBTQ trainings during the semiannual McKinney Vento Liaison workshops and trainings for the CoC.
4. Increase the availability of Spanish speakers to improve communication with students and families of only limited English proficiency.
5. Expand recruitment efforts to diversify the workforce serving at-risk youth, including hiring bi-lingual English and Spanish speakers.

Strategy #3: Connect youth with available homelessness resources in the community.

Action Steps:

1. Utilize a coordinated entry process to effectively link all youth experiencing homelessness to housing and services solutions that are tailored to their needs.
2. Increase utilization of Family House by promoting it to homeless service, youth and educational providers as a resource for homeless youth.

Strategy #4: Identify gaps in resources and utilize creative funding sources to create new or build on existing programs.

Action Steps:

1. Seek additional funding or reallocate current funding to create a supervised transitional living program for adolescents 16-24.
2. Reallocate CoC funding to create additional Rapid Rehousing for homeless youth ages 21-24.

3. Seek additional funding to create a formal Life Skills curriculum for youth.
4. Expand the tutorial programming available to help prevent homeless youth from falling behind in school.

Strategy #5: Link foster care agencies to the Coordinated Entry system to increase awareness of those exiting foster care to homelessness.

Action Steps:

1. Coordinate with County Foster Care to connect youth who have left the foster care system.
2. Support the County in developing additional incentives for youth to remain in foster care so that they can complete their education.
3. Invest further in establishing a case manager relationship with youth prior to discharge from foster care.

GOAL #3: Reducing/Ending Family Homelessness

Strategy #1: Build relationships between the CoC and local landlords to increase the number of landlords with quality housing units who accept subsidies.

Action Steps:

1. Work with the Kingston Landlord Association to identify ways landlords may become more willing to accept subsidies.
2. Market to landlords the opportunities and benefits of working with tenants who are connected to case management.
3. Issue a landlord award once a year to landlord(s) who maintain quality housing and work collaboratively with tenants.

Strategy #2: Support development of additional large (three or more bedrooms) affordable and permanent supportive housing units.

Action Steps:

1. Utilize Reallocation and Bonus CoC funding to prioritize funding new permanent supportive housing units for large families.
2. Work with the PHA to establish a preference, committing Housing Choice vouchers, public housing units, and multifamily housing units to serve families experiencing homelessness.
3. Support transition/graduation of families from permanent supportive housing units to affordable housing units when appropriate and available.

Strategy #3: Increase the amount of prevention resource funding in the community by at least 50%.

Action Steps:

1. Support CoC agencies in developing strategies to increase the amount of security deposit funding returned from landlords, such as by tracking clients and mailing letters to landlords.
2. Engage private funders to promote the systematic work of the CoC and the most important gaps that need financial support, such as prevention funding.

Strategy #4: Support CoC programs in operating as a Housing First model.

Action Steps:

1. Implement an education initiative with local elected officials by presenting the cost savings and community benefits of developing PSH and Affordable Housing.

Strategy #5: Increase opportunities for homeless and at-risk families to connect with education and employment programs, affordable childcare options, and necessary resources and benefits.

Action Steps:

1. Increase opportunities for homeless and at-risk families to access affordable childcare by increasing enrollment in the Family of Woodstock childcare training program and advocating for a childcare center with alternative hours that accepts the DSS childcare subsidy.
2. Encourage education and employment programs to become members of the CoC.
3. Advocate as a CoC to increase the financial resources and benefits available to homeless and at-risk families at the national and state levels.