



Norman/Cleveland County
CONTINUUM OF CARE

Norman/Cleveland County Continuum of Care (OK-504)

Bridging the Gap: Action Steps to End Homelessness

Implementation Plan

Prepared for the Norman/Cleveland County Continuum of Care
by Homebase February 2022

Updated for progress January 2025

GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTION STEPS

The community-wide process identified three overarching goals for the CoC:

Goal 1: Secure a Housing Future for All Residents of Cleveland County

Goal 2: Increase Access to Homeless Emergency Response Services

Goal 3: Mobilize a Countywide Response to Prevent and End Homelessness

Together the three Goals address the key challenges and needs identified in the CoC's Homelessness Gaps Analysis. Each goal includes a set of Strategies that enable the community to achieve the goal and Action Steps that are recommended to move the strategy forward.

In addition, the Action Plan identifies a series of short-term (6 months to 1 year), medium-term (2 to 3 years), and long-term (3 to 5 years) metrics associated with each goal. The metrics, while not exhaustive or prioritized, identify specific and quantifiable ways the community can measure whether and when the goals have been met.

Implementation Plan, detailed outline for implementing the strategies, including prioritization of the action steps.

Goal 1: Secure a Housing Future for All Norman Residents

Strategy 1.1: Assess and use available public and private land for housing

1.1a Conduct a Housing Market Analysis and Affordability Strategy for the County and the Cities of Moore and Noble. – Short Term

Underway - City of Norman Comprehensive Land Use Plan, AIM Norman. 3 members of the CoC are on the Housing Subcommittee. No current contact with the City of Noble. Limited interaction with City of Moore.

1.1b: Evaluate the feasibility and next steps for immediate development of rent-controlled apartment buildings, multi-family housing units, and in-law units, as well as non-traditional options such as repurposed motels/hotels and/or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) – Short Term

Underway - ADU Ordinance approved by Council Spring 2024. City of Norman was approved for a low-income affordable housing development in the competitive LIHTC federal housing program. New project will be 75 units on Imhoffe Imhoff called Crimson Flats

1.1d: Prioritize the development of single-room occupancy (SROs) buildings, which provide non-congregate, small furnished single rooms within multi-tenant buildings for residents with low- or minimal income who may be transitioning out of long-term homelessness. – Medium Term

Underway - HOME ARP Allocation plan approved by City Council and HUD. Single Residence Occupancy (SRO) or 1 Bedroom Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Project was approved in the plan. Currently looking for a site. Properties on Triad Village Drive and Carter are no longer feasible. Take this

statement out. We are still pursuing the Triad Site,. By definition SRO and PSH projects include case management components.

1.1c: Establish a five-year Countywide Housing Development Pipeline that identifies an achievable path to establish new housing for unsheltered populations, people exiting mental and criminal institutions, and other underserved populations.

i: Conduct an inventory of unused, underutilized, and available properties to determine what may be available for additional affordable housing units throughout the City of Norman and Cleveland County.

ii: Identify the most suitable sited for rehabilitation or development of affordable permanent housing in both the City of Norman and in Cleveland County.

iii: Initiate planning to aggressively expedite development and offer other incentives specifically for permanent supportive housing (PSH).

iv: Locate or create a development in Oklahoma green zones to provide independent housing for people with criminal convictions.

Strategy 1.2: Protect and expand affordable housing through local policy

1.2a: Adopt policies at the municipal and county levels that require set asides for all new development, dedicating a certain portion or number of units within each new development for very low-income (VLI) and extremely low-income (ELI) households. – Medium Term

Underway – As part of the AIM Norman Comprehensive Land Use Plan, policy recommendations were made through the AIM Norman Housing Committee. This committee is composed of stakeholders and community members, including members of CoC and the Executive Director of the Norman Housing Authority. The committee will make several recommendations, policy and statute changes to increase the development of affordable housing and specifically low-income affordable housing.

1.2b: Revise City and/ or County policies that incentivize absent landlords to sell or develop properties (e.g., residential vacancy tax or other similar efforts, including county-level approaches). Medium Term

1.2c: Develop “Moving On” policies within the Norman Housing Authority (NHA) that prioritize Housing Choice Vouchers for people in permanent supportive housing (PSH) in order to provide an affordable option and short-term services and resources that support program participants during and shortly after their move to a greater level of independence. Short Term

Underway – NHA and CoC funded partners have instituted Move On policies. Specifically, CoC funded partners now receive bonus points in the CoC NOFO competition process when they integrate Move On conversations in the case management process.

1.2d: Create local policies that incentivize absent landlords to sell or develop properties (e.g., residential vacancy tax or other similar efforts, including county-level approaches).

