



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Collaborative solutions for a promising future

HOMELESSNESS IN WASHTENAW COUNTY

Continuum of Care

Annual Report

2017

THANK YOU

PARTNERS

- Ann Arbor Housing Commission
- Avalon Housing
- Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw county
- Child Care Network
- Fair Housing Center
- Faith in Action
- Housing Bureau for Seniors
- Interfaith Hospitality Network at Alpha House
- Legal Services of South Central Michigan
- Michigan Ability Partners
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- Ozone House
- Safe House Center
- The Salvation Army of Washtenaw County
- Shelter Association of Washtenaw County
- SOS Community Services
- Unified HIV Health and Beyond
- Veterans Affairs Ann Arbor Healthcare System
- Washtenaw County Community Mental Health
- Washtenaw Housing Alliance
- Ypsilanti Housing Commission

FUNDERS

- Michigan State Housing Development Authority
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Washtenaw Coordinated Funders



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Washtenaw County Continuum of Care *plans, coordinates, and delivers housing and services* to people experiencing homelessness in Washtenaw County. Composed of a broad group of individuals and organizations interested in ending homelessness, we implement strategic response, provide support to housing providers, track our progress, and provide oversight for our coordinated entry.

The need is real: on a January night in 2017, 262 people experiencing homelessness in Washtenaw County were staying in emergency shelters, and 40 more in places not meant for human habitation. To meet this need we coordinate services and referrals to make sure that our limited resources reach those with the greatest need. Working together, *in 2017 we provided services to more than 5,000 people*—resulting in more than 2,100 housing placements, and a 24% reduction in homelessness since 2015.

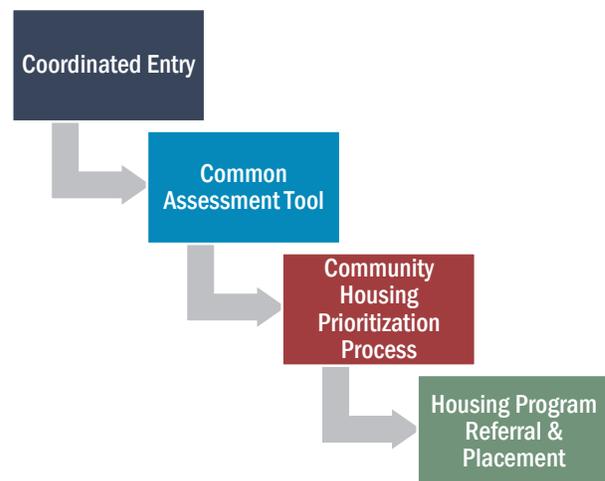
While our system is making an impact, we know that current resources for addressing homelessness are insufficient to meet the demand for housing and services. To better meet this need, the Continuum of Care also looks for opportunities to increase the resources available to address homelessness, to improve the quality and efficiency of our services, and to *engage more of the community to work toward our mission of ending homelessness*.

DEFINING HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness can take many forms. The Continuum of Care focuses its resources to serve people experiencing the following types of homelessness:

- **Literal Homeless:** People who are living in a place not meant for human habitation, such as a shelter, in a car, or on the streets
- **At-Risk:** People who are losing their primary nighttime residence within 14 days and lack the resources or support to remain in housing
- **Fleeing domestic violence:** People who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, have no other residence, and lack the resources to obtain permanent housing

Key components of Continuum of Care Assistance



SERVICES IN 2017



Avalon Housing and Chelsea State Bank staff at the grand opening of a new project from Avalon and Faith in Action

Our **COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM** screens clients to make appropriate referrals.

9,273

individuals were screened for services.

RAPID RE-HOUSING is designed to place people quickly into housing and provide time-limited support to keep them housed.



506 people housed through rapid rehousing.

People experiencing **UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS** receive services from shelters and street outreach.

545

individuals were contacted by our outreach teams.

