

## Heartland Coalition for the Homeless, Inc. Strategic Action Plan on Homelessness

	<b>Goal 1.</b>	Prevent episodes of homelessness: Operate as a Housing First Community		
	<b>Strategy</b>	a. Identify risk and protective factors to prevent episodes of homelessness for at-risk population; continue to prioritize funding projects that implemented a Housing First philosophy; Increased effort to educate the community about Housing First.		
	<b>Strategy</b>	b. Identify risk and protective factors to prevent chronic homelessness among person who are already homeless.		
	<b>Strategy</b>	c. Develop, test, disseminate, and promote the use of evidence-based homelessness prevention and early intervention programs and strategies.		
	<b>Goal 2.</b>	Help eligible, homeless individuals and families receive health and social services; Assess and prioritize all those experiencing a housing crisis for appropriate intervention.		
	<b>Strategy</b>	a. Strengthen outreach and engagement activities; CoC Lead Agency has expanded the Coordinated Entry System and helped expand access to Coordinated Entry by having strategic access points		
	<b>Strategy</b>	b. Improve the eligibility review process; The community has had increased participation in Coordinated Entry.		
	<b>Strategy</b>	c. Explore ways to maintain program eligibility.		
	<b>Strategy</b>	d. Continue to improve/examine the operation of HCH programs, particularly mainstreams programs that serve both homeless and non-homeless persons, to improve the provision of services to person experiencing homelessness.		
	<b>Strategy</b>	e. Foster coordination across HCH to address the multiple problems of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.		
	<b>Strategy</b>	f. Continue to explore opportunities with federal partners to develop joint initiatives related to homelessness, including chronic homelessness and homelessness as a result of a disaster.		

<b>Goal 3.</b>	Empower our state and community partners to improve their response to individuals and families experiencing homelessness; : Increase access to safe, affordable sustainable housing for all those experiencing homelessness.		
<b>Strategy</b>	a. Work with the state, governors, counties officials, mayors and local communities to effectively implement a Homeless Policy Academy Action Plan.		
<b>Strategy</b>	b. Examine options to expand flexibility in paying for services that respond to the needs of pers with multiple problems.		
<b>Strategy</b>	c. Encourage communities to coordinate services and housing.		
<b>Strategy</b>	d. Develop, disseminate and utilize toolkits and blueprints to strengthen outreach, enrollment, and service delivery throughout the catch area.		
<b>Strategy</b>	e. Continue to provide training and technical assistance on homelessness, including chronic homelessness, to mainstream service providers at the state and local community levels.		
<b>Goal 4.</b>	Develop an approach to track Agency progress in preventing, reducing, and ending homeliness for HCH clients; : Increase access to safe, affordable sustainable housing for all those experiencing homelessness.		
<b>Strategy</b>	a. Inventory data relevant to homelessness currently collected the HCH targeted and mainstream programs; including program participants' housing status; Utilized a housing locator position to help develop relationships with landlords and quickly place households		
<b>Strategy</b>	b. Develop an approach for establishing baseline data on the number of homeless individuals and families served in the HCH programs; Continued work to build partnerships with local government and housing developers to try and increase stock of affordable housing.		
<b>Strategy</b>	c. Explore a strategy to track improved access to HCH mainstream and targeted programs for person experiencing homelessness, including individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.		
<b>Strategy</b>	d. Coordinate HCH data activities with other federal data activities related to homelessness.		

## Overview of the Strategic Action Plan

### Gaps Analysis

The Lead Agency will conduct an annual gaps analysis/needs assessment of the homeless needs and services available within the geographic area. The gaps analysis/needs assessment will be used to determine local needs and establish community priorities each fiscal year. The findings will be published annually on October 15.

The Heartland Coalition for the Homeless and Governance Board developed strategic planning to increase their education on best practices for CoCs, complete a Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis, and review the plan yearly.

### HCH and Homelessness

Heartland Coalition for the Homeless (HCH) is the lead agency for COC service six (6) counties identified as Highlands, Hardee, Hendry, Glades, Desoto, and Okeechobee, with a service area encumbrance of over 6,000 square miles: Highlands County with the largest of all six counties.

HCH seeks to further an initiative to promote participation by all Americans with disabilities, including mental disabilities in the community. Ending homelessness requires housing combined with the types of services supported by HCH programs. The delivery of treatment and services to persons experiencing homelessness are included in the activities of the organization, both in five programs specifically targeted to homeless individuals and in twelve non-targeted, or mainstream, service delivery programs (see Table 1 below).

The *targeted programs* are much smaller in scope but are designed specifically for individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness.

*Mainstream programs* are designed to serve those who meet a set of eligibility criteria, which is often established by individual states, but are generally for use in serving low-income populations. Very often, persons experiencing homelessness may be eligible for services funded through these programs. Because the resources available for the mainstream programs are so much greater than the resources available for the targeted homeless programs, HCH has actively pursued an approach of increasing access to mainstream services for persons experiencing homelessness.

