

METRO GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

HOMELESSNESS PLANNING COUNCIL  
STRATEGIC PLAN

JULY 2023 – JUNE 2026

DRAFT

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## INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan of the Homelessness Planning Council (“HPC”) is our community’s action-oriented endeavor to improve the Housing Crisis Resolution System for Nashville-Davidson County. This refreshed plan intends to provide high-level goals and objectives for implementation by the HPC and its Committees, as Nashville strives toward a system where no person is forced to be homeless for more than an average of 90 days, making homelessness in our city rare, brief, and non-recurring. Rather than serving as a comprehensive action item list that addresses every need of each person, community partner, or entity with interests and/or concerns around homelessness, the strategies outlined in this plan are goal-based and outcome-driven.

Therefore, this three-year refreshed plan focuses on the top priorities for the Homelessness Planning Council to implement and measure on behalf of and with individuals with lived experience, service providers, government, and the Nashville community at large. The Strategic Plan is aligned with the federal strategic plan, “[Home, Together](#),” that aims to prevent and end homelessness for all people experiencing homelessness.

Typically, strategic plans are evaluated on a regular basis with annual and/or quarterly reports provided to those entities responsible for the plan and measuring its progress. The intention is to update this 3-year plan during an annual review process to the Homelessness Planning Council and the Nashville-Davidson County Homelessness Continuum of Care (“CoC”) General Membership.

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## VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

### VISION

The CoC is tasked with building and maintaining an effective Housing Crisis Resolution System to prevent and end homelessness for all Nashvillians.

### MISSION

The mission of the CoC is to create a collaborative, inclusive, community-based/inspired process and approach to planning and managing effective homeless assistance resources and programs (by which Federal, State and local funding resources will be actualized to adequately fund all homeless assistance needs) to end homelessness in our community, consistent with 24 CFR Part 578, the HUD regulations that guide the CoC program.

As a system, the CoC is housing focused, person centered, data driven, and committed to the effective use of resources.

### VALUES

The underlying values of the Strategic Plan are demonstrated as follows:

**Housing-focused** – Create a Housing Crisis Resolution System that helps stabilize housing situations and, when necessary, assists participants to obtain and move into permanent housing as quickly as possible and connect people to additional services and supports as needed to maintain housing stability without preconditions and barriers to entry. This plan endorses tailored housing interventions that align with our person-centered values considering best-practice approaches to address mental health recovery and other needs. The Nashville system should be oriented toward a Housing First approach that includes all types of housing interventions (including emergency and temporary housing placements while working toward sustainable permanent housing options). Effective Housing First approaches, developed in response to strong evidence, include: expanding access to new and existing affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness; providing rapid rehousing to families and individuals; and providing supportive housing to people with the most intense needs.

**Person-centered** – Treat individuals with dignity and respect by listening and working in partnership with people with lived experience of homelessness to support their personal perspectives, values, beliefs, preferences, and physical/mental health needs.

**Data-driven** – Use data to make strategic decisions regarding housing and supporting needs of individuals and families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

**Committed to the effective use of resources** – Create a system that is capable of non-duplicative service delivery, that evaluates effectiveness based on outcomes for the people served, and that utilizes financial resources and staff capacity in the community with the solution in mind.

**Race equity focused** – Create an environment where one’s race identity has no influence on how one fares in society.

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## TERMS TO KNOW

To share the best ideas around this community effort, a common language will be used to help level set and coordinate everyone's best thinking. Following are the definitions for terms that will be used throughout this document.

**Area Median Income (AMI)** - Area median income is the midpoint of the region's income distribution. For example, as of July 2022, in the 10-county area in which Nashville is situated, the AMI is \$96,700. Extremely low-income limits are at \$19,850 for 1 person or 70% of a 4-person limit which is \$28,300.

**Chronic Homelessness** - Either 1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR 2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. Families can now be considered chronically homeless.

**Continuum of Care (CoC)** – A regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for individuals, families, and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. A CoC creates a collaborative community effort that provides a strategic systems approach that focuses on connecting people to housing and services to end their homelessness.

**Coordinated Entry (CE)** – A standardized access, assessment, and referral process for housing and other services across agencies in a community. Other frequently used terms include “centralized or coordinated assessment” ([Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)) and “coordinated entry and assessment” ([National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)).

