

A stylized illustration of a mountain range in shades of blue. Overlaid on the mountains is a dark blue silhouette of a house with a chimney.

ASHEVILLE-BUNCOMBE CONTINUUM OF CARE

2025-2028
Strategic Plan

Overview

The Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care (CoC) was reestablished February 29, 2024 with a new Membership body adopting a new governance charter. The Membership elected its first Board April 25, 2024. In its first year, the CoC has grown to 452 Members, established 4 of its 5 standing Committees, and appointed 4 Work Groups. Seventy-seven Members have served as elected or appointed Board, Committee, or Work Group members. This is the new CoC's first strategic plan.

Utilizing CoC Membership engagement sessions and surveys, CoC Board Strategic Planning Sessions, HMIS data generated for the 2023 System Performance Measures, 2023-2024 Longitudinal System Analysis Data available through Stella P, and past Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count Data from 2019 through 2023, the CoC has established the following Strategic Plan to improve coordination and delivery of homeless and housing services for people faced with homelessness in the Asheville-Buncombe CoC.

Because the CoC is new, it will need to establish and understand its baseline performance and capacity before setting specific targets for improvement. This 3-year strategic plan is designed to allow for data analysis in year one to inform targets to be set in annual action plans in years two and three where applicable.

The Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care is a community-wide collaborative effort, and full CoC participation will be necessary to achieve the plan's objectives. With CoC-wide buy-in to the strategic plan and focused efforts to implement it, the CoC will begin its long-range work to build a collaborative system of care, fulfilling its chartered responsibilities of developing and overseeing a comprehensive and well-coordinated system of effective services designed to prevent and quickly resolve occurrences of homelessness in Asheville and Buncombe County.



Strategic Plan Overview

The intention of this comprehensive Strategic Plan is to help guide the CoC from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028 in achieving measurable outcomes and goals that will make a lasting impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the housing crisis response system, ultimately resulting in reduced unsheltered homelessness, instances of first-time homelessness, and returns to homelessness, while increasing exits from the system to permanent housing opportunities.

It is the charge of the CoC Board to oversee updates and progress through the completion of the plan. Committees, Work Groups, Members, and Lead Agency staff will lead and oversee various action steps, but ultimately it is the CoC Board's responsibility to make sure there is forward momentum and progress made toward achieving the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan. This plan is to be updated often and is intended to be flexible in order to adjust the course to best meet the changing needs of households faced with homelessness. Detailed action steps are provided for the following main objectives:

- 1. Decrease unsheltered homelessness**
- 2. Increase exits from homelessness to permanent housing**
- 3. Coordinate and expand Homelessness Prevention, Diversion, and Rapid Rehousing**
- 4. Build housing-focused system capacity**

Each objective has specific strategies and action steps laid out to provide a clear path to success. Annual action plans will be established for each of the three years covered by the plan to direct activities.

Objective 1: DECREASE UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

Success looks like:

- Street Outreach providers coordinated to identify, support, and develop a path to housing for every person experiencing unsheltered homelessness
- Adequate low-barrier Emergency Shelter capacity for people seeking shelter and for first responders and Street Outreach staff to make referrals
- Decrease in discharges to unsheltered homelessness from hospitals, jails, and other institutions
- Decrease in the average length of unsheltered homelessness
- Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing utilization rates average 90% or higher

Strategy 1.1 Increase utilization of current Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing beds to maximize capacity

CoC Board Member Assigned: Josh Morrow

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Use by-name list and HMIS to establish baseline data of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Average number of days people experience unsheltered homelessnessb. Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing utilization	Emergency Shelter Development Work Group
2. Coordinate Street Outreach, first responders, and unsheltered services to ensure every unsheltered person is a) added to the by-name list and b) referred for Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, or Other Permanent Housing based on system capacity and individual choice	Coordinated Entry Work Group
3. Collaborate with Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing providers, providers who work with people who need shelter, and people with lived experience of homelessness to identify opportunities to increase utilization	Emergency Shelter Development Work Group
4. Establish regular review, report, and retool processes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Continually decrease average number of days people experience unsheltered homelessnessb. Continually increase Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing utilization to average at least 90%	System Performance Committee

Strategy 1.2 Expand Emergency Shelter capacity

CoC Board Member Assigned: Rick Freeman

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Conduct needs assessment to determine number and type of new beds needed	Emergency Shelter Development Work Group