Strategy 1.3: Develop Greater Access to Affordable Housing Through a Coordinated Landlord Engagement Campaign

1.3.a: Establish a county-wide landlord engagement strategy that includes year-round staffing support to educate the general public, recruit landlords, engage in outreach to property managers, and develop materials to explain the advantages for landlords to work with the CoC and local housing programs. Develop specific strategies to connect with landlords who may not live in the city or county. Short term

Underway – Since 2022 the NHA, utilizing CDBG CARES funding, has employed a Housing Navigator / Liaison. This position works specifically with landlords to expand the inventory of units that can be used with housing and voucher programs. As of August 2024 the Navigator has been able to increase the number of units willing to rent to those with housing vouchers by 50% to 3000.

1.3.b: Address barriers that make it difficult for tenants to obtain affordable housing by creating client portfolios that include letters of support from community members who know the client or by adding information about the client's background and the steps they have taken to improve their housing stability. Provide people help with criminal record expungement, credit repair, and eviction expungement, if needed. Provide opportunities for potential tenants to meet landlords one-on-one to create personal connections. Short term

1.3.c: Establish a landlord risk mitigation fund that provides compensation to landlords to mitigate any damage caused by tenants. Develop a formalized protocol that creates standards for responding to landlords seeking mitigation assistance. Long term

Underway – Has been discussed by council as a possibility but has not found a funding or operational mechanism.

1.3.d: Create financial incentives for landlords renting to voucher holders, including bonuses for new and/or returning landlords. Long term

Strategy 1.4: Expand Housing Through the Coordinated Assistance Program

1.4.a: Expand the highly successful coordinated efforts to assist people experiencing homelessness to obtain identification documents and connect them to public benefits by holding community events more frequently than once per quarter. Short term

- i. Strengthen access to resources to support households with criminal and eviction expungement, credit assistance, and document readiness to ensure they can use available housing subsidies.

Underway – Community and CoC partners have started holding community resources fairs. One specifically targeted for those experiencing homelessness and a second, targeting employment. The fairs alternate every 6 months.

1.4.b: Create a countywide housing navigator program tasked with meeting in-person with individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Provide trauma-informed care and motivation interviewing training to all housing navigators. Long term

1.4.c: Expand rental assistance programs to cover application fees and assistance with security deposits and move-in costs to help ensure vouchers are utilized equitably. Short term

- i. Increase the availability and amount of flexible funds that support homeless and at-risk households through both one-time and short-term, recurring financial assistance to solve acute housing crises and emergencies Short term

Underway – A rental assistance program was operated from 2022 to 2024 utilizing CDBG CARES funds by CoC agencies, those funds have been fully expended and are longer available.

1.4.d: Develop a shared housing program that can increase the housing available to single adults through 2- and 3-bedroom homes for individuals exiting homelessness by coordinating across programs.

Underway – Norman housing authority has developed this program. Shared housing can currently be utilized for rental and leasing using housing authority vouchers. The program has limitations as the pool of applicants willing to participate in shared housing is limited. Successful shared housing programs usually have larger numbers of affinity groups to pull from to make matches.

Goal 2: Increase Access to Homeless Emergency Response Services

Strategy 2.1: Increase Low-Barrier, Housing-Focused Shelter

2.1.a: Establish at least one permanent year-round, low-barrier housing-focused shelter with day and night services. Medium term

Underway – The City of Norman at the direction of the Norman City Council is actively looking for a location to build a permanent emergency shelter with a day center component focused on housing and permanent supportive housing services. The shelter will be low-barrier and in conjunction with wrap around services.

Currently overnight services are being provided by A Friend's House, (I think we need to have the address) funded by the City and operated by Food and Shelter (FS) (Starting January 16, 2025 management of the overnight shelter, funded by the City, will be transferred to City Care) and The Salvation Army (SA) (we need to state that the SA portion will be at their location not AFH) which includes family rooms that allow children. I don't get the SA piece in that they are not expanding capacity, just doing what they usually do, why is this mentioned? Day services are provided at the Food and Shelter main campus, Women's Sanctuary (women and children only) and HUB 107, operated by Central Oklahoma Community Mental Health Center (COCMHC) on the Griffin grounds.

2.1.b: Provide additional support to participants who exit shelters to permanent housing through proactive case management and best practice strategies, such as motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, and housing-focused case management and planning. Short term

2.1.c: Provide optional wrap-around services and connections to key resources at all overnight and day shelters. Short term

2.1.d: Reduce existing barriers to entry in already existing shelters and other housing programs whenever possible. Medium term

i: Enact admission policies for all shelters that screen-in rather than screen-out potential participants who face the greatest barriers to housing.

ii: Enact minimal rules and restrictions that focus on behavioral expectations to help ensure client and staff safety – few rules, not “no rules.”

iii: Provide accommodations that welcome partners, pets, and possessions so that people do not face a choice of housing or separation.

