



NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

HOUSING and HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE

MAY 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.**

In May, after months of preparation, the Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness launched the Housing and Homelessness Task Force. With guidance from the Leadership Team-- including representatives from the City of Traverse City, Grand Traverse County, and Rotary Charities-- we **identified goals and focus areas, created a structure and timeline, recruited a facilitator, formed three different work groups, and gathered community leaders to create an advisory council** (see our 5-Page Task Force Overview document for more information).

The work groups met May 1st to discuss the **existing resources that can be built upon.** On May 8th, the advisory council met to review the obstacles and opportunities the work groups uncovered the week prior. From there, the council has made the **recommendations** you will find later in this report.

Despite the enormity of the initiative and the challenges of coordinating fifty people across a broad range of sectors, we have made **significant progress** toward our goal. We appreciate everyone's willingness to take on this problem, and the time and expertise they have shared with us. Their openness to learning and understanding, as well as their dedication to **finding and implementing solutions** is inspiring.

For more information

Ashley Halladay-Schmandt at 231-499-1019 or ashley@endhomelessnessnmi.org

Christie Minervini at 231-218-4421 or christieminervini@gmail.com

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 is 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 Leadership Team did not meet in May; members participated in the Advisory Council meeting instead. Their next meeting is on June 27th.

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 May, the group covered a Task Force introduction and level-setting, the community's focus on homelessness over time, and goals and responsibilities. They also spent time brainstorming on the topic: **"What existing resources and strengths can we build upon?"**

Meeting Date: May 1st

In Attendance:

Jennifer Holm - Traverse City Police Dept., **Bailey LaPan** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Joe Barkman** - Northern Lakes Community Mental Health, **Dr. David Klee** - Munson Family Practice, **Tara Peck** - Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, **Julie Ellalasingham** - St. Vincent DePaul

Key Takeaways and Insights:

- Build on the success of the Quick Response Team and their coordination efforts
- Reduce wait times; Access resources sooner with higher efficiencies
- Improve coordination for better access to all service systems and information
- Identify those most at risk with more housing navigation services and and screening at all levels of care

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	The work group studied Grand Traverse County data around labor, survival budgets, and financial hardship by township; Getting a baseline understanding of poverty and root causes
Increase and coordinate diversion efforts	The group looked at the high impact of diversion vs. homeless prevention or eviction prevention
Provide necessary services to people while they are experiencing homelessness and are working toward housing	Members expressed that this been happening with success, but better cooperation and collaboration will help reduce the amount of time in homelessness

Next Meeting: June 5th

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 May, the group covered a Task Force introduction and level-setting, the community’s focus on homelessness over time, and goals and responsibilities. They also spent time brainstorming on the topic: **“What existing resources and strengths can we build upon?”**

Meeting Date: May 1st

In Attendance:

Patrick Livingston - Safe Harbor, **Ryan Hannon** - Central United Methodist Church, **Jessica Hamilton** - Community Cares Coalition, **Rev. Jim Perra** - Grace Episcopal/ Jubilee House, **Juliette Schultz** - Women’s Resource Center

Key Takeaways and Insights:

- City and County funding is necessary to address this need
- We are having success with permanently housing chronic individuals; down 20%
- All three emergency shelter organizations are partnering, exploring or potentially investing in deeply affordable housing

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	The work group reviewed preliminary data on the total number of available beds, bed nights and utilization rates, diversion, number of people served, average length of stay, and exits to permanent housing
Determine the location and scope of services for day shelter and emergency shelter	Still in preliminary planning stages; looking at the emergency shelter system as a whole
Develop an extreme weather policy that is adopted by the City and County to help support	Safe Harbor just opened its summer season with a new HVAC system for air conditioning; We will look at this policy at a future meeting
Create a funding plan for shelter system	The individual shelter providers have started sharing our individual budgets (Safe Harbor,Goodwill, Women’s Resource Center and Jubilee House) to get a baseline cost for operations, including volunteer hours

