



NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

HOUSING and HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE

JUNE 2025 PROGRESS REPORT



Executive Summary

The Housing and Homelessness Task Force is an initiative **designed to develop a comprehensive plan** to prevent and end homelessness in Grand Traverse County. It brings together representatives from government, homeless and social service providers, healthcare, housing development, law enforcement, and other key sectors to **align efforts, maximize resources, and drive long-term solutions for safe and stable housing.**

From May through September 2025, work groups are focusing on three key areas: **emergency shelter, safety net services, and housing solutions.** These groups are assessing current gaps, identifying best practices, and developing actionable strategies. The resulting plan will guide implementation efforts starting in 2026, ensuring a **coordinated, sustainable approach to addressing homelessness.**

The Housing and Homelessness Task Force work groups met for the second time on June 5th. With guidance from the Leadership Team, we reviewed **goals and responsibilities**, scrutinized **strategic priorities** coming out of the May Advisory Council meeting, and identified the biggest **challenges and gaps** in our current system. The Advisory Council will review the work groups' next set of recommendations at their July 17th meeting.

We continue to be amazed by the **bipartisan support** coming from City and County leadership, and they've told us they want a plan for homelessness funding that is focused on **connecting people with housing**, leaning on the model of success demonstrated by the **reduction in veteran homelessness** in our region.

The Task Force is **on track**, and **on time**, and **participation has been better than expected.** To date, we have provided **regular updates** to both the City and County Commissions, **advocated locally for our membership**, and **lobbied State and Federal elected officials** to protect current funding levels. Despite the political and economic uncertainty, we are **committed to developing a plan** to address and end homelessness in Grand Traverse County.

For more information

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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 June 27th, providing **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 focused on a process for involving Leadership Team in future communications and funding requests, and how to handle challenges within the Emergency Shelter and Services work group. Because the Task Force is moving fast, It was decided that the Leadership Team **should meet more frequently**. Their next meeting is set for August 21st, but it is anticipated that they will meet once or twice prior.

Working Groups

Safety Net Services

This group aims 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 June, the group approved the Advisory Council's **strategic priorities** (with edits), covered **data and strategies** to prevent inflow and increase outflow, and looked at ways to expand upon the **progress made by the Quick Response Team**. They also spent time brainstorming on the topic: **“What are the biggest challenges and gaps in our current system?”**

Meeting Date: June 5th

In Attendance:

Jennifer Holm - Traverse City Police Dept., **Bailey LaPan** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Joe Barkman** - Northern Lakes Community Mental Health, **Sarah Hughes** - NWMCAA, **Dr. David Klee** - Munson Family Practice, **Paula Lapinski** - ATS

Key Takeaways and Insights:

- Most first-time entries into the system stem from family/friend issues, jail releases, or shelter stays.
- Re-entry often relates to insufficient supports post-voucher or housing.
- Diversion efforts show high success in maintaining people's housing stability over three months, emphasizing the importance of early diversion and community knowledge.
- We need to clarify the appropriate upstream point for intervention and define “early intervention,” considering capacity limits and the utility of screening tools like ACE scores.

Progress on Emerging Needs and Challenges:

Need or Challenge	Work Group Activity
Strengthen and expand support systems that prevent individuals and families from falling into homelessness	Reviewed information and data related to “Identification and Prevention: Reducing the Inflow”
Increase and coordinate diversion efforts	Looked at local diversion data (26% vs. nat'l average of 20-23%); Explored safe alternatives to entering emergency shelter or the experience of unsheltered living
Provide necessary services to people while they are experiencing homelessness and are working toward housing	Studied the Quick Response Team strategies that are working: collaboration, partnerships, referrals, barrier reduction and overdose response

Next Meeting: August 7th

Emergency Shelter and Services

The goal of this group is to strengthen the **crisis response system** to provide **immediate, safe, and supportive shelter**. This includes enhancing emergency shelters, day services, and housing navigation efforts. In June, the group approved the Advisory Council’s **strategic priorities**, reviewed **best practices**, had an in-depth **discussion** on the definition of “Emergency Shelter.”

Meeting Date: June 5th

In Attendance:

Dan Buron - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Ryan Hannon** - Central United Methodist Church, **Patrick Livingston** - Safe Harbor, **Mike McCrary** - Safe Harbor, **Rev. Jim Perra** - Grace Episcopal/ Jubilee House, **Megan Wick** - Community Cares Coalition

Key Takeaways and Insights:

- General acceptance on the definition of Emergency Shelter: “As one of multiple access points within a coordinated community response, emergency shelter is a temporary, low-barrier resource for people experiencing homelessness. Emergency shelters provide immediate safety and support, while partners deliver housing-focused services to help people exit homelessness as quickly and securely as possible.”
- There was clear agreement on the importance of safety, but debate persisted on whether shelters should directly participate in diversion efforts, housing plans, or chronic homelessness.
- The consensus was that these principles should be incorporated into the overall system, regardless of whether shelters deliver all services directly.

Progress on Emerging Needs and Challenges:

Need or Challenge	Work Group Activity
Ascertain the number of beds our community will need for year-round shelter	Reviewed and discussed future needs, and will potentially invite outside experts to provide additional perspectives and insights
Determine the location and scope of services for day shelter and emergency shelter	Clarified the role of shelters and identified best practices. We will explore shelter system size and location(s) at the next meeting
Create a funding plan for shelter system	Efforts are underway to improve coordination among agencies, with work on drafting budgets and exploring policy and funding opportunities

Next Meeting: August 7th

Housing Solutions

This 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 June, the group reviewed their **goals and responsibilities**, approved the Advisory Council’s **strategic priorities**, and covered a **status report** on Chronic Homelessness. They also spent time brainstorming on the topic: **“What are the biggest challenges and gaps in our current system?”**

Meeting Date: June 5th

In Attendance:

Becca Binder - Northwest Michigan Supportive Housing, **Karl Fulmer** - Traverse City Housing Commission, **Dan Buron** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Maxwell Cameron** - Grand Traverse County, **Shelly Charron** - Housing North, **Nora Dunlop** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Julie Ellalasingham** - St. Vincent DePaul, **Sarah Hughes** - Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, **Seth Johnson** - Cunningham-Limp, **Paula Lapinski** - Addiction Treatment Services, **Craig Patterson** - Woda Cooper, **Juliette Schultz** - Women’s Resource Center, **Shawn Winter** - City of Traverse City

Key Takeaways and Insights:

- System coordination is necessary to enable better access services and ultimately gain access to stable housing.
- Advocacy needed to promote more streamlined code/approval processes, property tax incentives, etc.
- Work group needs representation from Community Mental Health, Traverse Heath Clinic and Munson Medical Center.

Emerging Needs and Challenges:

Need or Challenge	Work Group Activity
Ascertain the number of Permanent Supportive Housing units needed each year to get to zero chronic	Studied an (unverified) formula showing 178 additional PSH units needed to serve chronically homeless
Analyze system inflow-outflow.	Looked at chronic vs. system-wide. Chronic averages 60-80 individuals each month out of roughly 250 experiencing homelessness overall
Explore funding sources needed to develop more units	Reviewed a report from NWCEH showing annual local spending on housing and services is \$2.6 million
Focus on housing development for 0-50% AMI	Members are exploring a 0-3% PILOT policy, as well as easing building code and electrification restrictions

Next Meeting: August 7th