



NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

HOUSING and HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE

AUGUST 2025 PROGRESS REPORT



Executive Summary

The Task Force work groups met **several times in August**, shifting from **broad idea-generation** to structured development of **concrete recommendations**. Each of the three work groups—Emergency Shelter & Services, Housing Solutions, and Safety Net Services—used the Task Force’s recommendation funnel and template to refine their proposals.

Recommendation Funnel

Each work group began by using the funnel to ensure recommendations consistently meet the following criteria:

- Data-informed and achievable by the City, County, or nonprofit community
- Aligned with Task Force values and Housing First principles
- Leverage partnerships without causing harm
- Benefit multiple stakeholders
- Include measurable outcomes

Recommendation Template

Once a recommendation passes through the funnel, groups use the Task Force template to refine details, addressing:

- What does this mean in practice?
- What is already in place?
- Where are the gaps?
- What steps would help implementation?
- What would success look like?

This process ensures recommendations are **clearly defined, actionable, and aligned** with the Task Force’s overarching goal: **addressing and ending homelessness in our community**.

Next Steps

In September, each work group will complete templates for their recommendations. The next phase will focus on **developing budgets** and **identifying funding requests** to support implementation.

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 cancelled its August meeting, though there was ongoing planning and review happening with the facilitator and among the members. They continue to provide **strategic direction, oversight, and accountability**, and they are also 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.

A **key recommendation** that came out of the July 31st meeting was to create a **Task Force website**. We have completed that task and will formally **launch the site in September**. It will be continually updated with our progress,

and important information regarding the plan and how we accomplished the goals outlined earlier in this document (www.housingandhomelessnesstaskforce.org).

Working Groups

The Safety Net Services, Emergency Shelter and Services, and Housing Solutions groups met several times in August to **dive more deeply into the material** and stay on track to meet their deadlines. Ongoing planning and collaboration among group members is underway to identify **specific, measurable changes** needed to **improve outcomes** related to each group’s recommendations.

Across the work groups, members are **actively coordinating** to refine and align the proposed actions. The focus is on clarifying what changes will be **most effective** and how **progress will be measured**, ensuring that each recommendation targets **tangible improvements**.

A **key development** is an effort to **streamline the recommendations** by combining similar ideas and eliminating duplication. The result will be a smaller, more **focused set of recommendations** that emphasizes urgency, achievability, and data-informed decisions.

Safety Net Services

Recommendation	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Expand Quick Response Team coverage to the entire county to ensure equitable community outreach	Enhance Service Coordination	Mid-term	1
Integrate trauma-informed practices in behavioral health and resilience-building strategies across the homeless response system (not finalized)	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing	Mid-term	2
Improve homeless response system navigation and service coordination	Enhance Service Coordination	Short-term	3
Increase access to mobile health and mental health services including mobile med and the new crisis center	Enhance Service Coordination	Mid-term	4
Invest in upstream prevention and early detection of high risk of homelessness while supporting programs that help people maintain housing stability	Maximize Funding and Resources	Long-term	5

Emergency Shelter and Services

Recommendation	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
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	Short-term	1
<i>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 (near consensus on this recommendation, but more discussions to take place)</i>	Incorporate Community Perspectives Enhance Service Coordination	Mid-term	2
Create a sustainable budget and funding plan for emergency and day shelter services.	Maximize Funding and Resources	Mid-term	3

Housing Solutions

Recommendation from the Development Sub-Group	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Expand deeply affordable housing availability and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) options	Advocate for Policy Solutions	Long-term	1
Advocate for increased density and zoning flexibility to support low income housing	Advocate for Policy Solutions	Mid-term	2
Explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as Brownfield TIF, affordable housing millages, progressive real estate transfer tax, etc.	Maximize Funding and Resources	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 Supports Sub-Group	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Increase access to behavioral health and integrated care supports for those residing in PSH through the development of a comprehensive care team	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing	Short-term	1
Strengthen system coordination and reduce silos	Develop a Unified Strategy	Short-term	2
Continue to expand Permanent Supportive Housing programs with support from city and county resources	Advocate for Policy Solutions	Mid-term	3

Listening Sessions

There were no listening sessions in August, though there is another one scheduled on September 11th at the Jubilee House. These session provide a platform for community members with lived experience of homelessness to **share their stories, challenges, and hopes**. The open and informal format allows for **honest dialogue**, with all participants assured of anonymity to foster candid responses.

Key Questions

- **Personal Experiences and Challenges**

What are some of the biggest challenges you face on a daily basis?

How does homelessness affect your access to food, healthcare, and safety?

- **Support Systems and Resources**

What kinds of support or services have you used in the past? (e.g., shelters, food programs, healthcare)

Are there services or resources you wish were available but aren't?

- **Barriers to Housing and Stability**

What do you see as the main barriers to finding and maintaining permanent housing?

What factors have helped you or could help you move toward stable housing?

- **Perceptions of Systemic Issues**

How do you feel the community or government responds to homelessness?

What policies or programs do you think would make a difference?

- **Suggestions and Ideas**

If you could suggest changes to improve services or solutions to homelessness, what would they be?

What kind of support or programs do you think would help you or others in similar situations?

- **Personal Goals and Aspirations**

What are your hopes or goals for the future?

What support would help you achieve those goals?

- **Feedback on Outreach and Engagement**

How can outreach efforts be improved to better connect with people experiencing homelessness?

What would make you feel more comfortable accessing help or services?

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. They did not meet in August— their next scheduled meeting is on September 18th.

For more information

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