Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Orange County has made great strides in filling gaps in the homeless service system over the past three years. Service providers and local governments have significantly expanded programs and services to address the needs of people at-risk of and experiencing homelessness. Community members and other funders have also stepped up to finance new and expanded programs.

At the same time, **demand for homelessness prevention, services, and housing has also increased**. The COVID global pandemic exposed existing inequality and overwhelmed existing supports and systems. **There are currently seventeen gaps to be filled to meet the current need and end homelessness in Orange County.**

Filling the gaps will provide the right mix of client-centered and evidenced-based programs which will in turn result in **homelessness in our community becoming rare, brief and one-time**.

Gap	Community Priority (1-6)
HOUSING	
Income Based Rental Units	1.62
Rapid Re-housing	2.08
DV Rapid Re-housing	NEW
Permanent Supportive Housing	1.31
Youth Housing	2.38
Landlord Incentives	2.92
Housing Locator	2.15
Furniture and Household Goods	2.62
SERVICES – TEMP HOUSING	
Accessible, housing-focused shelter	1.77
DV emergency shelter	NEW
Medical Respite Beds	1.46
Bridge Housing	2.00
SERVICES - CONNECTIONS	
Housing Helpline staffing	2.69
Crisis/Diversion facility	2.00
Integrated Service Center	2.15
SERVICES - DIGNITY	
24 hour bathrooms	1.85
Memorial service funding	2.31

GAP DETAILS

FILLED GAPS
Since the first homeless system gaps analysis in 2017, four gaps have been filled.

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Housing Access Coordinator	Position moved from CEF to Orange County	FILLED	Funded via OC Partnership to End Homelessness budget (local governments)	Continued program
Program Description: The Housing Access Coordinator (HAC) position originated at the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) in 2018 and moved to Orange County housing in 2020. This position works with landlords and property management staff to recruit existing housing units in our community to use Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) as well as other housing vouchers like Rapid Re-housing and veterans programs. This position has a limited capacity to also work with people in housing search. The HAC would work closely and directly with the Housing Locator position, which is a current Housing Gap to be filled.					

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Homelessness Diversion Funding	$13,000 in diversion funding provided by Carolina Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)	FILLED	Ongoing CHPI leadership development and funding continuing Funded via CHPI (nonprofit)	Continued program
Program Description: Homelessness diversion funding is flexible funding that allows people to find safe alternatives to emergency shelter. Orange County has reduced the number of people entering the homeless system through flexible diversion funds provided by the Carolina Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) as well as effective utilization of Emergency Housing Assistance and the Eviction Diversion program. CHPI was started by a group of undergraduate students at UNC who wanted to help people experiencing homelessness. After conversations with service providers and OCPEH staff, CHPI decided to tackle homelessness diversion, a gap at that time. CHPI has a system of ongoing member recruitment and leadership development to ensure ongoing continuation of this completely student-led and operated 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.					

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Street Outreach	Program started October 2020, 3 FTE (1 clinical coordinator + 2 peer support navigators) currently fully staffed at 1 clinical coordinator + 3 peer support navigators - ocpehnc.com/street-outreach	FILLED THROUGH JUNE 2022	Funded initially via Emergency Solutions Grant COVID funding (Oct 2020 – November 2021); Orange County providing continuation funding with American Rescue Plan (ARP) Ongoing funded secured via OC Partnership to End Homelessness budget (local governments)	Continued program

Program Description: The Street Outreach, Harm Reduction, and Deflection (SOHRAD) program began operations in October 2020 with three full-time positions – a clinical coordinator and two peer support navigators. SOHRAD works with people who are living unsheltered to connect them with housing and services. Since beginning client work in November 2020 and through mid-September 2021, SOHRAD staff served over 200 people including helping 48 people enter housing, and assisted with over 50 deflections from law enforcement involvement, including arrest and jail. Funding for a fourth full-time position could be approved by Town of Chapel Hill in fall 2021.

