



EVALUATE UPSTREAM:

BLUEPRINT FOR OPTIMIZING THE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION ASSISTANCE SYSTEM IN CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG



Painting is by R.T. Morgan, West Jefferson, North Carolina

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PART 1

Planning and investment efforts related to homelessness have, for well over a decade, primarily focused on the downstream components of the homeless services system. These components seek to reduce homelessness by increasing access to and availability of permanent housing (including subsidized and non-subsidized). This is true of communities across the United States and of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, data in Charlotte-Mecklenburg indicated that almost 30,000 households face a formal eviction each year. More than 78,000 renter households experienced housing cost burden, which means they are spending more than 30% of their income on housing-related costs. These numbers have increased, and will likely worsen, as a result of the long-term economic fallout from the response to COVID-19. In reacting to the pandemic, communities have started to

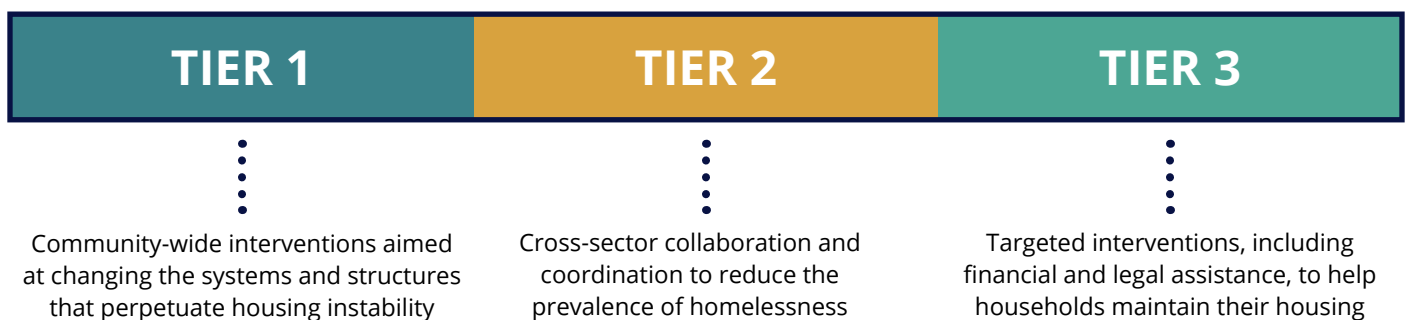
develop strategic housing and homelessness plans that integrate public health promotion with economic recovery. Homelessness prevention is the real key to both protecting the community and ensuring long-term housing stability.

In fact, federal COVID-19 assistance has targeted prevention activities to ensure that households can stay safely in their homes during the pandemic. While prevention assistance may have been missing from prior community housing strategies and previous multi-year plans, it has now emerged as an incredibly critical component. Charlotte-Mecklenburg's focus on prevention assistance (as a system) started long before the COVID-19 pandemic. This focus has only sharpened since the pandemic began impacting households in our community.

DEFINING PREVENTION ASSISTANCE

What, after all, is meant by “prevention?” It may be simpler to say what prevention is not: prevention assistance is not just one type of assistance. It is, instead, a category (or continuum) of housing assistance that targets households facing near-term housing instability but who have not yet lost their housing.

The continuum of prevention assistance includes three tiers:



So, what qualifies as prevention assistance? Any of the following could be considered prevention assistance:

- > Creating policies that ensure tenants have legal representation in civil proceedings
- > Adopting a racial equity lens to approach the delivery of housing and homelessness services; delivering education on tenant rights and the eviction process
- > Mandating transition or “discharge” planning to ensure households leaving a formal program have connection to mainstream resources
- > Linking childcare subsidies with housing programs
- > Providing direct financial assistance for rent, utilities and other debt to maintain housing
- > Appointing legal representation to prevent individual evictions
- > Administering supportive services to help keep housing
- > Supplying critical home repair and remediation to ensure housing is both safe and sustainable.

Prevention assistance is targeted upstream within the Housing & Homelessness Ecosystem. However, prevention can be an effective intervention at both ends of the housing continuum: targeting households facing housing instability so that they do not lose their housing as well as homeless households who regain housing so that they can sustain it.

THE STORY OF PREVENTION ASSISTANCE IN CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG

There are multiple prevention assistance providers (and funders) in Charlotte-Mecklenburg; many of these organizations and funding streams have existed for years. What has been missing is a unified strategy for, and a concerted effort to align the whole array of prevention resources to, addressing the needs of the populations at risk of experiencing homelessness. In 2016, Matthew Desmond published the book *Evicted: Poverty & Profit in the American City*. This book, which chronicles the lives of eight families struggling to pay their rent during the 2008 financial crisis, helped propel the issue of evictions into the national consciousness and raised awareness of housing instability. Prevention assistance was promoted as an anchor solution; subsequently, communities across the United States began to increase investment in prevention and enact policies to ensure legal representation for tenants.

During 2017 and 2018, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services released a three-part report series focused on evictions using local data. The initial report covered an overview of the formal eviction process, the second mapped formal eviction filings and judgments by neighborhood across the county and the third report took a deeper dive into a one-month snapshot of formal eviction filings in Mecklenburg County. This report series marked the first time a local report covered evictions (and the topic of homelessness prevention) in Charlotte-

Mecklenburg. In addition, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services partnered with the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute to organize a public lecture by Matthew Desmond in September 2017. The event was free to attend and was also streamed to a satellite location to maximize potential attendance.