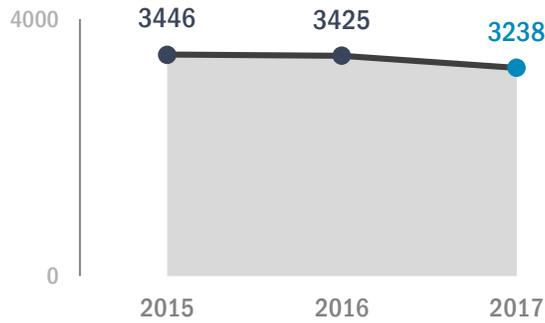
PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING pairs a permanent rental subsidy with ongoing services for high needs clients.



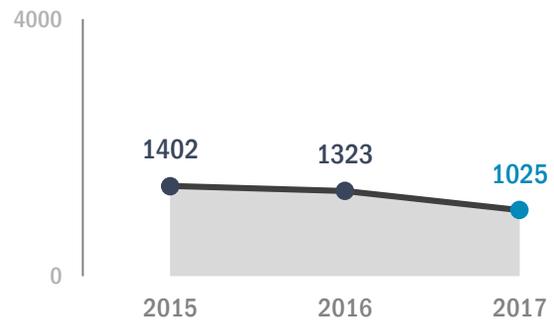
241 people exited to permanent supportive housing.

PROGRESS

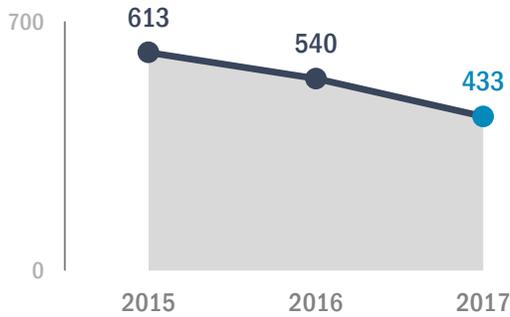
The number of people experiencing **literal homelessness** has **declined**.



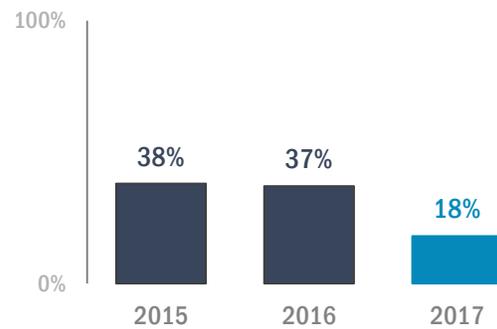
The number of people becoming homeless for the first time is **lower than ever before**.



There has been a **29% drop** in **chronic homelessness** since 2015.



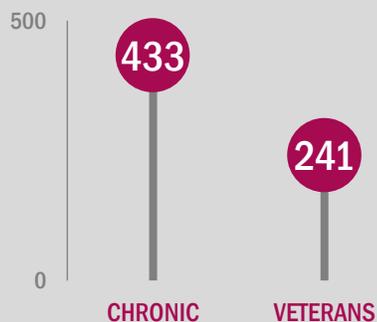
Fewer people are **returning to homelessness** after being housed.



Built For Zero. COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

As a member of the Built for Zero national change movement, Washtenaw County has committed to ending veteran and chronic homelessness. By following best practices, such as using real time data, tracking monthly progress, and optimizing local resources, Washtenaw County has contributed to the more than 80,000 people housed through this movement nationally.

Total number of **chronically homeless and veterans housed** in 2017 in the county



MOVING FORWARD

GOAL ONE: END VETERAN AND CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Our highest priority is making Veteran and Chronic homelessness rare, brief, and non-repeating.

GOAL TWO: IMPROVE YOUTH SERVICES

To improve outcomes for youth, we will listen to youth with lived experience of homelessness, seek additional resources, and improve coordination with other systems of care.

GOAL THREE: COORDINATE WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

While local law participates in CoC leadership, better coordination could lead to improved outcomes for all residents, especially those experiencing homelessness.

GOAL FOUR: INCREASE FUNDING AND RESOURCES

We need more permanent housing resources to build a system that fully meets the need for services.



STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to these goals we highlighted strategic opportunities using this icon throughout the report.

