



NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

HOUSING and HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE

SEPTEMBER 2025 PROGRESS REPORT



Executive Summary

The Housing and Homelessness Task Force was established to develop a **comprehensive, long-term plan** to prevent and end homelessness in Grand Traverse County. It brings together representatives from government agencies, homeless and social service providers, healthcare organizations, housing developers, and law enforcement to **coordinate efforts, share resources, and create effective solutions**. The goal is to **foster collaboration across sectors**, ensuring that all community efforts work together toward providing safe, stable, and affordable housing for everyone. This **unified approach** aims to build a stronger, healthier community by addressing homelessness systematically and compassionately.

In September, the **Leadership Team** met to provide **strategic direction and oversight** for the community-wide Task Force. They reviewed the proposed Advisory Council agenda and program to identify **which Work Group recommendations needed further input**, discussed **upcoming presentations** by the Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness at **state and regional summits**, addressed challenges with the **Jubilee House's funding request to the City of Traverse City**, and introduced the new Housing and Homelessness **Task Force website** (www.housingandhomelessnesstaskforce.org). The Leadership Team is responsible for **setting the overall vision, guiding the community plan**, and ensuring Work Groups have the **resources and support to succeed**.

Each of the three **Work Groups** met twice in September to **refine and consolidate recommendations** and **maintain alignment** with Task Force timelines. Collaborative efforts included a **tour of overnight shelters** at Safe Harbor and the Goodwill Inn for members of the Community Cares Coalition. The **Housing Solutions Supports Subgroup** held an additional meeting to delve into their **Integrated Care Team recommendation**, underscoring **ongoing planning and cross-group cooperation**.

In addition to the group meetings, the Task Force hosted its **second Listening Session** with Jubilee House guests in September at Grace Episcopal Church. **Twelve men experiencing homelessness** were given a **forum to share experiences and insights** in an anonymous, candid setting. The Advisory Council, comprising Leadership Team members, Work Group chairs, community leaders, officials, and subject matter experts, **reviewed progress, offered input on solutions, and discussed resource and policy support**. They also engaged with the new **Task Force website's resources** and divided into breakout groups to **scrutinize three priority areas**, with findings fed back to the Work Groups for refinement.

Task Force Goals

The goals of the Task Force are to develop a unified strategy, address systemic barriers to housing, maximize funding and resources, enhance service coordination, track progress and accountability, incorporate community perspectives and stakeholder input, and finally, to advocate for policy solutions.

To **develop a unified strategy**, we are aligning efforts across agencies, ensuring shared goals, streamlining services, and determining the most effective use of resources to prevent and end homelessness in our region.

We are **addressing systemic barriers to housing** by tackling factors such as housing affordability, mental health services, addiction treatment, and economic stability. The Task Force is working toward long-term solutions that reduce the risk of homelessness.

The Task Force is **maximizing funding and resources** by strengthening coordination of federal, state, and local funding to enhance efficiency and close service gaps. We are also advocating for additional resources to meet the growing demand for housing and support services.

By bringing together housing providers, healthcare systems, and social services, the Task Force is **enhancing service coordination** by improving collaboration and accessibility, ensuring that individuals receive the right support at the right time.

We are **tracking progress and accountability** by setting measurable goals and regularly evaluating outcomes. The Task Force is promoting transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in local housing and homelessness initiatives.

Through targeted engagement efforts, including public input sessions and collaboration with community leaders, the Task Force is **incorporating community perspectives and stakeholder input**. We are promoting awareness, education, and support for effective strategies to address and end homelessness.

To create lasting change, the Task Force is **advocating for policy solutions** by championing strategies that expand deeply affordable housing, increase funding for services, and remove regulatory barriers that impact those experiencing homelessness.

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team met on September 9th to provide **strategic direction, oversight, and accountability** for the community-wide Task Force's efforts to address and end homelessness. They are responsible for **setting the overall vision**, guiding the **development of the community plan**, and ensuring that Work Groups have the **resources and support** needed to succeed.

The meeting was held to review the proposed Advisory Council agenda and program to determine **which work group recommendations need further input**. The team was advised of **upcoming presentations** by the Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness at the Michigan State Housing Development Authority Summit on Ending

Homelessness and Northwest Michigan Housing Summit sponsored by Housing North. Challenges with the **funding request made by the Jubilee House** to the City of Traverse City were also addressed. Finally, we introduced the team to the new Housing and Homelessness **Task Force website** (www.housingandhomelessnesstaskforce.org).