Prior to Desmond's lecture, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services, in partnership with multiple community groups, initiated a community book club to help raise awareness about evictions, engage all levels of stakeholders with issues raised in Desmond's book and prepare to receive and use the information that would be released in the local report series. With support from the Foundation For The Carolinas, over 40 book clubs launched around Mecklenburg County. Each book club member received a free book and a toolkit that combined book-generated discussion questions with local data and context, along with ways to get involved to support the work in the community. These book clubs were conducted by public and private entities, schools and university groups, faith communities, businesses and neighborhoods. One consisted of a group of individuals with lived experience who were called by Desmond while conducting one of their meetings. This intentional community effort increased awareness about the issues of housing instability and the need to explore solutions. The attention also helped increase local resource allocations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PART 2

In FY19, Mecklenburg County initiated funding specifically for eviction prevention, targeting legal assistance to residents facing eviction; this was done by allocating over \$300,000 to Legal Aid of North Carolina. In FY20, this funding was increased by \$560,000, expanding the overall investment in legal assistance for evictions to over \$800,000 across two providers. In addition, Mecklenburg County allotted \$1M to Habitat for Humanity of the Charlotte Region to provide critical home repair. Although investment in prevention assistance had increased significantly, and there were multiple organizations providing a range of prevention activities, there was still not an aligned or coordinated prevention-assistance system. Recognizing this gap, in 2018 Mecklenburg County staff submitted a Continuum of Care (CoC) planning grant application to the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). The grant funding was to be purposed for developing a prevention assistance system. A comprehensive strategy was needed, not just to inform investments in prevention assistance, but to ultimately strengthen and expand prevention strategies in alignment with other components of the housing and homelessness ecosystem. The grant was fully funded and allocated to Mecklenburg County on behalf of the CoC in early 2020.

Between submitting the grant and receiving the funding, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services released a report entitled Launch Upstream: Homelessness Prevention in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The report provided the community with its first overview of the entire prevention assistance system, including the landscape of providers and dedicated funding streams in the community. As a precursor to the work of the planning grant, the report defined and described a framework for organizing prevention assistance as a system. The CoC planning grant work, referred to as “Evaluate Upstream: Optimizing the Homelessness Prevention Assistance System in Charlotte-Mecklenburg,” was launched in May 2020 and concluded in April 2021. “Evaluate Upstream” is a homelessness prevention system change effort intended to address the structural factors that impact access to, and sustainability of, housing. The goal of “Evaluate Upstream” is to develop a comprehensive homelessness prevention assistance system for Charlotte-Mecklenburg, grounded in shared accountability. The Evaluate Upstream Blueprint represents the culmination of the work during the previous 12 months and outlines recommendations for implementation.

THE FUTURE OF THE PREVENTION ASSISTANCE SYSTEM IN CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG

In comparison with other shelter and re-housing interventions, prevention assistance can be a much more cost-effective intervention. In addition, prevention reduces inflow into homelessness; this means that other elements of the ecosystem can do what they are best positioned to do: temporarily shelter any households facing a housing crisis and quickly re-house them into permanent housing. If combined with other demand-side solutions like increasing household income, expanding workforce development efforts and strengthening safety net supports, prevention assistance can reduce other public costs while also simultaneously bolstering the local economy. Finally, prevention assistance reduces all the impacts on households facing housing instability. An eviction filing, even if there was never an actual eviction, can keep a family from being approved for an apartment in the future. There are costs to move, store possessions or even replace items left behind. The loss of housing (and any time spent experiencing homelessness) has negative repercussions across multiple areas, for children and adults. The immediate negative impact on children also has long-term implications, including poor school attendance and academic outcomes. This is how the cycle starts and how it continues generation after generation.

Because of Mecklenburg County’s three-year head start in developing a prevention assistance system, the community is well situated to both develop and implement a comprehensive and sustainable response to the incoming tsunami of households facing housing instability and homelessness due to COVID-19. During a pandemic, prevention is seen as key to both protecting the community’s health and ensuring individual housing stability. Housing strategies solely focused on a crisis response will only ever operate in crisis mode. Worse, in a crisis, other routine operations are jeopardized, and it is easy to feel a loss of control of a given situation. With the waves breaking over the hull of our ship, and damage below the waterline, it is easy to lose steerage. Prevention assistance, if optimized as a systemic intervention within the housing ecosystem, can enable communities to both end and prevent homelessness. It can allow other parts of the ecosystem to get out of crisis response. Prevention assistance, if applied as broadly as practical, has the potential to impact multiple generations. It allows damage control to take place in the hull, where all the structural issues are. Prevention assistance, if funded to scale and coordinated strategically, can recalibrate the rest of the housing continuum. It serves to restore power to our helm. Prevention assistance, if allowed, could be the one thing that rights the ship.

EVALUATE UPSTREAM

DEFINITION & SCOPE OF

PREVENTION ASSISTANCE

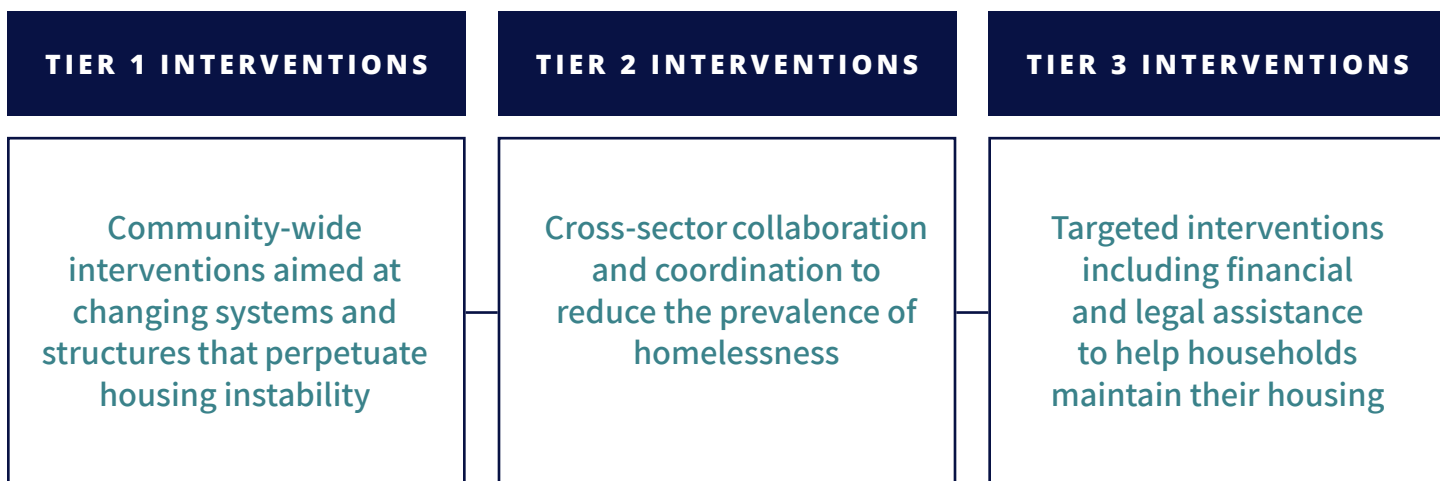
To understand the scope of the recommendations outlined in the Blueprint, this section provides the definition of the prevention assistance system, including a description of the three tiers of prevention assistance. It is important to note that while the target of the recommendations in the Blueprint are directed “upstream” on households experiencing housing instability, there are also positive “downstream” impacts for the homeless assistance system and people experiencing homelessness.

