

NC 507 CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs

This plan is the start of the Raleigh Wake's Continuum of Care dedicated efforts to increase resources for people who have severe service needs. The Raleigh Wake Partnership to End Homelessness (RWP), as the lead agency for the NC507 Continuum of Care, drafted this CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs. To facilitate a participative planning process, RWP took several steps.

- Formed an Ad Hoc CoC Planning Workgroup within two (2) weeks of funding announcement
- Held four (4) weekly meeting of Ad Hoc CoC Planning Workgroup
 - Each meeting had a specific topic (Introduction to SNOFO, Identifying Missing Players, Leveraging Housing Resources, Leveraging Healthcare Resources)
- Consulted with persons with Lived Expertise prior to release of plan for feedback
- Posted a draft plan on CoC's website and invited people to give feedback from August 22- September 15
- Discussed the Plan during the CoC General Membership meeting on August 22

The Ad Hoc CoC Planning Workgroup met virtually on the same day and time to allow for the most participation. This workgroup consisted of multiple system partners and stakeholders who represented the unique and broad diversity of our community. All the planning workgroup opportunities were publicized on the CoC website in advance,

The goal of this plan is to provide a framework for the CoC to implement strategies to reduce unsheltered homelessness and to target resources to people with severe service needs. In support of this plan, the Raleigh Housing Authority will distribute all 36 of their new entitled Fairshare Vouchers as follows: thirty (30) vouchers to Raleigh/Wake Partnership Referrals (Unsheltered Families) and six (6) Interact Referrals (Unsheltered Domestic Violence). Commitment Letter attached in NC507's Consolidated Application.

P-1. Leveraging Housing Resources

P-1a. Development of New Units and Creation of Housing Opportunities – Leveraging Housing
N/A; No permanent housing funding applications were submitted during this funding competition.

P-1b. Development of New Units and Creation of Housing Opportunities – PHA Commitment
PHA Commitment Letter attached in e-snaps.

P-1c. Landlord Recruitment

Wake County has been impacted by the affordable housing crisis that has similarly impacted the rest of the country. The crisis has only worsened with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic that led to unprecedented economic and housing instability across the county. Raleigh and Cary are two of the fastest growing cities in the county. The increased demand for housing and higher

construction costs has led to increased rent costs over time. Unfortunately, household earnings have not kept up with the rising rents, and the gap is only widening. A housing needs inventory and gap analysis for the City of Raleigh completed by the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy estimates that there is a deficit of 11,721 rental units affordable for those making 30% and below Area Median Income (AMI). Those households are at-risk of homelessness and may be experiencing housing instability.

Despite the challenges of the housing market, the Wake County community has continued to preserve and build low-income affordable housing. Beginning in 2016, the City of Raleigh committed to creating 570 affordable housing units a year for ten years, totaling 5,700 units by 2026. So far, the city has completed about half of the 10-year goal. This goal is largely accomplished with funding from the \$80 million Affordable Housing Bond passed in November 2020. Each year, funding from this bond is allocated to help accomplish the bond's priorities set by Raleigh City Council. For fiscal year 2022-2023, \$8 million is allocated for site acquisition for the city to purchase land for affordable housing development near transit, \$4 million for public-private partnerships, and \$4.8 million for Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Gap Financing, allowing developers to build new affordable housing options for low-to-moderate income residents.

One program, the Joint Venture Rental Development Program, has been in operation since 1988 providing multifamily affordable housing developers with low-interest loans to build and/or purchase and rehabilitate privately-owned and managed rental properties. More than 3,000 affordable housing units have been created or preserved through this program, which leverages federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, bond financing, conventional financing, and/or other public funding sources. Currently, the City of Raleigh is working to build and/or preserve 2,477 housing units across 20 rental developments for a total investment of \$53 million. In May 2022 the city approved three new developments using this funding which will create 344 new affordable rental units with 44 units reserved for households at or below 30% AMI.

In May 2021, with \$8 million from the Affordable Housing Bond, the City of Raleigh funded the development of King's Ridge, a new 100-unit Permanent Supportive Housing complex run by CASA, a local agency. The complex, currently under construction, is located on a bus route and will have one-, two-, and three-bedroom floorplans and is reserved for households at or below 30% AMI. Residents will only pay one-third of their income towards rent and will have access to on-site supportive services. In addition to King's Ridge, CASA has a total of 283 affordable housing units in Wake County alone with an additional 324 apartments in various stages of development.

