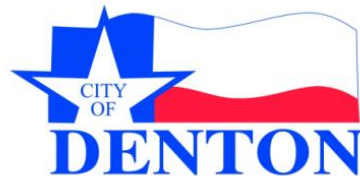# DENTON COUNTY HOMELESSNESS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Making homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring

2017 – 2020 Strategic Plan

A Collective Impact Initiative of:

CITY OF DENTON

United Way
United Way
of Denton County, Inc.
UnitedWayDenton.org

Mission

The Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team fosters an effective and coordinated system of homelessness prevention and intervention, resulting in homelessness that is rare, brief and nonrecurring through:

- Community awareness and connection
- Data-driven, evidenced-based, fiscally responsible recommendations
- Innovative solutions around affordable housing, access to primary and behavioral health care services, adequate incomes and coordinated services
- Mobilizing, advocating and empowering public-private community-wide collaboration

Vision

Every person in Denton County has a place to call home that is safe, affordable, accessible and supported by community resources.

Overall Strategy – Collective Impact

Common Agenda
- All participants **share a vision for change** that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions.

Shared Measurement
- All participating organizations **agree on the ways success will be measured and reported**, with a short list of common indicators identified and used for learning and improvement.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated activities through a **mutually reinforcing plan of action**.
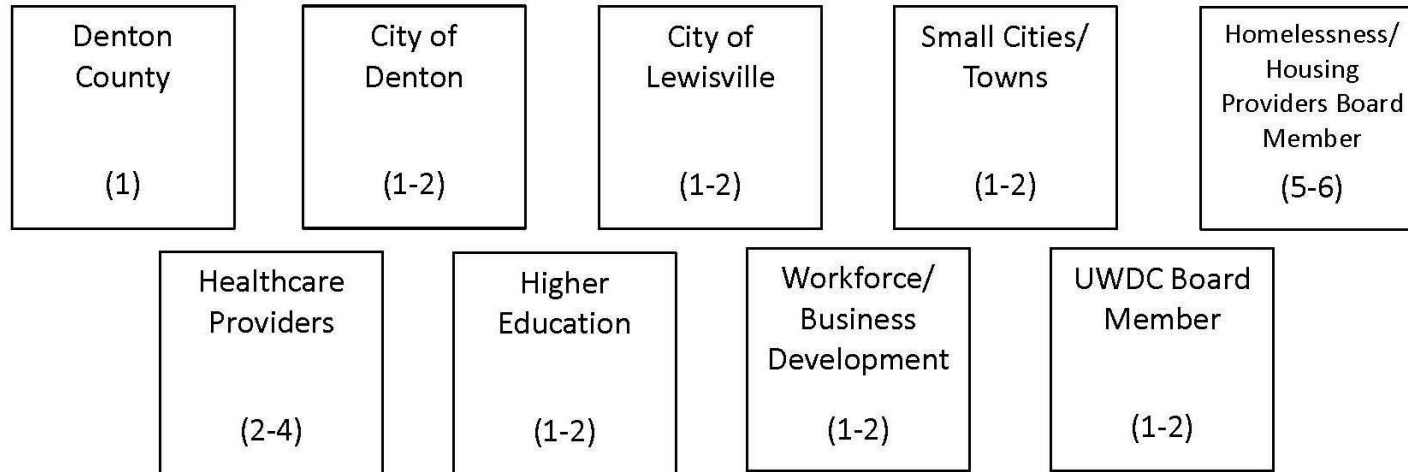
Continuous Communication
- All players engage in **frequent and structured open communication** to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
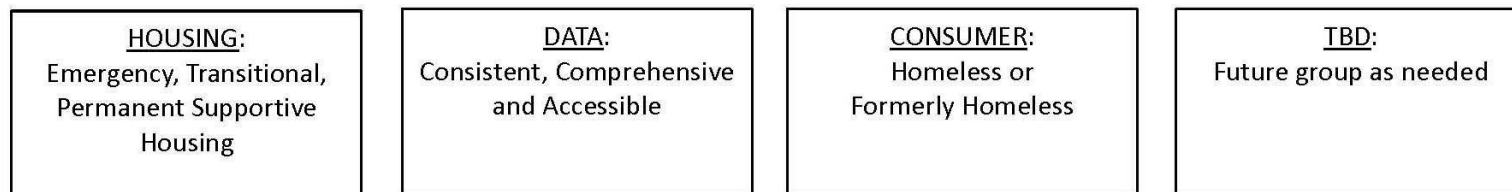
Backbone Support
- An **independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative** provides ongoing support by guiding the initiative's vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources.

Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team Structure
(14-23 Total Members)

Denton County (1)	City of Denton (1-2)	City of Lewisville (1-2)	Small Cities/ Towns (1-2)	Homelessness/ Housing Providers Board Member (5-6)

Healthcare Providers (2-4)	Higher Education (1-2)	Workforce/ Business Development (1-2)	UWDC Board Member (1-2)

Work Groups

HOUSING: Emergency, Transitional, Permanent Supportive Housing	DATA: Consistent, Comprehensive and Accessible	CONSUMER: Homeless or Formerly Homeless	TBD: Future group as needed

DCHLT HOUSING WORKGROUP STRATEGIC GOAL:
INCREASE ACCESS TO HOUSING FOR RESIDENTS OF DENTON COUNTY

Objectives	Strategies	Metrics	Status
What is the need? Identify Unmet Housing Needs in Denton County	• Develop Housing Crisis Response System • Determine level of housing need for Denton County through utilization of housing study/homelessness data • Identify available housing resources and types of housing* (short-term assistance, long-term assistance, independent living) • Expand housing and rental availability databases (student housing market; general housing market)	• Develop Housing Priority List o Develop and Implement Priority Matrix** • Clearly define percentages of diversified types of housing to serve literal homeless (short-term assistance, long-term assistance, independent living) • Develop comprehensive supportive housing inventory • Identify occupancy rates; rental rates	• In progress • In progress • In progress • Pending
How do we meet the need? Expand Housing Capacity in Denton County	• Develop replicable supportive housing program protocol • Network with private landlords • Utilize data to increase diverse stock of supportive/affordable housing	• Add 10 units of supportive housing in Denton County by March 2018 • Generate program overview for replicable supportive housing pilot • Create database of private landlords • Research landlord risk mitigation funds[+] to provide incentives for landlords to participate in programs • Evaluate relationship between transportation and access to housing • Support addition of necessary number of units o DCHLT compose letters of support for addition of supportive/affordable housing units in Denton County	• In progress (2/10) • Complete • Pending • Pending • Pending • As needed
How do we keep people housed? Foster Housing Stability in Denton County	• Identify and reduce barriers to access • Support case management capacity of local agencies; encourage uniformity • Collaboration between agencies to create seamless transition to maintain long term housing stability	• Assess capacity of local economy; analyze household income levels of Denton County residents compared to housing costs • Assess case management capacity and needs of local agencies and make necessary funding recommendations to DCHLT • Assess Availability/accessibility of wrap-around services • Assess capacity of local agencies to provide diversionary services to people experiencing homelessness	• Pending • In Progress • In Progress • In Progress

Objectives	Strategies	Metrics	Status
System Maintenance Influence Public Policy	• Advocate and support on-going housing initiatives at all levels of government o City/County) o State o Federal • Student Housing - Address need for student housing; affect future planning of universities to increase student housing	• Explore inclusionary zoning and other housing policy to support objectives • Network and communicate advocacy goals at various levels of government: o City/County – Chambers of commerce, city government committees, North Central Texas Council of Governments o State – Denton County Delegates in Texas Legislature o Federal – Denton County Delegates in Federal Government	• In Progress • Pending
Seek Funding to Support Strategic Objectives	• Seek funding to supportive objectives	• Make funding recommendations to address needs that result from strategic objectives: o Case Management Capacity o Increase diverse housing stock o Landlord Risk Mitigation Funds	• In Progress