**Extremely low income** – Those individuals who are attempting to live at 0 - 30% of the median income for the city of Nashville.

**Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** – A local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to individuals and families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. It is used as a tool to evaluate people's needs and assist them more effectively, avoiding duplication of services.

**Homeless Population** – Nashville's goal is to end homelessness among the following population categories (which are listed in alignment with the federal strategic plan, “[Home, Together](#)”):

- Veterans
- People experiencing chronic homelessness who are disabled
- Families with children
- Unaccompanied youth
- All other individuals

[Homelessness Planning Council \(HPC\)](#) – The Nashville-Davidson County community board of 25 members that serves as the Continuum of Care Governance Board. The Homelessness Planning Council is a quasi-Metro body as described in BL2018-1199. It is empowered to act on behalf of the CoC as outlined in the CoC Governance Charter.

[Homelessness Providers](#) – Agencies serving people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. These agencies include organizations that are not traditionally viewed as homeless service providers because the populations they serve are generally at high risk of experiencing housing instability. They include, among others, people with need for Accessibility (mobility, intellectual, visual, hearing, etc.); people experiencing Sex/Human Trafficking; people who are immigrants/or have language barriers (ESL); the Recovery Community; LGBTQ+; Extreme Medically Vulnerable people; Domestic Violence survivors; people with pets; multi-generational families; single fathers who are the main caretakers of children; people struggling with re-entry after incarceration or other institutionalizations.

[Housing Crisis Resolution System \(HCRS\)](#) – A community system that includes all types of programs from prevention/diversion, emergency, and temporary interventions to permanent housing solutions. As a whole, an effective Housing Crisis Resolution System focuses on identifying people in a housing crisis as early as possible and connects them with housing and needed supports as quickly as possible. In Davidson County, the current goal is to house people in an average of 90 days or less.

[Housing First](#) – A Housing First system orientation recognizes that people experiencing homelessness (like all people) need the safety and stability of a home in order to best address challenges and pursue opportunities. The Housing First approach connects people back to a home as quickly as possible, while making readily available the services that people may need to be stable and secure.

[Literal Homelessness](#) – Individuals or families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence. People experiencing literal homelessness sleep in shelters, on the streets, in encampments, in cars, and in in other places not meant for human habitation.

[Local Education Agency \(LEA\)](#) – The school system’s definition of homelessness includes families in motels and in shared housing situations due to the loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason.

[Multi-directional Education](#) – A collaborative approach to understanding and accessing the expertise, views, and experiences represented in various populations, whereby all participants learn from one another, prioritizing populations that have been historically marginalized.

## STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

### SUMMARY

The primary aim of this plan is to set forth goals and objectives that can be used to drive implementation of a fully-realized, effective Housing Crisis Resolution System for the Nashville area. In such a system, the community will work together to ensure that homelessness is a rare occurrence, lasts only briefly when it does occur, and does not recur for those individuals who have been housed. To achieve this aim, the community presents two strategic goals and accompanying objectives that are intended to drive specific and measurable impact within our community over a three-year period.

A Housing Crisis Resolution System incorporates coordinated entry and prioritizes households with the highest needs for assistance, uses data to assess system and project performance, and ensures that all the components, programs, and services are oriented toward our common goal: rapidly moving people who are homeless into housing. In establishing such a system, emphasis will be placed on elevating the voice of the community in line with our person-centered values, particularly those voices that historically have been marginalized from the conversation.

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## IMPACT

Since the original strategic plan was written in 2019, Nashville has weathered tornadoes (March 2020 and December 2021), a pandemic (March 2020 – present), a bombing (December 2020), the second hundred-year flood in a decade (March 2021), a growing housing and affordability crisis, and a recent change to state law that criminalizes camping on public land (July 2022). Nashville residents at 0-30% AMI are disproportionately affected by adverse weather, natural disasters, and the state’s housing legislation. With these events and changes in Nashville and to our state laws, the HPC recognized the need to refresh the Strategic Plan in a way that reflects the urgency, responsiveness, accountability, and alignment required to address our current situation.

Therefore, our impact statement reads:

*Because homelessness is a life-or-death experience, the CoC must urgently prioritize and implement equitable, responsive, and proactive solutions by 2025.*

This refreshed Strategic Plan builds on the work accomplished since 2019, weaves in adaptability, and prioritizes making homelessness among residents at 0-30% AMI rare, brief, and non-recurring.

