



NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

HOUSING and HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE

JULY 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.

From May through September 2025, the Task Force's work groups have been focusing on three key areas: **emergency shelter, safety net services, and housing solutions**. These groups are assessing current services, identifying gaps, and exploring best practices from other communities to develop actionable strategies. Their work involves data collection, community input, and strategic planning with the aim of producing a **detailed plan** that will guide efforts starting in 2026. This plan will serve as a roadmap for **coordinated implementation**, helping to ensure **resources are used effectively** and that solutions are **sustainable over the long term**.

On July 17th, the Task Force held its second Advisory Council meeting, where members **reviewed progress** and **prioritized recommendations** from the June work group sessions. Guided by the Leadership Team, members discussed strategies with the **greatest potential impact** and **planned next steps** for implementation. The Advisory Council will meet again in September to evaluate ongoing progress and make necessary adjustments, ensuring the plan remains **aligned with community needs** and that efforts stay on schedule. Regular updates and reviews like these are vital to maintaining **momentum and accountability** throughout the process.

Political support has been strong, with significant backing from the City of Traverse City and Grand Traverse County. Recently, the City approved over \$100,000 to support Jubilee House, the community's only day shelter, ensuring its operations can continue through the end of the year and until the final plan is adopted. Officials have also expressed frustration with **fragmented requests** from individual service providers and have called for a more **coordinated approach** to resource sharing. Recognizing the challenges inherent in this work, the Task Force remains committed and on track, pushing forward efforts to secure **lasting funding** and **strong partnerships**. Our aim is to develop a comprehensive, community-wide plan that **addresses immediate needs** while laying the foundation for **lasting solutions** to prevent and end homelessness in Grand Traverse County.

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 July 21st, and again on July 31st 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 first meeting was held virtually, and was convened after the second Advisory Council meeting in response to **needed changes in content and format**. The Advisory Council is comprised of a **broad range of local leadership**,

and the challenge is to utilize their **knowledge and expertise**, while giving them the **understanding and tools** they need to succeed. The funding request made by the Jubilee House to the City of Traverse City was also discussed.

The second meeting was focused on **assessing progress** made by the work groups and Advisory Council to date, and **studying survey responses and feedback** from participants. The need for a **communications plan**, including a **Task Force website**, was also discussed. Finally, the Leadership Team put together a plan for **more effective and efficient meetings** in the future. Because the Task Force is moving fast, the Leadership Team will be meeting more frequently. Their next meeting is set for August 19th.

Working Groups

The Safety Net Services, Emergency Shelter and Services, and Housing Solutions groups **did not meet in June**, though there is **ongoing planning and collaboration** happening among the members, and a **tour of the day shelters** at Central United Methodist Church and Jubilee House that was sponsored by the Community Cares Coalition on July 30th.

The individual work group will **meet at least once in August** to begin identifying **specific measurable changes** needed to **improve outcomes** associated with each of their recommendations. They will consider what each means in practice, what is already in place that could be leveraged or expanded upon, how to fill gaps, steps needed for implementation, and what success ultimately looks like.

Listening Session

On July 17th, the Task Force hosted its inaugural Listening Session during the community breakfast at Central United Methodist Church. The session provided a platform for **fourteen community members** with lived experience of homelessness to **share their stories, challenges, and hopes**. The majority are currently experiencing homelessness—living in various situations, including at shelters or in vehicles. The open and informal format allowed for **honest dialogue**, with all participants assured of anonymity to foster candid responses.

Key Themes

- **Service Gaps**
Limited hours at Jubilee House, inconsistent shelter rules, and lack of information about progress toward housing.
- **Barriers to Stability**
Rising costs, transportation challenges, fragmented day services, and the daily “migration” between service sites.
- **Communication Needs**
Calls for more transparency from case workers and clearer information on housing wait lists and voucher process.
- **Strengths in the System**
Praise for caring staff and volunteers at Safe Harbor, Jubilee House, and Mobile Med.
- **Solutions Suggested**
More deeply affordable housing, additional shelter options or flexibility, better mental health and employment supports, and stronger community connections.

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 July 17th Meeting:

Nate Alger - GT County, **Chris Barsheff** - Garfield Township, **Nikki Basch** - Great Lakes Housing Services, **Rick Bellingham** - Facilitator, **Dan Buron** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Warren Call** - Traverse Connect, **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., **Terri LaCroix-Kelty** - Munson Medical Center, **Deb Lake** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Jen Leaf** - Michigan State Housing Development Authority, **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., **Sakura Takano**, Rotary Charities, **Chief Jim Tuller** - TC Fire Dept., **Megan Wick** - Community Cares Coalition

The Advisory Council heard reports from the co-chairs and **prioritized recommendations** (see below) coming out of the individual work groups, prompted by the question, **“What are the biggest challenges and gaps in our current system?”** They **reviewed barriers** preventing people from accessing services, under-served populations, bottlenecks and inefficiencies, and specific challenges or recurring problems that have been identified through feedback or data analysis. They also helped determine the **terms for completion** of each recommendation.

Finally, NWCEH Director Ashley Halladay-Schmandt shared **“The Homeless Response System and Diversion”** presentation she gave at the National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference in Washington, D.C. earlier in the month.

Safety Net Services

Recommendation	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Improve system navigation and service coordination	Enhance Service Coordination	Short-term	2
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, and diversion	Maximize Funding and Resources	Long-term	5

Safety Net Services (continued)

Promote resilience and trauma-informed practices across all safety net programs	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing	Mid-term	3
Expand Quick Response Team coverage to the entire county to ensure equitable community outreach	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing	Short-term	1
Support programs that help people maintain housing stability, including utility support and crisis assistance	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing	Long-term	6

Emergency Shelter and Services

Recommendation	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Improve shelter experience by reducing trauma, increasing dignity, and aligning with Housing First principles	Advocate for Policy Solutions	Short-term	2
Examine a campus style model with integrated health and housing services	Develop a Unified Strategy	Long-term	5
Expand shelter diversion staffing and resources to prevent shelter entry whenever possible	Maximize Funding and Resources	Short-term	1
Lower barriers to entry and ease rules in shelter and emergency supports	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing	Mid-term	4
Examine a 24/7 model combining day and overnight shelter	Enhance Service Coordination	Mid-term	3

Housing Solutions

Recommendation from the Development Sub-Group	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Ensure Housing TIF funds are utilized for deeply affordable housing (under 50% AMI)	Advocate for Policy Solutions	Mid-term	2
Advocate for increased density and zoning flexibility to support low income housing	Advocate for Policy Solutions	Mid-term	3
Explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as affordable housing millages	Maximize Funding and Resources	Short-term	4
Develop an incentives toolkit to encourage affordable housing during the planning and zoning stages	Enhance Service Coordination	Short-term	5
Adopt developer checklists that integrate homelessness and affordability consideration into land use proposals	Incorporate Community Perspectives	Short-term	6
Expand housing availability and Permanent Supportive Housing options	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing	Mid-term	1

Recommendation From Supports Sub-Group	Task Force Goal	Term	Priority
Strengthen system coordination and reduce silos	Develop a Unified Strategy	Short-term	2
Broaden and align funding streams	Maximize Funding and Resources	Mid-term	4

Housing Solutions (continued)

Increase access to behavioral health and integrated care supports	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing	Long-term	3
Launch a coordinated public education campaign	Incorporate Community Perspectives	Short-term	5
Expand Permanent Supportive Housing programs with support from City and County resources	Maximize Funding and Resources	Short-term	1

For more information

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