HOW WE SERVE

HOUSING FIRST

An evidence-based approach to homelessness assistance, Housing First is based on the idea that people need basic necessities, like food and a safe place to live, before working on anything less critical, such as getting a job, or attending to substance abuse issues.

By prioritizing access to permanent housing, our system focuses on quickly ending homelessness to provide a stable platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life.

COORDINATED ENTRY

By using a common process to screen everyone seeking services, we ensure fair access to services and can effectively prioritize our limited resources for those with the greatest need.



23,600
CALLS



9,273
SCREENINGS

BUILT FOR ZERO

Since 2015, Washtenaw County has been a member of Built for Zero, a rigorous national change effort of communities committed to ending veteran and chronic homelessness by using real time data, tracking monthly progress, and optimizing local resources. Participating communities have housed more than 80,000 people, including 241 veterans and 433 people experiencing chronic homelessness in Washtenaw County.

PROGRAMS OFFERED

PREVENTION AND DIVERSION

These approaches serve people at-risk of homelessness by providing assistance before they enter literal homeless.

PREVENTION provides emergency financial assistance to keep people in their homes.

DIVERSION is an approach to help people find and access resources already available to them to prevent them from needing emergency shelter or other housing resources.

281

households utilized diversion and prevention services & were **stably housed**.



The **average amount of financial assistance per household was \$543.**

OUTREACH

Street outreach focuses on engaging persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness in a place not meant for human habitation.

By meeting clients where they are and helping to engage and connect individuals to the resources they need, outreach seeks to help transition people from the streets to permanent housing.

293

individuals were contacted by our outreach teams.



60 people served by outreach exited to **housing**.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

Providing a safe place to stay for persons experiencing literal homelessness is just the start for our Emergency Shelter programs. Along with meeting basic needs for shelter and food, shelter staff provide case management, working with clients to obtain identification, increase income, and find affordable housing. This focus on a pathway from shelter to housing leads to more people getting housed sooner, and without relying on more limited and costly permanent housing programs.

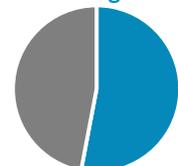
801

households were served by **emergency shelters** in 2017.



Seasonal Expansion:
An additional 120 beds are added during winter months when it can be especially dangerous to sleep outside.

53% of shelter households exited to **housing**.



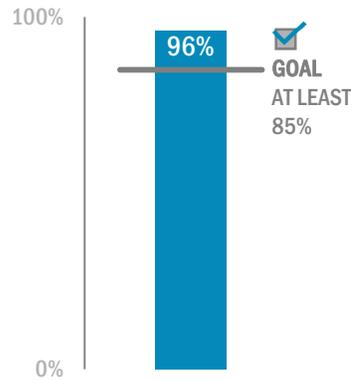
RAPID REHOUSING

Rapid Re-Housing is designed to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing by providing a tailored package of assistance that may include help with a housing search, time-limited financial assistance with move in costs and rent, and targeted case management and supportive services.

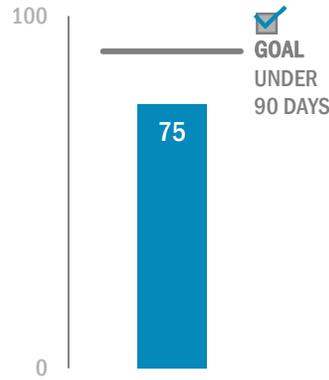
506 people experiencing homelessness were housed through rapid rehousing.



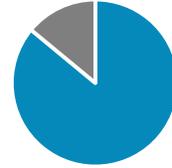
96% of those housed in 2015 did not return to homelessness within 2 years.



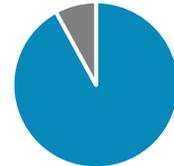
There was an average of 75 days from identification to housing.



86% of households exited to permanent housing.



92% of beds are for families with children.

