

*McHenry County*



# Continuum of Care

**STRATEGIC PLAN TO  
END HOMELESSNESS 2023-2026**



McHenry County  
Continuum of Care

Strategic Plan 2023-2026



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	ii
<b>Snapshot of Trends in McHenry County</b> .....	1
McHenry County Overview .....	1
Homelessness in McHenry County .....	1
Poverty Trends .....	3
Economic Trends.....	5
Income Support Program Utilization.....	7
McHenry County Affordable and Homeless System Housing.....	7
<b>Background: McHenry County Continuum of Care (CoC)</b> .....	11
Plans to End Homelessness .....	13
<b>McHenry County Plan to End Homelessness: Overview</b> .....	15
<b>McHenry County Plan to End Homelessness: Progress</b> .....	16
Current Progress.....	16
Homelessness is Rare .....	16
Homelessness is Brief.....	18
Homelessness is Non-recurring.....	19
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Performance Review.....	20
<b>McHenry County CoC Priority Areas</b> .....	21
Housing and Shelter.....	21
-Emergency Shelter (ES) .....	21
-Transitional Housing (TH).....	21
-Rapid Re-Housing (RRH).....	22
-Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).....	22
-Affordable Housing.....	22
Supportive Services.....	23
-Street Outreach .....	23
-Mainstream Resources .....	24
-Homelessness Prevention .....	24
-Health Care.....	25
-Employment.....	25
System Operation .....	25
-Coordinated Entry (CE) .....	26
-Operational Capacity.....	26
-Leadership & Governance.....	26
<b>Next Steps</b> .....	27
Priority 1: Affordable Housing.....	27
Priority 2: Case Management.....	31
Priority 3: Greater Collaboration.....	32
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	35
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	36
<b>Appendix B</b> .....	39

# Introduction

In 2015, the community came together to create a roadmap for ending homelessness in McHenry County. *Confronting Homelessness in McHenry County: Strategic Plan to End Homelessness 2016-2018* laid out the groundwork for the McHenry County Continuum of Care (CoC) to continually review and improve its efforts in serving the homeless population. The 2015 plan, along with the subsequent 2019 plan, described trends in the county's homeless population as well as set goals and priority areas for the years to come.

Now, the 2023-2026 Plan to End Homelessness, seeks to continue this process. Since the release of the previous plan in 2019, McHenry County has seen dramatic changes in need as well as resources. The COVID-19 pandemic hit McHenry County in early 2020 and its effects are still being seen today. Congregate shelters were shut to prevent the spread of the virus, households were left with little to no income as businesses were forced to make cutbacks and/or individuals were quarantined and unable to work, and the cost of housing shot up. In response, McHenry County, along with federal funding, launched new programs like Emergency Cold Weather/ COVID Motel program and the Emergency Utility and Rental Assistance Program (McEURAP).

The McHenry County CoC created the Strategic Planning Committee in January, 2023. This committee was made up of County employees, local agency administrators and caseworkers, County Board members, and other county stakeholders. The Strategic Planning Committee met several times to discuss current trends in homelessness, gaps in services, and future goals for the CoC. Three subcommittees were formed to provide focused research: Planning subcommittee, Housing and Programs subcommittee, and the Partnerships and Resources subcommittee. Using the research and discussion of the Strategic Planning Committee, the McHenry County CoC agreed upon goals and next steps to be taken in the path to ending homelessness in the county.

This plan will give an update on current trends in McHenry County. A snapshot of trends including homelessness, poverty, economy, income supports, and housing will illustrate the current situation in McHenry County and how it has changed over the last several years. Following this will be a description of the McHenry County Continuum of Care (CoC), including its structure and improvements made over the years. Next, this plan will review progress for the CoC's goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. Previous priority areas for the 2015 and 2019 plan will be reviewed and updated.

Lastly, this plan will describe the three new priority areas the McHenry County CoC has agreed upon for the 2023-2026 plan which are:

- 1. Increase Workforce Housing**
- 2. Prioritize Case Management**
- 3. Improve/Expand Collaboration**



**A total of 125 individuals in McHenry County were counted as homeless in the 2023 point-in-time (PIT) Homeless Count, a decrease of 18.8 percent from the 2020 count** (Table 1).

This count represents the number of people homeless on a cold winter night and does not represent the number of people homeless during the course of a full year. This decrease is due to a number of factors including Rapid-Rehousing programs, rental assistance programs and the COVID pandemic forcing families to move to an area with more affordable housing. Of the 125 homeless people counted in 2023, 16 percent were considered chronically homeless, an increase from 9 percent in 2015. There is also a noticeable increase in the number of unsheltered homeless. This is due largely to an increase in street outreach across the county and the creation of Community Resource Days which brings together local agencies to provide services and support to homeless and at-risk individuals. These actions have allowed the CoC to meet and assist more individuals. Another factor is that many of the programs funded by COVID response funding have ended and the county is seeing an increase in households that are unable to afford their current housing without a subsidy or find new affordable housing.

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2023</b>
Emergency Shelter	88	83	87	36
Transitional Shelter	123	85	67	54
Unsheltered	1	9	0	35
Chronically homeless	(5)	(6)	(14)	(20)
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>125</b>

**Table 1 - McHenry County Homeless Population**

The HUD definition of homelessness does not include those families or individuals that are doubled up, meaning that they are living with relatives, friends, or others because of economic reasons. The National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that if the doubled up category was added to the federal definition of homeless, an additional 126,900 people in the Chicago metropolitan region would be added to the estimates of people that are homeless on a given night. The most recent census data estimates 1,550 housing units in McHenry County are overcrowded. The represents 1.3% of all occupied housing units in the county.

There are specific subpopulations that can be particularly vulnerable to homelessness, among them veterans and people with disabilities. McHenry County is home to 14,065 veterans, 5.9 percent of the adult population. The veteran population has been decreasing rapidly over the past decade. The 2007-2011 ACS estimated a veteran population of 18,441 while the most recent estimate of the veteran population is 14,065 (a 23% decrease). Additional populations vulnerable to homelessness include single parent families and persons over the age of 65.



	2015	2017-2021 ACS	Change between 2015-Now
Persons with mental/physical disabilities	8.34% (25,542)	9.45% (29,216)	+11.49%
Single headed families with children	9.41% (7,750)	7.9% (9,065)	+16.9%
Veterans	6.85% (15,683)	5.91% (14,065)	-9.25%
Persons 65>	11.6% (35,650)	14.8% (46,037)	+29.13%

Source: Census / American Community Surveys

**Table 2 - Change in McHenry County Vulnerable Populations**

### Poverty Trends

In 2023, a family of three is considered poor if their gross annual income falls below \$18,677. People living in poverty are at extreme risk of homelessness largely as a result of having incomes too low to support covering the costs of housing. The poverty measure has long since failed to give an accurate picture of what families need to realize a decent, though modest, standard of living (Table 3).

Estimates that take into account local costs including housing, food, transportation, health care, taxes and other necessities reveal that it takes an estimated \$8,353 monthly, or \$100,233 yearly in McHenry County for a family of four to make ends meet and be self-sufficient (Economic Policy Institute. Family Budget Calculator. <https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/>). This estimate places McHenry County, IL as the second most expensive county in the state to live in.

Household/ Family Size	25%	50%	75%	100% (Poverty Line)	125%	130%	133%	135%	138%	150%
1	\$3,645	\$7,290	\$10,935	\$14,580	\$18,225	\$18,954	\$19,391	\$19,683	\$20,120	\$21,870
2	\$4,930	\$9,860	\$14,790	\$19,720	\$24,650	\$25,636	\$26,228	\$26,622	\$27,214	\$29,580
3	\$6,215	\$12,430	\$18,645	\$24,860	\$31,075	\$32,318	\$33,064	\$33,561	\$34,307	\$37,290
4	\$7,500	\$15,000	\$22,500	\$30,000	\$37,500	\$39,000	\$39,900	\$40,500	\$41,400	\$45,000
5	\$8,785	\$17,570	\$26,355	\$35,140	\$43,925	\$45,682	\$46,736	\$47,439	\$48,493	\$52,710
6	\$10,070	\$20,140	\$30,210	\$40,280	\$50,350	\$52,364	\$53,572	\$54,378	\$55,586	\$60,420
7	\$11,355	\$22,710	\$34,065	\$45,420	\$56,775	\$59,046	\$60,409	\$61,317	\$62,680	\$68,130
8	\$12,640	\$25,280	\$37,920	\$50,560	\$63,200	\$65,728	\$67,245	\$68,256	\$69,773	\$75,840
9	\$13,925	\$27,850	\$41,775	\$55,700	\$69,625	\$72,410	\$74,081	\$75,195	\$76,866	\$83,550
10	\$15,210	\$30,420	\$45,630	\$60,840	\$76,050	\$79,092	\$80,917	\$82,134	\$83,959	\$91,260

Source: Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) 2023 Poverty Guidelines: 48 Contiguous States

**Table 3**

19,378 individuals in McHenry County have incomes below the official poverty line (Table 4). This represents 6.2 percent or nearly **1 in every 15 people in the County living in poverty.**

Approximately 6,303 McHenry County children are in poverty. This means that 8.76 percent or nearly **1 of every 10 children in the county is poor.** Children have the highest rate of poverty of any group. Child poverty has grown substantially in the last 20 years. Since 2000, the number of poor children in McHenry County has grown 94.6 percent.

Age Group	Number	Percent of age group
Children (0 to 17)	6,303	8.76%
Adults (18 to 64)	10,657	5.52%
Seniors (65+)	2,418	5.35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,378</b>	<b>6.23%</b>

Table 4 - McHenry County Poverty, 2020

Poverty growth in McHenry County has far outpaced population growth. Since 2000, the number of people living in the county rose by 19.28%, while the number of people living in poverty in McHenry County well over doubled (Table 5).

Year	Number in Poverty	Poverty Rate
2000	9,446	3.66%
2010	18,795	6.17%
2020	19,949	6.55%
<b>% Change (2000 - 2020)</b>		<b>111.19 %</b>

Table 5 - McHenry County Poverty Change Over Time

In addition to more people living in poverty in terms of raw numbers, the rate of people who are poor has also grown from 3.6 percent in 2000 to 6.55 percent in 2020. Among those living in poverty is a subset of people who live in the direst form of poverty - extreme poverty. Extreme poverty means living with an annual income below half the poverty line - less than \$12,430 for a family of three in 2023. At this very low income level, families do not have near enough money to pay for the most basic of their needs, such as housing, food, health care, and clothing. This results in families making untenable tradeoffs and going without certain needs being met. **Extreme poverty is a reality for 1,460 households in McHenry County**, 1.7 percent of the entire population. Estimates suggest that nearly half of all people in extreme poverty are either children, people with disabilities, or seniors. People who have incomes above the poverty line but under twice the poverty line (also called between 100% and 200% FPL), though not officially poor by the federal government's definition, still face serious struggles in being able to make ends meet. For a family of three, living under twice the poverty line means having an annual income below \$49,720. For a family of four, it is under \$60,000. **In McHenry County 10,251 families or 12 percent of the population have incomes below 200% of the poverty line.**

Finally, people with a disability are disproportionately represented among those in poverty (Table 6), and are at high risk of becoming homeless. 29,216 people or 10.4 percent of people in McHenry County have a disability. In McHenry County, people with a disability are over 30% more likely to live in poverty.