Underway - City Care has plans to enact the majority of the priorities listed in section 2.1. As part of the contract for services that will provide case management to those who are staying at the overnight shelter, this represents an increase in resources. City Care operates under a low-barrier model while still providing best practice safety and security measures. Maybe we should mention that the Case Management is enhanced, with specific timelines in the Policies and Procedures in comparison to what FSI offered.

Strategy 2.2: Expand Street and Encampment Outreach Including Treatment for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

2.2.a: Create a coordinated, county-wide street and encampment outreach team that includes staff from a mix of different disciplines, including street medicine, social work, nursing, behavioral health, and housing navigation. Medium term

2.2.b: Purchase and equip a mobile outreach van program that can offer medical, behavioral health, and housing navigation services. Medium term

Underway – Red Rock Behavioral Health implemented a mobile outreach vehicle in the summer of 2024. I think we should add Kara's role with COCMHC including the PD ridealongs

2.2.c: Expand capacity and support of existing outreach teams. Short term

i: Ensure existing outreach teams offer access to housing-focused case management, public benefits, and other critical housing-focused resources.

ii: Ensure street outreach staff are engaged with and participating in Coordinated Entry (CE), the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Underway – Calls from the City Action line, about those experiencing homelessness, contact is routed to PD, planning, parks, code enforcement and COCMHC outreach staff.

2.2.d: Develop a peer support program as part of an interdisciplinary approach that trains and uses peers with lived experience of homelessness for street outreach and system navigation. Long term

Strategy 2.3: Expand Supportive Services and Housing-Focused Case Management

2.3.a: Provider ongoing training and education opportunities to all community partners and their staff (current and new) on housing-focused approaches and best practices to connect people to housing and services. Short term

Underway – Monthly training for CoC members. The last Tuesday of the month the CoC has an in-person meeting, open to the public, where training on relevant issues and COC partner agencies is provided. Annual housing Case Manager Training is held in June. Provides HUD mandated training including Housing First.

2.3.b: Ensure staff trained on housing-focused approaches and housing navigation are available night and day at crisis shelters, health centers, and day centers. Medium term

2.3.c: Strengthen partnerships and coordination with mainstream agencies such as legal aid, credit repair services, public benefits advocacy and appeals (Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, SSI/SSDI), workforce development, etc. Medium term

2.3.d: Evaluate and revise salaries and benefits for case managers to ensure that the CoC can recruit and retain qualified staff. Medium term

Strategy 2.4: Improve Transportation To Employment, Services, And Shelter

2.4.a: Develop a comprehensive transportation strategy in partnership with local transit authorities that considers the transportation needs of people experiencing homelessness. Medium term

i: Provide visible, easily accessible information about transit schedules that does not require a smart phone or access to the internet.

ii: Create a program/expand existing programs that provide(s) discounted or free transit passes to people experiencing homelessness.

iii: Set up and identify locations where personal belongings may be stored and where pets and service animals may be cared for while individuals access services and resources.

Underway – Norman Embark bus services can be utilized at no cost to riders. Printed Rider Guides are available at the new centrally located Transit Center and on the buses.

2.4.b: Work with health care providers to enable transportation to and from medical appointments. Short term

2.4.c: Develop a subsidized ridesharing program or creating a van service for individuals experiencing homelessness/recently housed. Medium term

[Underway – Care-A-Vans receives funding from the City of Norman for transporting those who are unhoused. On Demand is a program that supplies individual transit services in the evenings and on the weekends.](#)

Goal 3: Mobilize The Citywide Response To Prevent And End Homelessness

Strategy 3.1: Expand Coordinated Prevention and Diversion Assistance

3.1.a: Establish a coordinated homelessness prevention and problem-solving (homelessness diversion) system to help people at high risk of homelessness remain housed. Medium term

i: Provide regular training for all stakeholder partners in problem-solving techniques, motivational interviewing, and include staff from all access and outreach points in training opportunities.

ii: Identify a cohort of staff who focus on problem-solving with people before they enter the homeless system of care.

iii: Leverage prevention and diversion programs to allow the system to reserve limited beds in shelter and housing programs for those that need additional support to regain housing.

[Underway – Training is provided monthly open to the public and annual at Housing Case Manager Training.](#)

3.1.b: Review current rental assistance programs' eligibility and protocols and revise policies to ensure that all households eligible for rental assistance receive help. Short term

3.1.c: Establish a monitoring protocol, including a field in HMIS to identify households who fall into homelessness for the first time, and to track impact of interventions. Short term

Strategy 3.2: Provide Information and Engagement Opportunities to People with Lived Experience of Homelessness

3.2.a: Establish a lived experience advisory board, comprised of people currently experiencing homelessness or with recent lived experience who can provide feedback to the CoC and be involved in policymaking and allocations processes within the CoC. Medium term

[Underway – CoC currently has three voting members with lived experience of homelessness. Recruitment of others with lived experience is on-going.](#)