As part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the City also received a one-time allocation of \$5.2 million in HOME-ARP funds to assist individuals or households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The city plans on using 69% of the funding for the acquisition and development of non-congregate shelter, and 29%, \$1.5 million towards the development of affordable rental housing. The city estimates the HOME-ARP money will support the development of 20 affordable housing units for those earning less than 30% AMI.

Another project undertaken by the City of Raleigh is the rehabilitation and provision of affordable housing via non-traditional means. Studios at 2800 is a 116-room extended stay hotel recently acquired by the city which provides affordable units for low-income residents. As current tenants leave and units become available, a portion of the units will be set aside as permanent supportive housing. The City's acquisition of this property ensures that existing guests will be able to remain stably housed.

In addition to the City of Raleigh government, Wake County government has made great strides in the acquisition of affordable housing and landlord recruitment. Since 2019, Wake County government has created over 2,500 affordable housing units including units dedicated to permanent supportive housing. This was accomplished through a variety of methods including combining federal and local dollars, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and private funding.

The City of Raleigh and Wake County have clearly demonstrated their commitment to increasing the stock of affordable housing through the acquisition and development of new properties, supporting local agencies doing affordable housing work, and creatively thinking through housing solutions, such as converting motels to studio PSH apartments. While these projects are vital in the work to end homelessness and decrease housing instability, they take time to develop and, in the meantime, there are countless households who are unstably housed and at-risk of homelessness, as well as individuals and households who are experiencing homelessness with housing vouchers in hand, searching for a landlord to accept them.

Wake County has responded to the current needs of households needing immediate housing assistance, especially in the wake of the pandemic. The county's Department of Housing Affordability & Community Revitalization partnered with the City of Raleigh to form the HOUSE WAKE! COVID-19 Financial Assistance Program in March of 2021. More than \$33 million in federal aid was made available to local renters who were behind on rent or utility bills. Assistance was available for up to 12 months of past-due rent and unpaid utilities dating back to April 1, 2020. The program also offered legal counsel for tenants who need mediation with their landlord, and relocation assistance for households earning below 50% AMI unable to maintain payments for their current home. The program expended their funds in January 2022 after assisting more than 3,800 households avoid eviction. Though the program was not able to secure funding to continue, in December 2021, Wake County created Bridge to Home, allocating \$10.5 million in flexible funding to homeless service providers to increase successful permanent housing outcomes.

The county's Department of Housing Affordability & Community Revitalization created a Landlord Engagement Unit with the intention of bridging the gap between housing provider partners with affordable rental homes and Wake County residents who are seeking permanent affordable housing. In March of 2022, the Landlord Engagement Unit launched a new initiative called Lease 2 Home, aimed at increasing the supply of affordable rental units by offering incentives to landlords and property owners to offer units at affordable prices for qualified tenants, and to accept housing vouchers. The program's initial goal was to bring on more than 50 property owners with the hopes of creating around 300 additional affordable home options within its first year. As of August 15, 2022, 50 landlords have enrolled in the program and 123 are in the process of enrolling for a total of 241 affordable units.

The Lease 2 Home program offers landlords and property owners up to \$1,000 to cover any damage above the security deposit, up to two months of rental payment if a unit is vacant for more than 30 days and assistance with a new referral placement, \$500 for every lease signed and \$750 if the landlord accepts a Housing Voucher program, and \$1,000 for lease renewals. Once housing providers enroll in the program, their unit vacancies are listed privately for homeless service providers and agencies who help clients locate a unit, expediting the time between when someone receives a subsidy and when they move into permanent housing. The CoC works very closely with the Landlord Engagement Unit and the Lease 2 Home Program to assist clients moving from the By-Name-List to housing. A need has been identified for more landlord education and recruitment in rural parts of the county, which will provide more variety of housing options for those with vouchers. As the Lease 2 Home program continues gaining traction, it will help increase the number of positive housing placements for the unsheltered population and will decrease the time it takes to identify a unit once a housing voucher is secured.

P-2. Leveraging Healthcare Resources – New PSH/RRH Project Leveraging Commitment Only
Healthcare Commitment Letter attached in e-snaps.