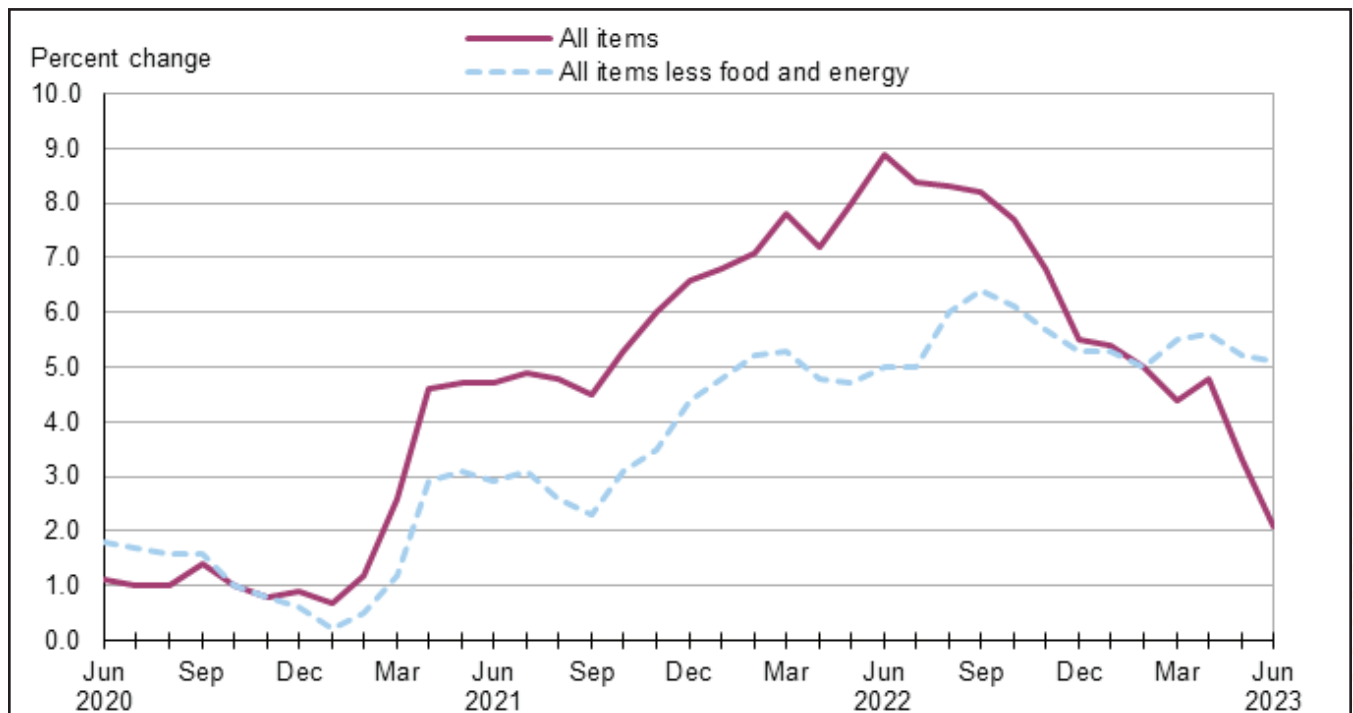
	With a Disability			With no Disability		
	Total	# in Poverty	% in Poverty	Total	# in Poverty	% in Poverty
<b>Population</b>	<b>29,216</b>	<b>3,114</b>	<b>9.38%</b>	<b>280,079</b>	<b>16,835</b>	<b>6%</b>

Source: 2017-2021 ACS

Table 6

## Economic Trends

The cost of basic goods and services has been tumultuous over the last several years in the Chicago region (Chart 1). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the cost of food had risen by 11 percent between July 2021 and July 2022, while energy prices rose 46.7 percent (due largely to the 51.7% rise in gasoline prices). This reality, combined with a changing economy as discussed below, put pressure on McHenry County families as they tried to make ends meet. Thankfully, gas and energy prices have decreased by 23.3% between June 2022 and June 2023 due largely to a 25.9% decrease in gas prices.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Chart 1 - Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI, June 2020-June 2023

The unemployment rate measures the percent of people who are actively looking for a job that did not find one in the past month. Unemployment rates have fluctuated over the course of the last two decades with a number of recessions influencing this strongly. McHenry County's unemployment rate peaked at 9.37% in 2021, dropped to 3% in May 2022, and has risen again to 5.1% in the summer of 2023.

Nationally, 6.5 percent of people who are not in the workforce - people not captured in the unemployment rate - actually desire a job. Additionally, 11.9 percent of the part-time employed population is working part-time due to lack of full-time job availability or adverse business conditions indicating they are underemployed. It is also important to note that a portion of the population are not expected to participate in the labor force due to being over age 65, having a work-limiting disability, having full-time responsibilities in the home, or being a student.

The employment picture in the Chicago region and in Illinois as a whole is characterized by a changing economy that continues to lose high-paying manufacturing jobs that historically have provided quality benefits and long-term job security. Since 2010, manufacturing jobs in the county have dropped by 11.9%, while occupations in transportation, food prep/service, and government have steadily grown.

McHenry County has experienced very modest job growth rates since 2000. From 2015 to 2020, total employment in the County rose by only 2.2 percent, more than 4% behind the national growth rate of 6.2%. Incomes and earnings in McHenry County reflect the reality of a changing economy.

The median income for all households in McHenry County in 2000 was \$66,362. In 2023, that amount has risen to \$93,801, meaning half of the households in McHenry County are earning more than \$93,801 while the other half are earning below this number. The high median household income masks the fact that many households in the county are trying to get by with low incomes. Nearly 1 in every 4 households in McHenry County has an annual income below \$50,000.

Being employed is no guarantee against poverty and economic hardship. In McHenry County, nearly 5,260 people who work (full time, year round or part time or part year) still fall below the poverty line. Poverty rates for people who are unemployed - meaning they are actively looking for employment - are considerably higher than the poverty rates for people who are employed and for people who are not in the labor force.

<b>Labor Force Status</b>	<b>Percent in Poverty</b>
Employed (164,018)	3.2%
Unemployed (8,138)	15.2%
Not in Labor Force (147,203)	4.9%

**Table 7**

People with a disability are less likely to work than those without a disability. In McHenry County, nearly a quarter of people with a disability are not working compared to less than 5% of those without a disability (Table 8). When people with a disability are able to work, they earn considerably less than their counterparts without a disability. There are 2,103 McHenry County residents receiving SSI (Supplemental Security Income), the federal government's main form of assistance for people with a disability. This represents only 7% of the county's population that lives with a disability.

	<b>Total Labor Force</b>	<b>Persons With a Disability</b>	<b>With a Disability, Not Working</b>	<b>No Disability</b>	<b>No Disability, Not Working</b>
<b>Ages 16-64</b>	164,018	28,777	6,907 (24%)	135,241	6,250 (4.6%)

**Table 8 - Employment Status by Disability Status**

## **Income Support Program Utilization**

The government has a range of public benefits or income supports that are available to families who are struggling with poverty, low-wages, or unemployment and who meet certain eligibility criteria including income thresholds and asset limits. These income supports provide a vital lifeline for thousands of families in McHenry County who would otherwise have even more difficulty meeting their basic needs.

From 2000 to 2020, the receipt of certain income supports in McHenry County has grown steadily. **The percent of McHenry residents receiving food stamps grew from 0.75% (1,977 people) in 2000 to 6.7% (21,008) in 2020; far outpacing the population growth in the county.** The percent of residents receiving Medicare and other healthcare benefits has remained relatively stable over the last decade. This increase reflects increased need, increased utilization due to heightened outreach efforts, and in the case of public health insurance, program expansions.

As a result of welfare reform in the late 1990s, the number of people in McHenry County receiving welfare cash grants, also called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF, has steadily dropped. In January, 2013, 609 persons received TANF assistance. In January of 2023, that number has dropped to 215; a 65% reduction. Research has indicated that in Illinois these large declines in welfare cash grant receipt have not always been accompanied by comparable increases in work, one of the main goals of welfare reform, due to family circumstances, skill deficits, and other barriers to employment. This has left a large group of families who are neither working nor receiving welfare cash grants (IDHS – TANF Reports & Data).

Despite popular perception to the contrary, the average benefit amounts for these income support programs are quite low. The average annual benefit in 2023 being received for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the main government program for people with disabilities who have little or no income to meet basic needs, is \$7,452 (Social Security Administration – SSI). This amount is far less than the poverty line for one person. There are over 2,000 households in McHenry County receiving SSI.

These income supports are designed to help struggling families make ends meet, but not all people who are eligible for them are actually receiving benefits. For example, in McHenry County, over 4,000 families are eligible for welfare cash grants (TANF) while only 215 families received assistance in January 2023.

## **McHenry County Affordable and Homeless System Housing**

Having an adequate supply of affordable housing is vital for reducing homelessness and housing instability for extremely low-income households. Rising housing costs, coupled with stagnating or declining incomes and earnings, results in housing becoming more and more unaffordable. *Housing costs are considered affordable if they consume less than 30 percent of a household's income.*

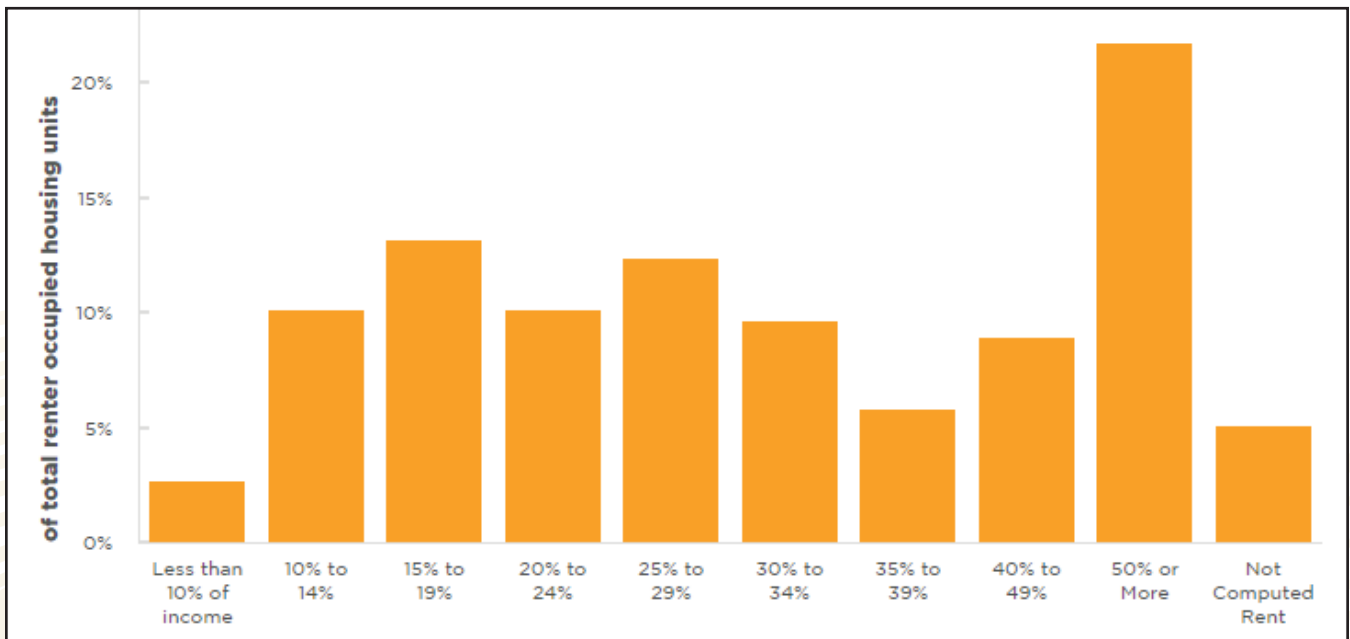
An analysis of Fair Market Rents reveals that rents rose by 31.7 percent in McHenry County from 2015 to 2023. This comes after Fair Market Rent rose by only 7.6 percent between 2010 and 2015. The 2023 Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom unit in McHenry County is \$1,440. In the McHenry County, workers need to earn over \$30 an hour to reasonably afford a two-bedroom apartment at FMR. A worker who gets paid Illinois' minimum wage of \$13 an hour (beginning Jan. 1, 2023) would need to work 92 hours a week in McHenry to be able to reasonably afford a two-bedroom apartment at the FMR.

<b>FMR for 2BR, 2023</b>	<b>Estimate of Mean Hourly Wage, 2023</b>	<b>Monthly Rent Affordable at Mean Wage, 2023</b>	<b>Wage Needed to Afford FMR 2BR, 2023</b>	<b>Work Hours per Week at IL Min Wage to Afford FMR 2BR, 2023</b>
\$1,440	\$20.69	\$1,076.17	\$30	92

**Table 9**

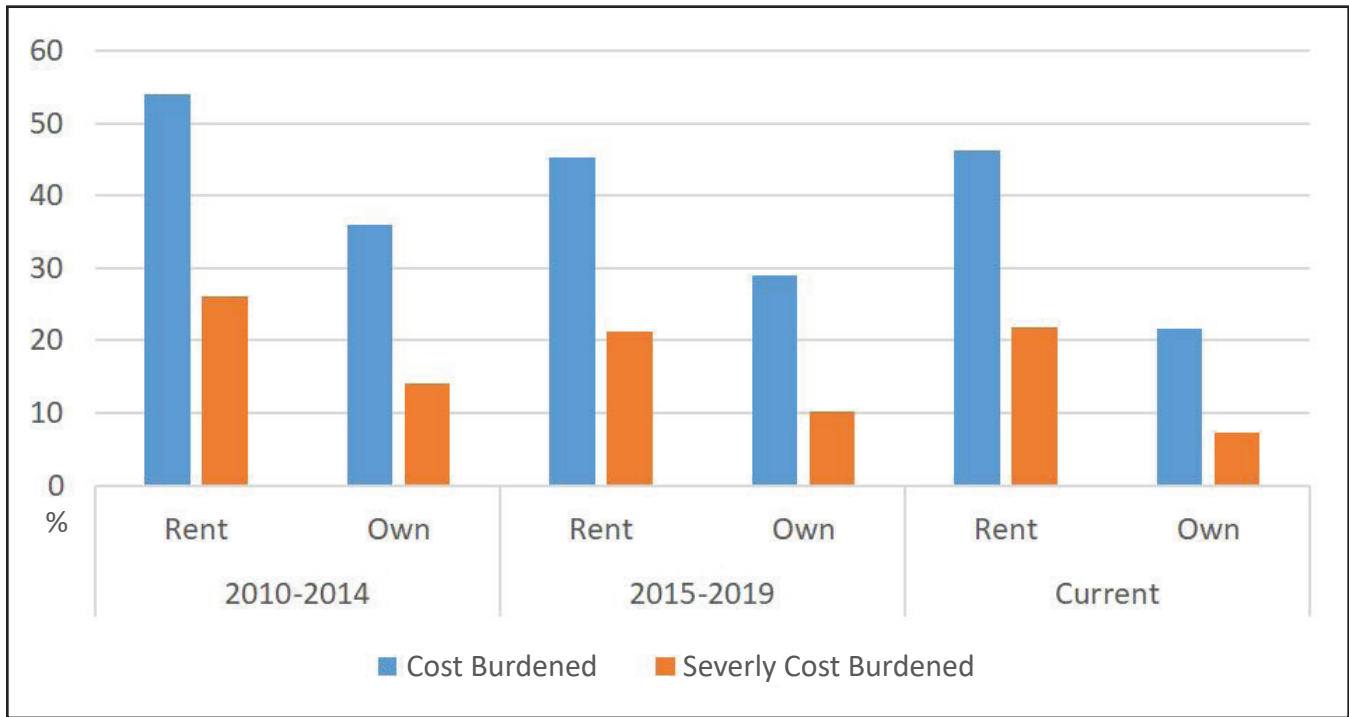
The opposite of being able to afford housing is having a high housing cost burden. Households are cost burdened when they spend 30 percent or more of their income for housing. In 2023, 46.3 percent of all renter households were paying too much of their income toward rent. Over 1 in 5 (21.78 percent) of all renter households in McHenry are severely rent burdened, paying half their income toward their housing costs. This leaves less money for other essentials such as food, medication, and transportation.