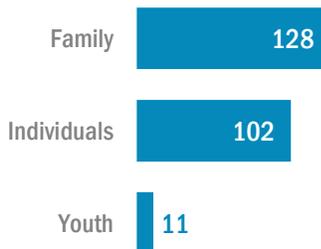


PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

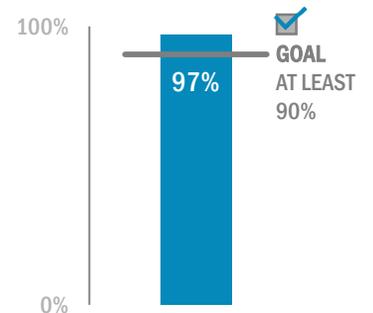
Permanent Supportive Housing is an evidence-based housing intervention that pairs ongoing rental assistance with wrap-around supportive services for people experiencing homelessness. It is the most intense level of assistance available for people experiencing homelessness. Washtenaw County prioritizes Permanent Supportive Housing resources for people with the highest needs and vulnerability, starting with people experiencing Chronic homelessness and those who have a disability.



241 people experiencing homelessness entered permanent supportive housing.



The 2017 housing retention rate was 97%.



Jennifer first came to Avalon Housing in 2011. “Since I was a teenager,” she says, “I have struggled with homelessness.” Jennifer also struggled for years with substance use and mental health issues. Since the birth of her daughter, Jennifer has been able to maintain her sobriety. She’s taken parenting classes and has joined a peer support group to help her stay in recovery. With the help of her Avalon case manager, Jennifer’s also getting the critical medical, dental and mental health care that she could not obtain while living on the streets. As she says: “Because of Avalon, I’m finally able to be the mother that my child needs.”

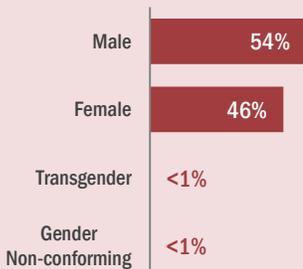
WHO WE SERVE



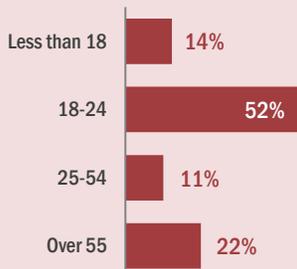
DEMOGRAPHICS

More than 5,000 people received services in 2017.

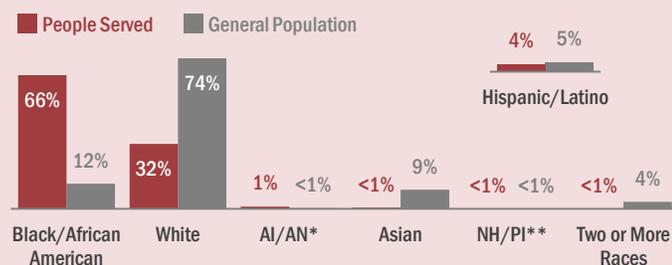
GENDER



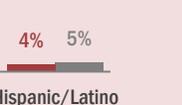
AGE



RACE



ETHNICITY

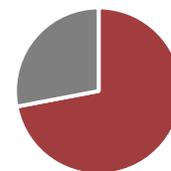


* American Indian or Alaska Native ** Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

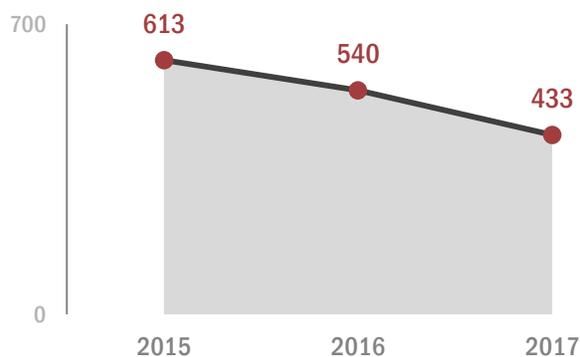


72% of the chronically homeless identify as men.



Chronic Homelessness occurs when a person with a disability experiences homelessness for at least 12 months out of the last 3 years. Households experiencing chronic homelessness often face significant barriers to housing, and are prioritized for the most intensive services.