Next Meeting: June 5th

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 May, the group covered a Task Force introduction and level-setting, the community's focus on homelessness over time, and goals and responsibilities. They also spent time brainstorming on the topic: **"What existing resources and strengths can we build upon?"**

Meeting Date: May 1st

In Attendance:

Becca Binder - Northwest Michigan Supportive Housing, **Karl Fulmer** - Traverse City Housing Commission, **Maxwell Cameron** - Grand Traverse County, **Shelly Charron** - Housing North, **Nora Dunlop** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **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, **Shawn Winter** - City of Traverse City

Key Takeaways and Insights:

- Brownfield TIF critical to building deeply affordable housing
- Turnover for property management employees and PSH support staffing needs addressing
- The data needs to be reframed; possibly use local wages vs.Area Median Incomes (AMI)
- More consistent advocacy needed at the State level

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 a listing of GT County Permanent Supportive Housing units, their owners, managers and type
Determine how many units we'll need each year to end chronic homelessness	Looked at rental housing needed by AMI, Current Income Limits for 30-50% AMI, Fair Market vs. Actual Grand Traverse County Rents
Explore funding sources needed to develop more units	Brainstormed on Brownfield TIF, Tax Credits, Community Development Block Grants, and PILOTs
Focus on housing development for 0-50% AMI	Members are in the beginning stages of inventorying current stock and identifying the need

Next Meeting: June 5th

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 action plan. In July, the group met to review and prioritize the recommendations coming out of the individual work groups. learned about the Task Force goals and structure, and saw a presentation on “How to Solve Chronic Homelessness.” They also heard reports and prioritized recommendations coming out of the individual work groups, prompted by the question, ***“What existing strengths and resources can we build upon?”***

Meeting Date: May 8th

In Attendance:

Nate Alger - GT County, **Nikki Basch** - Great Lakes Housing Services, **Becca Binder** - NW Michigan Supportive Housing, **Dan Buron** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Warren Call** - Traverse Connect, **Randy Fewless** - GT County Sheriff Dept., **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** - NW Michigan Community Action Agency, **Terri LaCroix-Kelty** - Munson Medical Center, **Deb Lake** - Goodwill Northern Michigan, **Bailey LaPan** - 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., **Kendall Rodriguez** - Networks Northwest, **Sakura Takano**, Rotary Charities, **Liz Vogel** - City of Traverse City, **Megan Wick** - Community Cares Coalition

Safety Net Services Recommendations:

Recommendation	Task Force Goal
Increase access to mobile health and mental health services including Mobile Med and the new crisis center.	Enhance Service Coordination
Promote resilience and recovery-focused practices across all safety net programs	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing
Broaden Quick Response Team coverage to the entire county to ensure equitable community outreach	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing
Expand shelter diversion staffing and resources to prevent shelter entry whenever possible	Maximize Funding and Resources
Improve community education on existing services to ensure clients know where and how to get help	Enhance Service Coordination

Emergency Shelter and Services Recommendations:

Recommendation	Task Force Goal
Continue to expand Permanent Supportive Housing programs with support from City and County resources	Maximize Funding and Resources
Support programs that help people maintain housing stability, including utility support and crisis assistance	Address Systemic Barriers to Housing
Focus funding on long-term housing solutions, rather than managing homelessness	Maximize Funding and Resources
Improve shelter experience by reducing trauma, increasing dignity, and aligning with Housing First principles	Advocate for Policy Solutions
Consider adopting a "housing campus" model with integrated health and housing services	Enhance Service Coordination

Housing Solutions Recommendations:

Recommendation	Task Force Goal
Ensure that Housing TIF funds are utilized for deeply affordable housing (under 50% AMI)	Advocate for Policy Solutions
Advocate for increased density and zoning flexibility to support low income housing	Advocate for Policy Solutions
Explore innovative financing mechanism, such as affordable housing millages	Maximize Funding and Resources
Develop an incentives toolkit to encourage affordable housing during the planning and zoning stages	Enhance Service Coordination
Adopt developer checklists that integrate homelessness and affordability consideration into land use proposals	Incorporate Community Perspectives and Stakeholder Input

Next Meeting: July 17, 2025