***Evaluate Upstream* is a homelessness prevention system change effort focused on addressing structural factors that affect access to and sustainability of housing.**

The goal of *Evaluate Upstream* is to develop a comprehensive homelessness prevention assistance system in Charlotte-Mecklenburg that is grounded in shared accountability.

PREVENTION ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

Prevention assistance is a category of housing assistance that targets households facing housing instability who have not yet lost their housing.



PROJECT HISTORY & CONTEXT



2018

Mecklenburg County staff submitted a Continuum of Care (CoC) planning grant application to the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) for developing a prevention assistance system.

OCTOBER 2019

Mecklenburg County Community Support Services released Launch Upstream: Homelessness Prevention in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

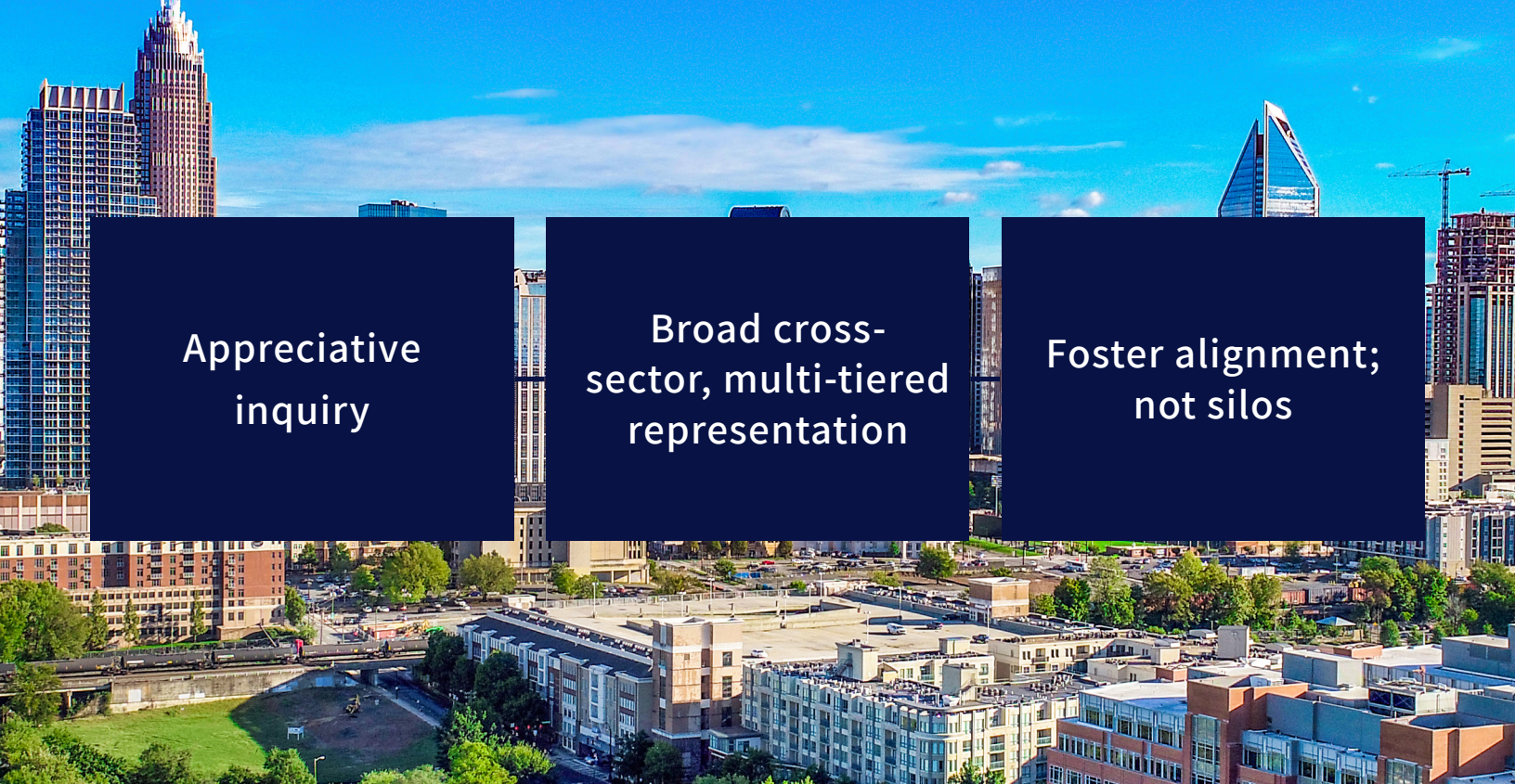
MAY 2020

The CoC planning grant work began, referred to as "Evaluate Upstream: Optimizing the Homelessness Prevention Assistance System in Charlotte-Mecklenburg."

APRIL 2021

"Evaluate Upstream" work concluded. The Evaluate Upstream Blueprint represents the culmination of the work during the previous 12 months and outlines recommendations for implementation.

HOW THIS WORK IS DIFFERENT

An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely Charlotte, North Carolina, featuring several high-rise buildings and a mix of urban development. Three dark blue rectangular boxes are overlaid on the image, each containing white text. The boxes are arranged horizontally across the middle of the image.

Appreciative
inquiry

Broad cross-
sector, multi-tiered
representation

Foster alignment;
not silos

There are three primary differences that both distinguish Evaluate Upstream from other efforts and have the potential to propel the solutions.

First, Evaluate Upstream did not solely compile data and research on “what works” relative to prevention. Instead, Evaluate Upstream has employed a method called “Appreciative Inquiry.” This approach has the advantage of integrating the voices of those who have experienced housing instability into the work.

Second, Evaluate Upstream has included representatives from across the private and public sector: staff and elected officials from Mecklenburg County, City of Charlotte and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools; providers across all tiers of prevention assistance; housing assistance and homeless service providers; funders; members of the faith community; individuals with lived experience; housing development, management and real estate firms; and representatives from other sectors that intersect with housing instability and homelessness.

