Morris County Continuum of Care Strategic Plan 2022-2023

MISSION:

To develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address and prevent homelessness in Morris County.

HISTORY:

The Strategic Planning Workgroup began after the CoC Executive Committee saw a need to look critically at the full homeless service system, identify gaps and barriers and offer solutions and improvements to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring in Morris County. Given the racial disparities seen in the data, the Strategic Planning Workgroup was also tasked with ensuring that all policies, procedures and processes were fostering equity and using a trauma-informed, dignity-centered approach.

METHODOLOGY:

The Strategic Planning Workgroup met bi-weekly from August 2021 - December 2021. A schedule that laid out what topics would be covered at the bi-weekly meetings was sent to all workgroup members to ensure there was enough time to compile any documents or additional information needed for each meeting. Workgroup meetings were kept to an hour and focused on gaps and barriers in the system and possible solutions. After meetings, workgroup members were encouraged to include their comments in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis that was shared via Google Drive. Through these targeted conversations and the SWOT analysis, the workgroup identified several goals and objectives the Morris County CoC could work towards in the short to long-term future.

PLANNING WORKGROUP MEMBERS:

The Executive Committee leadership determined to create a small, focused group consisting of long-time CoC participants, leadership from Coordinated Entry and Coordinated Prevention, CoC-funded providers, representation from the Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) and people with lived experience of homelessness. Monarch Housing Associates staff reported that individuals from the lived experience advisory board were concerned about attending meetings, fearful that speaking against the system or providers would lead to retaliation and loss of services. Therefore, meetings were recorded and viewed by lived experience advisory board members who shared feedback through Monarch staff. Members of the workgroup include:

- Amy Archer, Morris County Department of Human Services, CoC Lead Agency
- Nadine Azari, Monarch Housing Associates, CoC consultant
- Mike Armstrong, community representative and CoC member
- Jeff Bashe, community representative and HSAC member
- Joann Bjornson, Family Promise of Morris County and CoC-funded provider
- Rose Brown, Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris and CoC-funded provider
- Allison Delcalzo-Berens, Morristown Medical Center and CoC Member
- Maria Fodali, Morris County Office of Temporary Assistance and Coordinated Entry Chair
- Russ Hall, Housing Alliance representative and CoC member
- Jessica Padilla Gonzalez, Housing Partnership and CoC member
- David Saltzman, Legal Services of Northwest Jersey, CoC member and Coordinated Prevention Chair

GOALS:

A. Enhance CoC administrative support, operations and coordination
B. Support families experiencing homelessness (NOFO)
C. Increase and maintain permanent housing options
D. Ensure programs and system are meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness

GOAL A: Enhance CoC administrative support, operations and coordination

#	OBJECTIVE	TIMELINE	COMMITTEE/WHO
1	HIRE FTE FOR COC SUPPORT	2 YEARS	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/ LEAD AGENCY/ MONARCH
2	CREATE OUTREACH AND TRAINING PLAN FOR COMMUNITY (non-COC providers, municipalities, vulnerable populations, landlords)	1 YEAR	CAS
3	DETERMINE A STRATEGY/POLICY/PROCESS FOR HOW COC MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN ADVOCACY WORK (criminalization, homeless trust fund, fair market rent, transportation, etc.)	1 YEAR	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/OTHER COMMITTEES TBD
4	REDUCE DUPLICATION AND INCREASE COORDINATION – SYSTEM MAPPING, FUNDING STREAM ANALYSIS	6 MONTHS	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/ LEAD AGENCY/ MONARCH
4B	REVIEW GAPS IN SERVICES AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER FUNDING	1 YEAR	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/ LEAD AGENCY/ MONARCH

GOAL B: Support families[1] experiencing homelessness

#	OBJECTIVE	TIMELINE	COMMITTEE/WHO
5	ENGAGE HOMELESS LIAISONS FROM THE THREE SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH THE HIGHEST HOMELESSNESS IN COC	1 YEAR	YOUTH ADVOCATE
6	WORK WITH CHILDCARE PROVIDERS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO HOME-BASED CHILDCARE SETTINGS[2]	1 YEAR	YOUTH ADVOCATE
7	CREATE A PROCESS FOR ENSURING FAMILIES ARE NOT SEPARATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH EACH HOUSEHOLD'S DEFINITION OF FAMILY AND EACH FAMILY MEMBER'S SELF-REPORTED GENDER IDENTITY	6 MONTHS	DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
8	ENHANCE DIVERSION PROGRAMMING INCLUDING STRATEGIES TO INCREASE SHARED LIVING SUPPORTS AND ADVOCATE FAMILY REUNIFICATION[3]	2 YEARS	CE/DIVERSION WORKGROUP