P-3. Current Strategy to Identify, Shelter, and House Individuals and Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness

P-3.a Current Street Outreach Strategy

The Raleigh/Wake CoC has seen an unprecedented increase in unsheltered homelessness over the past several years. The 2022 Point in Time Count revealed that the number of unsheltered people experiencing unsheltered homelessness increased by 41% from the 2021 count, from 473 to 1,160 persons. This data is congruent with the increased number of individuals served by street outreach teams. In 2021 the teams served 721 people comprising 589 households. Through the first six months of 2022, the teams have served 395 individuals comprising of 280 households. Wake County and the City of Raleigh have invested over \$150,000 in street outreach programs to address the growing need. Across the CoC, there are eight outreach teams, including a PATH outreach team and a team embedded within the Raleigh Police Department called ACORNS. There are several peer support specialists with lived experience on the teams. These teams are very well coordinated and provide critical, housing-focused case management, complete Coordinated Entry assessments, provide emergency survival supplies, and make referrals to emergency shelters and other need resources.

Beginning in February 2021, the street outreach teams and community partners who engage with the unsheltered population have been meeting monthly to coordinate efforts, staff difficult cases and new referrals, review encampment maps, and discuss emerging issues and needs. These meetings, facilitated by the CoC Lead Agency, the Raleigh Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness, are very well received in the community, and attendance is steadily growing, with an invite list of over 66 individuals currently. The group is hoping to formalize and develop some standard evidence-based outreach polices and strategies and will receive Technical

Assistance through the National Alliance to End Homelessness beginning in October 2022 to assist them.

In addition to the monthly standing meetings, the outreach committee meets ad hoc to discuss imminent issues such as encampment displacements, or urgent community referrals. For example, the Raleigh Durham Airport reached out to the CoC concerned about an increased number of individuals sleeping in the airport. The outreach group met ad hoc and came up with a plan to work with the airport staff to outreach the airport during the early morning and evening hours and were able to identify and engage with individuals previously unknown to the teams. Another time, the group met ad hoc when a property owner concerned about a very large encampment on their property reached out. The group collaborated to immediately get the 25 households from the encampment placed into a non-congregate hotel to be sheltered. Typically, community referrals are routed through the CoC, though also come from local agencies, and are staffed at either the monthly meetings, or ad hoc if more urgent. The CoC is brainstorming ideas on how to create a standard outreach referral form for community members, which would be staffed through a streamlined, coordinated process.

The CoC's outreach teams typically work Monday-Friday, business hours, though will work early morning or evening hours if needed to better engage with certain referrals or individuals and will work outside of normal business hours if needed to outreach during a severe weather event. The CoC has a new Emergency Operations Committee to make plans for severe weather events such as hurricanes and winter storms to ensure the unsheltered population has low barrier shelter options.

In addition to serving the unsheltered population in the field, many unsheltered individuals and families are served in Raleigh at the community's only day services center, Oak City Cares. This agency provides basic services such as laundry, showers, mail, connection to food and financial services, and connection to Coordinated Entry via the Access Hub. Oak City Cares is designed to assist households with services to quickly secure housing, find employment opportunities, receive primary and substance use care, and improve their health, all on-site. Many outreach workers engage with their clients at the day services center, which is a central location to meet and complete case management work. Oak City Cares has over 20 health, behavioral health, education, and human service providers offering services onsite. All outreach teams participate in HMIS and can use tablets and phones in the field to complete Coordinated Entry assessments and data entry in real time. NC 507 recently underwent an HMIS transition from WellSky/ServicePoint to Bitfocus/Clarity. There is open sharing in the HMIS, and the new system has a built-in outreach mapping feature which allows outreach workers to mark encampment locations and leave notes about which clients are there and when a team was last there. During the monthly outreach meetings, the map in HMIS is reviewed together to ensure all known encampments have been engaged with recently, the map is up-to-date, and the entire county is covered, not just Raleigh. Additionally, the outreach workers can make referrals through HMIS to appropriate shelters if a client wants to be sheltered.

Once an individual or family experiencing unsheltered homelessness is identified and enrolled in either the outreach team's program or an emergency shelter program, they are automatically added to the CoC's By-Name List (BNL). This list is reviewed weekly by a full-time By-Name

List Coordinator who facilitates bi-monthly case conferencing meetings. These meetings allow for in-depth conversation around those on the BNL, the circumstances around their housing, any foreseeable barriers to quick rehousing (e.g., recent evictions, criminal history, low- to no-income, etc.), and strategies for overcoming these barriers. The BNL Coordinator works with the street outreach teams and housing providers to match households to Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and/or a Housing Choice Voucher.