*Types of Housing –
- Short-Term Assistance – Financial and/or case management assistance that may last 30 days to two years and may consist of the following: emergency shelter, hotel/motel vouchers, short-term rental subsidy (Rapid Re-Housing/RRH) that may or may not include supportive services, Transitional Housing (TH), etc.
- Long-Term Assistance – Financial and/or case management assistance that lasts more than two years; may occur in the form of Housing Choice Voucher (formerly Section 8) programs or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs
- Independent Living – Permanent solutions that allow Denton County residents to find and maintain units they can afford based on their income (paying 30% or less of household income toward housing); may also consist of short-term assistance to keep people at-risk of homelessness house (Housing Prevention/HP)

**Priority Matrix – This tool is meant to help communities determine, in conjunction with the Comprehensive Assessment Tool, which households should be prioritized for services. The goal of this tool is to keep waiting lists for services short and to provide clarity and objectivity for providers in selecting clients for their services.

[+]Landlord Risk Mitigation Funds – A mitigation fund is essentially an added protection for landlords who are willing to reduce screening criteria to rent to someone with limited income, a poor rental history, or a criminal history. If there are excessive damages to the unit, lost rent, or legal fees beyond the security deposit, landlords can be reimbursed for damages up to a specified amount (Source: https://www.usich.gov/news/using-incentives-to-engage-landlords-risk-mitigation-funds)

DCHLT DATA WORKGROUP STRATEGIC GOAL:
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF HOMELESSNESS DATA MANAGEMENT IN DENTON COUNTY

Objectives	Strategies	Metrics	Status

Implement Coordinated Entry in Denton County	• Define Denton County Coordinated Entry Process
	• Identify Phases of Coordinated Entry Implementation
	   o Prioritize Veterans
	   o Denton Supportive Housing Pilot
	• Address capacity and barriers of agencies to implement Coordinated Entry at staff and governing board levels
	   o Encourage consistent utilization of HMIS Database & Housing Priority List
	     ▪ Increase access to and training/support for use of HMIS database
	• Conduct assessment of equipment and personnel needed for implementation and maintenance of Coordinated Entry Process in Denton County
		• Develop Coordinated Entry Policy and Procedure Document for Denton County and corresponding protocol training materials
		   o Identify critical measures for success (ex: adjustment of internal processes at agencies)
		   o Establish baseline goals for amount of time people experience a housing crisis (7 days, 14 days, 30 days, 90 days, etc.)
		   o Determine which agencies will serve as points of entry for capturing housing need
		   o Identify roles of agencies throughout Coordinated Entry process (administer common assessment, place people onto Housing Priority List, remove people from Housing Priority List, etc.)
		• Develop Logic Model to track inputs, outputs and outcomes throughout Coordinated Entry Implementation
		• Define and Develop Priority Matrix for Denton County
		• Track use of system and tools throughout Denton County including but not limited to:
		   o Number of individuals/families entered in HMIS via Coordinated Entry process
		   o Number of people placed on Housing Priority List
		   o Number of people house (taken off Housing Priority List)
		   o Number of agencies using HMIS
		   o Number of licenses at each agency
		   o Number of agencies practicing real-time data entry (entering data into HMIS at time of assessment)
			• In Progress
			
			• Complete
			
			• In Progress
			
			• In Progress

Determine Housing Need	• Utilize local data to identify gaps in needed housing and services by DCHLT homeless definition category:
	   o Category 1: Chronic/Literal
	   o Category 2: At-Risk
	   o Category 3: Youth
	   o Category 4: Domestic Violence
		• Track Coordinated Entry Process metrics in addition to following measures to determine housing need (including but not limited to)
		   o School district homelessness numbers
		   o Number of people on Denton Housing Authority wait list
		   o Denton County Census Cost Burdened Estimates
			• In Progress
			