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[1] The term "families" is used in line with HUD language from the 2022 NOFO and to intentionally highlight the humanity around households experiencing homelessness. The definition of "family" is to be considered by the Executive Committee prior to any policies or procedures under this topic/goal are created.

[2] The Childcare Workgroup determined in 2020-2021 that, due to the many barriers COVID has caused to the affordability and accessibility of mainstream daycare providers, the CoC focus in the short-term should be on increasing access to home-based childcare settings.

[3] Evidence has shown that network impoverishment is a primary cause of homelessness. Diversion programming is not restricted to use for "families", however using diversion programming intentionally to reduce network impoverishment will reduce homelessness. For more information on network impoverishment, see the SPARC study: SPARC-Phase-1-Findings-March-2018.pdf (c4innovates.com).

GOAL C: Increase and maintain safe and equitable permanent housing options

9	REDUCE RETURNS TO HOMELESSNESS FROM EMERGENCY SHELTER DISCHARGE TO: 0-6 MONTHS = 10% WITHIN 24 MONTHS = 10%[4]	2 YEARS	AD HOC WORKGROUP CONSISTING OF SHELTER PROVIDERS, COORDINATION ENTRY AND DATA QUALITY
10	INCREASE EARNED INCOME FOR SYSTEM LEAVERS TO 20%[5]	2 YEARS	EVERYDAY CONNECT/ PROVIDER COMMITTEE[6]
11	WORK WITH PHA'S TO ESTABLISH HOMELESS PREFERENCE OF 5%	2 YEARS	PERMANENT HOUSING
12	FORMALIZE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEIGHBORS IN NEED AND THE COC AND DETERMINE HOW LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT FITS INTO OVERALL COC STRUCTURE[7]	6 MONTHS	PERMANENT HOUSING
13	ANALYZE EVICTION DATA AND TARGET SOLUTIONS TO COMMUNITIES WITH HIGHER EVICTION RATES	2 YEARS	DATA QUALITY/ COORDINATED PREVENTION

GOAL D: Ensure programs and system are meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness

14	CREATE STRATEGY TO SHELTER HOMELESS (WET SHELTERS, EMERGENCIES (CB/CR), NO BARRIER SHELTERS, OPTIONS FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES/MENTAL ILLNESS)	2 YEARS	CE SHELTER PROVIDER WORKGROUP/ ESG
15	CREATE SAFE SPACES AND PIPELINE FOR PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE, INTEGRATE PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE INTO COC	1 YEAR	ADVISORY BOARD/ MONARCH/ DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION/ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
16	UPDATE COC MONITORING AND APPLICATION PROCESS TO BE DATA DRIVEN AND PROGRAM SPECIFIC[8]	3 MONTHS	ALLOCATIONS

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[4] Current baseline: 0-6 months = 16%; 24 months = 25%. While reducing returns to homelessness is a systems-wide issue, the returns after discharge from emergency shelter are effective system performance metrics more than any other category.

[5] Current baseline: 0%

[6] In 2018, the Provider Resource Committee merged with the Program Coordinating Committee to reduce duplication of effort. In 2019, the CoC created an Everyday Connect Committee to replace the Project Homeless Connect single-day initiative in Morris County. Throughout 2021, the Provider Resource Committee and Everyday Connect Committee worked together on strategies to increase employment options for the homeless population in Morris County. The chairs of the Provider Resource Committee and Everyday Connect Committee have agreed that merging these committees will maximize the human resources of the CoC. This merge is scheduled to take place in mid-2022.

[7] The immediate tasks of this objective include reviewing and finalizing MOU's, determining the mechanism for case conferencing, formalizing a leadership and accountability structure and determining strategies for outreach. Once this objective is complete, the Planning Committee will discuss including an objective around sustainability of the project.

[8] This objective includes tasking the Allocations Committee with a plan for ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness and quality of the process and tools.