In July 2021, NC-507 received 138 Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) as part of President Biden's American Rescue Plan Act. An ad hoc EHV workgroup was formed that included homeless service providers, city government, county government, and the Raleigh Housing Authority. The workgroup decided to dedicate all 138 vouchers to individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness due to the high number of unsheltered individuals on the By-Name List and in identified encampments. The workgroup formed a standing bi-weekly meeting to discuss voucher distribution and housing barriers for those issued a voucher. Approximately, 116 vouchers have been issued with 30 previously unsheltered households now in housing. While the housing rate is only at 21%, the workgroup is continuing to identify issues such as financial and transportation costs, and work through them with the collective support of the providers and housing authority.

Through the first six months of 2022, the CoC's outreach teams collectively have a 51% positive housing destination exit rate for those enrolled in street outreach, up from 37% in 2021. The team continuously searches for new housing options and creative housing solutions to increase the percent of positive exit destination rates. The increase in collaboration, data collection, and coordinated housing efforts have been and will continue to improve outreach's housing outcomes.

P-3.b Current Strategy to Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Shelter and Temporary Housing for Individuals and Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness

There are currently ten Emergency Shelter providers within the Raleigh/Wake CoC providing 209 family beds and 165 adult beds. There are currently 5 Transitional Housing providers with 114 family beds and 49 adult beds. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many congregate shelters transitioned to non-congregate hotel settings. Early in 2020, Wake County partnered with several hotels to provide over 200 hotel rooms for individuals experiencing homelessness who were in the high-risk category for COVID-19. Street outreach teams were able to directly refer clients to the hotels, and many unsheltered who maybe previously weren't comfortable in a congregate setting were willing to be placed in a hotel. Currently, some shelters have gone back to congregate settings, though several of the non-congregate hotels are still operational. There is a night-by-night shelter as well as shelters where beds are assigned. Referrals to shelter beds go through Coordinated Entry, called the Access Hub.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the CoC to examine and adapt its Coordinated Entry system to meet the needs of those in crisis, while balancing the safety of staff. A homelessness crisis hotline called the Access Hub was introduced, staffed by five full-time employees including Spanish-speaking staff and a translation service to assist non-native English speakers with accessing assistance. The hotline is staffed Monday-Friday 8 AM to 6 PM with a walk-in feature

for those individuals and/or families lacking consistent access to phones/emails and an online form. The staff conduct assessments to identify the needs of the individual or family and make appropriate referrals in HMIS to emergency shelter, transitional housing, non-congregate shelter via hotel/motels, or to street outreach if previously un-engaged by a team.

Street outreach teams can complete all assessments and make referrals to shelter and transitional housing in the field, so unsheltered individuals who may have barriers calling in to the hotline, or physically going to a walk-in center are still able to access services and get referred to shelter if wanted. The shelters for single individuals are typically close to capacity but able to accommodate most same-day referrals, especially for unique circumstances. Walk-ins to the shelter can also typically be accommodated. The family shelters are typically full and operate waitlists though do their best to accommodate as many families as possible and provide temporary housing solutions, so families are not left unsheltered.

For certain sub-populations, such as youth and veterans, there are set-aside beds and different procedures for obtaining emergency shelter and housing. For youth, there are a few set-aside emergency shelter beds, and transitional housing options, particularly for pregnant youth. These beds can be accessed via referrals in HMIS. Veterans have access to HUD VASH, SSVF, contract programs, and shelter in non-congregate settings through SSVF. There are bi-weekly case conferencing meetings specifically to review the veteran By-Name List, attended by all veteran services providers in the community. The veteran's eligibility for the various programs is discussed, as well as the preferences of the veteran, and matches to programs are made. The community has made significant progress in the efforts to end veteran homelessness. The 2022 PIT count only found 34 veterans. Through the first six months of 2022, less than 1% of those street outreach teams have engaged with identified as being a veteran.

Recently the CoC approved a new committee tasked with reviewing current system practices and recommending improvements and changes to the Coordinated Entry System as well as the CoC's written standards on shelter operations. This committee, called the Coordinated Access System (CAS) committee, recommended the Access Hub staff reallocate some of their time to assist in reaching out to people on the various shelter waitlists and the By-Name Lists to ensure they are still experiencing homelessness and in need of services and housing. The goal is ensuring all lists are accurate and up to date, so they reflect who is truly in need, and there isn't time wasted searching for individuals who have self-resolved and no longer need services.