Working Groups

The Safety Net Services, Emergency Shelter and Services, and Housing Solutions groups each met twice in September in order to further **refine and consolidate their recommendations**, and to stay on track with Task Force timelines. **There has been ongoing planning and collaboration** happening among the members, including a **tour of the overnight shelters** at Safe Harbor on September 4th and the Goodwill Inn on September 25th at the request of the **Community Cares Coalition**. The Housing Solutions **Supports Subgroup** also held a special meeting on September 12th to take a deeper dive into their **recommendation for an Integrated Care Team**.

Safety Net Services

The Safety Net Services work group is developing recommendations to **strengthen support systems** that **prevent homelessness and assist those currently experiencing it**. Focus areas include access to healthcare and mental health services, crisis intervention, diversion and prevention efforts, and essential resources.

In Attendance at the September 5th and September 12th meetings:

Joe Barkman - Northern Lakes Community Mental Health, **Ryan Hannon** - Central United Methodist Church, **Jennifer Holm** - Traverse City Police Dept., **Sarah Hughes** - Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, **Dr. David Klee** - Munson Family Practice, **Bailey LaPan** - Goodwill Northern Michigan , **Paula Lapinski** - Addiction Treatment Services

Recommendation	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Improve homeless response system navigation and service coordination	Enhance Service Coordination	Mid-term	1
Expand Quick Response Team and Street Outreach coverage to the entire county to ensure equitable community outreach	Enhance Service Coordination	Short-term	2
Integrate trauma-informed practices in behavioral health and resilience-building strategies across the homeless response system as a secondary prevention strategy to prevent returns to homelessness	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing	Long-term	3
Increase regional access to mobile health and mental health services including mobile med and the new crisis center	Enhancing Service Coordination	Short-term	4

Emergency Shelter and Services

The Emergency Shelter and Services work group is developing recommendations to **improve crisis response systems** and ensure **immediate, safe, and supportive shelter**. This includes enhancing emergency shelters, day services, and housing navigation efforts.

In Attendance at the September 4th and September 25th meetings:

Dan Buron - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Jessica Hamilton** - Community Cares Coalition, **Ryan Hannon** - Central United Methodist Church, **Patrick Livingston** - Safe Harbor, **Mike McCrary** - Safe Harbor, **Hannah Wescott** - Grace Episcopal/Jubilee House, **Megan Wick** - Community Cares Coalition

Recommendation	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Create a sustainable budget and funding plan for emergency and day shelter services	Maximize Funding and Resources	Short-term	1
Develop a clear and feasible plan for the location(s) and scope of emergency and day shelter services that balances accessibility, service quality, community concerns, and long-term system goals	Develop a Unified Strategy	Mid-term	2
Develop a consistent set of recommended service standards across all emergency and day shelters to ensure high-quality, trauma-informed, and equitable services	Enhance Service Coordination	Mid-term	3

Housing Solutions

The Housing Solutions group is working to create **affordable housing options** for people exiting homelessness by **securing funding, partnering with developers and landlords**, and **advancing supportive housing models** like Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-Housing and other innovative housing solutions.

In Attendance at the September 4th and/or September 12th meetings:

Becca Binder - Northern Michigan Supportive Housing, **Dan Buron** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Maxwell Cameron** - Grand Traverse County, **Shelly Charron** - Housing North, **Nora Dunlop** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Julie Ellalasingham** - St. Vincent DePaul, **Karl Fulmer** - Traverse City Housing Commission, **Sarah Hughes** - Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, **Claire Karner** - East Bay Township, **Paula Lapinski** - Addiction Treatment Services, **Tony Lentych** - Michigan State Housing Development Authority, **Craig Patterson** - Woda Cooper Companies, Inc., **Juliette Schultz** - Women's Resource Center, **Shawn Winter** - City of Traverse City

Recommendation from the Development Sub-Group	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Expand deeply affordable housing availability and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) options	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing	Long-term	1
Explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as Brownfield TIF, affordable housing millages, progressive real estate transfer tax, etc.	Maximize Funding and Resources	Mid-term	2
Advocate for increased density and zoning flexibility to support low income housing	Advocate for Policy Solutions	Short-term	3
Adopt an incentives toolkit and developer checklists that consider homelessness and encourage affordable housing during the planning stages	Enhance Service Coordination	Short-term	4