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Housing Locator	Orange County allocated the County portion for this position in the FY21-22 budget; OC Partnership to End Homelessness secured grant funding for 0.5FTE through the Foundation for Health Leadership and Innovation	FILLED	Housing Locator allow the HAC to concentrate on system-level unit recruitment	Continued funding

Program Description: The Housing Locator provides client-level assistance in locating units for people exiting homelessness, people with Housing Choice Vouchers, and other people at risk of homelessness who contact the Housing Helpline. The position works in coordination with the Housing Access Coordinator (HAC) to develop and maintain landlord relationships. This will allow the HAC to focus more completely on system-level landlord recruitment. People are searching for units with Housing Choice Vouchers and other rental assistance without being able to locate units. As of December 2022, there are over 180 households experiencing homelessness who are connected to service providers and in active housing search, up from average of 102 households in 2019.

Program Budget:
Salary & benefits for Housing Locator position $67,000

Orange County has made significant progress on filling some system gaps, there is also more work to be done. Here is the current status with some gaps added from previous editions of the Gaps Analysis.

CURRENT GAPS: HOUSING

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Income-based rental housing	Some units available in the community from Town/County subsidies and HUD subsidies, with majority of referrals not coming through Coordinated Entry; There has been a significant expansion in the availability of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) since Oct 2020 with 100% of vouchers available through coordinated entry	PARTIALLY FILLED	Progress has been made with Master Leasing and development of new income-based units but barriers exist in the application process that exacerbate the lack of affordable housing options for people with criminal justice backgrounds and eviction histories resulting in longer time homeless for our most vulnerable community members	9,553 households are currently "rent burdened" meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs; At any given time, there are 3x more households experiencing homelessness than the maximum number of LITHC units to be developed
Program Description: Having an adequate supply of housing that people can afford is one of the key drivers of ending homelessness. People are less likely to become homeless if they are not rent burdened and more likely to exit homelessness faster if they can find housing that is affordable. Income based rental housing uses household income to determine amount of rent paid by clients.					
Program Budget: Average subsidy/unit has increased drastically with increased construction costs and interest rates. The current average subsidy for new unit development is $80,000 per unit					

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Expanded Rapid Re-Housing	Best practice program started April 2020, as of December 2022 have 4 FTE case managers	PARTIALLY FILLED	Best practice program funded via combination of Emergency Solutions Grant COVID (ESG-CV) funds, ESG, Continuum of Care (CoC) funds, HOME funds for Tenant Based Rental Assistance, and County	$574,660 additional annual funding

			Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funding; Program targeted long-term shelter stayers, plus others on HOME Committee list; Need funding for a total of 6 case managers plus client financial assistance to serve 180 households per year (30 per case manager per year)	

Program Description: Rapid Re-housing provides a flexible mix of short to mid--term rental assistance and case management with services provided in a trauma-informed, client-centered manner. As of December 2022, there are over 180 households each month who are connected to service providers and in need of permanent housing, almost all of whom would be well served by Rapid Re-housing.

Program Budget:

Salary & benefits for 6 case managers $400,360
Expected ESG funding for RRH services   ($ 40,500)
FY21 CoC funding for RRH services   ($ 147,200)
MOE funding for RRH services   ($ 70,000)
SUBTOTAL - case manager funding needed $142,660

Client financial assistance $1200/household/month x 12 months x 6 case managers
       $1,296,000
HOME funds for Tenant Based Rental Assistance   ($ 864,000)
SUBTOTAL – rental assistance needed $ 432,000

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Expanded DV Rapid Re-Housing	$120,000 annually of Victim of Crime Act Funds between Oct 2018-2022. $107,208 in CoC funds for DV Housing Coordinator and rental assistance starting January 2023	PARTIALLY FILLED	FY21 CoC funds provides rental assistance for four households and part of the DV Housing Coordinator's supportive services	$95,000 annually – rental assistance to support all participants on the DV Coordinator's caseload

Program Description: Rapid Re-housing provides a flexible mix of short-term rental assistance and case management with services provided in a trauma-informed, client-centered manner. DV Housing Coordinator can provide services for up to 12 clients at one time. Additional rental assistance dollars would maximize the number of survivors the Coordinator can serve.

Program Budget: TBD

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	1 program currently serves Orange County: IFC ; Other PSH was reallocated due to poor performance	PARTIALLY FILLED	Need additional funding for program expansion, helpful to identify non-HUD source for services funding to serve as match for CoC-funded PSH	$200,000

Program Description: Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) serves people experiencing chronic homelessness, providing housing subsidy and case management. The Inter-Faith Council for Social Service (IFC) is requesting funds for 3 FTE case managers to allow expansion of best practice PSH program. The current program cannot expand due to the need for match funding. The program currently has 2 FTEs funded by Continuum of Care (CoC) funding. Providing local funding for PSH services would allow the CoC dollars to be used for rental assistance, and adding another FTE case manager (3 total) would provide the staff capacity needed to administer additional rental assistance from reallocated CoC funds. Permanent Supportive Housing demand has been exacerbated by COVID, from an average of about 25 households per month in February 2020 who are experiencing chronic homelessness and have high service needs to about 40 households per month in September 2021. There has been one program referral to PSH in the past two years because current programs are full.