Homeowners are increasingly impacted by high housing cost burden as well as by declining incomes. McHenry County has a homeownership rate of 81.47 percent. The remaining 18.5 percent of households rent. In McHenry County, 21.78% of renter families are extremely cost burdened (meaning over 50% of their income is used to cover rent) while 7.35% of homeowners are extremely cost burdened by their mortgage.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2017-2021

**Chart 2 - Rental Costs as a Percent of Income**



**Chart 3 - Historic Cost Burden**

Public housing authorities are key players in the affordable housing context. Since 2000, housing authorities have experienced continuing declines in federal funding levels for housing assistance programs. These funding declines, along with new rules that affect how housing authorities operate and fund their programs, have resulted in long waiting lists for housing assistance. There are three main types of housing assistance: public housing units, housing choice vouchers, and project-based Section 8.

The McHenry County Housing Authority offers housing choice vouchers, public housing sites, as well as Senior and Disability Housing. Housing choice vouchers provide direct rental assistance to renter households to enable them to find their own housing in the private housing market. The voucher amount is based on the rent and utility costs of a unit, the family's annual adjusted income, and a payment standard set by the local housing authority based on the local Fair Market Rent.

The McHenry Housing Authority has a budgeted amount of 992 Housing Choice vouchers (HCV) from HUD. Due to high rental rates, low rental vacancies, and high payment standards, the Housing Authority is currently only providing assistance for 820 families with Housing Choice Vouchers. The last time applications were open was February 6th, 2018 and was only open for one week. As of August, 2022, there are 2,987 applicants waiting on the HCV waiting list.

The project-based Section 8 program is a federally funded program that makes rental units affordable to low-income families and individuals by providing a mortgage and/or rental subsidy. The subsidy stays with the unit rather than with the individual or family. As of 2020, there are approximately 2,752 persons living in 613 subsidized units in McHenry County. The federal government has not funded any new Section 8 projects for years, and current landlords are not required to stay in the program after their contracts expire. With the high cost of housing, many landlords are exploring other more

profitable options for their buildings and McHenry County may see a real loss of subsidized units in upcoming years. See Appendix A for full Housing Inventory and Affordability Information.

The homeless system is also an important provider of shelter and appropriate housing models for those who are homeless. The majority of the housing capacity within the homeless system currently is in transitional housing.

Currently there are 289 shelter beds in McHenry County. Over one third of these beds are reserved for families.

Transitional housing is affordable housing that is time-limited, meaning the family or individual can only live there for a certain period of time. During their stay in transitional housing, an individual or family can receive supportive services that will ready them to move into a permanent housing unit. In McHenry County there are 78 transitional housing beds with nearly a third being set aside for families, and another third set aside for veterans.

Permanent supportive housing is affordable housing for homeless persons with disabilities that is not time-limited and is linked with case management services that enable residents to remain housed. Residents generally are required to pay no more than one third of their income for the housing. Supportive housing providers offer case management, which includes life skills training and linkages to other needed services such as physical and mental health services, substance abuse treatment and support, and employment services. In 2023, there is a total of 136 permanent supportive housing beds, accounting for both HUD-funded and non HUD-funded units.

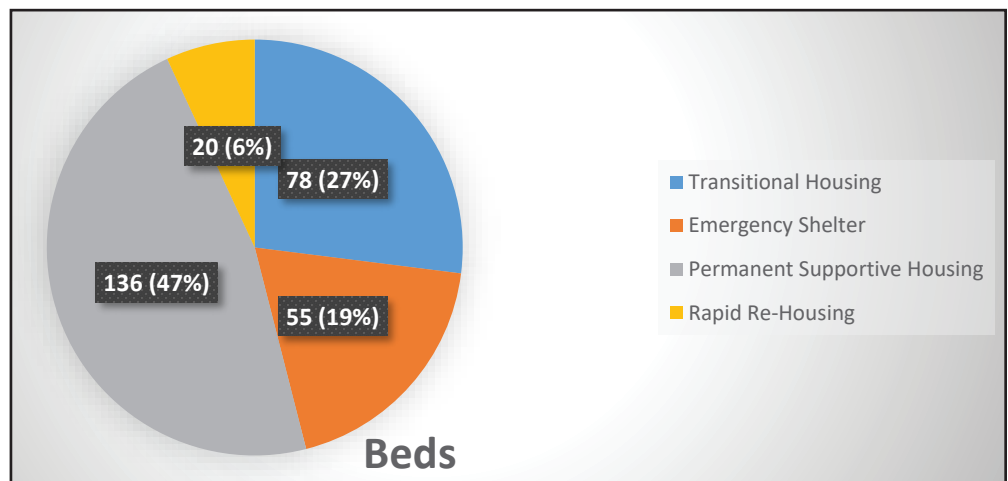


Chart 4



# Background: McHenry County Continuum of Care (CoC)

In the 1980's, concerned McHenry County residents and institutions of faith began seeing individuals and families sleeping in their cars, under bridges, and in other places unfit for human habitation. Concerned about this growing epidemic, groups of concerned local citizens created non-profit organizations to confront this crisis, all from humble beginnings, and with limited resources from local institutions of faith and private donors to serve these individuals. Initially, local institutions of faith collaborated to shelter the homeless during the colder months. Then, year-round shelter sites began to appear.

Driven by the considerable increase in demand, McHenry County non-profits, institutions of faith, and concerned citizens formed a task force in the early 1990's to confront homelessness and ensure the scarce federal resources were allocated to meet local needs. In the meantime, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determined that local submission of applications had become cumbersome for its Field Offices, and developed the Continuum of Care model in the later 1990's as an interface between HUD and local decision makers to determine where federal homeless dollars would be spent.

In 1995, as part of a national effort to streamline applications for federal funding and to promote regional collaboration of homeless services, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) began to require that communities submit one single application for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants, the primary federal funding source for homeless programs. Continua of Care were created to meet this need, and as of 2006, there were 476 Continua of Care in the United States.

Continua of Care (CoC) not only provide a centralized body for application of federal funds, but also play an important role in facilitating collaboration and coordination among local agencies providing homeless services. Because they are regionally based, CoCs allow for homeless service agencies to work together and meet local needs.

"A Continuum of Care Plan is a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness."

According to HUD, CoC's should be comprehensive and collaborative, and should include strategic planning. The four critical parts of a CoC as identified by HUD are:

1. Outreach, intake, and assessment to identify needs and provide appropriate linkages;
2. Emergency shelter to provide a safe place to stay;
3. Transitional housing with supportive housing to help people remain housed; and
4. Permanent housing and permanent supportive housing.

The task force assumed a role as one of the first Continua of Care in Illinois in 1997 and began awarding these federal homeless funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Initial applications to the Continuum of Care program involved more shelter-oriented (transitional and emergency) and Permanent-Supportive Housing models. An applicant would generally receive upfront support for program start up (acquisition of a site and rehabilitation funds).

In 2009, Congress reauthorized the McKinney-Vento Act through the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, which established even greater local decision authority

on grant funds, established more stringent Continuum requirements, and established Housing First and Rapid Rehousing as effective models and service delivery methods. An emphasis is placed on meeting clients holistically, and ensuring that collaboration among multiple partners in the service spectrum is most effectively utilized as a tool to confront homelessness.

In 2020, McHenry County was designated as the 12th Unified Funding Agency in the United States. This model allows for even greater local decision-making and support to ensure that the needs of McHenry County homeless can be met.

Oversight and leadership of the McHenry County CoC is primarily achieved through committees:

**Compliance & Ethics Committee**

This committee monitors performance and compliance of projects approved by the McHenry County CoC Board for funding; logs, investigates, and recommends action on grievances and appeals in accordance with the Grievance Policy; and annually analyzes grievances and appeals for trends.

**Finance Committee**

This committee ensures that there is a comprehensive, equitable, objective and well evaluated funding allocation process. The committee also ensures that all programs for which McHenry County CoC holds a funding allocation role in compliance with Federal Regulations and best practices through monitoring, consultation, and technical support.

**Housing and Services Committee**

The Housing and Services Committee brings forward current information about known housing and service opportunities in McHenry County and also identifies service deficits within the county. The committee works together to help close the service gaps and will look for ways the county can be proactive to avoid further housing and service deficits. Additionally, they review service deficits and barriers to housing reported by community agencies and make recommendations to the CoC Board.

**Membership and Nominating Committee**

The committee develops and annually reviews election procedures for the CoC. The committee also works in collaboration with the McHenry County CoC Collaborative Applicant to ensure that all membership documents are in place and reviewed annually.

**Community Awareness Committee**

This committee manages the McHenry County CoC's external and community relations, and ensures that the CoC's mission, work, and messages are known to the community at large. Actions include periodically reviewing existing informational resources available to McHenry County residents and recommend changes or additions as appropriate. The committee may make plans for various events, and plan and arrange for the CoC's participation in events such as World Homeless Day, The People in Need Forum, and other appropriate events/occasions.

In addition to these committees, the McHenry County CoC is led by the Full Board and Steering Council:

### **McHenry County CoC Full Board**

The Full Board serves as the CoC's decision-making body and consists of all the member organizations and community members of the CoC. Taking a participatory approach, any organization or community member that desires to be represented on the CoC Full Board to help end homelessness is allowed to join and have one vote on the Full Board.

While membership is open to all, the Department of Housing and Urban Development CoC's to include members from the following stakeholders:

- Homeless or formerly homeless individuals and families
- Housing Developers and Landlord Organizations
- Neighborhood Groups
- Non-profit Organizations
- Healthcare Providers; and many more

The CoC has an annual meeting every September where the CoC members vote to elect Officers. Officers can be elected for a term of two years at a time. Officers are limited to election to two terms consecutively in the same position; a minimum one-term hiatus is required before an officer may be elected again to the same position. The current Officer positions in the McHenry County CoC are:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

### **McHenry County CoC Steering Council**

The Steering Council serves to effectively guide, or "steer," the agenda and priorities of the CoC, and consists of the CoC Elected Officers, CoC Committee Chairs, and other key staff. It is the Steering Council that decides what is on the CoC Full Board meeting agendas and provides direction regarding new ideas or strategies for the CoC prior to passing them on to the CoC Full Board.

Anyone interested in joining the McHenry County Continuum of Care, or looking for more information can find it at the CoC's website: [mchenrycountyhomeless.org](http://mchenrycountyhomeless.org)

## **Plans to End Homelessness**

In 2000, the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) released *A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years*, highlighting that the time has come for the nation to recommit to ending homelessness rather than just managing it. Drawing on research and innovative programs from around the country, the Plan outlined key strategies in addressing the issue locally through the creation and implementation of 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness.

NAEH then provided tools, research, and guidance to communities on developing and implementing local Plans to End Homelessness. NAEH has identified these key elements in a Plan to End Homelessness:

- ✓ Plan for Outcomes
- ✓ Close the Front Door to Homelessness
- ✓ Open the Back Door Out of Homelessness
- ✓ Build the Infrastructure

Within these main areas, NAEH identifies 10 essentials to ending homelessness in their toolkit for ending homelessness:

1. Creating a Plan to End Homelessness
2. Creating a Data System to Help End Homelessness
3. Establishing Emergency Prevention Programs
4. Making System Changes that Prevent Homelessness
5. Outreach to Homeless People on the Streets
6. Shortening the Time People Spend Homeless
7. Re-housing People Rapidly So That They Do Not Become Homeless
8. Putting Together Treatment and Other Services for Homeless People
9. Creating an Adequate Supply of Permanent Affordable Housing
10. Ensuring That Homeless People Have Incomes to Pay for Housing

NAEH identified four strengths key to the successful implementation of a Plan: measurable goals, timeline for achievement of goals, identified funding sources, and assignment of responsibility, yet found that not as many Plans “set clear numeric indicators, timelines, implementing bodies, and identify funding sources.” In addition, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has identified 10 common elements in successful Plans to End Homelessness. These elements are related to engagement of key stakeholders, planning, and innovation.