Third, Evaluate Upstream has worked diligently to integrate any program-level or systems-focused initiatives in Charlotte-Mecklenburg to avoid creating new silos; instead, the intent is to break down barriers and fill gaps.

These three aspects of Evaluate Upstream are vital to ensure that there is an effective final product. More important is that the right process, done well, will best position the product for community ownership. And that the successful adoption and execution will then translate to the downstream components of the housing continuum.

PROJECT MILESTONES

- Countywide prevention resource mapping
- Study of disposition of at-risk callers to NC 2-1-1
- Best practices research
- Completion of Appreciative Interviews with households with lived experience
- Preliminary strategies from Design Thinking “Design Sprint”
- Blueprint development during 5-week “Blueprint 5k”
- Completed Blueprint presentation, review & feedback

EVALUATE UPSTREAM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This section outlines the guiding principles that have informed the work of Evaluate Upstream and are embodied in the content and structure of the Blueprint. These principles include the Framework Core Values, Cross-Cutting Elements and Lenses (Demand-Driven Factors, Supply-Driven Factors and Systems-and-Structures-Driven Factors).

FRAMEWORK CORE VALUES

1

Shared, multi-sector investment in and ownership of homelessness prevention assistance system

2

Elevates voices of people with lived experience in design, implementation and evaluation

3

Integrates components of demand-driven, supply-driven and systems-and-structures-driven factors into all elements

4

Embraces human-centered, trauma-informed approach to positively impact people, programs, policies and systems

5

Translation of framework into implementation is owned by single, appropriately resourced entity

FRAMEWORK LENSES

DEMAND-DRIVEN FACTORS

Needs of individuals and families who face housing instability and homelessness, including rent and other household expenses, food, childcare, transportation, information about and access to affordable housing, and support and assistance navigating systems

SUPPLY-DRIVEN FACTORS

Resources to ensure access to and sustainability of permanent, affordable housing (physical units, rental subsidies, down payment assistance and/or mortgage assistance)

SYSTEMS-AND-STRUCTURES-DRIVEN FACTORS

Policies, practices and institutions that prohibit or facilitate positive change

As part of the design process to develop a blueprint, there were three main goals: to develop a shared understanding of the interrelated factors that lead to housing instability and homelessness, to develop consensus on the homelessness prevention framework that would be used as a source for system-level recommendations, and to create a collaboratively designed implementation and ownership blueprint for the prevention systems solutions. Participants in the design and planning process considered eight categories of factors that contribute to housing instability and homelessness through three lenses: demand side, supply side, and systems and structures.

Demand-Side Issues include the concerns of individuals and families who face housing instability and homelessness. In other words, is there equality in access to the resources? What needs must be met?

Supply-Side Issues refer to the resources to ensure access to and sustainability of permanent, affordable housing. This includes removing barriers to access housing, increasing housing supply and targeting resources to prevent and end homelessness. What must be provided to meet the needs identified?

Systems and Structures incorporate the policies, practices and institutions that either prohibit or facilitate positive change. Examples include cross-sector funding alignment to prioritize prevention assistance and incentives to attract and/or retain businesses which support housing and/or a living wage. What role does government play? What is the work of private enterprise in addressing homelessness?

FRAMEWORK CROSS-CUTTING ELEMENTS

1

Clear, cohesive strategies driving communication, education and advocacy

2

Addresses demand-driven, supply-driven and systems-and- structures-driven factors

3

Greatly enhanced and expanded use of data in design, implementation and evaluation

4

Data-informed, cross-sector, funding alignment

5

Integrates complementary cross-sector systems and structures

EVALUATE UPSTREAM BLUEPRINT OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of the format and structure of the Blueprint. The Blueprint contains five main impact areas, which have been condensed from the eight used during the Design Sprint. It is important to note that there will be areas of overlap across impact areas. In addition, the fifth impact area focused on equity contains strategies and action steps that integrate into the other four impact areas. The Blueprint components include impact areas, strategies, action steps, key partners and champions, and outcomes. Where possible, existing evidence-based strategies and research are linked to the Blueprint recommendations.

BLUEPRINT COMPONENTS



**IMPACT
AREA**



STRATEGIES



**ACTION
STEPS**



**KEY PARTNERS
& CHAMPIONS**



OUTCOMES

**EVIDENCE-BASED
PRACTICES & RESEARCH**

BLUEPRINT IMPACT AREAS

1

Develop an effective, comprehensive and holistic homelessness prevention assistance system sustained by aligned, cross-sector funding and resources

2

Creatively expand access to and availability of affordable housing inventory (physical units/homes and rental subsidies/down payment/mortgage assistance)

3

Close the gap between household income and cost-of-living so that households can both access and sustain housing

4

Support policies and practices that reduce and/or remove barriers to access or sustain affordable housing

5

Eliminate race and ethnicity-based income disparities and wealth accumulation gap

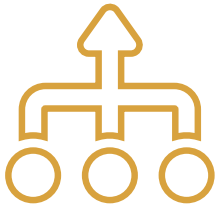
EVALUATE UPSTREAM BLUEPRINT FINAL DRAFT

This section provides a final draft of the Blueprint organized by impact area. Each impact area includes multiple strategies with identified action steps, key partners and champions, and outcomes. Where possible, evidence-based strategies and research are included, linked to the relevant recommendations.



IMPACT AREA 1

Develop an effective, comprehensive and holistic homelessness prevention assistance system sustained by aligned, cross-sector funding and resources



IMPACT AREA 1 STRATEGIES

Develop an effective, comprehensive and holistic homelessness prevention assistance system sustained by aligned, cross-sector funding and resources

1

Develop person-centered prevention assistance intake & triage system

2

Integrate prevention assistance system with complementary sectors and organizations

3

Use data to inform solutions, evaluate impact and guide cross-sector funding

4

Identify entity to own translation of high-impact outcomes into implementation and create comprehensive, flexible funding strategy that refocuses providers and funders, and meets short-term and long-term needs