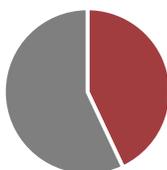
There has been a **major decline** in the total number of chronically homeless.



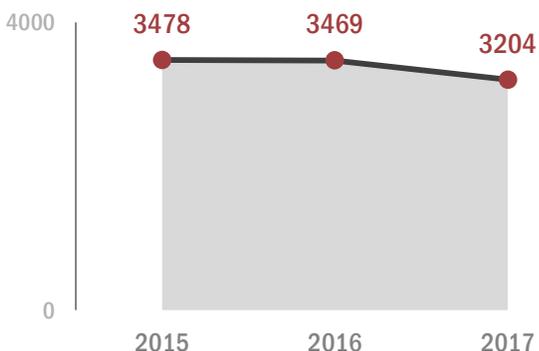
SINGLE ADULTS

More than 3,000 adults without children were served. While people of all types experience homelessness, single adults tend to be older, and are more likely to have a disability than other populations.

43% were homeless for the first time.



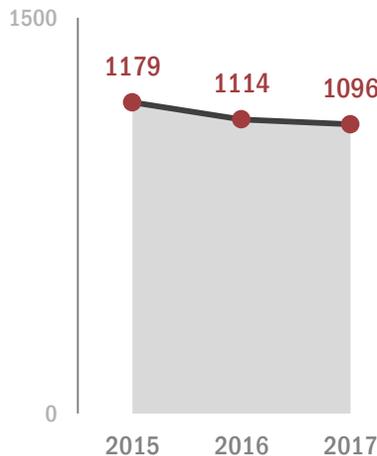
Single adults experiencing homelessness saw a sharp decline in 2017.



FAMILIES

Households with adults and children under 18 are served by our family providers. 2,313 adults and children in families were served in 2017. While families experiencing homelessness have more income on average than individuals, they still face many barriers to housing, such as large family sizes and previous evictions.

There has been a **decline** in the number of families served.



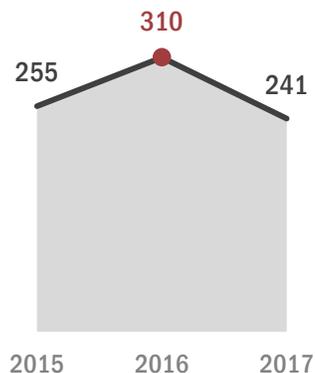
PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

We partner with McKinney-Vento liaisons in local school districts and charities to ensure that any children under 18 experiencing homelessness are able to continue attending school without disruption.

VETERANS

Ending Veteran Homelessness has been a special priority for Washtenaw County since 2015 when we joined a national change movement of more than 70 communities committed to ending Veteran and Chronic homelessness called Built for Zero.

Total Veterans Served Overtime



WHY THE SPIKE IN 2016?

In 2015, we began working more closely with the Ann Arbor VA to ensure that all Veterans experiencing homelessness receive the assistance they need. Many Veterans who previously had been served only by the VA started to be referred to our system. This increased integration may explain the sudden jump.



Jay, an 8-year US Navy veteran, suffered a stroke at age 41 leaving him challenged by walking and speaking. With most of his family living down south, he was left without a housing solution. In 2018, Jay connected with Michigan Ability Partners and was placed in a site with other veterans. "They gave me the short term help until I could do more things on my own." As of early 2019, Jay is living on his own in an apartment in Ypsilanti. Through the Keys for Vets program, Jay's move-in costs and first three months' rent were covered. He receives Social Security Disability payments, and is now paying rent on his own. Of working with MAP, Jay says, "They were awesome. They paid attention to my needs and really listened to me."

Total number housed:
73 VETERANS



Average length of time homeless: **119 DAYS**



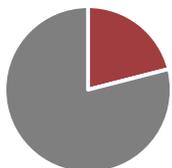
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence become literally homeless because they are fleeing a situation where they are at risk of being hurt or killed. While many survivors do not become homeless as a result of fleeing, shelter is an important last resort, supporting both survivor empowerment and assailant accountability.

308

total number of adult and child survivors

21% of those experiencing homelessness are survivors.