Successful Plans have engaged community and political leaders who “own” the Plan. They include decision makers from all levels of government, and they coordinate with other state and private agencies.

They measure and achieve results by using baselines, benchmarks, timelines, and funding considerations. They emphasize prevention and consumer preferences, and include consumers in planning. High-risk populations are prioritized, and evidence-based practices are implemented. Finally, successful Plans are living documents that include timelines for assessment, evaluation and updating, and that provide opportunities for sharing progress and celebrating successes.

**TEN ELEMENTS OF GREAT PLANS TO END HOMELESSNESS:**

- 1. POLITICAL/COMMUNITY WILL**
- 2. PARTNERSHIPS**
- 3. CONSUMER-CENTRIC SOLUTIONS**
- 4. BUSINESS PLAN**
- 5. BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**
- 6. PREVENTION & INTERVENTION**
- 7. INNOVATIVE IDEAS**
- 8. IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS**
- 9. BROAD-BASED RESOURCES**
- 10. LIVING DOCUMENTS**

# McHenry County Plan to End Homelessness: Overview

The McHenry County Continuum of Care (CoC) released its first Plan to End Homelessness in 2015, titled *Confronting Homelessness in McHenry County: Strategic Plan to End Homelessness 2016-2018*. This plan introduced the vision for the CoC as it strives to end homelessness. This vision includes:

- Be a coordinated system with real-time housing inventory information, effective referrals, and no cracks.
- Have a mix of housing and services and supply that are aligned with needs – i.e. person-centered, not program or agency centered;
- Have housing first principles and policies embedded throughout the system—meaning programs are client ready versus participants being housing ready and that people are screened in versus screened out; and
- Be a system that is easily understood, accessed, and navigated by people experiencing homelessness.

The measures/goals for this plan were three-fold:

1. **Homelessness is Rare** – Numbers of people experiencing homelessness decrease and numbers for whom homelessness is prevented increase.
2. **Homelessness is Non-recurring** – returns to homelessness decline.
3. **Homelessness is Brief** – length of time spent homeless declines or is measure relative to a benchmark.

The 2015 plan also introduced three sets of priorities for the County to end homelessness:

1. **Housing and Shelter** – Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Affordable Housing
2. **Supportive Services** – Street Outreach, Mainstream Resources, Prevention, Healthcare, and Employment.
3. **System Operations** – Coordinated Assessment, Operational Capacity, Leadership & Governance, and Measuring Progress.

The next plan to end homelessness was released in 2019 (McHenry County: Strategic Plan to End Homelessness 2019-2023. Found at the following link: [https://www.mchenrycountyhomeless.org/\\_files/ugd/5a754e\\_b4aa9ce8a93d4c348e112abdbf3168e1.pdf](https://www.mchenrycountyhomeless.org/_files/ugd/5a754e_b4aa9ce8a93d4c348e112abdbf3168e1.pdf)). Like the original plan, the 2019 plan provided an update on the goals of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. In addition, the plan highlighted programs and organizations that are making a difference in McHenry County.

The remainder of this plan will give an overview of McHenry County's efforts to end homelessness, provide an update on goals from past plans, and lay out new priorities for the McHenry County Continuum of Care to deal with the issue of homelessness.

# McHenry County Plan to End Homelessness: Progress

## Current Progress

The ultimate goal of the McHenry County Continuum of Care is to reach functional zero homelessness. The term functional zero refers to a milestone, which needs to be sustained. This milestone indicates that a community has measurably ended homelessness for a population. This does not mean that no one will experience homelessness, but it is rare, brief, and non-recurring. Making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring has been the measuring-stick the CoC uses since the initial Plan to End Homelessness in 2015. This section will give benchmarks for these three factors over the last 7 years.

## Homelessness is Rare

The most foundational goal for this plan is to increasingly make homelessness rare. We anticipate to continually see a decrease in the number of persons who experience homelessness, and an increase in the number of persons for whom homelessness is prevented.

Individuals who are, or become, homeless and come into contact with homeless service providers are documented and added to the County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Through HMIS, the CoC is able to track the number of homeless individuals, what services they need, what services they receive, and whether they return to homelessness.

The homeless population is consistently fluctuating as households may become homeless or leave homelessness throughout the year. This means that tracking the actual number of homeless is difficult and can be done in multiple ways. The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night.

The following chart illustrates the McHenry County PIT counts for the last several years:

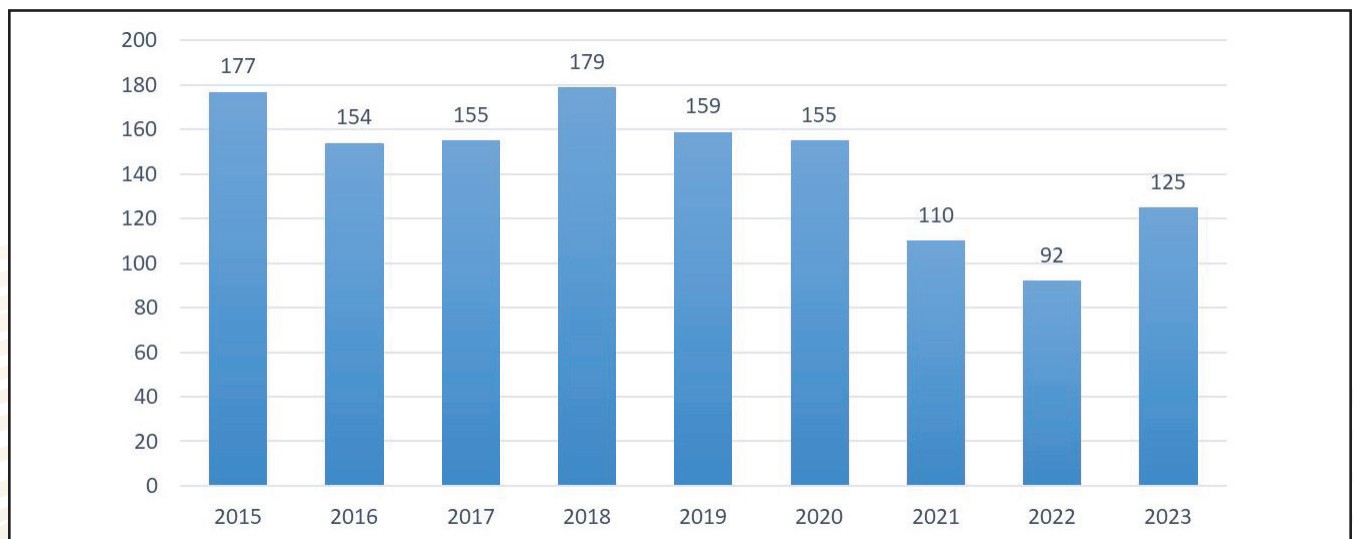
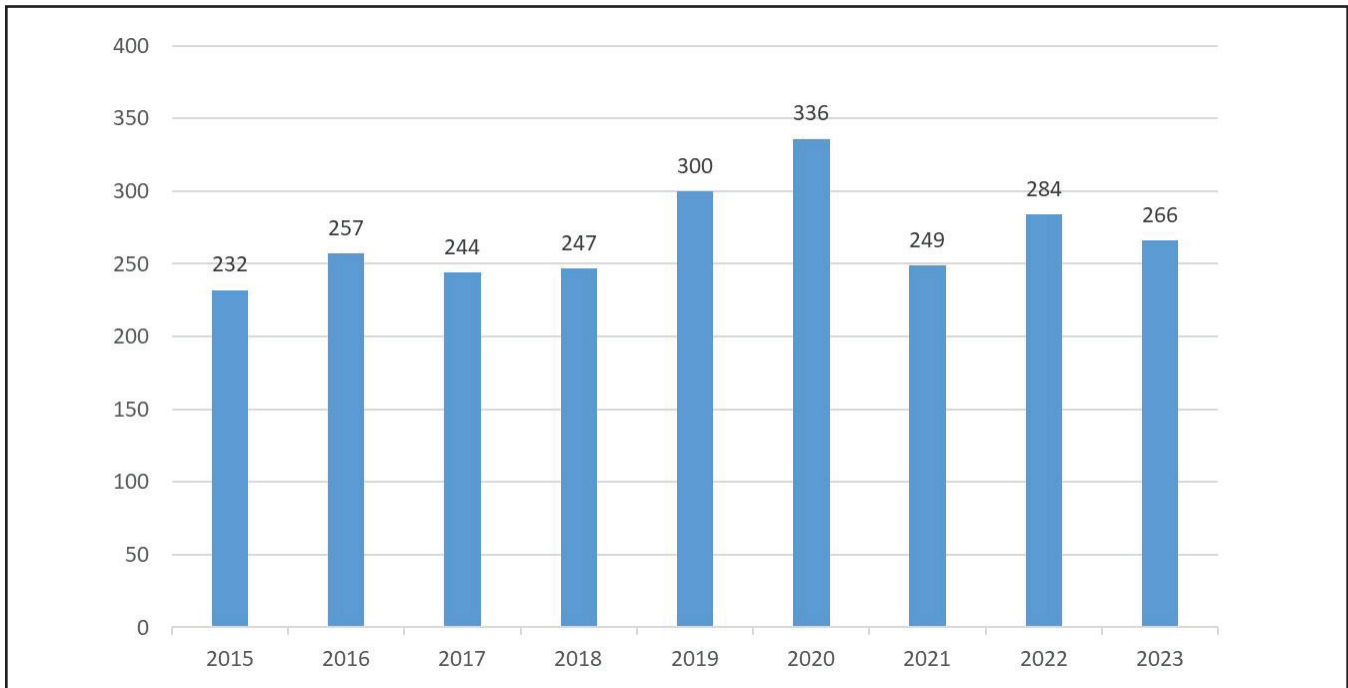


Chart 6 - PIT Count

Another way for CoC's to track their homeless population is through HMIS data reports. The following chart demonstrates the data from an HMIS report that shows an unduplicated count of homeless clients served in Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing (Note: This count does not include the count of unsheltered homeless. This population IS counted in the annual PIT count).



**Chart 7 - Report 0702: Number of Homeless Persons - Metric 3.2**

These two charts begin to paint a picture of the current homeless situation in McHenry County. The Point-In-Time data shows that, at any given time, the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless has been decreasing steadily over the last three years. However, the number of homeless persons receiving emergency shelter/transitional housing annually has not seen a decrease. This is due largely to the impact of COVID-19 on the entire homeless system. In 2020, the county experienced an increase in need for shelter and housing services. This led to the creation of short-term programs like the Covid Motel, where the CoC partnered with local motels to safely house people in need of shelter during the colder months. Another program that was created in response to the increased need was McEURAP (McHenry County Emergency Utility and Rental Assistance Program), which provided rent/utility assistance for at-risk families, as well as provide eviction prevention services and case management. By the spring of 2023, the projects funded by the pandemic response are closed or significantly scaled back. As these supports run out of funding, the County has seen an increase in households experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. This is reflected in the 35% increase in PIT count individuals from 2022 to 2023.

## Homelessness is Brief

While the ultimate goal is to prevent homelessness throughout McHenry County, this is often not possible. In these cases, we strive to reduce the length of time individuals and families spend homeless (whether sheltered or unsheltered). There can be numerous factors that contribute to the length of time that individual remains homeless. Nationally, factors like physical disability, mental health issues, or substance use disorder lead to longer length of homelessness due to increased and/or more complex needs for housing. Another common factor that can increase the length of homelessness is the amount of housing/services available at any given time.

In wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of agencies in McHenry County were forced to significantly reduce their capacity due to concerns and regulations regarding congregate shelters and risk of COVID outbreaks. In addition, many local agencies have been struggling to find and hire enough staff needed to run these shelters/programs at full capacity.

These factors created a noticeable increase in the length of homelessness for 2020-2021. The County saw a small drop in length of time homeless in 2022. This was due mainly to multiple housing and rental assistance projects being funded by pandemic response funding. As these projects close, the County is faced with an increase in demand for services and a lack of housing options. This results in households experiencing homelessness for a longer period of time while housing is located and secured.

The following chart illustrates length of homelessness based off of McHenry County HMIS data. This data tracks the length of time individuals spend in emergency shelter (ES) and transitional housing (TH) before finding permanent housing and leaving homelessness.