Strategy 1

DEVELOP PERSON-CENTERED PREVENTION ASSISTANCE INTAKE & TRIAGE SYSTEM



ACTION STEPS

- Evaluate ability of NC 2-1-1 to conduct person-centered prevention assistance intake and triage, including identifying data-driven risk factors prior to homelessness and referring callers to coordinated resources; incorporating lessons learned from evaluations of NC 2-1-1 and Coordinated Entry; exploring alternatives if necessary
- Align other intake and triage systems with prevention assistance intake and triage system; expand and strengthen system to receive referrals from prevention intake and triage; if NC 2-1-1 is determined to be entry point for prevention assistance system, ensure adequate communication is provided to community
- Expand referral network to non-traditional partners and cross-sector providers and partners
- Create prevention-focused intensive case management model with prioritization schema that includes follow-up and ongoing case management supported by Housing First, Employment First, trauma-informed and person-centered practices; shared data collection and reporting; and coordinated planning and referrals



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- NC 2-1-1/United Way of Central Carolinas
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Continuum of Care: Coordinated Entry Oversight Committee; Data Advisory Committee
- North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services (NCCARES 360)
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- Mecklenburg County
- Public/Private funders
- Ownership Entity*
- "2025 Char-Meck Homelessness Strategy" effort**
- People with lived experience

Strategy 1

DEVELOP PERSON-CENTERED PREVENTION ASSISTANCE INTAKE & TRIAGE SYSTEM



OUTCOMES

- The number of households that are identified and appropriately referred prior to becoming homeless will increase.
- Connectivity and systems integration across intake and triage systems for homelessness prevention and other social supports service delivery will increase.
- The number of at-risk households that receive person-centered, trauma-informed, intensive case management intake and referral will increase.



EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. Comprehensive case management/supportive services, NYC HomeBase Program (*In the Midst of Plenty*, Shinn and Khadduri, p. 134-136)
2. Use of data and predictive statistical models for proactive screening and targeted support [Predicting and Preventing Homelessness in Los Angeles, September 2019](#)
 - *In the Midst of Plenty*, Shinn and Khadduri, p. 126-129)
3. Targeted interventions and transition planning for special populations (Center for Evidence-Based Solutions to Homelessness; "Getting to Proof Points: Key learning from the first three years of Built for Zero Initiative," Community Solutions)
4. Community-based services (*In the Midst of Plenty*, Shinn and Khadduri, p. 134-135)
5. Integrating homelessness and antipoverty service systems (*In the Midst of Plenty*)

Strategy 2

INTEGRATE PREVENTION ASSISTANCE SYSTEM WITH COMPLEMENTARY SECTORS AND ORGANIZATIONS



ACTION STEPS

- Bookend Prevention Assistance System with Leading on Opportunity (upstream) and Homelessness Assistance System (downstream), connecting services upstream with services downstream; identify and link relevant prevention assistance system recommendations with recommendations outlined in the Opportunity Task Force Report
- Promote outcomes that can be shared and used across complementary sectors and organizations
- Employ concepts that bridge complementary sectors and organizations, including multi-generational approach, economic opportunity, housing and employment first, and cost-effectiveness
- Educate public and private sectors about opportunities and benefits for people who might qualify for prevention assistance



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Leading on Opportunity
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Continuum of Care
- Cross-sector partners, funders and providers
- Mecklenburg County
- Ownership Entity
- “2025 Char-Meck Homelessness Strategy” effort
- People with lived experience with prevention services and housing insecurity



OUTCOMES

- Homelessness prevention and assistance strategies will be integrated into a coherent continuum, reducing systems “leakage” (i.e., falling through the cracks).
- Duplication of effort will be minimized, resulting in more data-driven, efficacious investment of resources.
- Consensus will be achieved on outcomes, metrics and determination of shared success.

Strategy 2

INTEGRATE PREVENTION ASSISTANCE SYSTEM WITH COMPLEMENTARY SECTORS AND ORGANIZATIONS



EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. Cross-sector collaborations to provide holistic supports for families experiencing housing instability and homelessness (*In the Midst of Plenty*)
2. Explore innovative methods to provide financial assistance to the informal sector, working – where useful – with the private sector and city government. (Source: [World Economic Forum: “Making Affordable Housing a Reality in Cities”](#))
3. Develop innovative ways of establishing creditworthiness and serving low-income households seeking to improve their informal housing (Ibid.)
4. Consider supporting employees to meet housing costs through loans, subsidies or mortgage deals (Ibid.)

Strategy 3

USE DATA TO INFORM SOLUTIONS, EVALUATE IMPACT AND GUIDE CROSS-SECTOR FUNDING



ACTION STEPS

- Use existing data to determine whether specific interventions are effective preventing homelessness; ensure that shaping structure and governance of data embodies core values
- Employ person-centered data management platform connected to or aligned with existing platforms with capacity to complete cross-sector referrals and case coordination; optimal data integration, management and sharing; and incentives and/or funding to facilitate access to and use of shared platform
- Incorporate and empower grassroots organizations in the data collection process
- Develop predictive model, using cross-sector shared data, to understand risk factors and inform system design, resource allocation, prioritization and policy-making
- Evaluate impact of prevention assistance system, utilizing adopted evaluation framework; align funding with adopted performance-based strategy; educate funders and stakeholders on goals and progress; integrate continuous quality improvement



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Mecklenburg County
- NC 2-1-1/United Way of Central Carolinas
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Continuum of Care: Coordinated Entry Oversight Committee; Data Advisory Committee
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- UNC Charlotte Urban Institute: ISC database; UNC Charlotte School of Data Science
- Financial institutions
- Cross-sector partners
- Ownership Entity
- Public / Private funders
- People with lived experience
- “2025 Char-Meck Homelessness Strategy” effort

Strategy 3

USE DATA TO INFORM SOLUTIONS, EVALUATE IMPACT AND GUIDE CROSS-SECTOR FUNDING



OUTCOMES

- Homelessness prevention and assistance strategies will be integrated into a coherent continuum, reducing systems “leakage” (i.e., falling through the cracks)
- The number of households and their needs who are predictively/proactively identified before becoming unstably housed and who are referred prior to becoming homeless will increase.
- Consensus will be achieved on outcomes, metrics and determination of shared success.
- The prevention network will use data to optimize decision-making about system design, improvement and funding.



EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. Use of data and predictive statistical models for proactive screening and targeted support:
 - [“Predicting and Preventing Homelessness in Los Angeles”, September 2019.](#)
 - *In the Midst of Plenty*, Shinn and Khadduri, p. 126-129
 - [Predictive data tool](#) developed by Marybeth Shinn using HomeBase data, 2013.
 - [“A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration”, AISP, May 2020.](#)
2. Approaches to evaluating and monitoring prevention:
 - [“A Prevention-Centered Approach to Homelessness Assistance: A Paradigm Shift?”](#) Culhane & Metraux, p. 25-26.
 - [“A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention.”](#) Gaetz & Dej, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

Strategy 4

IDENTIFY ENTITY TO OWN TRANSLATION OF HIGH-IMPACT OUTCOMES INTO IMPLEMENTATION AND CREATE COMPREHENSIVE, FLEXIBLE FUNDING STRATEGY THAT REFOCUSES PROVIDERS AND FUNDERS AND MEETS SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM NEEDS



ACTION STEPS

- Identify ownership entity for implementation of recommendations, alignment of funding and ongoing research and evaluation of system
- Ownership entity coordinates and facilitates access to training opportunities for system providers and stakeholders to ensure fidelity to system model
- Ownership entity regularly convenes system providers, funders, partners and stakeholders to prevent reversion to silos; problem-solve communication, coordination and implementation issues; and ensure alignment across system
- Ownership entity ensures quality and timely data collection on shared outcomes; conducts research and evaluation of prevention assistance model
- Ownership entity expands universe of funders in prevention assistance system to include non-traditional partners such as employers; provide education and guidance for funder network; identify flexible funding sources and/or strategies to meet immediate needs of population experiencing housing instability; and redirect and/or realign existing funding to fill gaps; develop short- and long-term funding strategy that aligns cross-sector funding with adopted performance-based strategy using adopted evaluation framework; and refocuses service providers and funders



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- Ownership Entity
- Mecklenburg County
- City of Charlotte
- “2025 Char-Meck Homelessness Strategy” effort
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- People with lived experience to help inform where investments are most needed

Strategy 4

IDENTIFY ENTITY TO OWN TRANSLATION OF HIGH-IMPACT OUTCOMES INTO IMPLEMENTATION AND CREATE COMPREHENSIVE, FLEXIBLE FUNDING STRATEGY THAT REFOCUSES PROVIDERS AND FUNDERS AND MEETS SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM NEEDS



OUTCOMES

- Prevention efforts will be coordinated and aligned.
- Buy-in and accountability among cross-sector partners and co-owners will be increased.
- The prevention network will achieve consensus about the collection, interpretation and application of outcomes data.
- The prevention network will use data to optimize decision making about system design, improvement and funding.
- Cross-sector investment in homelessness prevention will expand and will enable flexible, high-impact investing.
- Community will achieve the flexibility to target funding to gaps and priority needs.
- Performance-based funding strategy will reinforce fidelity to best practices among service providers.



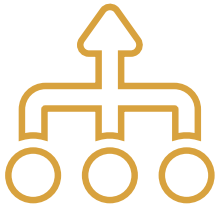
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. Permanent, shallow or deep housing subsidies; expanding housing vouchers
 - [Center for Evidence-Based Solutions to Homelessness](#)
 - *In the Midst of Plenty*, Shinn and Khadduri, p. 131-133.
2. Flexible cash grants to low-income households
 - *In the Midst of Plenty*, Shinn and Khadduri, p. 144.



IMPACT AREA 2

**Creatively expand access to and availability
of affordable housing inventory (physical
units/homes and rental subsidies/down
payment/mortgage assistance)**



IMPACT AREA 2 STRATEGIES

Creatively expand access to and availability of affordable housing inventory (physical units/homes and rental subsidies/down payment/mortgage assistance)

1

Maintain existing inventory through preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing (noah)

2

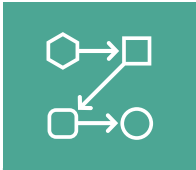
Expand affordable inventory through construction of new housing units

3

Increase quantity and type of subsidies to gap cost of housing by need (rental subsidies/ mortgage assistance)

Strategy 1

MAINTAIN EXISTING INVENTORY THROUGH PRESERVATION OF NATURALLY OCCURRING AFFORDABLE HOUSING (NOAH)



ACTION STEPS

- Develop data-driven community strategy to identify NOAH sites
- Identify strategies and funding where needed to mitigate displacement
- Increase funding for property acquisitions and rehabilitation; ensure incorporation of plan for quality property management and maintenance
- Increase funding to acquire, rehabilitate and/or subsidize “non-traditional” and non-residential buildings to be repurposed as single- and multi-family NOAH units
- Increase funding to continue maintaining and/or expand NOAH homeownership
- Increase funding to integrate supportive services as necessary
- Increase funding for expansion of critical home repair
- Identify and educate and incentivize NOAH owners / investors
- Support housing goals in other community plans, including City of Charlotte and towns in Mecklenburg County



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Mecklenburg County
- City of Charlotte
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- Public/Private funders
- Investors
- Housing providers
- NOAH property owners
- Employers
- Faith Community
- Ownership Entity
- “2025 Char-Meck Homelessness Strategy” effort

Strategy 1

MAINTAIN EXISTING INVENTORY THROUGH PRESERVATION OF NATURALLY OCCURRING AFFORDABLE HOUSING (NOAH)



OUTCOMES

- The community will adopt a targeted approach to NOAH acquisition and preservation that optimizes location and ROI.
- More NOAH property owners and investors will be educated and incentivized to preserve their properties as affordable.
- The inventory of available NOAH units across Mecklenburg County will increase.

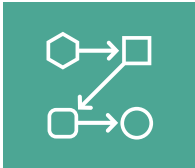


EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. [“Preserving the Largest and Most At-Risk Supply of Affordable Housing”](#), McKinsey & Company, February 23, 2021

Strategy 2

EXPAND AFFORDABLE INVENTORY THROUGH CONSTRUCTION OF NEW HOUSING UNITS



ACTION STEPS

- Support diverse housing products that will provide multiple affordable housing options that meet a spectrum of need including through ADUs, single family and multi-family, etc., with a focus on need at 30% AMI
- Support and/or align with comprehensive plan with multiple types of housing solutions; integrating factors of density, zoning, deed restrictions, quality
- Employ incentives that prioritize housing units that meet the greatest need
- Strategically acquire land near existing supportive services and future public transit routes and develop land trusts
- Establish broad-based anti-NIMBY (or YIMBY) campaign and integrate with/embed in other relevant community plans



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- City of Charlotte
- Mecklenburg County
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Continuum of Care
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- Public/Private funders
- Developers
- Non-profit and for-profit housing developers
- Neighborhood associations/coalitions
- “2025 Char-Meck Homelessness Strategy” effort
- Ownership Entity



OUTCOMES

- The City and County will proactively acquire and/ or utilize existing public land for affordable housing development, consistent with relevant community plans.
- Increase or expand units, closing gap of units needed.