Several lessons have been learned, and pain points identified by reviewing the new Access Hub and Coordinated Entry model implemented in the pandemic. One thing quickly realized was how overwhelmed Access Hub staff were with the high call volume and the severity of the needs of those calling. The review committee is currently looking at ways to strengthen the referral process by making better use of Clarity's HMIS capabilities to utilize transparent, sharable "community queues" with real time data. Additionally, the community is looking at ways to maintain and increase the stock of emergency non-congregate hotel vouchers to quickly house unsheltered individuals. The hotel model has proven to be successful in transitioning people from unsheltered homelessness to permanent housing and offers a shelter option for those who traditionally have been resistant to congregate shelter, as the privacy and comfortability of the hotels are enticing.

P-3.c Current Strategy to Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Permanent Housing for Individuals/Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness

The 2022 Housing Inventory Count data shows NC 507 as having 794 PSH beds, 414 dedicated to persons experiencing chronic homelessness. There were 348 RRH beds, and 28 Other Permanent Housing beds. The stock of permanent housing for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness has increased with the addition of 138 Emergency Housing Vouchers, which the CoC has dedicated to people with long histories of unsheltered homelessness. In addition to the new EHV's, one local agency is currently building a new 100-unit PSH complex, which will house both individuals and families and provide on-site case management and wrap around services. All housing providers operate with the Housing First philosophy. Matches between clients and open vouchers are made based on the CoC's prioritization criteria and client preference, regardless of the client's income, criminal or housing history, credit score, family size, etc.

All clients housed with PSH and RRH in the CoC come from the By-Name List, which clients are automatically added to upon completion of a Coordinated Entry assessment and/or enrollment in an outreach project in HMIS. The By-Name List Coordinator monitors the BNL, and tracks vacancies in the community via the CoC Vacancy Tracker. Matches to vacancies are made during case conferencing meetings, which occur every other week, and are attended by case workers, outreach workers, housing providers, and members from the county's Landlord Engagement Unit. Prioritization for vacancies is based on chronic status, VI SPDAT score, and length of time homeless. Client preference is considered, and case managers discuss any special circumstances to be considered. Additionally, any potential transfers from RRH to PSH are discussed at case conferencing, as all efforts are made to avoid returns to homelessness. Once matched to a housing program, the assigned case worker works with the client to obtain all needed documentation, such as their ID, social security card, and disability and homeless verification. If the next client prioritized for a vacancy doesn't have an assigned case manager, the By-Name List Coordinator attempts to reach the client via phone and email and uses HMIS to look for any recent engagement with services. If the client cannot be contacted, the client is removed from the BNL, but can always be added back if re-engaged.

The addition of a full-time By-Name List Coordinator to the community has led to more productive case conferencing meetings and increased communication between the housing providers and the frontline homeless service providers. The BNL Coordinator works with the public housing authority and other housing providers to identify issues delaying housing placements, such as lack of needed documents, and works with the frontline workers to identify ways to overcome those speedbumps causing delays.

There are specific housing opportunities for those living with HIV/AIDS. The Wake County Housing Affordability and Community Revitalization provides HOPWA vouchers that via the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program. This program allows for permanent housing placements, supportive services, housing information, and resource identification. HOPWA participants are referred to the program by the By-Name List Coordinator via the Coordinated

Entry process. These vouchers clear a pathway for those living with HIV/AIDS and their families to quickly move into permanent housing.

Our Veteran service providers are comprised of the Department of Veteran Affairs, two Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) providers, and Wake County government. They meet bi-weekly to review the veteran BNL and discuss strategies for securing safe affordable housing for our community's veteran population. Staff from the Department of Veteran Affairs attends each meeting to discuss available and in-use HUD-VASH vouchers that provide permanent supportive housing to Veterans. The vouchers are issued by the Wake County Housing Authority with over 200 in distribution as of the 2022 Point-In-Time Count.

Interact, the local Domestic Violence agency, attends each bi-weekly case conferencing meeting. They are fully integrated into the Coordinated Entry process with survivors having full access to Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing placements. This is in addition to access to all Housing Choice and Emergency Housing vouchers.

In effort to ensure that our unsheltered households receive the services and housing needed to stabilize their lives, the CoC will work with the National Alliance to End Homelessness beginning in October 2022. The community will receive specialized technical assistance on strategies for improving overall system performance and interventions via the Alliance's Center for Capacity Building. The Center helps communities utilize cost-effective, data-driven strategies for ending homelessness via quick and long-term permanent housing.