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## GOALS

There are two goals in this strategic plan. The first involves assessing the *current state* of homelessness planning, including the roles stakeholders play, what inventory, funding, data, and other resources are available, and what metrics should be in place for tracking progress. The second goal calls for collaborative efforts to deploy all available resources to end homelessness in the *future*.

Under each of these two goals, the Strategic Plan includes four objectives that have been gleaned and expanded upon from the 2019 plan. These objectives are intended to guide the efforts of all who work tirelessly to end homelessness in our community.

In addition, the plan includes suggested CoC Committee assignments that will have oversight for implementing the goals and objectives in the plan in an effective and transparent manner.

### GOAL #1

**URGENT AND RESPONSIVE:** *Recognizing the urgency, Nashville will employ evidence-based, data-driven decisions to serve and empower individuals experiencing homelessness.*

### GOAL #2

**ALIGNED & ACCOUNTABLE:** *The Homelessness Crisis Response System (HCRS) will align resources that close the resource gap and have clear lines of accountability.*

## OBJECTIVES & COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS

### GOAL #1

**URGENT AND RESPONSIVE:** *Recognizing the urgency, Nashville will employ evidence-based, data-driven decisions to serve and empower individuals experiencing homelessness.*

#### **OBJECTIVE 1.1: Reexamine and strengthen collaborative infrastructure and roles played by key stakeholders, including individuals with lived experience, governance, committees, and members.**

- a) Committees
  - i. Reexamine, reassess, and redefine focus of HPC committees.
  - ii. HPC Executive Committee, in consultation with HPC committee chairs, assign ownership and tracking of all strategic plan action steps to committees.
  - iii. Schedule quarterly meetings between CoC committee chairs and staff.
  - iv. Require membership on at least one committee for all HPC members.
- b) Individuals with Lived Experience
  - i. Establish an engaged and effective Consumer Advisory Board for individuals with lived experience with dedicated staff support.
  - ii. Implement approaches to attain a welcoming, inclusive environment built on authentic collaboration.
- c) CoC Members
  - i. Create opportunities for CoC members to form mutually beneficial relationships that foster trust and collaboration.
  - ii. Provide opportunities for better communication and alignment of resources and expertise among CoC members.
- d) Other Key Stakeholders
  - i. Identify and engage with critical stakeholders in local, state, and federal government, the business community, and faith-based communities.
  - ii. Focus on raising the funds needed to end homelessness in our community.
  - iii. Utilize effective systems mapping.

*Suggested Committees:* *Executive Committee & all current committee chairs*

#### **Objective 1.2: Identify inventory.**

- a) Create and maintain inventories of:
  - i. Housing
    - 1. Affordable housing
    - 2. Dedicated housing for people experiencing homelessness
  - ii. Available Metro properties
  - iii. Funding sources
  - iv. Support services
- b) Conduct gaps analysis to identify shortfalls in inventories
- c) Develop plans and take necessary actions to maximize inventories

- i. Use gaps analyses to prioritize housing and service gaps for funding and programming.
- ii. Review and revise plans on an ongoing basis.

*Suggested Committees: Consumer Advisory Board, Shelter Committee, HMIS Oversight Committee, Standards of Care Committee*

**Objective 1.3: Outline a plan to improve data collection, analysis, and presentation for all populations.**

- a) Incentivize HMIS participation for providers through additional funding, reporting, and increased community coordination.
- b) Require HMIS participation for all funding opportunities, including those from governmental, faith-based, and philanthropic entities.
- c) Reduce barriers to HMIS participation by working with HMIS vendor to conduct regular imports of agency data into HMIS when possible.
- d) Ensure CoC leadership and committee chairs understand data available through HMIS, potential use cases for their work, and strategies for data-driven decision making.