**Our Priorities**

Aligning with the federal priorities, the Heartland Coalition for the Homeless Continuum of Care is working on the following priorities:

1. Ensure homelessness is rare.
2. Ensure homelessness is brief.
3. Ensure homelessness is one time.
4. Sustain an end to homelessness.

**Table 1. HCH Programs Relevant to Person Experiencing Homelessness**

<b>Targeted Homeless Prevention</b>	<b>Individual/Families Served</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>
Rental, Short-medium term, arrears		
Utilities		
Deposits		
Housing search		
Moving Cost		
Placement Cost		
Stability Case Management		
Mediation		
Legal Service		
Credit Repair		

<b>Mainstream Programs</b>	<b>Individual/Families Served</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>
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Access to Recovery		
Child Support Enforcement Program		
Community Mental Health Service		
Community Service		
Community Health Centers		
Family Violence Prevention and Service Center		
Head Start Program		
Maternal and Child Health Services		
Medicaid		
Social Service		
State Children's Health Insurance Program		
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment		
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families		

HCH strategic action plan is to develop a Working Group, entitled to ending chronic homelessness, strategies for action. The purpose of the plan is to define the chronically homeless population and itemize the service needs of the population; analyze the response of HCH mainstream assistance programs to these needs; specify outcomes and objective that would improve the response of mainstream programs to the chronically homeless population and offer actions the organization/communities could take that would improve access to the coordination of the service.

The general premise of the strategic action plan posits that homelessness is a complex social problem, and ending chronic homelessness requires housing combined with the types of services supported by the programs funded by the state and operated by HCH. The goals outlined within the strategic action plan provided a course of action for the organization to follow in order to improve access to needed health and social services for individuals experiencing

chronic homelessness, empower states to improve their response to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, and to prevent future episodes of homelessness within HCH clientele.

The Work Group will meet regularly to discuss policy issues related to chronic homelessness, as well as homelessness among families and youth, review progress, and report about key activities occurring in the various operating divisions. The Work Group will develop activities tracking matrix, which allows agencies to chart homeless-related activities under the specific goals and strategies outlined in the Plan noted above. The matrix provides Work Group members with a way to measure progress towards achieving these goal and strategy and also provides a simple measure of the level of activity withing each key are of focus.

### **Key Events Shaping Strategic Action Plan Revision**

Between 2021 and 2025, several key elements and activities will guide the development of this plan. First, HCH will partner with Federal, State, and local entities to fund the projects that will bring together all level programs administrators and homeless service providers in order to develop/state specific actions needed to design to increase access to mainstream resources to persons experiencing homelessness.

Another key effort is increasing the focus on chronic homelessness and developing a collaborative initiative to help end chronic homelessness. Recognizing that homelessness is an issue that cuts across various agencies in the community, this unique effort across the community offers permanent housing and supportive service funded through a consolidated application process. Successful applicants described an integrated and comprehensive community strategy to us funding sources, including mainstream service resource to move chronically homeless individual/families from the streets and emergency shelter into stable housing. Once housed, the residents would be able to access the range of services needed to promote and maintain greater self-sufficiency. This is important because it operationalizes may of the key goals and strategies outlined in both the original and revise strategic action plans; for example, use of interagency partnerships on both local and federal levels, increases the effectiveness of integrated systems of care, and the use of mainstream resources.

Another key element will be to influence the Work Group to identify the key players during the hurricane; housing and health issues; the impact on the historically homeless; and data pertaining to and lessons learned from previous disasters. Furthermore, agency representatives at the meeting described their experiences providing concrete assistance during any hurricane. Lessons learned from the disaster have led HCH to carefully consider how other organizations should prepare for and respond to homelessness and human service needs in future disasters, and how the structure of the Work Group might be used as a tool for future natural disasters.

Finally, one of the original charges to the Work Group was to “itemize accountability and evaluation processes.” This called for establishing *monitoring and evaluation benchmarks* pertaining to chronic homelessness.

### **The Strategic Action Plan in Detail**

The strategic action plan in detail delineates all the goals and strategies identified in the Strategic Action Plan. Under each strategy, a few examples of possible activities HCH could implement in order to fulfill a given strategy. It is recognized throughout this document that no strategies, or activities, will be implemented without seeking and attaining all relevant legislative and/or regulatory changes needed to ensure that all programs within HCH continue to operate within their given authority and mission. It is also stated that, to the extent the strategies seek to impose any requirements on applicants as conditions of given awards, before doing so, programs will confirm that their authorizing authority and program/administrative regulations permit such imposition of conditions. It is further assumed that no proposals will be implemented without resolving any inherent budget implications.