P-4. Updating the CoCs Strategy to Identify, Shelter, and House Individuals Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness with Data and Performance

The CoC believes in using data to guide system improvements, to evaluate the system, and track outcomes. There are two formal committees of the CoC tasked with using data and performance measures to evaluate the system and recommend improvements. The Coordinated Access System (CAS) committee provides oversight of the Coordinated Entry system, identifying and discussing issues and recommending changes to policies and processes to the CoC Governing Board. The Data Advisory Committee (DAC) is another CoC committee that provides oversight of the HMIS, examining system-wide data quality and performance measures, as well as project-level data quality monitoring and performance reviews. Like the CAS committee, the DAC makes recommendations and presents on their work to the CoC Governing Board. The DAC works with the HMIS Lead Agency, the Raleigh Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness, to ensure there is a annual Gaps Analysis done for the community as well as project-level performance evaluation and data monitoring.

The Raleigh Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness presents monthly Access Hub data to the CoC Governance Board and CoC Membership. This data identifies call trends from the crisis hotline to better assess community needs and referral trends to generate in-depth conversation around best Coordinated Access System practices. In addition to monthly reporting, The Partnership implemented the annual Ending Homelessness Academy designed to increase the skills and knowledge of homelessness and housing providers. The Ending Homelessness Academy was first introduced in 2021 and co-led by OrgCode, a nationally recognized and

respected organization focused on ending homelessness. Topics covered best practices in prevention, diversion, rapid resolution, housing-based case management, housing-focused sheltering, impactful street outreach, and how to be a high functioning CoC.

Beginning in October 2022, the community will undertake a system re-design under the support and guidance of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. In preparation of that, the HMIS team has gathered 3 years' worth of Point-in-Time and Annual Performance Report (APR) data to share with NAEH to assist with the re-design. The goal is to improve street outreach performance, increase access to low-barrier shelter and non-congregate housing, and rapidly house individuals and families experiencing or having experienced unsheltered homelessness.

All street outreach teams in the CoC participate in HMIS, entering all Universal Data Elements and Program Specific Data Elements. Additionally, they are trained in Coordinated Entry and can enter those assessments in HMIS. The new Clarity HMIS system the CoC recently switched to is compatible with tablets and phones, making real-time data entry more attainable for street outreach workers. Additionally, encampments are now tracked via the mapping system embedded within HMIS and will help ensure outreach coverage includes the entire CoC, including the more suburban areas. The CoC has data quality and performance benchmarks for each project type, including outreach, and these metrics are reviewed by the DAC Committee of the CoC monthly. Additionally, the CoC uses the System Performance Measures to monitor and track progress in improving outcomes related to outreach and unsheltered homelessness. For street outreach, the CoC wants to use HMIS to specifically monitor the number of individuals and households contacted and entered into a project, the percent of those who become engaged, the positive exit destination rate, and length of time in the project. The CoC wants to see an increase in the rate of engagement, a decrease in unknown exits and an increase in positive exits. All of this data can be pulled from the CAPER and CoC APR reports.

The CoC has a street outreach group that meets monthly and is open to community partners who interact with the unsheltered population. Currently, members of the police department's outreach team attends, as well as members of the PATH outreach team, which is based out of one of the hospital systems. Business owners concerned about encampments on their property have also attended in the past, and solutions were found to safely place individuals into shelter from the encampments. In the future, the group hopes to expand to include representatives from the County Parks and Recreation Department, code enforcement, the local airport, additional healthcare providers, and grassroots groups serving the homeless. The group is steadily growing in number, mostly due to word of mouth. The CoC also hopes to develop a streamlined referral process where external partners can make referrals to the street outreach teams, and those would be staffed at the monthly meetings or ad hoc.

Emergency shelters are evaluated monthly by the DAC committee, as well as annually via the Point in Time and Housing Inventory Counts, the System Performance Measures, and the Longitudinal System Analysis. Of particular interest to the CoC recently has been analyzing data from the low-barrier, hotel-based non-congregate shelters, which have demonstrated the efficacy of providing a full array of services at the shelter level to increase exits to permanent housing. Within six months of the initial Hotels to Housing program the county launched at the beginning of the pandemic, the program permanently housed more than 300 people, which was an

unprecedented number.

In December 2021, Wake County launched the Bridge to Home initiative to provide \$10.5 million in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to shelters to increase their ability support households experiencing homelessness. The Bridge to Home agency recipients must partner with external agencies and provide case management, flexible financial assistance, access to benefits, transportation, connections to healthcare, housing navigation, and permanent housing home furnishings. These dollars have allowed shelters to staff SOAR-certified case managers to increase income via Social Security benefits and have increased funding to cover rental application and documentation fees and rapid exit funding. The funding has also helped agencies invest in housing navigators to aid households to exit homelessness quickly and permanently. The funding also increases access to on-site primary, mental, and behavioral healthcare services which further serve to stabilize households and may encourage service-resistant households to seek shelter and other services.