2. Collect and analyze cost data and funding sources on current Emergency Shelter programs	Emergency Shelter Development Work Group
3. Identify and secure new funding sources for Emergency Shelter	Emergency Shelter Development Work Group
4. Engage healthcare, behavioral healthcare, and criminal justice systems in collaborating on funding and referrals for discharge coordination	Emergency Shelter Development Work Group
5. Develop new, funded Emergency Shelter beds based on needs assessment	Emergency Shelter Development Work Group
Strategy 1.3 Support service provider capacity to deliver low-barrier Emergency Shelter	
CoC Board Member Assigned: Karen Hayes-Roberts	
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Develop standardized policies, procedures, and forms organizations can use to adhere to the service quality designated by the CoC in the Written Standards for low-barrier Emergency Shelters	Emergency Shelter Development Work Group
2. Provide ongoing training to existing and interested service providers on housing-focused Emergency Shelter programs, low-barrier shelter operation and supervision, and trauma-informed systems and service provision	System Planning and Implementation Committee

Objective 2: INCREASE EXITS FROM HOMELESSNESS TO PERMANENT HOUSING	
Success looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All housing interventions dedicated to people exiting homelessness are 100% utilized • People experiencing homelessness are able to access dedicated pathways into other permanent, affordable housing • Housing Authority resources are appropriately and effectively engaged and integrated into the homelessness response system • Housing navigation is coordinated at the system level to maximize efficiency and minimize competition and includes adequate resources to promote landlord engagement 	
Strategy 2.1: Increase utilization of current housing interventions dedicated to people exiting homelessness to maximize capacity	
CoC Board Member Assigned: Celeste Ordiway	
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Identify all housing interventions dedicated to people exiting homelessness and establish baseline utilization data	System Planning and Implementation Committee
2. Identify opportunities to maximize utilization at 100% for all housing interventions dedicated to people	System Planning and Implementation Committee

exiting homelessness	
3. Develop system-level strategies for Emergency Solutions Grant and Continuum of Care Program funding to maximize housing interventions at 100% utilization	Funding Committee
4. Establish system-level standards and pathways for graduation from Permanent Supportive Housing to promote self-sufficiency and create throughput in Permanent Supportive Housing programs	System Planning and Implementation Committee
Strategy 2.2: Expand capacity of housing interventions	
CoC Board Member Assigned: Christian Chambers	
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Utilize the by-name list to quantify how many households need Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Other Permanent Housing to exit homelessness	System Planning and Implementation Committee
2. Collect and analyze cost data and funding sources on current housing interventions	Funding Committee
3. Identify and secure new funding sources for housing interventions	Funding Committee
4. Negotiate with the Asheville Housing Authority to reinstate a slate of preferences to streamline access to Housing Authority resources through Coordinated Entry	Board
5. Develop strategy with the City of Asheville and Buncombe County to incorporate set-aside units in funded housing developments	Board
Strategy 2.3: Develop system-level housing navigation infrastructure	
CoC Board Member Assigned: Jenny Moffatt	
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Develop system-level landlord engagement and housing navigation to support all housing interventions participating in Coordinated Entry	System Planning and Implementation Committee
2. Consolidate or develop staffing in order to implement system-level landlord engagement and housing navigation	System Planning and Implementation Committee
3. Develop a package of resources for landlords to incentivize renting to participants of housing interventions slated through Coordinated Entry	System Planning and Implementation Committee
4. Measure and identify opportunities to continually decrease the number of days between referral to	System Performance Committee

housing intervention through Coordinated Entry and identifying and securing an affordable unit

Objective 3: COORDINATE AND EXPAND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION, DIVERSION, AND RAPID REHOUSING

Success looks like:

- Cohorts of providers delivering services consistent with CoC Written Standards and incorporated into Coordinated Entry and HMIS
- Coordinated flexible financial assistance available to households based on their specific needs and right-sized to resolve their housing crises
- New resources to expand capacity in alignment with CoC Written Standards
- Measurable positive changes in the volume and duration of occurrences of homelessness
 - Continual decrease in people experiencing homelessness for the first time
 - Continual decrease in length of time people experience homelessness
 - Continual decrease in number of people becoming chronically homeless
 - Continual increase in number of people exiting homelessness
 - Continual decrease in the number of people returning to homelessness from housing interventions