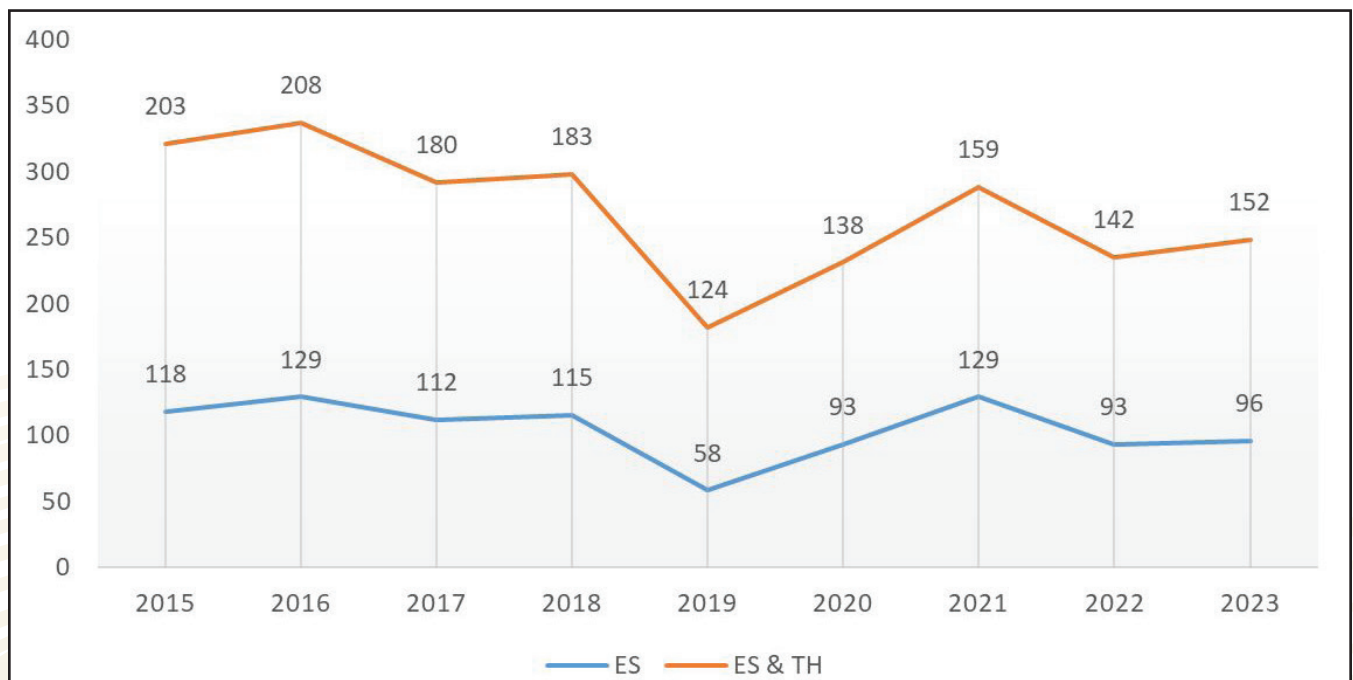


Chart 8 - Length of Homelessness



## Homelessness is Non-recurring

When a household becomes homeless, receives services from McHenry County providers, and then exits homelessness to a permanent housing placement; the goal is that the household does not reappear in the homeless system again. When this happens it is known as recidivism. The following chart illustrates the data on recidivism for McHenry County:

<b>Fiscal Year (FY)</b>	<b># of Households that have exited homelessness to a permanent housing placement</b>	<b># of households that have returned (this FY) to homelessness within 2 years of exiting to PH</b>
2015	122	8
2016	174	11
2017	152	10
2018	181	16
2019	200	29
2020	248	41
2021	199	26
2022	290	8

**Table 10**

There are two main trends worth mentioning in this data. The first is that the number of households that have exited homelessness to permanent housing increased by over 200% between 2015 and 2020. However, the percent of households returning to homelessness within 2 years also saw an increase of over 200% between these years. Again, this spike in numbers is due largely to the COVID-19 pandemic in which the County encountered and assisted a larger number of households. In the wake of this pandemic, the County has been experiencing skyrocketing rental costs, unemployment, and a large portion of the County's rental housing stock being sold by private landlords and removing the units from availability. Factors like these have resulted in an increase of households returning to homelessness and re-entering shelters. While recidivism numbers have begun to return to pre-pandemic levels, many of the economic effects of COVID-19 are still challenging at-risk households across the County.

## Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Performance Review

The following table displays data from the McHenry County HMIS along with goals set by the McHenry County CoC. The table covers six system performance measures pertaining to homelessness in McHenry County. The green columns represent goals for the next three years as the CoC strives to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness, and for households that do experience homelessness we strive to reduce their length of stay and keep them from returning to homelessness.

Measure	Seek to Reduce	October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020		October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021		October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022		October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023	October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024	October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025	October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026			
Sys PM 1: Average Length of Time Homeless	Reduce by 10% baseline 100	ES	89	ES	110	ES	98	85	76	67	58			
	Reduce by 10% baseline 150	ES/TH	127	ES/TH	152	ES/TH	143	128	114	100	86			
Sys PM 2: Recidivism Rate	Maintain rate of 2% or less baseline 1%	15/149 6.7%		40/192 10.4%		34/173 9.8%		10%	8%	6%	4%			
Sys PM 3: Total number of Homeless	Reduce by 10% baseline 175	ES	224	ES	142	ES	178	161	144	127	110			
	Reduce by 10% baseline 120	TH	130	TH	88	TH	128	116	104	92	80			
Sys PM 4: Job and Income Growth	Seek to Increase by 5%		\$	B	\$	B	\$	B						
		S	0/4 0%	0/4 0%	S	0/21 0%	2/21 9.5%	S	1/29 3%	3/29 10%	At least 5%	At least 10%	At least 15%	At least 20%
		L	6/57 10.5%	10/57 17.5%	L	13/65 20%	10/65 15%	L	21/61 34%	9/61 14%	At least 25%	At least 30%	At least 35%	At least 40%
Sys PM 5: Number of First Time Homeless	Reduce by 10% baseline 200	w/o PH	224/255 87%	w/o PH	144/166 86%	w/o PH	203/231 87%	183	163	143	123			
	Proposed baseline 300	w/ PH	305/386 79%	w/ PH	185/225 82%	w/ PH	267/309 87%	237	207	177	147			
Sys PM 7: Successful Housing Placement and Retention	CoC Competition only Not ESG (includes street outreach)	248/361 67%		341/548 62%		270/398 67%		At Least 70%	At Least 75%	At Least 80%	At Least 85%			

Table 11

# McHenry County CoC Priority Areas

In addition to creating the goals of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring in McHenry County, the original plan to end homelessness in 2015 introduced three broad priority areas: Housing, Services, and System Operations. This section will provide a brief overview of the priority categories and the programs contained in them.

## Housing and Shelter

Housing is the cornerstone of McHenry County’s efforts to end homelessness. McHenry County is committed to supporting a variety of housing interventions, improving the targeting of each housing type to the populations most likely to benefit, improving processes, applying best practices, and integrating housing first. This section will provide an overview of housing and shelter services available in McHenry County followed by an analysis of how each housing type has changed since the original plan’s inception.

### Emergency Shelter (ES)

Emergency shelters in McHenry County have historically been operated on a seasonal basis in the colder months, hosted in rotating locations at congregations, and staffed primarily through volunteers. Many were in church facilities poorly equipped to serve as shelter, and there were many months—May through September—when there was no general population shelter option at all. Transition-aged youth (ages 18-24) were mixed with adults in the shelters and having poorer outcomes. These shelters operated within a funding and practice context that is moving away from shelters as a housing solution and with growing recognition that, for many people who end up in shelters, their homelessness could have been prevented in the first place.

During the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021, the majority of emergency shelters were closed due to concerns of spreading the virus. The “pop-up” style emergency shelters held in churches throughout the County were closed, with the vast majority remaining closed as of August 2023. In addition, permanent emergency shelters like the Pioneer Center PADS Chapel were forced to reduce their shelter capacity; sometimes by more than half. With the loss of these congregate emergency shelters, McHenry County was forced to use more expensive and unpredictable means of shelter. Many homeless individuals chose to, or had no choice but to, camp during warmer months.

Thanks to several emergency rounds of funding for the Federal government, McHenry County was able to provide motel room vouchers for many of the homeless during the colder winter months. As of 2022, the pop-up emergency shelters are no longer being used in McHenry County. McHenry residents in need of emergency shelter are now assisted at either the PADS chapel or with a motel voucher until more permanent housing is available. In early 2023, the Pioneer Center PADS Chapel increased its capacity from 35 to 55, but serves an average of 35-45 individuals on a given night.

### Transitional Housing (TH)

Transitional housing is itself going through a transition across the nation. Through research and the emergence of newer housing and service models, it is becoming clearer that transitional housing should prioritize individuals and families going through transitional periods in their lives. Their service needs are acute but not indefinite. Examples include survivors of domestic violence, people in recovery or in treatment, people exiting incarceration, and youth. McHenry County has a history of transitional housing that has been effective and continues to evolve

based on best practices including shorter length of stay and focused case management.

The majority of transitional housing projects in McHenry County are focused on serving mothers with children, victims of domestic violence, and veterans. These programs provide a safe shelter along with case management to help individuals find permanent shelter. Case managers assist the individuals with finding a home that meets their needs, employment, and various life skills.

### **Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)**

Rapid re-housing, short- to medium-term rental assistance with limited services, is one of the fastest growing and popular approaches for interventions on the housing continuum targeted at people experiencing homelessness. While it has many features similar to transitional housing, in rapid re-housing the assistance is temporary but the housing is meant to be permanent. Early evidence suggests this to be a promising tool in the fight to end homelessness. The rapid re-housing programs in McHenry County are still fairly new, but have shown promising results of effectiveness. In the summer of 2023, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) awarded McHenry County \$498,106 to expand RRH projects with an additional 20 units for households in need.

### **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)**

Permanent supportive housing is broadly understood to effectively end homelessness for those with disabilities especially chronically homeless individuals and families. McHenry County has had trouble filling its permanent supportive housing units with chronically homeless because the nature of homelessness in the county frequently does not meet HUD's definition of chronic homelessness. There are other populations falling through the cracks of the system that might also benefit from supportive housing.

McHenry County has been diligently increasing its stock of permanent supportive housing over the years. Through targeted HUD funding the County has invested in several scattered-site permanent supportive housing residences for McHenry County families at risk of homelessness. In addition to this, the County funded the creation of Pearl Street Commons in McHenry. Pearl Street Commons is a 25-unit PSH complex that provides on-site case management and supportive services for residents. Pearl Street Commons opened in August of 2019. In 2021, McHenry County awarded funds to build a second Pearl Street Commons next to the first. The second complex will also be PSH and will offer the same invaluable services as the first. The County is continuing to prioritize PSH with upcoming grants through IDHS and HUD CoC program to create additional PSH units.

### **Affordable Housing**

An adequate supply of affordable housing is essential for preventing and ending homelessness. While much affordable housing development happens outside of the formal purview and funding mechanisms of the homeless system, there are many creative ways for the homeless system to participate in and spur the new creation or set-aside of affordable units. The Housing Authority can implement a homeless preference in housing voucher wait lists, and landlords could be asked to set aside units at lower rents.

McHenry County, like most of the US, has seen the cost of rent and housing increase drastically over the last several years. The median home sale price in McHenry County has risen from

\$230,250 in 2018 to \$340,000 in 2021, representing a 47% increase. In comparison, the state of Illinois only saw a 25% increase during this same time. Along with this, the median gross rent in McHenry County rose from \$1,074 in 2015 to \$1,253 in 2023. This represents an increase in median rent of 16.6% (18.5% increase for Illinois).

The increase in home buying and rental cost has led to McHenry County investing in assistance for low-income households. The McHenry County Housing Authority (MCHA) currently provides 820 families with Housing-Choice Vouchers which allows them to pay 30% of their income to rent while the Housing Authority covers the rest. Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) is another affordable housing project where the County provides funding to local non-profit agencies, who in turn, cover a large portion of rent for households at risk of homelessness.

The COVID-19 pandemic put hundreds of McHenry County renters at risk of homelessness. Whether due to the rising cost of rent, loss of employment, or a number of other burdens related to COVID-19, renters in McHenry County were in need of emergency assistance. In March, 2021, McHenry County launched the McHenry County Emergency Utility and Rental Assistance Program (McEURAP). This program, funded through multiple emergency Federal allocations, provided households who earn less than 80% Area Median Income with rent and/or utility assistance for up to 18 months. As of July, 2023, McEURAP has assisted 836 households and distributed nearly 12 million dollars in rental/utility assistance to struggling families. McEURAP involved collaboration among county staff, the housing authority and several local nonprofit agencies across McHenry County. The McHenry County Housing Authority reviewed applications and disbursed funds while agencies like the Home of the Sparrow and Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Northern IL provided case management and eviction prevention services. The Pioneer Center, Association for Individual Development, and Veterans Path to Hope provided homelessness prevention services and case management as well. While this program prevented many residents from becoming homeless, McEURAP is now closed to applications and the County will need to ensure these households do not become at risk of homelessness in the near future.