			• In process

Objectives	Strategies	Metrics	Status
	• Use data to inform policy recommendations	• Utilize Denton Supportive Housing Pilot as case study for Coordinated Entry implementation; consistently measure progress	

Develop and Maintain Denton County Homelessness Data Dashboard	• Determine information needs of community (regarding homelessness data)
	• Determine sources of homelessness and housing data
	• Develop web-based dashboard of comprehensive Denton County Homelessness Data
	• Continuous evaluation of System Performance Measures in HMIS
	• Determine resources needed to maintain dashboard
	• Identify funding and resource needs to develop and maintain dashboard
		• Identify data sources
		• Establish master template for consistent reporting of data from multiple data sources
		• Utilize System Performance Measures to monitor effectiveness of Denton County's Housing Crisis Response System:
		   o Number of System Performance Measures tracked through HMIS
		• Number of agencies reporting towards SPMs
		• Conduct community focus group discussions to assess community information needs to inform dashboard
		   o Establish timeframe
		   o Track number of discussions conducted
			• Complete
			
			• In Process
			
			• In Process
			
			• Pending

Seek Funding to Support Strategic Objectives	• Seek funding to support objectives	• Make funding recommendations to address needs that result from strategic objectives:
		   o Access to necessary number of HMIS licenses at each agency
		   o Personnel needed to oversee and support Coordinated Entry Process in Denton County
		   o Personnel needed
			• In Progress

DCHLT BACKBONE SUPPORT STRATEGIC GOAL:
SUPPORT THE MISSION AND VISION OF THE DENTON COUNTY HOMELESSNESS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Objectives	Strategies	Metrics	Status
Increase Community Awareness and Connection	• Create Speakers Bureau slide presentation to be administered by DCHLT Appointees at civic groups throughout Denton County • Coordinate with regional homelessness initiatives and groups throughout Denton County and the North Texas region to align efforts and raise awareness	• Track number of Speakers Bureau presentations conducted throughout Denton County on a quarterly basis • Track number of work session presentations to city councils and Denton County Commissioners Court • Host annual homelessness awareness events	• In progress • In progress • Nov. 2016 – Denton County Homelessness Summit

Support Strategic Goals of DCHLT Workgroups	• Track progress of workgroup goals and objectives of DCHLT Workgroups:
	   o DCHLT Housing Workgroup
	   o DCHLT Data Workgroup
	   o DCHLT/DCBHLT Community Conversations Workgroup
		• Provide monthly Workgroup Reports to DCHLT Appointees
		• Provide Monthly/Quarterly Workplan Updates to DCHLT Appointees
			• In progress
			• In progress

CATEGORY 1: Chronic/Literal

People who are living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided.

CATEGORY 2: At-Risk

People who are losing their primary nighttime residence, which may include a motel or hotel or a doubled-up situation, within 14 days.

- May include *Cost Burdened* Families: Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. An estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes for housing. A family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the United States.

CATEGORY 3: Youth

Families with children or unaccompanied youth who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state.

CATEGORY 4: Domestic Violence

People who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

Accurate, high quality data is important when measuring community efforts toward ending homelessness. Performance measurements help communities understand if elements of a Housing Crisis Response System are working effectively together to achieve their goals of preventing and ending homelessness.

The implementation of a Coordinated Entry System will assist Denton County's Housing Crisis Response System in collecting information and data about people experiencing homelessness in the community. Consistent monitoring of the following performance measures will assist in identifying gaps in homeless and housing services and where to channel collective impact efforts.

Number – Reduce number of people experiencing homelessness

Length –Reduce the length of time households are enrolled in emergency shelter and transitional housing experiencing homelessness.

First Time Homeless – Reduce the number of persons who become homeless for the first time

Recidivism – Reduce the number of people who return to homelessness after receiving permanent housing

Barriers – Increase access to housing through a variety of successful housing placement options

Income – Increase income of homeless adults being served

Outreach – Identify vulnerable populations

Organizational Structure

Balance of State (BoS) – Texas's largest CoC. The Texas Balance of State CoC is made up of all service providers, advocates, local government officials, and citizens who work to eliminate homelessness in over 213 counties in Texas outside of most major metropolitan cities. DCHC is a member. Texas Homeless Network (THN) serves as the CoC lead agency, HMIS administrator and the applicant for the HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Program for the Balance of State.