Data from the community-wide Landlord Engagement Unit combined with data from Annual Performance Reports (APR), System Performance Measures, annual Gaps Analysis, Longitudinal System Analysis, and data from By-Name List can be utilized to improve the community's ability to rapidly house individuals and families in permanent housing. The National Alliance to End Homelessness along with the Coordinated Access System committee can assist the community with identifying and implementing proven best practices.

P-5. Identify and Prioritize Households Experiencing or with Histories of Unsheltered Homelessness

Wake county has demonstrated a clear, continued, and unrelenting commitment to reducing and ultimately ending unsheltered homelessness for individuals and families. There has been significant investment in street outreach programs, an increased effort to coordinate outreach efforts and ensure the entire county is covered, and increased collaboration with external partnerships. Additionally, the CoC's experienced Funding Review Committee uses multi-scale scorecards to evaluate RRH and PSH programs, rewarding high performing projects with high rates of housing placements for people with histories of unsheltered homelessness.

The unsheltered homeless population can access the Access Hub (Coordinated Entry) multiple ways, offering options for those without access to technology as well as those in suburban or rural parts of the county further from Raleigh. They can call the crisis hotline and get assessed over the phone, can go in person to the day services center in Raleigh, or can be assessed by an outreach worker in the field. Once assessed, the individual or household is automatically added to the By-Name-List and can receive immediate referrals to emergency shelter if desired, or other resources if eligible via HMIS. Outreach teams are in the field engaging with known encampments and searching for new ones Monday-Friday and receive referrals from external partners about new encampments. The teams largely focus on the Raleigh area, where much of the unsheltered population is concentrated, but makes sure to cover the entire county, including the suburban areas where there are large, wooded areas. The CoC wants to ramp up the referral procedure and process, which will aid in the initial identification of individuals experiencing homelessness who may be new to the system. Outreach workers are trained to provide housing-focused outreach, but meet

clients where they're at, and work to connect them to needed services including health care. The day services center has a health clinic that operates three days a week, and several of the emergency shelters also offer on-site medical care. Those living with HIV/AIDS are referred to medical case management if needed. Affordable or free dental care has been an emerging need the outreach group is currently seeking solutions.

Once assessed and on the By-Name-List, the unsheltered individuals are prioritized for housing. The current prioritization criteria for PSH and RRH is based on chronic homelessness status, VI SPDAT score, and length of time homeless. Matches to openings in housing programs are made during case conferencing meetings, as well as the Emergency Housing Voucher meetings. Clients do not need a disabling condition to be matched to an EHV, which offers a great housing resource for those unsheltered who may not meet the definition of chronic homelessness. Once matched to a housing opening, the case managers work to ensure the clients obtain all needed documents such as IDs and social security cards, and updated income verification if applicable. Often obtaining these documents is a barrier to housing and can significantly slow the process. Outreach workers work with clients as soon as possible to start getting them document ready.

The CoC will continue to review Coordinated Access System data on who is matched to a housing program, how many are housed, what their history of homelessness was, how long the process took, etc. to identify areas for improvement. The CoC will also complete a high-impact system design clinic with the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Currently, our CoC is reviewing its Coordinated Access (Entry) policies and procedures as well as its written standards to ensure that all programmatic and coordinated entry processes reduce homelessness, especially for those living unsheltered.

P-6. Involving Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness in Decision Making – Meaningful Outreach

The CoC has a Lived Experience Committee comprised of individuals with lives experience of homelessness who can offer their perspective to the other committees, workgroups, and the Governance Board. The Raleigh Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness is exploring ways to provide a reimbursement of expenses through a stipend and other incentives such as childcare, transportation, and/or meals. The committee currently has seven members on it, and is trying to recruit at least three more members. The committee is widely advertised on the CoC's website, in CoC and related email blasts, during CoC and workgroup meetings, including the monthly outreach meeting, and via word of mouth. Nominations are accepted on a rolling basis and are reviewed as needed. The committee makes every effort to have diverse and inclusive representation by having representation from each area outlined below:

- Domestic Violence Survivor
- Black, Indigenous, Latinx, or person of Color (BIPOC)
- Single Adult
- Unaccompanied Children and Youth
- Behavioral health, Substance dependent, and/or Behavioral Health
- Resided in Emergency Shelter in Wake County
- Participated in a Permanent Supportive Housing Program in Wake County

Received Street Outreach Services in Wake County
Adult only household (couples, adult with adult child, etc.)