*Suggested committees: HMIS Oversight Committee, Data Committee, Youth Action Board*

**Objective 1.4: Establish effective metrics to report on strategic homelessness initiatives.**

- a) Commit to ensuring that people-first language and actions are central to all metrics.
- b) Provide quarterly report on identified metrics to all CoC stakeholders, with all data disaggregated by race, to include HUD System Performance Measures
  - a. Number of homeless persons.
  - b. Length of time persons remain homeless.
  - c. The extent to which persons who exit homelessness to permanent housing destinations return to homelessness.
  - d. Successful placements in permanent housing

*Suggested committees: Equity & Diversity Committee, Data Committee, Consumer Advisory Board, Performance Evaluation Committee, Standards of Care Committee*

**GOAL #2**

*ALIGNED & ACCOUNTABLE: The Homelessness Crisis Response System (HCRS) will align resources that close the resource gap and have clear lines of accountability.*

**Objective 2.1: Mobilize community partners and maximize funding to serve all populations.**

- a) Mobilize community partners:
  - i. Partner with the Metro Planning Department, Housing Division, Office of the Mayor, Planning and Zoning Commission, and MDHA to better align local priorities and funding to address this effort.
  - ii. Increase formal collaboration among existing partner agencies and individuals through memoranda of understanding (MOUs), shared investments, and dedicated staff time.
  - iii. Engage with culturally-specific programs and organizations to ensure services and housing opportunities better reflect the needs and preferences of people experiencing homelessness.

- iv. Work with mainstream systems serving vulnerable Nashvillians (including corrections, foster care, and healthcare) to ensure they do not exit people to homelessness.
- b) Maximize funding sources
  - i. Engage faith-based, recovery, healthcare, and mainstream employment partners to expand the spectrum of services and funding.
  - ii. Partner with philanthropic organizations, collective impact funding groups, and local corporations to provide ongoing funding and encourage the braiding of resources for community priorities.
  - iii. Work with Metro departments to maximize inventory by simplifying and incentivizing institutional approval of 0-30% AMI housing and to preserve existing affordable housing stock.

*Suggested committees: Equity & Diversity Committee, Shelter Committee, Membership Committee, Nominating Committee, Youth Action Board, Consumer Advisory Board*

**Objective 2.2: Focus on ending chronic homelessness.**

- a) Expand inventory for those experiencing chronic homelessness by incentivizing deeply affordable rehabilitated units and new builds, permanent supportive housing, and tenant-based rental assistance.
- b) Increase the number of Housing Choice Vouchers, public housing units, and other mainstream housing resources accessed by people experiencing homelessness and encourage a local homelessness preference at MDHA.
- c) Increase the number of SOAR programs in the city to increase income for people experiencing homelessness with disabling conditions.
- d) Ensure access to post-housing support services for all individuals exiting homelessness by expanding partnerships with behavioral health treatment services.
- e) Build a systematic approach for people to move out of permanent supportive housing when they are ready.
- f) Mobilize and align resources to strengthen prevention and diversion programs, and integrate diversion training into the system, including shelters and outreach teams.

*Suggested committees: Consumer Advisory Board, Shelter Committee, HMIS Oversight Committee, Standards of Care Committee*

**Objective 2.3: Maximize community wide HMIS data collection, sharing, and use.**

- a) Onboard all homeless service providers into HMIS.
- b) Create strategy for onboarding non-homeless service sectors into HMIS, including healthcare, recovery, and re-entry.
- c) Focus on using HMIS data to improve system performance through monitoring program and community-wide goals, and making data-based recommendations to funders, HPC, Metro Council, and city leadership.
- d) Improve data sharing and information exchange to facilitate continuity of care across healthcare, corrections, and child welfare.
- e) Consistently evaluate homelessness data to ensure equity for all sub-populations.

*Suggested committees: HMIS Oversight Committee, Membership Committee, Data Committee*

**Objective 2.4: Develop an ongoing, robust, and transparent communications strategy.**

- a) Facilitate multi-directional education to learn from and reach individuals with lived experience, agencies, media, government, and the Nashville community at large.

- b) Communicate strategic plans goals and clear community priorities to stakeholders, including individuals with lived experience, advocacy groups, governmental entities, faith-based communities, and philanthropic and business sectors.
- c) Bolster information and referral services so that accurate and useful information is provided to people experiencing homelessness.
- d) Build capacity, train, and support natural points of contact to connect people experiencing homelessness to coordinated entry and available resources.
- e) Generate community energy for ending homelessness by celebrating big and small wins through press releases, public dashboards, and an annual CoC report/newsletter.

*Suggested committees: Executive Committee, Membership Committee, Youth Action Board, Consumer Advisory Board*

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