Continuum of Care (CoC) – CoC's are authorized by HUD, CoC's are designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. CoC's apply to HUD and are awarded CoC grants that then provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, state, and local governments to end homelessness.

US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – One of the many things offered by HUD are grants and programs related to the topic of homelessness.

Grants – Local Grants related to Homelessness (not all inclusive):

COD – City of Denton Human Services Grant
ESG – Emergency Solution Grant
EFSP – Emergency Food and Shelter Program
SHP – Supportive Housing Grant
CoC – Continuum of Care Grants

Programs – List of some homeless program types (not all inclusive):

Affordable Housing – Defined as paying 30% or less than an individual's income for housing.

Coordinated Entry – Process used in communities to streamline access, assessment, and referral process for housing and other services across agencies in a community. In a coordinated system, each system entry point ('Front Door') uses the same assessment/intake tool and makes decisions on which programs families are referred based on a comprehensive understanding of each program's specific requirements, target population, and available beds and services.

Emergency Shelter – Shelter provided to address the immediate needs of homeless persons living on the street by providing temporary housing.

Diversion – Diversion is a strategy that prevents homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC) – The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is a point-in-time inventory of provider programs within a Continuum of Care that provide beds and units dedicated to serve persons

who are homeless, categorized by five Program Types: Emergency Shelter; Transitional Housing; Rapid Re-housing; Safe Haven; and Permanent Supportive Housing.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – HMIS tracks the data regarding the homeless and services provided.

Homelessness Prevention (HP) – Short- and/or medium-term rental assistance provided to prevent an individual or family from moving into an emergency shelter or another place not fit for human habitation.

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) – Formerly known as Section 8 Vouchers; federally funded housing voucher for low-income individuals and families; administered locally by the Denton Housing Authority

Housing Crisis Response System (HCRS) – An effective HCRS identifies all people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness across the community, prevents homelessness whenever possible, provides immediate access through coordinated entry to shelter and crisis services without barriers to entry, as stable housing and supports are being secured, and quickly connects people who experience homelessness to housing assistance and/or services tailored to the unique strengths and needs of households and which enable them to achieve and maintain permanent housing.

Housing First – Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.

Housing Priority List (HPL) – List of individuals and families who have been assessed using the VI-SPDAT in HMIS and are waiting to be connected to a permanent housing solution

Low-Barrier – Housing solutions that requires a minimum number of expectations of the people who wish to be placed there.

Point-In-Time (PIT) Count – A count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. Continuums of Care also must conduct a count of unsheltered homeless persons every other year (odd numbered years). Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) – Housing for people who need long-term housing assistance with supportive services to stay housed.

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) – Housing relocation and stabilization services and assistance provided to help a homeless individual or family move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) – Monthly benefit for people who are living with a disability

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) – Monthly benefit program for people with little income who are also living with a disability

Supportive Housing (SH) and Transitional Housing (TH) – Housing that is provided with case management designed to help client achieve self-sufficiency and exit the program over a determined amount of time

Street Outreach. Essential services and outreach provided to unsheltered homeless people on the street

Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) – Combination of Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance and individualized case management services for Veterans experiencing homelessness

VI-SPDAT – The VI-SPDAT is a pre-screening, or triage tool that is designed to be used by all providers within a community to quickly assess the health and social needs of homeless persons and match them with the most appropriate support and housing interventions that are available

Wrap-Around Services. Community based, client centered approach to provide other supportive services as available and as needed for clients to maintain housing stability. Wrap-Around Services might include: Health Care, Child Care, Substance Use Treatment, Mental Health Care, Education, Employment, Legal Services, Counseling, Transportation, etc.