A minimum of one CoC Board member should come from this committee. The Lived Experience Committee meets monthly, and members are encouraged to attend and participate in CoC Governance Board meetings, CoC Membership meetings, and other CoC Committees and workgroups. The committee reviews ongoing CoC activities such as the NOFO and SNOFO applications. The committee reviewed this narrative and provided feedback and ideas on what they'd like to see if allocated money. Their ideas are respected, and their feedback is extremely valuable and is incorporated into CoC plans, processes, and procedures.

In addition to the Lived Experience Committee, the CoC encourages agencies to involve individuals and families with lived experience of unsheltered homelessness in decision making processes. Inclusion of people with lived experience in decision making is a factor on the local SNOFO and NOFO scorecards. The CoC's street outreach teams and shelters include staff with 15 years of lived unsheltered homelessness. In the monthly street outreach meetings, those with lived experience feel comfortable voicing their opinions and concerns, which contributes to more appropriate, effective, client-focused outreach.

P- 6a. Involving Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness in Decision Making – Letter of Support from Working Group Comprised of Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness Lived Experience Support Letter Attached in esnaps.

P-7. Supporting Underserved Communities and Supporting Equitable Community Development

Though most homeless service providers and housing resources are based in Raleigh, the CoC covers the entire county, which includes twelve municipalities ranging from urban to suburban to rural areas. The PIT data and mapping shows that though unsheltered homelessness is concentrated in the Raleigh area, it is not exclusive to Raleigh, with encampments spread across the entire county. The county is very large, so without access to transportation, those living outside the Raleigh area may have trouble accessing the services centered around Raleigh. Street outreach services are vital in getting these individuals identified and connected to services, as outreach can take someone through the housing process entirely from the field. Fortunately, during the pandemic the public transportation in the area became free, and it remains free today. Before it was free, outreach workers would provide bus passes to clients needing transportation for work or an appointment and would return to that if the public transportation fee is resumed.

There are several service-resistant sub-populations within the unsheltered population, such as those in the midst of heavy substance use. For those who are service resistant, outreach workers meet them where they're at, not pushing assessments or housing on them before they're ready. Outreach workers work on rapport building, still going out to check on those individuals and offering supplies and resources. There is a PATH street outreach team embedded within one of the hospitals who are trained and equipped to work with those who have an untreated severe and persistent mental illness. Though housing these often service-resistant populations is often extremely slow, the outreach workers do not give up, and continue building those relationships and building trust. During extreme weather events such as a winter storm, these individuals are

offered low barrier shelter options and supplied to help keep them safe.

Another underserved population is the Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) population. Roughly 7-10% of those outreach teams in the CoC serve identify as Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x). Several teams have Spanish-speaking staff, and translation services can be provided if needed to assist those individuals in navigating the system. There is a growing refugee population in Wake County that the CoC is keeping an eye on and is prepared to assist if any refugees find themselves experiencing homelessness.

In terms of housing, the City of Raleigh and Wake County governments have supported the preservation and creation of affordable housing across the entire county, not just in Raleigh. For example, Wake County works with the municipalities and landlords to tackle zoning policies that affect housing affordability, decrease income discrimination by incentivizing the acceptance of rental subsidies, and mandate 10% set-asides for tenants receiving a rental subsidy for projects developed with government money. The City of Raleigh partnered with Southeast Raleigh Promise to build 27 affordable rental housing units in southeast Raleigh which is comprised of mostly low-income black and minority residents. The Landlord Engagement Unit has identified a need for more education on housing vouchers for private landlords in more rural and suburban parts of the county and is working to recruit landlords in a wider variety of areas in the county, offering clients more choice in where they can live in communities where they are comfortable.

The City of Raleigh has set priorities for spending the Affordable Housing Bond which include providing generally equal geographic distribution with project investments and seeking projects and acquisition opportunities near planned transit routes.

The Raleigh Wake Partnership intends to apply for a full-time Unsheltered Coordinator who can work alongside the community to identify areas of needed engagement and the resources needed to serve fully and equitably many of the underserved communities outlined in HUD's notice. The Unsheltered Coordinator will also help develop and staff the Racial Equity Committee, a committee of the CoC Governance Board. The goal of the committee is to evaluate CoC policies and data with a racial equity lens to recommend changes to increase equity. Lastly, the Coordinator will work to provide community-based training with the support of a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion consultant.