3.2.b: Develop resource materials and educational information that can be available online and distributed at the public library, at transportation sites, and other places where people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness can learn more about the variety of organizations and services in the community, including the name, location, and hours of operation for shelters, day services, food, etc. Short term

[Underway – The CoC website and McFarlin UMC have digital resource lists that are updated regularly. Business sized cards with QR codes to service information and resources are also available.](#)

Strategy 3.3: Develop a Public Education About the Homeless System Of Care

3.3.a: Undertake a community-wide engagement campaign that includes landlords, people recently housed, the business community, and other leaders to dispel common myths about homelessness and celebrate progress of the community's efforts to reduce and end homelessness. Short term

i: Outreach and involve philanthropy, service organizations, and the faith-based community in supporting engagement campaigns.

[Underway – Xenia Institute will be holding a series of community dialogues on homelessness in the Spring of 2025.](#)

3.3.b: Include introductory information about homelessness when collecting community feedback, hosting townhalls, holding hearings, or having large meetings related to homelessness. Short term

Strategy 3.4: Improve Communication, Coordination, and transparency of the CoC

3.4.a: Create a new and accessible CoC website that is separate from the City of Norman's website, which provides information regarding success stories, challenges, key policy decisions, funding allocations, announcements of new staff, available resources, housing opportunities, and etc. Short term
[Complete – https://ok504coc.wixsite.com](https://ok504coc.wixsite.com)

i: Create a publicly facing dashboard that shows progress towards identified goals (i.e., services offered, people assisted, or people placed into housing).

[Underway – A Dashboard, that will be linked from the COC website, utilizing HMIS data, is being created. Estimated launch is mid 2025.](#)

ii: Prominently display a link to the CoC website on the City of Norman website, at the public library, on the Cleveland County website, on all stakeholder partner websites, and other public places frequently visited by individuals experiencing homelessness.

3.4.b: Create additional formal mechanisms to provide transparent information about the CoC to the broader community and require agencies to contribute timely and relevant information to the efforts. Medium term

3.4.c: Provide additional opportunities for facilitated conversations with the staff of the City of Norman, CoC leadership, and members of the community as they seek to work together in an actionable way to implement the Action Plan. Short term

[Underway – Any group or member of the public can request a meeting with the Collaborative Applicant to discuss the workings of the CoC and available resources. The monthly CCM resources meeting, held the last Tuesday of the month, is open to anyone interested in attending.](#)

Strategy 3.5: Commit to Robust Data Collection

3.5.a: Revise data quality standards and develop a more robust, clear, and transparent CoC "Data Quality Plan" that establishes expectations for both the community and end-users. Medium term

i: Develop data quality benchmarks. The Data Committee should incorporate into the CoC's own detailed manual baseline benchmarks and provide regular updates to each HMIS-participating agency.

ii: Once the Data Quality Plan has been drafted and adopted with benchmarks and timelines, the CoC should implement appropriate incentives and establish a monitoring structure.

3.5.b: Revitalize the CoC's Data Committee with a clear mandate and expectations; including to monitor Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data quality, expand HMIS bed coverage, oversee ISOK's regular efforts, review and revise HMIS Policies and Procedures as necessary, etc. Short term

Underway – Monthly data reporting for funded agencies has been upgraded and includes scoring in the funding rubric. The collaboration of CoC's for the state have started an HMIS Governance committee, that meets quarterly, where all HIMS policies and procedures are reviewed.

i: Produce aggregate data reports, at least quarterly, which can provide public information about the numbers of people being served by the homeless system of care and/or placed in stable housing.

Underway – A Dashboard, that will be linked from the COC website, utilizing HMIS data, is being created. Estimated launch in mid 2025.

ii: Review data entry and data quality requirements for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) participating homeless service providers to improve local understanding of the scope of chronic homelessness in Cleveland County.

Underway – Monthly data reporting for funded agencies has been upgraded and includes scoring in the funding rubric.

3.5.c: Reevaluate Point-in-Time (PIT) count methodology, especially with respect to the chronic homeless status of residents in emergency shelters and unsheltered situations. Short term

Underway – Methodology was reviewed and amended in 2022. The PIT questions are reviewed annually before the count is taken.

3.5.d: Evaluate, track, and implement training and program modifications to address any disparities in system access and service provision for special subpopulations. Medium Term

3.5.e: Establish a monitoring protocol, including a field in HMIS to identify households who fall into homelessness for the first time or who return to homelessness, and to track impact of interventions. Short term

3.5.f: Seek out additional resources for HMIS to subsidize license costs and consider a program to sponsor agencies based on need to make HMIS participation more financially accessible to a diverse range of stakeholders. Consider requiring organizations that want to place their clients in housing to participate in HMIS if a subsidy is available. Medium term