**Goal 1: Prevent episodes of homelessness within the HCH clientele, including individuals and families.**

**Strategy a. Identify risk and protective factors to prevent episodes of homelessness for at-risk populations.**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Identify and promote the use of effective, evidence-based homelessness prevention interventions, such as discharge, release, or transition planning; intensive case management; access to protection orders, legal assistance and safety planning for victims of abuse; landlord mediation, and family strengthening, along with organizational and cross-organizational level strategies.
- Examine how HCH agencies can synthesize, sponsor, or conduct epidemiological, intervention, and health services research on risk and protective factors for homelessness and identify preventive interventions that could be provided in health care and human services settings that are effective at preventing at-risk persons from entering a pattern of residential and personal instability that may result in homelessness.
- Encourage states and communities to experiment with various approaches to creating a coordinated, comprehensive approach to addressing homelessness prevention (e.g. establish an infrastructure that supports prevention activities, allows flexibility in the use of funds, and fosters the development of systematic relationships between providers and across systems of care).

**Strategy b. Identify risk and protective factors to prevent chronic homelessness among persons who are already homeless.**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Review and synthesize published and non-published literature to identify risk factors associated with chronic homelessness and protective factors that reduce the risk for chronic homelessness.
- Examine how HCH can sponsor or conduct epidemiological, intervention, and health services research on risk and protective factors for chronic homelessness and to identify preventive interventions that could be provided in health care and human services settings that are effective at preventing currently homeless individuals from becoming chronically homeless.
- Develop targeted interventions preventing chronic homelessness specifically for use in HCH programs that are currently serving homeless persons.



**Strategy c. Develop, test, disseminate, and promote the use of evidence-based homelessness prevention and early intervention programs and strategies.**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Sponsor, synthesize, or conduct research and evaluation on interventions that focus on primary, secondary, and tertiary homeless prevention strategies and health treatment regimens, as well as the organization, effectiveness, and cost of such preventive interventions.
- Identify and develop workforce development strategies and program incentives that foster the adoption and implementation of evidence-based homelessness prevention programs and practices.
- Promote the availability of technical assistance and training documents on services and policy issues related to homelessness prevention via internet access, distribution at relevant meetings, and other settings offering instruction on the issue of homelessness.

**Goal 2: Help eligible, homeless individuals and families receive health and social services.**

**Strategy a. Strengthen outreach and engagement activities.**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Encourage mainstream programs that support outreach and case management to identify individuals and families experiencing homelessness as potentially eligible candidates for these services.
- Identify and promote innovative outreach and engagement activities successfully operating in existing programs, such as mobile health clinics, outreach workers who function as case managers, and innovative clinic-based programs that operate through such programs as the Health Care for the Homeless Program and the PATH program.

- Support empirical studies and demonstration projects that develop and test the effectiveness of outreach and engagement strategies for various populations.

**Strategy b. Improve the eligibility review process**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Develop tools for providers that simplify or streamline the eligibility review process, similar to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)-funded publication entitled *Documenting Disability: Simple Strategies for Medical Providers*, which provides a partnership tool for the Social Security Administration's Homeless Outreach Projects and Evaluation (HOPE) program, focused on assisting eligible, chronically homeless individuals in applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits.
- Promote the inclusion of homeless assistance programs among the entities conducting eligibility and enrollment functions for mainstream programs.

**Strategy c. Explore ways to maintain program eligibility.**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Explore state practices related to policies designed to suspend, rather than terminate, Medicaid eligibility for individuals who are institutionalized so that the eligibility process does not need to be initiated over again upon release.

**Strategy d. Examine the operation of HCH programs, particularly mainstream programs that serve both homeless and non-homeless people, to improve the provision of services to persons experiencing homelessness.**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Inventory mainstream HCH programs, identifying barriers to access for persons experiencing homelessness, and propose strategies to reduce and eliminate these barriers to services.

- Identify regulatory barriers and other challenges faced by organizations as they implement their Homeless Policy Action Plans to increase access to mainstream resources.

**Strategy e. Foster coordination across HCH to address the multiple problems of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Continue to use the regularly scheduled meetings set by the Work Group on Ending Chronic Homelessness as a means to promote collaboration and coordination across the service areas and develop joint activities and approaches to addressing various aspects of homelessness.
- Work with HCH program agencies to ensure that the organization's disaster planning efforts address the special needs of the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations affected by disasters. Where feasible and appropriate in HCH programs, identify ways to mitigate the long-term impact of homelessness because of disasters.

**Strategy f. Continue to explore opportunities with federal partners to develop joint initiatives related to homelessness, including chronic homelessness and homelessness because of a disaster.**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Promote joint initiatives through interagency cooperative agreements, pooled funding for special projects or evaluations of mutual interest or benefit.
- Jointly develop policy or program guidance to assure consistency with other agencies' policies and statutory and programmatic definitions, and/or consider joint issuance of key policy or programmatic guidance, especially where such issuance has the potential of having a significant impact on another organization clients and/or grantees.