Program Budget:
Salary & benefits for 3 case managers + IFC overhead $200,000

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Youth Housing Program	Program that served Durham revamped to adopt Rapid Re-housing model; LGBTQ Center was awarded $284,771 in CoC funds in the FY2021 competition	PARTIALLY FILLED	Need program expansion funding to cover youth in Orange County	TBD

Program Description: Funding LGBTQ Center of Durham for housing, therapy, and case management for youth (age 18-24) exiting homelessness in Orange County; program serves both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ youth. The Center completely revamped their youth housing program in response to COVID - changing from a host home program model to rapid re-housing inclusive of rental assistance and services.

Program Budget:
Staff Salaries   1/3 Program Director and Case Manager $33,997
Therapy Services   Contract services with mental health service providers $36,663
Housing $1000/month for 7 clients for 12 months $84,000
Admin and overhead $ 7,500

TOTAL $162,160

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Sustained funding for Landlord Incentive Program (LIP)	Implemented LIP in April 2020 ([flyer](#)) to increase units available for people exiting homelessness and people with Housing Choice Vouchers, funded with CARES Act, HCV funds, and County ARP funds	PARTIALLY FILLED	Funded with County American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds	$200,000 annually for 200 units

Program Description: The Landlord Incentive program provides landlords with $1000 signing bonus for new leases and $500 for renewing leases for Housing Choice Voucher participants and participants in other programs like Rapid Re-housing, veterans programs, and for clients working with the Local Reentry Council and Compass Center. The County has funded LIP with ARP funds currently. LIP is managed by the Housing Access Coordinator. COVID eviction moratorium created stagnation in unit turnover -- providing Landlord Incentives for new and renewing leases has proven an effective strategy during COVID to create unit availability for people with Housing Choice and other vouchers.

Program Budget:
100 new leases, $1000 each $100,000
200 renewal leases, $500 each $100,000
TOTAL $200,000

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Furniture and household goods	Orange County used state CARES Act funding for a furniture and household goods program in November 2020 – over 71 households applied in a 6 week period, of whom 39 were funded an average of $800	PARTIALLY FILLED	The Furniture Program, St. Thomas More's Caring and Sharing Center, and CommunityWorx thrift store offer some options for furniture and household goods for people entering housing. Gaps remain for returning clients, clients in Ashley Forest, and to meet community-wide need for all people exiting homelessness	$160,000

Program Description: People exiting homelessness often have little to no furniture or the other things needed to create a home, like linens, dishes, and cleaning supplies. Having items to make a housing unit livable and comfortable contribute greatly to housing stability. A best-practice program design would allow for a great deal of flexibility and client choice in allowing people to pick both what they need and what they would like for their homes. Orange County is on track to house over 160 households in 2022, the project budget estimates for 200 households understanding some do not come through the HOME Committee. The project budget estimates $800 per household,

understanding some people will be fully or partially served by existing community programs, but that gaps remain.

Program Budget:

200 households per year, $800 each	$160,000

CURRENT GAPS: SERVICES – TEMP. HOUSING

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Accessible, Housing-Focused Shelter	Noncongregate shelter program at local hotel funded by FEMA May 2020 – June 2021, COVID isolation non-congregate shelter available December 2021 – August 2022 and expanded Cold Weather non-congregate shelter available January – March 2022 was provided with County funds	PARTIALLY FILLED	Changes to the Chapel Hill Good Neighbor Plan are needed to allow IFC to implement best practice, low barrier approach and Emergency Shelter designation at IFC Community House; IFC also needs increased staffing to provide low barrier shelter	$194,700 (revising Good Neighbor Plan) to $3.17 million (building new shelter)

Program Description: HUD recommends that emergency homeless shelters are accessible with low barriers to entry. Currently there is no same-night shelter availability in Orange County – people wait days, weeks, or months to enter and the wait time is highly variable. HUD further recommends that shelters are fully integrated into a housing-focused homeless service system. Stipulations in the current Good Neighbor Plan (GNP) agreement between shelter operator IFC and the neighbors of the men's shelter, Community House regarding the designation and programming at IFC Community House do not allow this currently. OCPEH will partner with stakeholders and provide technical assistance regarding the current restrictions to try to determine a way forward – changing the GNP, building a new shelter, or other option(s).