## **Supportive Services**

While housing is the centerpiece of local responses to homelessness, success in housing and becoming stabilized is often a result of receiving needed services and supports. McHenry County is committed to improving and enhancing services within the homeless system such as street outreach, homelessness prevention, health care, and efforts to increase income for people experiencing homelessness.

### **Street Outreach**

Street outreach focuses on finding people experiencing homelessness who might not know about housing or services available. It includes building relationships, monitoring well-being, assessing vulnerability, linking to services, and providing follow-up case management. Outreach is a critical first step in connecting people with the services they need and reducing the length of time they spend homeless. That being said, the rural nature of much of McHenry County makes outreach a challenge. It is further challenged by the limited resources available to support such services.

Much of the street outreach done in McHenry County is through small non-profit or faith-based

organizations, many of which receive little to no government funding.

Organizations like Warp Corp, based out of Woodstock, IL have stepped up over the last several years to provide street outreach and other community based supports like transportation and workforce development.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic Willow Creek Community Church in Crystal Lake, along with several leaders of local non-profits, organized and launched Community Resource Days. This program, originally called the Empower Shower, brings together multiple non-profit service agencies together in one place where homeless individuals and low-income residents can receive a number of services including food, camping supplies, vaccines, hygiene products, healthcare, and much more. Community Resource days went from being held once a month, to bi-weekly, and as of August 2022, the event is now held weekly.

While outreach efforts like these are making an impact, there is still a need for further street outreach, especially to the more rural parts of McHenry County.

### **Mainstream Resources**

The homeless system in isolation does not have the resources to prevent and end homelessness; mainstream government programs are a core partner in this effort. Mainstream programs are typically for low-income people, though they are not specifically targeted toward people experiencing homelessness.

There are a variety of mainstream safety net programs to help people experiencing homelessness meet their basic needs such as TANF (cash assistance/welfare), SSI (disability), and SNAP (food stamps), among others. Unfortunately, people experiencing homelessness often encounter barriers to accessing those resources. In order to increase income and services received, homeless providers need to be equipped to help program participants enroll in mainstream programs.

Improvements in the County's Coordinated Entry system, along with events like Community Resource Days have increased cooperation among local agencies to provide residents with the resources they need.

### **Homelessness Prevention**

Homelessness prevention activities are designed to reduce the number of people who become homeless for the first time. Activities include short- or medium-term financial assistance and services as well as tenant and legal services. In addition, it includes systems prevention efforts with institutions that may discharge people into homelessness. A newly emerging area of prevention work is identifying the situations that make a person most likely to become homeless and intentionally targeting households with those situations. This reinforces the importance of assessment in the process.

Programs like McHenry County Emergency Utility and Rental Assistance (McEURAP) have been working hard to prevent homelessness in a multi-faceted approach. Along with providing at-risk households with rental assistance, McEURAP has also partnered with agencies like Consumer Credit Counseling Services and Prairie State Legal Services to prevent evictions and homelessness at the source. Through partnership with the McHenry County Court House, these providers have an office at the court house where eviction cases are redirected to them first.

The agencies then attempt to mediate cases and offer rental assistance (when applicable).

In addition to eviction prevention, many local non-profit agencies have created, or continue to run, homeless prevention activities which range from financial counseling to assistance locating housing.

### **Health Care**

Poor health and chronic health conditions are frequent contributors to homelessness, and behavioral health issues are commonly found among people experiencing homelessness. The Affordable Care Act provides for a Medicaid expansion to nearly all individuals with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level, and Medicaid enrollment processes have been streamlined. Given their low incomes and high uninsured rate, individuals experiencing homelessness could significantly benefit from this coverage expansion. However, it will be important to address the barriers they face to enrolling in coverage and accessing needed care. In addition, Medicaid funds may be available to support some services for people experiencing homelessness in new ways.

Organizations like Family Health Partnership Clinic work with the County and non-profit organizations to provide health check-ups and medical care to at-risk and low-income families. Family Health Partnership Clinic also participates in Community Resource Days where they offer free vaccines and other health services.

### **Employment**

Linking individuals and families with stable earned income from employment is a critical tool in the fight to prevent and end homelessness. One of the HEARTH Act performance measures, jobs and income growth for people experiencing homelessness, brings attention to the importance of employment as a solution within homeless systems. Providers serving people experiencing homelessness can play a role in connecting individuals with employment opportunities and should be aware of the service models and strategies that are most effective in serving this population.

While nearly all of the homeless service organizations in McHenry County provide employment assistance in some capacity, McHenry County also utilizes their Workforce Network. The McHenry County Workforce Network has a variety of programs and services for employers and job seekers needing assistance in meeting the challenges of today's job market. They are an affiliate of Illinois workNet, which is a consolidated effort to provide a one-stop system for employment related services in McHenry County and part of a nation-wide, grant-funded system.

## **System Operation**

It is no small feat to coordinate and manage all of the moving parts of a local homeless system. HUD has issued new guidance to help local homeless systems build needed capacity and institute system improvements. The ultimate goal is to make it as easy as possible for people experiencing homelessness to get matched up quickly and effectively to the services and housing they need. For the homeless system this means developing a coordinated assessment and referral process, formalizing governance, and continuing to build the functionality and success of the homeless management information system.

### **Coordinated Entry (CE)**

Coordinated intake and assessment can be a powerful tool for making rapid, effective, and consistent matches of people in need to housing and services regardless of their location within a geographic area. McHenry County has a dedicated Coordinated Entry Administrator who works to find housing and services for individuals who are entering/returning to homelessness.

Coordinated Entry works like this:

1. Homeless or at-risk individuals who request assistance or are engaged during street outreach are entered into McHenry County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
2. Assisting provider enters client's basic information and needs.
3. Assisting provider then makes a referral to Coordinated Entry (through HMIS)
4. Coordinated Entry Lead reviews client's information and needs.
5. Coordinated Entry Lead then makes referral for the client to the appropriate services.

All organizations that receive HUD funding for homeless services are required to participate in Coordinated Entry by making referrals to CE along with attending weekly and monthly meetings where participating agencies discuss progress and future needs.

### **Operational Capacity**

Implementation of this ambitious plan requires a renewed assessment of organizational capacity and operations. McHenry County has continued to expand and improve upon its capacity to serve the homeless population through various means.

In 2021, The McHenry County CoC applied and was accepted as a Unified-Funding Agency. A Unified Funding Agency (UFA) means an eligible applicant selected by the CoC to apply for the entire CoC, which has the capacity to carry out the duties in 24 CFR §578.11(b). The Collaborative Applicant submits a compiled grant application on behalf of CoC homeless providers for grant opportunities, which allows the County to receive annual HUD grant funds for local homeless needs. The UFA is a special designation by HUD that only applies to the annual CoC grant competition through HUD, and which allows the Collaborative Applicant to not only apply for grant funds on behalf of the CoC, but to receive them directly. The UFA then re-distributes the grant funds to local CoC homeless providers in the form of sub-grants. The McHenry County Government (Department of Planning and Development) is the Collaborative Applicant and UFA for the McHenry County CoC. This change has helped stream-line the application and allocation process for the CoC as well as help lighten the burden of front-line organizations serving the homeless.

### **Leadership & Governance**

The McHenry County Continuum of Care has continued to build upon and improve its leadership and policies to align with best practices. In 2021, the McHenry County CoC launched its website: [mchenrycountyhomeless.org](http://mchenrycountyhomeless.org). This website is intended to improve the CoC's visibility to the community, as well as provide information and contacts for residents seeking help.

The McHenry County CoC is committed to continually reviewing and improving their leadership and bylaws. The CoC's Compliance and Ethics Committee annually reviews the Continuums policies, leadership, and decision-making to ensure it meets federal requirements and provides the best possible services to McHenry residents.



# Next Steps

The McHenry County Continuum of Care, including its various committees, is committed to serving the homeless population to the best of our abilities with the ultimate goal of ending homelessness in the county. In addition to continually reviewing and improving upon current services offered to the homeless, The McHenry County CoC understands the importance of expanding the amount, quality, and type of assistance available.

The purpose of the County creating and updating the Plan to End Homelessness is to both give a snapshot of the current homeless situation in McHenry County, as well as describe the areas in which the McHenry County CoC will prioritize moving forward. The following section will describe three priority areas the McHenry County CoC believes will make the greatest impact in addressing homelessness. These priorities were selected through months of conversation during CoC Steering Council and Full Board meeting, a survey of McHenry County HMIS users, and numerous conversations with homeless providers and clients through events like Community Resource Days.

In January of 2023, The CoC formed a Strategic Planning Committee. This committee met three times as a large group and three times within sub-committees (Plans, Housing and Programs, Partnerships and Resources).

## Priority 1: Affordable Housing

In the discussion on what McHenry County needs to better serve the homeless population, by far the most common response describes the urgent need for affordable housing in the county. The National Alliance to End Homelessness reports that the nation is currently in the middle of one of the most severe affordable housing crises in history (National Low Income Housing Coalition – accessible at <https://nlihc.org/gap>). As of 2020, 0 out of 50 states have an adequate supply of affordable rental housing for the lowest income renters. In Illinois, there are 36 rental homes available for every 100 extremely low income persons and 71 percent of extremely low income renter households are severely cost burdened by rent. McHenry County faces the same crisis as the number of rental units available to low income households decreases while the amount of households earning a low or very-low income increases. The following charts illustrate the current rental housing market in McHenry County.

**Rental Stock** – Across the area, an estimated 18.53% or 21,202 households rented their home between 2017-2021. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the area had rental units with cash rent of the following sizes between 2017-2021:

Rental Units by Size	Number of Units	Percent of All Rental Units
0 or 1 Bedroom	4,760	23.44%
2 Bedrooms	8,661	42.64%
3 or more Bedrooms	6,889	33.92%
All	20,310	100%

Table 12

**Rental Costs** – For 2017-2021, typical (median) gross rent for rental units with cash rent in this area was \$1,253. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of rental units with cash rent by average gross rent and by bedroom size were as follows:

Gross Rent in 2017-2021	Number of Units		
	0 or 1 Bedroom Units	2 Bedroom Units	3 or more Bedroom Units
< \$300 / month	187	97	219
< \$500 / month	593	169	293
< \$750 / month	1396	497	413
< \$1,000 / month	2957	1855	826
> \$1,000 / month	1803	6806	6063

**Table 13**

**Household Incomes** – According to the Census’ American Community Survey (ACS), the median household income here was \$93,801 between 2017-2021. The range of household incomes in this area is as follows:

2017-2021 Annual Income Category	Number of Households	Percent of Households
Less than \$25,000	10,512	9.19%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	6,117	5.34%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	10,462	9.14%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17,745	15.51%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	16,053	14.03%
\$100,000 - \$124,999	14,633	12.79%
\$125,000 - \$149,999	10,658	9.31%
\$150,000 or more	28,266	24.7%

**Table 14**

**Rental Affordability** – According to the U.S. Census’ ACS, 9,819 renters in this area were cost burdened (paying more than 30% of their income towards rent) between 2017-2021.

Of those renters, 21.19% were over the age of 65. Additionally, 30.08% of cost burdened renters earned less than \$20,000 between 2017-2021.

<b>Burdens by Age</b>	<b>Cost Burdened Renters between 2016-2020</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>% of all cost burdened renters</b>
Under 65	7,738	78.81%
65 or older	2081	21.19%
<b>Burdens by Annual Income</b>	<b>Cost Burdened Renters between 2016-2020</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>% of all cost burdened renters</b>
Less than \$20,000	2,954	30.08%
Less than \$50,000	8,087	82.36
Less than \$75,000	9,554	97.3%

Table 15

**Summary**

The charts above illustrate how McHenry County’s current stock of affordable rental housing does not adequately address the need. There are 10,512 McHenry households that earn less than \$25,000 a year. Of the 20,310 available rental units, only approximately 2,711 units (including 0-3 bedroom units) would be affordable for a family with an income of \$25,000. Households earning less than \$75,000 make up 39.18% of the households renting in McHenry County, but also account for 97.3% of cost burdened renters.

This data still doesn’t give a full picture of the issue the County faces with affordable housing. Homeless service agencies bring weekly accounts of the struggles that homeless, and at-risk households face when trying to find affordable housing. In March, 2021 McHenry County launched its Emergency Rental Assistance program (McEURAP) which has provided over 10 million dollars in rental and/or utility assistance to over 800 households in McHenry County. Even with rental subsidies, finding a rental unit is still a challenge. As the demand for rental housing has spiked over the last two years, the cost of rent has also spiked. Along with the increasing monthly rent, many landlords and rental complexes implement income restrictions (e.g. monthly income must be 3x monthly rent) and/or require up to 3 months of rent in advance. These factors together create a housing market that is unequipped to house the most vulnerable populations. See Appendix A for more information on Housing Affordability.

**Next Steps**

The need to increase the affordable housing stock is clear. The factors affecting affordable houses are numerous and the County is considering several approaches at increasing and strengthening the affordable housing market.