**Goal 3: Empower our state and community partners to improve their response to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.**

**Strategy a. Work with states and communities to effectively implement Homeless Policy Action Plans,**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Encourage federal agencies to incorporate language into their program funding guidance that authorizes applicants to use HCH and other federal funds to create and/or support programmatic strategies that formulate an integrated safety net for poor and disabled individuals and families, where appropriate. Language should also include a requirement that provides for the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of coordinated efforts.
- Support state grantees to seek appropriate HCH funds to support the implementation of their Policy Action plans to address homelessness.
- Support state efforts to expand Policy Action Plans to address the needs of HCH clientele including homeless families and individuals at risk of homelessness, particularly youth and victims of abuse.

**Strategy b. Work with governors, county officials, mayors, and other non-profit organizations to maintain a policy focusing on homelessness, including homelessness as a result of a disaster.**

*Examples of Activities:*

- Encourage intergovernmental organizations to hold sessions with a homelessness policy focus at their annual and/or winter meetings (e.g., Conference of Mayors).
- Share information with the intergovernmental organizations that can be used in their newsletters and other communications with their members (e.g., through a homelessness clearinghouse website that provides links not only to relevant HCH programs but also to local activities that could serve as “best practice” models).

**Strategy c. Encourage organizations and local leaders to coordinate services and housing.**

**Strategy d. Develop, disseminate, and utilize toolkits and blueprints to strengthen outreach, enrollment, and service delivery.**

**Strategy e. Provide training and technical assistance on homelessness, including chronic homelessness, to mainstream service providers at the local and community level.**

**Goal 4: Develop an approach to track departmental progress in preventing, reducing, and ending homelessness for HCH clientele.**

**Strategy a. Inventory data relevant to homelessness currently collected in HCH targeted and mainstream programs; including program participants' housing status.**

**Strategy b. Develop an approach for establishing baseline data on the number of homeless individuals and families served in HCH programs.**

**Strategy c. Explore a strategy to track improved access to HCH mainstream and targeted programs for persons experiencing homelessness, including individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.**

**Strategy d. Coordinate HCH data activities with other agency data activities related to homelessness.**

#### **Broadening the Plan to Incorporate a Focus on Homeless Families with Children and Youth**

In the next few years HCH Work Group will actively track the efforts of numerous components of HCH's process to improve access to treatment and services for all eligible groups, including chronically homeless individuals, homeless families with children, and homeless youth. While chronic homelessness has remained a priority, HCH has also engaged in other homelessness-related activities that affect families with children and youth, who make up a substantial portion of the HCH clientele.

The goals and strategies from this Strategic Action Plan framework specifically focused on chronic homelessness. For example, the language in Goals 1 and 2 used the terms *chronically homeless* and *chronic homelessness*, and the same two terms were also used throughout the different strategies under all four goals. In order to accurately capture the clientele served by all homelessness relevant HCH programs, the Work Group decided that the plan would have to be broader in scope. Therefore, the goals and strategies were edited to include families and youth, where applicable. In general, phrases such as “chronically homeless individuals” were substituted by “homeless individuals and families” to be inclusive of families and children experiencing homelessness, while still including *individuals* experiencing homelessness, whether chronic or episodic. However, to maintain chronic homelessness as a priority, the Work Group highlights chronic homelessness in a few different strategies in the new framework.

Runaway and homeless youth, defined in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act as “individuals who are not more than 21 years of age...for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement,” may have different needs than homeless youth who are still connected to their families due to run away and homeless youth’s lack of adult supervision during a homeless episode. Other youth who may be at-risk of homelessness include youth who are aging out of foster care or exiting the juvenile justice system (Farrow et al 1992). HCH operates a wide range of programs that may be accessed by homeless families with children and runaway and homeless youth.

This is certification to the best of my knowledge; I certify that information in the Heartland Coalition for the Homeless Strategic Action Plan on Ending Homelessness is updated to add the below activities to the plan to end homelessness. And that the activities as stated in the plan and below that the proposed funds will be used as identified to end homelessness in Highlands, Hendry, Hardee, glades, Desoto and Okeechobee counties.

- Homeless Prevention (HP) identified on page # 16 additional Add on in the Plan.
- Rapid Rehousing (RRH) as identified on page # 16 additional in the Plan.
- Deposits Utility/RRH as identified on page # 16 additional in the Plan.

- Homeless Outreach as identified on page # 16 additional in the Plan.
- Case Management as identified on page # 16 additional in the Plan.
- Coordinated Entry on page # 16 additional in the Plan.
- Administration on page # 16 additional in the Plan.
- HMIS

This Strategic Plan was approved on January 10, 2019; Updated yearly and will be reviewed and update annually by the Board of Directors.