Program Budget: TBD

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Accessible, Housing-Focused Domestic Violence Shelter	Noncongregate shelter program funded by using fundraised dollars beginning in October 2020 - current	PARTIALLY FILLED	Current non-congregate shelter program uses a scattered site model and is comprised of three units. Amount needed to fill includes cost for 3 units with services and assumes the addition of 6 units with services	$435,000 – annual cost for 9 units and supportive services

Program Description: Confidential Shelter for adults and children experiencing domestic violence is a persistent need in the community. Compass Center currently operates a scattered site shelter comprising of three units and refers survivors and their families to domestic violence or other types of shelters in other counties when the units are filled. Accessing safe housing near support networks is critical for survivors of domestic violence and is a key strategy to increase physical and psychological safety while reducing length of time homeless.

Note: The cost here will not meet the entire need, but is an estimate of the number of units that could be sustainable using the current scattered site model. Compass Center would like to engage in a mixed strategy method that includes sustained funds for rapid rehousing.

Program Budget: TBD

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Medical Respite Beds	UNC Health is interested to pursue a pilot project providing lodging and per diem costs within Chapel Hill / Carrboro	UNFILLED	Explore community-based congregate versus scattered site models	Depends on the approach and whether a partner secures funds for operating costs; Cost savings to UNC Health will be significant

Program Description: Beds with low level medical care available for people discharging from hospital without a place to live, 2-6 week stays previewed for people who are able to complete their activities of daily living but need skilled care such as wound care or IV medicine administered. Currently these patients are long-term stayers at the hospital or discharged to homelessness – a medical respite program would free up needed hospital beds and also ensure people experiencing homelessness are getting needed care. The program will be designed to meet community need, connect people with community-based social work and occupational therapy, and particularly being able to serve target people with behavioral health issues and/or criminal justice involvement for additional support

Program Budget: TBD

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Bridge Housing	Reentry House Plus opened summer 2021 to provide bridge housing to up to 3 participants at a time, plus a house manager who also has a history of incarceration	UNFILLED	Orange County Local Reentry Council (LRC) seeing 65 people exiting jail or prison per year needed an average of 60 nights stay	$220,500

Program Description: There is a critical need for short-term, low barrier reentry housing and supporting services to help reentering individuals re-integrate into the community, especially during COVID. Bridge Housing funds allow for short-term supportive stabilization housing at hotels for up to 60 days for 55 reentering individuals per year and supportive services for 65 individuals through Reentry House Plus. Reentry House Plus has contracted with the SWIT (Success While in Transition) program run by individuals who themselves have reentered successfully to provide a month-long course and ongoing one-on-one case management and peer mentoring for these individuals in collaboration with our Local Reentry Council. Bridge Housing and support is an evidence-based best practice for ensuring stabilization and support for people reentering from incarceration, which has been identified as a critical priority by U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary, Marcia Fudge.

Program Budget:

Hotels – 55 people per year, an average of 60 nights, $55/night	$181,500
Services – SWIT classes, $600/person for 65 people	$ 39,000
TOTAL	$220,500

CURRENT GAPS: SERVICES – CONNECTIONS

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Housing Helpline Staffing	Program moved to Orange County March 2020; expanded to full time hours (Monday-Friday, business hours) plus three days a week in-person in Chapel Hill/Carrboro as of July 2022 ocpehnc.com/housing-help	PARTIALLY FILLED	Have ongoing funding for 2.5 FTE from Continuum of Care grant; one-time 12 month funding for .5 FTE from ESG-CV; one-time funding from Foundation for Health Leadership and Innovation for .5 FTE HH Team Lead, have funding for 4 temporary staff through June 2023	$161,010 additional annual funding to add 2 FTE July 2023 and beyond

Program Description: The Orange County Housing Helpline is the centralized access point for people in housing crisis, including people who need to access emergency shelter, homelessness diversion, eviction diversion, and homelessness prevention including rent and utility assistance. Since launching in March 2020 through November 2022, Helpline staff serve approximately 600 households per month. Helpline staff offer assistance using a trauma-informed and client-centered approach. The increased volume of people in housing crisis due to COVID results in increased need for Housing Helpline staff to answer calls, emails, and provide in-person assistance to households less likely to have regular access to phone and email.