**1. Prioritize the use of CDBG and HOME funding for the development/acquisition of affordable housing.**

Every year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides qualifying jurisdictions with funding through Community Development Block Grants

and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program supports community development activities to build stronger and more resilient communities. To support community development, activities are identified through an ongoing process. Activities may address needs such as infrastructure, economic development projects, public facilities installation, community centers, housing rehabilitation, public services, clearance/acquisition, microenterprise assistance, code enforcement, homeowner assistance, etc. The HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) provides formula grants to states and localities that communities use - often in partnership with local nonprofit groups - to fund a wide range of activities including building, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership or providing direct rental assistance to low-income people. McHenry County will encourage McHenry County agencies to apply for funding for these purposes. The McHenry County Housing and Services Commission, which selects local CDBG/HOME projects for funding, will also prioritize the selection of projects designed to increase the affordable housing stock in McHenry County.

## **2. Research and Develop Housing Trust Fund and/or Social Impact Bonds.**

Federal and State funding through programs like Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program, and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) provide steady and necessary to counties across the United States. However, federal and state funding have been steadily declining for the last several decades. For example, total CDBG funding decreased by 23 percent from 1994 to 2018 while the US population increased by 25% during the same time. While these federal and state sources of funding have experienced an increase over the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the gap between needs and available funds is growing. In response, many counties have begun exploring other sources of revenue in order to increase housing. Below are two such options the County will consider.

### **1. Housing Trust Funds**

According to the Housing Trust Fund Project, there are currently over 135 county housing trust funds across 16 states, which collected over \$100 million in FY2015, and, on average, leveraged \$8.50 for every dollar they invested in affordable housing. The majority of counties that have developed Housing Trust Funds receive funding from document recording fees. Other sources of income include funding from sales taxes, developer impact fees, real estate transfer taxes, restaurant taxes and property taxes.

### **2. Social Impact Bonds**

This method, also known as “pay-for-success” programs is used to fund the development of affordable homes based on the results the developer achieves, rather than paying a set cost upfront. How this typically works is an investor will contribute the initial funding for a project, then the county will capture the savings the project produces to repay the investor in the future. An example of this would be an investor using their own funds to develop affordable homes and thereby reduce the costs of county hospital, jail, and social service operations. Once the county has realized these savings, it will pay back the investor for the affordable homes using a portion of the savings generated from reduced service costs.

### **3. Work with McHenry County landlords to reduce barriers to affordable housing**

The relationships between renters and landlords can be complicated with factors like personal values, one's livelihood, and personal property all contributing to the success or failure of a landlord/tenant relationship. It is the intent of the McHenry County CoC to build and sustain healthy relationships with McHenry landlords to encourage the continued availability of affordable housing throughout the County.

A recent trend in McHenry County, and across the US, is that less and less landlords are willing to work with government rental subsidies. Low-income renters are being denied units due to either blatant rules against using government subsidies or through de facto means (e.g. requiring 3 months of advance rent, or requiring an income 3x the monthly rent). In order to encourage further landlord participation, McHenry County is considering the use of monetary incentives/reimbursements for landlords willing to rent to low-income households using government subsidies. In the HUD Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Guide, HUD encourages grantees to offer payments, typically one-time, that may encourage participation in the HCV program, or may mitigate perceived risk of being a landlord within the program. In addition to the financial benefit these incentives offer, landlords will hopefully recognize them as a symbol of support for some of the financial burdens posed by renting housing. Offering monetary incentives to landlords has been proven to increase the number of landlords working within subsidized housing programs and could prove invaluable to McHenry County renters struggling to find housing even with housing choice vouchers.

## **Priority 2: Case Management**

A common frustration among homeless service providers is the lack of funding available for case management. Case Management refers to a collaborative and plan approach to ensuring that person who experiences homelessness gets the services and supports that they need to move forward with their lives. A client-centered case management approach ensures that the person who has experienced homelessness has a major say in identifying goals and service needs, and that there is shared accountability. The goal of case management is to empower people, draw on their own strengths and capabilities, and promote an improved quality of life by facilitating timely access to the necessary supports and thus reduce the risk of homelessness and/or help them achieve housing stability.

CoC and ESG (Emergency Solutions Grant) program requirements state that Rapid Re-housing (RRH) and Homelessness Prevention (HP) projects must require program participants to meet with a case manager "not less than once per month" to assist the program participant in ensuring long-term housing stability. While case management is built into the program design of RRH and HP through the CoC and ESG programs, this is not the case for the majority of funding the County receives. For example, the CDBG program has a 15% cap for funding going to public services which includes employment services, health services, substance abuse services, education programs, down payment assistance, fair housing counseling, and services for homeless persons. In addition, case management is not an eligible activity under HUD's HOME program. The COVID-19 pandemic also led to many of McHenry County's homeless service providers experiencing a drop in staff; many of which are still not fully staffed. This leads to current program staff and case managers taking on larger caseloads, less time being spent with clients, and staff burning out and leaving the field at increased rates.

The need to prioritize case management for households experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness can be illustrated by the County's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (McEURAP). Launched in March, 2021 to assist low-income households stay in their rental units, McEURAP has distributed over 10 million dollars to over 800 households. This program, which is funded by the US Treasury, allowed jurisdictions to create their program in a way that best addresses their local needs. The McHenry County Housing Association partnered with several local agencies that assisted program applicants with completing their applications, obtaining required documents, mediating between tenant and landlord, following up with households every 3 months for program recertification, and a number of other case management activities. Partnerships within this program with agencies like Consumer Credit Counseling Services and Prairie State Legal Services also provided financial counseling for households in the program and legal/eviction assistance when needed. The work of program case managers undoubtedly prevented dozens of at-risk households from becoming homeless.

The challenge of finding case managers and other program staff for homeless service providers needs to be addressed by the County as a whole. Public Service funds available through the CDBG program should prioritize projects that seek to employ, train, and utilize case workers to assist homeless persons and connecting them with the services they want and need.

### **Priority 3: Greater Collaboration**

The final priority area has been a priority of the McHenry County CoC for several years and will continue to be one moving forward. Since the McHenry County Continuum of Care's inception in 1997, the CoC has implemented several actions that increase collaboration among homeless service providers and the community. Examples include:

#### **Expanding Representation in the CoC Full Board**

As the population of McHenry County has changed and expanded, so has the CoC. Current members represent McHenry County's various homeless service providers, local non-profits, government representatives, healthcare providers, business owners, and more.

#### **Creation of the McHenry CoC Website**

Launched in October, 2021, the website ([mchenrycountyhomeless.org](http://mchenrycountyhomeless.org)) serves as a hub for information regarding homelessness and the Continuum of Care. Events, news, links to service providers are found on the home page along with information regarding how to contact or join the CoC.

#### **Built for Zero**

This movement, or methodology, is made up of over 100 cities and counties across the US with the goal of measurably ending homelessness for entire populations. McHenry County joined Built for Zero in 2019 with the goal of ending homelessness in the veteran population. Involvement in Built for Zero requires veteran service providers to meet monthly and quarterly with the county's Built for Zero team and provide updates on the veteran homeless population. The County's Built for Zero team also meets regularly with staff from Community Solutions, who have created and run the program nationally.

### **Coordinated Entry**

The creation of the McHenry County Coordinated Entry (CE) system ensures that all county homeless service providers receiving HUD funding participate fully in CE. This includes making referrals for eligible persons through CE as well as attend weekly CE meetings.

In order to continually improve and expand collaboration among McHenry County's CoC, the CoC will implement these changes over the next three years:

### **Improve representation on the CoC's Full Board and Committees**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) strongly encourages CoCs to include current and/or past homeless persons in the Full Board. The CoC has had homeless individuals serve on the CoC Board in the past, but it has been a challenge to keep it consistent. The importance and need for homeless representation on the board has been discussed frequently and service providers have been charged with the task of inviting possible representatives.


In addition to homeless representation, the CoC is also seeking to expand representation among healthcare providers, landlords, housing developers, real estate, and transportation.

### **Increase functionality and use of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)**

HUD requires all organizations receiving HUD funds to use the HMIS system. Homeless service providers enter their organizations information (including location, services provided, beds available, etc.) into HMIS. When an individual becomes homeless and engages any of these agencies, staff will enter the client's information into HMIS and refer them to Coordinated Entry (CE). CE will then navigate the county's HMIS to find the appropriate services/program for the homeless client. McHenry County has been using the same HMIS vendor (with periodic updates) for over two decades.

During this time, there have been hundreds of HMIS users and clients entered. As staff at the various homeless service provider's changes over time, so do the staff using HMIS. The McHenry County Community Development Division serves as the HMIS Lead for the county. In order to increase the use and effectiveness of HMIS, the steps will be made:

- HMIS Training and Instructions – Currently, in person training on the use of HMIS is offered once a year with technical assistance available intermittently. Over the next two years the HMIS Administrator will expand training by offering shorter introductory and topic-based HMIS training. In addition, the HMIS Administrator will also develop step-by-step guides to completing common tasks in HMIS (e.g. entering a client or making a referral).
- System Maintenance and Data Management – Over the years, programs offered by homeless service providers have come and gone. The homeless population has also changed as individuals are continually securing housing and moving out of the county. Constant maintenance is needed to keep HMIS accurate and navigable.
- Expand use of HMIS – The use of HMIS is mandated for HUD funded programs, but there are still more non-profit and faith-based organizations that serve the homeless yet do not use HMIS. While many of these organizations still collaborate with the CoC through Full Board meetings, committees, and out in the community,



the information never makes it to HMIS. The McHenry County CoC will encourage agencies that serve the homeless and are not yet using HMIS, to do so. With no direct cost to the agency, the CoC will provide training and access to HMIS. The increase in agencies using HMIS will provide a fuller picture of the homeless situation in McHenry County, as well as increase collaboration among service providers for a wider range of clients.





# Conclusion

McHenry County is dedicated to continually update and improve its strategic plan to end homelessness. McHenry County, along with the world, saw the COVID-19 pandemic challenge the county's homeless resources as it was forced to quickly adapt and expand resources. This plan gives a snapshot of the current homeless situation, economic trends, and housing crisis that the county faces. This plan also gives a description of services, housing programs, and assistance that the county offers to homeless and/or at-risk of homeless households.

Finally, this plan discusses next steps that the McHenry County CoC will take to further its goal of ending homelessness. This plan identifies the importance of improving the county's affordable housing stock and shelters. With federal rental assistance programs coming to an end and rental costs soaring, McHenry County must increase the amount of affordable housing available while also ensuring at-risk households have the support they need to avoid homelessness. The CoC also understands the importance of case management and walking with individuals/families as they try to address the unique factors/circumstances that led them to seeking assistance. Lastly, this plan describes the steps the CoC has and will make to encourage and improve collaboration among homeless service providers across the county.

The goal of ending homelessness in McHenry County is a lofty one. The factors leading to homelessness are ever changing, fluctuating, and unique. While it may not be possible to prevent everyone from experiencing homelessness, McHenry County is dedicated to making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