8,710

total number of nights in shelter provided

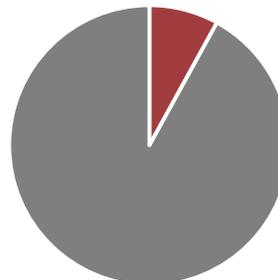
Average length of time homeless: **33 DAYS**



YOUTH

Youth aged 15 to 24 are more likely to experience homelessness as a result of a crisis in relationships than due to economic reasons, and may be more vulnerable to victimization or trafficking. Because youth are very resourceful in finding short-term housing, the number of at-risk youth is likely far higher than the number receiving services. While addressing youth homelessness requires specific supports and tailored services, timely interventions with youth can prevent future episodes of homelessness from occurring.

5% of youth experiencing homelessness are unaccompanied minors (under age 18).



721

total number of youth served

5X

Youth are more than 5 times as likely to be transgender/gender non-conforming than the overall homeless population.

MOVING FORWARD

RACE EQUITY

A brief glance at local data on homelessness reveals a high level of racial inequity. Black or African American households in Washtenaw County are more than 12 times as likely to experience homelessness than white households.

To better understand and address this landscape, we use data to learn how race intersects with homelessness in Washtenaw County. We aim to elevate the voices of people with lived experience, facilitate community conversations around race and equity, and identify opportunities to address inequity within our work.



7 out of every 10 families are single mothers of color with children

Homeless families seeking help are over 6 times more likely to be black compared to the general population of Washtenaw County.

% BLACK IN THE HOMELESS POPULATION:

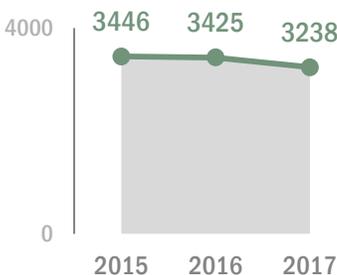


% BLACK IN WASHTENAW COUNTY:

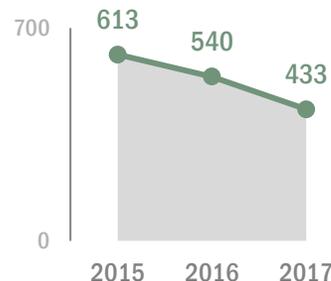


SYSTEM SUCCESSES

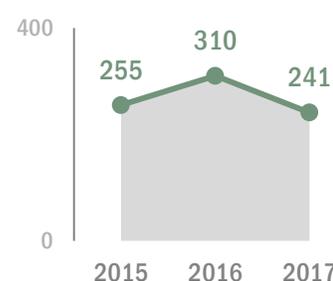
People experiencing literal homelessness has declined.



29% drop in chronic homelessness since 2015



20% drop in Veteran homelessness since 2016



Improved Coordinated Entry processes to make our system more inclusive, trauma-informed, & person centered.

SYSTEM GOALS



Goal One: End Veteran and Chronic Homelessness
Our highest priority is making Veteran and Chronic homelessness rare, brief, and non-repeating.



Goal Two: Improve Youth Services
To improve outcomes for youth, we will listen to youth with lived experience of homelessness, seek additional resources, and improve coordinate with other systems of care.



Goal Three: Coordinate with Law Enforcement
While local law participates in CoC leadership, better coordination could lead to improved outcomes for all residents, especially those experiencing homelessness.



Goal Four: Increase Funding and Resources
We need more permanent housing recourses to build a system that fully meets the need for services.

GET IN TOUCH

1. If you are homeless or experiencing a housing crisis, please call HAWC at (734) 961-1999
2. If you want to get updates, please sign up for the email list at [HTTP://BIT.LY/WCHOMELESSNESS](http://bit.ly/wchomelessness)
3. If you are interested in homelessness advocacy, please contact Washtenaw Housing Alliance at [HTTP://WWW.WHALLIANCE.ORG/](http://www.whalliance.org/)
4. If you have additional questions, please contact the Washtenaw Continuum of Care lead at (734) 544-6748