Program Budget:

Salary & benefits for 2 Coordinated Entry Housing Specialists $161,010

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Crisis Diversion Facility	Orange County Behavioral Health Task Force subcommittee working since 2019 on program to divert people in behavioral health crises from jail and hospitals. Stakeholders are combining conversations about a Sobering Center with this project, The County has an RFP out for an Architect	UNFILLED	UNC Healthcare seeing 10-15 encounters/5 people per week presenting at Emergency Department (ED) without medical conditions beyond alcohol use; discussion of rolling detox/sobering space into long-term planning for best practice Crisis/Diversion Facility	Facility to receive people who can be diverted from jail or hospitals

Program Description: A Crisis Diversion Center would provide a therapeutic environment in which to resolve a presenting mental health or substance use crisis while facilitating connections to interdisciplinary supports

Program Budget: TBD

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Integrated Service Center	IFC Commons opened January 2021 providing bathrooms, showers, and drop-in service navigation; CEF Hub providing appointment based supportive services	PARTIALLY FILLED	Continuing community conversations to explore additional service integration with IFC Commons	Budget TBD

Program Description: An integrated service center is a central location where people in housing crisis could access many different needed services including housing navigation, service connections, showers, lockers, medicine storage, medical care, and food. Services would be provided in a trauma-informed and client-centered manner. Behavioral Health Taskforce Day Center Workgroup has recommended the following positions to address people in crisis in early engagement with additional service connections: Harm Reduction Therapist and Harm Reduction Peer Support Specialist.

Program Budget: TBD

CURRENT GAPS: SERVICES – DIGNITY

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
Memorial Service Funding	CEF held vigils in 2020 and 2022 for people that passed the previous year; community member expressed interest in setting up GoFundMe to establish funding	PARTIALLY FILLED – CEF has received a $1500 grant from UNC	DSS can assist with cremation if person is unclaimed; can explore receiving discounted rate while allowing person to be claimed by community members; Quarterly community memorial services and on-call grief support	$6000 annually
Program Description: Many people experiencing or with lived experience of homelessness are also medically fragile. Several times each year members of our community pass away. Oftentimes this is followed by case managers having to scramble to assemble funding and resources needed for a memorial service. Service providers have requested our community to establish a fund to use in these circumstances that would allow memorial services to occur with less stress, to provide needed closure for all community members. Service providers have also stated a need for grief counseling for service providers experiencing compounded losses and additional training on end of life planning for community members				
Program Budget: $1000 for 5 services/year $5000 $75/hour for chaplaincy services $1000				

Gap	Progress since June 2019	Status	Notes	Needed to Fill
24 Hour Bathroom with showers and drinking water Access in Downtown	Need exacerbated with COVID, now returned to pre-COVID levels; Working group coordinated by the Town of Chapel Hill came up with pilot program in 2019, ToCH approved funding for expanded hours of operation for Wallace Deck facilities in November 2022	PARTIALLY FILLED - IFC Commons bathroom open; Carrboro Town Commons open	24-hour access and downtown location are key elements; OCPEH will partner with Town of Chapel Hill planning group to determine next steps	Budget TBD
Program Description: Bathroom and shower access in downtown Chapel Hill/Carrboro for all community members, including people experiencing homelessness.				
Program Budget: TBD				

BACKGROUND

The Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness is a diverse group of community stakeholders including services providers, local governments and community members who work to prevent and eliminate homelessness in Orange County. This collaborative seeks to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and one time through a coordinated system of assessment and service delivery including prevention and diversion, emergency shelter and rapid re-housing and permanent housing options.

In 2016-2017 the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness (OCPEH) gathered a series of meetings with people with lived experience of homelessness, homeless service providers, community leaders, and state homeless experts to map the homeless service system in Orange County. This process created the Orange County homeless system map and the homeless system gaps analysis. OCPEH staff work with community members to update the gaps analysis annually, the latest updated is previewed to be approved by the OCPEH Leadership Team in January 2023