# Appendix A

## Subsidized/Supportive Housing Inventory

Agency/Organization	Housing Type (Workforce Rental, Light PSH, PSH, Owner-Occupied)	Total Capacity	Unit Type	Ages Served	Other Requirements
McHenry County Housing Authority	Workforce Rental	992	Voucher	All	Families
McHenry County Housing Authority	Workforce Rental	23	3 Br Single-family	All	Families- Household size must be appropriate for 3-bedroom unit
MCHA GreenTrees Huntley	Workforce Rental	224	1 Br	Seniors/Disabled	Senior 62+ and Disabled 18+
MCHA SilverTrees Richmond	Workforce Rental	40	1 Br	Seniors/Disabled	Senior 62+ and Disabled 18+
MCHA / Cary Senior Living	Workforce Rental	62	1 Br	62+	7 PBV Units at 30% AMI Senior 62+ and Disabled - Waiting list closed 8/1/2022
MCHA / Walnut Ridge - Woodstock Commons	Workforce Rental	170	1/2/3 Br	All	15 PBV Units below 50% AMI, preference to applicants that work within 12 miles or are unemployed due to age or disability
MCHA / Creekview	Light PSH	25	1 Br	55+	3 PBV Units at 30% AMI
MCHA / Villas of Lake in the Hills	Workforce Rental	60	1/2/3 Br	All	12 PBV Units at 30% AMI, waitlist for 1 bedroom is closed
MCHA / Residences of Lake in the Hills	Workforce Rental	92	Studio / 1 Br	55+	10 PBV Units at 30% AMI, preference for applicants with disabilities transitioning from a licensed nursing facility into a private rental
MCHA / Berkshire Johnsburg	Workforce Rental	68	1 Br	55+	30% AMI, 18 vouchers, preferences 11- State Referral Network, 1 Homeless, 2 veteran, waitlist closed
MCHA / Residences of Crystal Lake	Workforce Rental	60	1 Br	55+	16 PBV Units, 6 Veteran Preference, 1 Homeless Pref. at 30% AMI, waitlist closed 8/1/2022
Residences of Crystal Lake 2	Workforce Rental	27	1 Br / 2 Br	All	6 PBV at 30% AMI 3 Homeless Preference
MCHA / Renaissance Apartments	Workforce Rental	8	Studio / 1 Br / 2 BR	All	UP to 80% AMI- Applicants must provide income documentation that demonstrates an ability to pay rent
MCHA / Sunnyside Apt. Marengo	Workforce Rental	12	1 Br / 2 Br	All	12 Units at 30% AMI- Waitlist Open for Marengo
MCHA / Huntley Horizon Apartments	Workforce Rental	79	1 Br	62+	8 PBV Units 50% AMI, waitlist closed 8/1/2022
MCHA / Garden Place (Cary)	Workforce Rental	60	1 Br	All	12 PBV Units at 30% AMI
MCHA Proposed Johnsburg Workforce Housing	Workforce Rental	49	1,2,3 Br	All	8 PBV Units at 30% AMI Preference 1 Homeless
MCHA Proposed Taylor Place Apt. McHenry	Workforce Rental	50	1 Br	All	12 PBV Units at 30% AMI
MCHA/Congress Parkway	Workforce Rental	60	1,2,3 Br	All	13 PBV Units at 30%
Hillcrest Apartments	Workforce Rental	88	1/2/3 Br	Seniors	Low-income
Woodstock Senior Lane	Workforce Rental	42	1/2 Br	Seniors	50% AMI
Pearl Street Commons / Full Circle	Light PSH	25	1/2 Br	All	19 PBV at 30% AMI 11 SRN Preference, Veterans, Disabled Preference
Walden Oaks (Woodstock)	Workforce Rental	192	1/2/3 Br	All	Senior/Disabled units, family units
Mapletree Apartments (Woodstock)	Workforce Rental	120	1/2 Br	All	
Crystal Terrace	Workforce Rental	86	1/2/3 Br	All	
The Villager / Briarwood	Workforce Rental	116	1 Br	All	Senior, Disabilities preference
Harvard Ranch Apartments	Workforce Rental	23	1/2 Br	62+	50% AMI
Northern Point / Harvard Supportive Housing	Light PSH	16	1/2 Br	All	Disabilities
Sunset Senior Apartments (Harvard)	PSH	24	1/2 Br	All	Must be 62+ or have disability
Hebron Meadows	Light PSH	16	1 Br	All	Must be 62+ or have disability
The TLS Project	Light PSH	14		All	Veterans
Habitat McHenry	Owner-Occupied	6			
Cedarhurst of McHenry	Light PSH	52		55+	

Table 16

## Rental Affordability

Gross Rent in 2017-2021	Number of Units			Total by rent	Income Needed to Rental Affordability	Ideal Number of Units by Rent for McHenry County Residents' Income	Difference from current total
	0 or 1 Bedroom Units	2 Bedroom Units	3 or more Bedroom Units				
County (McHenry)				Total by rent			
< \$300 / month	187	97	219	503	\$12,000	2,215	1712
< \$500 / month	593	169	293	1055	\$20,000	4,431	3376
< \$750 / month	1,396	497	413	2306	\$30,000	6,646	4340
< \$1,000 / month	2,957	1,855	826	5638	\$40,000	8,862	3224
1000 - 1500	1188	4836	1669	7693	\$40,000-\$60,000	7,610	-83
>1500	615	1970	4394	6979	\$60,000+	4,730	-2249
Total by unit type	4760	8661	6889	20310		21,202	892

Table 17

2017-2021 Annual Income Category	Number of Households	Percent of Households	Rents Affordable at Income Category	1 Income Hourly Rate (Full-time)	2 Income Hourly Rate	Affordable Units
County (McHenry)						
Less than \$25,000	10,512	9.19%	<\$625	\$12.00	\$6.00	2,711
\$25,000 - \$34,999	6,117	5.34%	\$625 - \$875	\$12 - \$16.83	\$6 - \$8.41	6,683
\$35,000 - \$49,999	10,462	9.14%	\$875 - \$1,250	\$16.83 - \$24	\$8.41 - \$12	13,348
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17,745	15.51%	\$1,250 - \$1,875	\$24 - \$36	\$12 - \$18	19,336
\$75,000 - \$99,999	16,053	14.03%	\$1,875 - \$2,500	\$36 - \$48	\$18 - \$24	20,310
\$100,000 - \$124,999	14,633	12.79%		\$48 - \$60	\$24 - \$30	
\$125,000 - \$149,999	10,658	9.31%		\$60 - \$72	\$30 - \$36	
\$150,000 or more	28,266	24.70%		\$72 +	\$36 +	

Table 18

	Renting		Homeowner	
Household Income Occupying	#	%	#	%
Less than equal to 30% AMI	4,622	22%	5,315	6%
30% -50% AMI	4,240	20%	6,806	7%
50%-80% AMI	4,897	23%	15,292	16%
80% - 100% AMI	2,713	13%	10,443	11%
100% AMI or more	4,730	22%	55,388	59%
<b>Total Households (114,446)</b>	<b>21,202</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>93,244</b>	<b>81.5%</b>
Median Income	\$51,267		\$105,952	

**Table 19**

Rental Unit Size		30% AMI	Units Available	Ideal/ Needed Amount	50% AMI	Units Available	Ideal/ Needed Amount
1 BR	Rent Affordable for 1 Person Households	\$547.50	780	2,547	\$912.50	2,332	7,424
	Rent Affordable for 2 Person Households	\$625.00	1,016		\$1,042.50	2,957	
2 Br	Rent Affordable for 3 Person Households	\$703.75	450	1,568	\$1,172.50	3,547	4,570
	Rent Affordable for 4 Person Households	\$781.25	610		\$1,302.50	4,756	
3 or more Br	Rent Affordable for 5 Person Households	\$843.75	578	509	\$1,407.50	2,161	1,484
	Rent Affordable for 6 Person Households	\$906.25	660		\$1,511.25	2,495	
	Rent Affordable for 7 Person Households	\$968.75	765		\$1,616.25	2,935	
	Rent Affordable for 8 Person Households	\$1,031.25	826		\$1,720.00	3,373	

**Table 20**

# Appendix B: 3-Year Goals

In addition to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) system performance measures goals (pg. 20), the McHenry County CoC has decided upon several measurable goals for the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan to End Homelessness.

These goals are the result of CoC discussion, surveys and strategic planning committee meetings. After the list of goals was created, the CoC ranked the goals depending on need and resources. The CoC will monitor progress towards these goals and make changes as needed.

## Goal 1: Landlord Engagement

- In order to quickly secure additional housing units for use within transitional and permanent housing projects, the CoC will engage in outreach to McHenry County landlords to create partnerships.
- The CoC will use public meetings, fliers, and electronic communications to find new landlords and discuss the possibility of them renting housing units to CoC clients.
- The CoC will research using landlord incentives to draw in more landlords and creating a FAQ page to answer common landlord concerns.

## Goal 2: No Barrier Shelter

- McHenry County only has one, full-time, emergency shelter that serves men, women, and children. Homeless individuals with elevated needs and/or restrictions against congregate shelter need another option.
- The CoC will research and launch a new low/no barrier shelter that will allow agencies to provide shelter to individuals who cannot use the congregate shelter.
- The CoC hopes to provide emergency shelter options for individuals without documentation, individuals with a criminal record, and households in need of pet accommodations.

## Goal 3: Increase Supply of CoC Housing Units

- The CoC is dedicated to increasing its supply of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Transitional Housing (TH) in McHenry County.
- The CoC is looking to deliver at least five new housing units a year with a focus on providing PSH/TH for families, men, and men with children.

## Goal 4: Expand Street Outreach

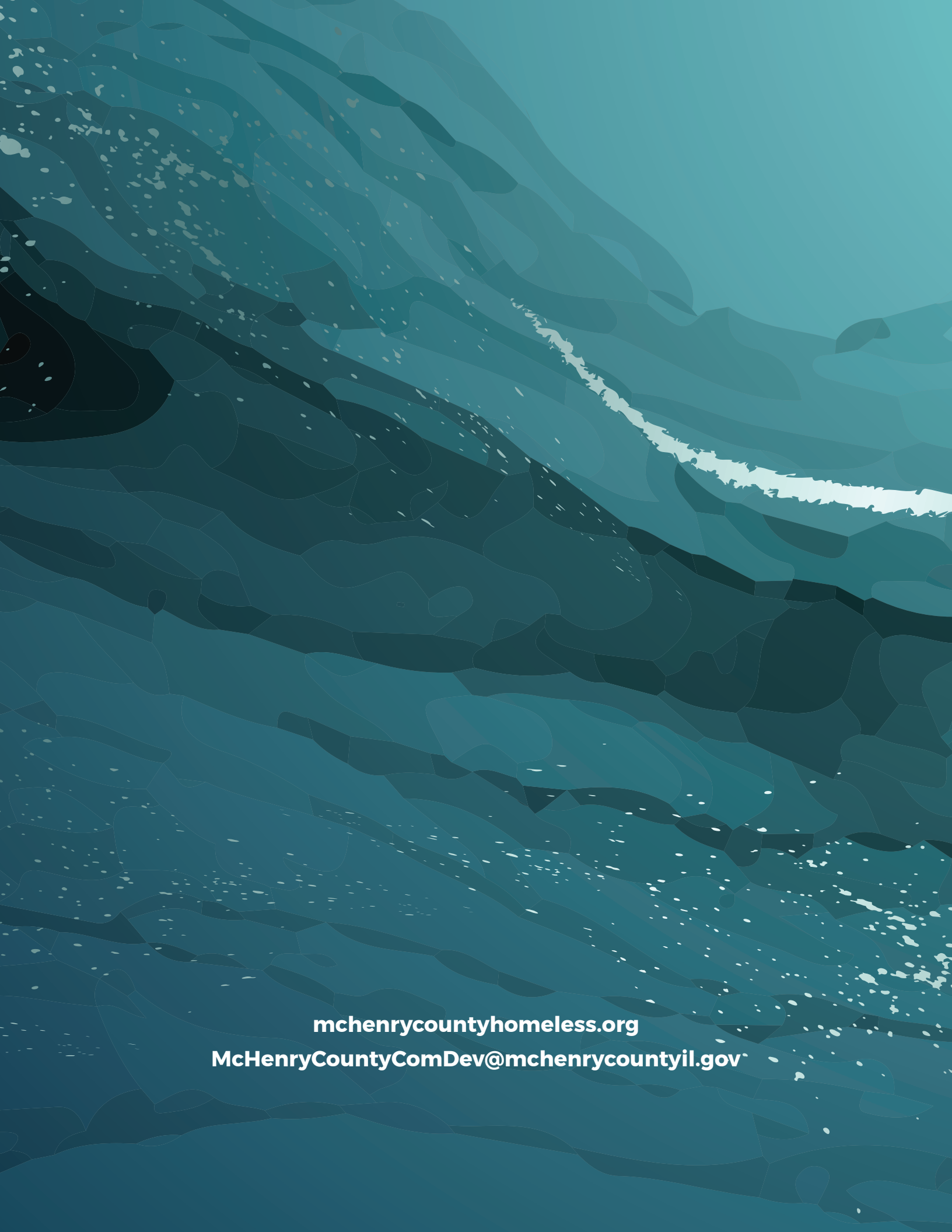
- The McHenry County CoC currently has one agency dedicated to Street Outreach (Warp Corps).
- During 2023-2026, the CoC will look to add at least one additional street outreach project in HMIS that goes out into the community to locate and assist street-homeless individuals.

The following table outlines these goals and other goals brought up in the CoC Strategic Planning process that the CoC hopes to accomplish within the 2023-2026 timeframe.

Goal	2024	2025	2026
Landlord Partnerships	5 units	5 units	5 units
No Barrier Shelter	Research/Consulting/ Preparation	Locate site	Launch no-barrier shelter
Additional Housing Units	3 PSH / 2 TH (Families/Men)	1 family PSH / 2 PSH and 2 TH (Families/Men)	1 family PSH / 2 PSH and 2 TH (Families/Men)
Street Outreach Expansion	Collaborate to create full map and visit schedule of encampments	Select another Street Outreach agency to CoC	Monitor, evaluate, expand Street Outreach services
Additional Meal Day	Create list of current food programs in McHenry County	Select day/location to provide additional meals and launch project	Monitor, evaluate, expand food services in McHenry County
Safe Parking/ Warming Bus	Secure temporary safe parking and research long-term locations	Identify possible permanent locations for safe-parking and/or a warming bus	Launch project and evaluate
Jobs/Workforce Placement	Research and collaborate with local agencies already providing services	Launch workforce placement program	Expand job skills training and workforce placement
People with Lived Experience	Collaborate with local agencies to perform a comprehensive survey with homeless population	Add additional consultant to CoC with lived experience	Coordinate efforts to obtain feedback from the public/stakeholder/homeless population for next CoC Plan

**Table 21**





[mchenrycountyhomeless.org](http://mchenrycountyhomeless.org)  
[McHenryCountyComDev@mchenrycountyil.gov](mailto:McHenryCountyComDev@mchenrycountyil.gov)