Recommendation from the Supports Sub-Group	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Increase access to behavioral health and integrated care supports for those residing in Permanent Supportive Housing through the development of a comprehensive care team	Enhance Service Coordination	Mid-term	1
Continue to expand Permanent Supportive Housing programs with support from city and county resources	Maximize Funding and Resources	Mid-term	2
Reduce silos while broadening and aligning funding streams	Develop a Unified Strategy	Short-term	3

Listening Session

On September 11th, the Task Force hosted its **second Listening Session** during with Jubilee House guests at Grace Episcopal Church. The session provided a platform for **twelve community members**, all men aged 18 to 65 who are currently experiencing homelessness to **share their stories, challenges, and hopes**. The open and informal format allowed for **honest dialogue**, with all participants assured of **anonymity to foster candid responses**.

Key Themes

- **Housing Scarcity**
Long wait lists, strong push for 24/7 shelter and expanded county resources.
- **Pines closure**
3 camping, 2 in vehicles, 7 in shelter → ongoing vulnerability.
- **Gap between rough outdoor living and formal shelter**
Options seen as insufficient.
- **Importance of support networks**
Central United Methodist and Jubilee House are stretched; need for stronger outreach.
- **Street Outreach and Quick Response Team**
Praised for proactive engagement and connections.
- **Critical levers**
Better transit, more front line social workers, housing to reunite families, safer shelter accountability.
- **Systemic barriers**
Conflict with police responding to nuisance calls, scarcity of bicycles; need to move across shelters/parks/jail, criminal records preventing housing, fragmented mental health services.
- **Recommendations**
Harm-reduction balance, sober-living within shelters, mobility tools (bus passes, bikes).

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council includes the Leadership Team, Work Group chairs, community leaders, local and state officials, and subject matter experts. They **review progress** from each work group, **offer input** on proposed solutions, and **help secure the necessary resources** and **policy support** to implement the community-wide action plan.

In Attendance at the September 18th Meeting:

Nate Alger - GT County, **Deb Allen** - City of Traverse City, **Chris Barsheff** - Garfield Township, **Becca Binder** - Northwest Michigan Supportive Housing, **Dan Buron** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Rick Bellingham** - Facilitator, **Warren Call** - Traverse Connect, **Randy Fewless** - GT County Sheriff Dept., **Karl Fulmer** - Traverse City Housing Commission, **Ashley Halladay-Schmandt** - NW Coalition to End Homelessness, **Ryan Hannon** - Central United Methodist Church, **Jennifer Holm** - TC Police Dept., **Michele Howard** - Traverse Area District Library, **Sarah Hughes** - Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, **Terri LaCroix-Kelty** - Munson Medical Center, **Deb Lake** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Bailey LaPan** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Pat Livingston** - Safe Harbor, **Alison Metiva** - GT Regional Community Foundation, **Angela Mikula** - Lived Experience of Homelessness, **Connor Miller** - Aspire North, **Christie Minervini** - NW Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness, **Chief Matt Richmond** - TC Police Dept., **Kendall Rodriguez** - Networks Northwest, **Megan Wick** - Community Cares Coalition

The Advisory Council **reviewed progress** and heard a few updates, including the **launch of a new Task Force website**, which includes an archive of all presentations, communications, and draft recommendations to date

(www.housingandhomelessnessnmi.org). Ashley Halladay-Schmandt shared work group reports and the council members broke into small groups to discuss **three key priorities** needing further **examination and input**:

1. Housing Solutions Development Subgroup: "Explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as Brownfield TIF, affordable housing millage, progressive real estate transfer tax, etc. for more Permanent Supportive Housing units."
2. Housing Solutions Supports Subgroup: "Increase access to behavioral health and integrated care supports for those residing in Permanent Supportive Housing through the development of a comprehensive care team."
3. Safety Net Services: "Expand Quick Response Team coverage to the entire county to ensure equitable community outreach."

Representatives from each break out group **reported out their ideas and findings**, which were sent back to the individual work groups to **consider and incorporate**.

For more information

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