Strategy 3.1 Develop system-level approach to targeted Homelessness Prevention

CoC Board Member Assigned: David Bartholomew

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Inventory existing Homelessness Prevention and Emergency Assistance resources	Homelessness Prevention Work Group
2. Collaborate with existing Homelessness Prevention and Emergency Assistance providers to identify opportunities to streamline access, maximize resources, and track impact through HMIS and comparable database	Homelessness Prevention Work Group
3. Analyze inflow into homelessness using HMIS and comparable database data to identify risk factors for homelessness	Homelessness Prevention Work Group
4. Develop standardized Homelessness Prevention screening tool and prioritization scheme to be utilized within the Coordinated Entry System	Homelessness Prevention Work Group
5. Expand resources to increase availability for general population	Homelessness Prevention Work Group
6. Develop CoC Written Standards establishing system-level practices	Homelessness Prevention Work Group
7. Establish and support cohort of targeted Homelessness Prevention providers for peer learning and regular training in alignment with CoC Written Standards	Homelessness Prevention Work Group

Strategy 3.2 Develop system-level approach to Diversion to rapidly resolve housing crises prior to entering homelessness response system

CoC Board Member Assigned: Scott Rogers

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Inventory existing Diversion resources, practices, and providers	System Planning and Implementation Committee
2. Develop cohort of interested providers to standardize Diversion practices that maximize resources and flexibility in order to fully resolve housing crises. Develop into CoC Written Standards establishing system-level practices.	System Planning and Implementation Committee
3. Implement across crisis response system access points, including Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing, and Coordinated Entry access points	System Planning and Implementation Committee
4. Incorporate into HMIS and comparable database to track impact	System Planning and Implementation Committee
5. Identify flexible funding to expand Diversion resources in alignment with CoC Written Standards	Funding Committee

Strategy 3.3 Expand Rapid Rehousing to serve all populations**CoC Board Member Assigned: Lacy Hoyle**

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Engage Technical Assistance to develop targeting and prioritization strategy for Rapid Rehousing through Coordinated Entry	System Planning and Implementation Committee
2. Identify number of households on by-name list in need of Rapid Rehousing	System Planning and Implementation Committee
3. Inventory current Rapid Rehousing capacity and identify any opportunities to increase utilization	System Performance Committee
4. Identify all public and private resources available for Rapid Rehousing and develop system-level funding strategy	Funding Committee
5. Expand Rapid Rehousing for underserved populations	System Planning and Implementation Committee
6. Develop CoC Written Standards for Rapid Rehousing and provide training to all Rapid Rehousing providers for consistency in service delivery	System Planning and Implementation Committee

Objective 4: BUILD HOUSING-FOCUSED SYSTEM CAPACITY

Success looks like:

- The CoC is unified in its approach to standards of care for people experiencing homelessness and its goal to help people access housing
- CoC Written Standards are meaningful and actively applied in service delivery and in CoC decision making
- Service providers are supported in aligning with standards of care and in delivering housing-focused services
- Training is consistent and accessible to all CoC Member organizations
- CoC performance is understood, regularly reviewed, and continually improving

Strategy 4.1 Develop CoC Written Standards to promote consistency in quality service delivery across the CoC

CoC Board Member Assigned: Melina Arrowood

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Develop Written Standards that are housing focused for Homelessness Prevention, Diversion, Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Permanent Supportive Housing	System Planning and Implementation Committee
2. Incorporate Written Standards into tools used in decision making in the CoC (e.g. project proposal or funding application evaluation criteria, monitoring)	CoC Staff to identify opportunities for Board, Committees, and Work Groups to consider

Strategy 4.2 Develop and implement annual CoC-wide training plan

CoC Board Member Assigned: April Burgess-Johnson

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
1. Provide annual training on CoC Written Standards to support service providers in aligning practices	System Planning and Implementation Committee
2. Collaborate with CoC Member organizations to establish annual training plan that shares training resources where possible and makes available standardized training to all CoC Member organizations	System Planning and Implementation Committee
3. Provide Housing-Focused Practices Training to all funded providers by service type (Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, etc.) at least annually	System Planning and Implementation Committee

Strategy 4.3 Develop and implement CoC-wide performance measurement

CoC Board Member Assigned: Debra Campbell

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE BODY
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1. Establish and understand baseline performance data, including resource utilization and outcomes	System Performance Committee
2. Set improvement targets for resource utilization, outcomes, and other identified performance measures	System Performance Committee
3. Establish regular performance measurement practices and report results to the CoC	System Performance Committee