Strategy 2

EXPAND AFFORDABLE INVENTORY THROUGH CONSTRUCTION OF NEW HOUSING UNITS

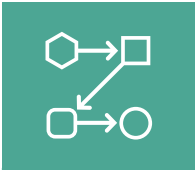


EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. Affordable housing development strategies such as land use and zoning, financing, and design and construction using more affordable materials
 2. Develop the residential Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) market, which can become a useful tool in scaling the supply of rental units in the city.
- Source: World Economic Forum: [“Making Affordable Housing a Reality in Cities”](#)

Strategy 3

INCREASE QUANTITY AND TYPE OF SUBSIDIES TO GAP COST OF HOUSING BY NEED (RENTAL SUBSIDIES/ MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE)



ACTION STEPS

- Explore, identify and expand new and existing sources of public and private funding at all levels
- Increase down payment assistance for homeownership and rental subsidies for tenants, prioritizing assistance for lower-income households and/or targeting data-driven assistance to specific household and/or neighborhoods
- Provide funding and advocate for policy that support subsidy models that provide flexibility in range and/or tenure, align subsidies with market rates and prioritize households with lowest income
- Develop network of committed landlords who serve as housing advocates and recruit others
- Evaluate existing subsidy models and scale solutions that work (e.g., A Way Home, MeckHOME) including risk mitigation funds, housing navigators, master leasing, expedited processes/procedures and centralized administration of subsidies
- Couple supportive services and other financial assistance (e.g., childcare, workforce development support) with subsidies as needed to ensure households can both access and sustain housing
- Undertake coordinated campaign to inform and influence policy and funding to support additional assistance



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Mecklenburg County
- City of Charlotte
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Continuum of Care
- Employers
- Property owners/landlords
- SocialServe; Greater Charlotte Apartment Association; other landlord networks
- Public/Private funders
- Financial institutions
- Ownership Entity
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- “2025 Char-Meck Homelessness Strategy” effort
- People with lived experience

Strategy 3

INCREASE QUANTITY AND TYPE OF SUBSIDIES TO GAP COST OF HOUSING BY NEED (RENTAL SUBSIDIES/ MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE)



OUTCOMES

- The inventory of available sources, types, and ranges of ST and LT gap subsidies will increase.
- The efficiency and efficacy of targeted gap funding and subsidy assistance will increase.
- The number and percentage of supported households that can access and maintain housing will increase.
- Public policy in support of ST and LT gap housing subsidies will be enacted. (LT outcome)
- Number and percentage of households who transition out of need for subsidy.



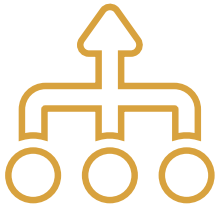
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. [Center for Evidence-Based Solutions to Homelessness](#)
2. *In the Midst of Plenty*, Shinn and Khadduri, p. 131-133.



IMPACT AREA 3

**Close the gap between household income
and cost of living so that households can
both access and sustain housing**



IMPACT AREA 3 STRATEGIES

Close the gap between household income and cost of living so that households can both access and sustain housing

1

Create non-employer-based targeted income supplements

2

Increase employer-based targeted income supplements

3

Strengthen alignment across non-housing systems and services targeting lower-income households

Strategy 1

CREATE NON-EMPLOYER-BASED TARGETED INCOME SUPPLEMENTS



ACTION STEPS

- Promote universal basic income
- Support expansion of Medicaid
- Expand financial support for no-cost high school equivalency and post-secondary education and training
- Establish a refundable state child tax credit or increase and make refundable the NC child deduction
- Implement a viable, income-based transportation subsidy plan
- Implement/expand child care subsidies
- Expand eligibility for SNAP benefits
- Increase awareness of and access to public benefits among qualifying populations
- Increase real earnings through a coordinated workforce development continuum pegged to higher wage “jobs of the future”
- Support energy-related subsidies for low-income households
- Increase the number of prevention assistance navigators to assist and support qualifying employees in the private sector
- Explore policy solutions to limit the rate of increase of costs of housing and other basic cost-of-living factors



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Mecklenburg County
- City of Charlotte
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- Public/Private funders
- Relevant providers
- Institutions of higher education
- Workforce development providers/sector
- Ownership Entity
- People with lived experience

Strategy 1

CREATE NON-EMPLOYER-BASED TARGETED INCOME SUPPLEMENTS



OUTCOMES

- Individual and household housing affordability will increase by virtue of direct and indirect income supplements/increases in incomes.
- More qualifying individuals and households will access public benefits.



EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. Center for Evidence-Based Solutions to Homelessness; [“The Impact of Homelessness Prevention Programs on Homelessness”](#)
2. *In the Midst of Plenty*, Shinn and Khadduri, p. 167-170.
3. [“Tackling the Housing Crisis and Bridging Generational Divides Through Home-Sharing”](#), Stanford Social Innovation Review.

Strategy 2

INCREASE EMPLOYER-BASED TARGETED INCOME SUPPLEMENTS



ACTION STEPS

- Develop and implement reverse financial literacy curriculum to teach employers financial aspect and experience of homelessness; include benefits of minimum wage increases and benefit supports; include internal practices/policies of existing systems to help employers, etc. understand how they might be contributing to housing instability and/or help address it
- Develop person-centered model with range of creative benefits based upon needs of lower-wage employees; educate human resource departments about public benefits for which low-wage earners may qualify and partner organizations in the community
- Evaluate effectiveness; quantify return on investment for employers
- Create network of certified employers committed to providing targeted income supplements; disseminate information on positive impact included increases in productivity and reduced absenteeism and overall impact to community; foster environment that encourages and rewards participation of all types of businesses
- Establish certification as public and/or private standard or bonus-point for doing business and/or as part of funding allocation



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- City of Charlotte
- Mecklenburg County
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- Public/Private funders
- Employers, including Human Resource Departments
- Corporate management trainers
- Lower-wage employees
- Leading on Opportunity
- Charlotte Regional Business Alliance
- Charlotte Center City Partners
- Financial literacy / Employment-related organizations
- Workforce Development Sector

Strategy 2

INCREASE EMPLOYER-BASED TARGETED INCOME SUPPLEMENTS



OUTCOMES

- Employers will adopt practices that customize benefits for employees of all wage levels.
- Employers will be incentivized to participate and promote targeted income supplements.
- Housing affordability for low-wage employees will increase as a result of targeted benefits.



EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

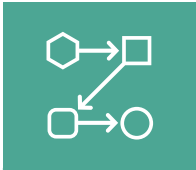
1. World Economic Forum: [“Making Affordable Housing a Reality in Cities”](#), p. 43

- Includes international examples of employers supporting city housing.
- *“Employers are experiencing challenges in recruiting top talent to offices in cities where housing is expensive. In London, a recent survey by CBI/CBRE revealed that 66% of companies face issues with entry-level recruitment due to housing costs and availability. Employers such as Facebook and Google (in the U.S.), IKEA (in Reykjavik, Iceland), Lego (in Billund, Denmark), Samsung (in Seoul and Suwon) and Alibaba (in Hangzhou) have started investing in the development of housing for employees. Other employers are offering help to meet housing costs, either in the form of loans, subsidies or mortgage deals. In China, Shenzhen-based Tencent offers interest-free loans to help employees buy property, while Starbucks subsidizes the rent of full-time workers.”*

Source: (Forrest, 2018)

Strategy 3

STRENGTHEN ALIGNMENT ACROSS NON-HOUSING SYSTEMS AND SERVICES TARGETING LOWER-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS



ACTION STEPS

- Ensure equitable access to all public benefits
- Include affordable housing as part of Transit-Oriented Development (maximize amount of residential, business and leisure space within walking distance of public transport)
- Base complementary systems like transit, utilities, etc., on housing cost burden
- Recruit and upskill individuals in lower-income households in alignment with needs of new businesses
- Improve access for all lower-income households to benefits under the Affordable Care Act
- Identify and coordinate complementary benefit systems, including TANF, workforce development, unemployment, schools, childcare programs, child welfare, early childhood development, legal system, domestic violence/intimate partner violence survivor programs and other systems to strengthen and align prevention assistance and activities



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Mecklenburg County
- City of Charlotte
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Continuum of Care
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- Public/Private funders
- Employers
- Workforce development sector
- Complementary cross-sector providers and systems



OUTCOMES

- Lower-income households will experience increased income as a result of better coordination of and access to public benefits.
- Housing affordability will increase for lower-income households as a result of cost-of-living offsets from public benefits.

Strategy 3

STRENGTHEN ALIGNMENT ACROSS NON-HOUSING SYSTEMS AND SERVICES TARGETING LOWER-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS



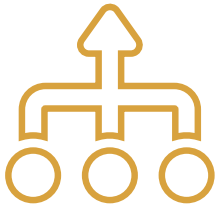
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. Targeted interventions and transition planning for special populations (mental health, veterans, ex-offenders) including universal screening for veterans; housing subsidies with supportive services for people with mental illness; shallow, permanent subsidies:
 - Center for Evidence-Based Solutions to Homelessness: “Getting to Proof Points: Key learning from the first three years of Built for Zero Initiative,” Community Solutions
 - *In the Midst of Plenty*. Shinn and Khadduri, p. 137-140
 - “A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention” (p. 5) Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
2. Community-based rather than centralized services (e.g., HomeBase in NYC):
 - *In the Midst of Plenty*. Shinn and Khadduri, p. 134-135
3. Integrating homelessness and anti-poverty service systems:
 - *In the Midst of Plenty*. Shinn and Khadduri, p. 145.



IMPACT AREA 4

**Support policies and practices that
reduce and/or remove barriers to
access or sustain affordable housing**



IMPACT AREA 4 STRATEGIES

Support policies and practices that reduce and/or remove barriers to access or sustain affordable housing

1

Support policy agendas that reduce or eliminate discriminatory and/or predatory practices

2

Support policy agendas seeking to ensure livable wages

3

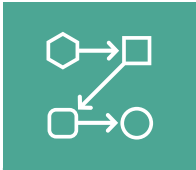
Support policy agendas that create opportunities for lower-income and bipoc households to build wealth and accumulate assets

4

Support policy agendas that will foster landlord participation in programs

Strategy 1

SUPPORT POLICY AGENDAS THAT REDUCE OR ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATORY AND/OR PREDATORY PRACTICES



ACTION STEPS

- Research existing groups and/or agendas that are in alignment with strategy including Source of Income Discrimination, criminal history and/or eviction history; understand barriers to feasibility and/or adoption by community
- Promote education and awareness in support of policy agenda
- Promote regulatory practices to protect prospective tenants and buyers
- Support policies that prevent racial and economic segregation
- Advocate at state and federal levels for policies that address discriminatory housing problems



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Mecklenburg County
- City of Charlotte
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- Public/Private funders
- Ownership Entity
- Legal and policy organization and advocates
- People with lived experience



OUTCOMES

- Legal and policy barriers to access to affordable housing will be reduced and/or eliminated.

Strategy 1

SUPPORT POLICY AGENDAS THAT REDUCE OR ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATORY AND/OR PREDATORY PRACTICES

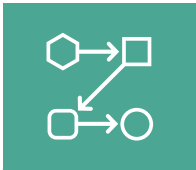


EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. [“Source of Income Discrimination and Fair Housing” Policy](#). J. Rosie Tighe, Megan E. Hatch, and Joseph Mead
2. “Fair Housing Policy Guide: Best Practices to Help Government Further the Commitment to Equitable, Dignified Homes for All.” Lael Robertson & Tim Thompson, Housing Justice Center

Strategy 2

SUPPORT POLICY AGENDAS SEEKING TO ENSURE LIVABLE WAGES



ACTION STEPS

- Research existing groups and/or agendas that in alignment with strategy; understand barriers to feasibility and/or adoption by community
- Promote education and awareness in support of policy agenda
- Support efforts to raise federal and state minimum wage
- Develop hiring policies whereby participating organizations and/or those that receive housing-related funding commit to hire employees with lived experience and/or lower-income and BIPOC households
- Engage employers in campaign based on their knowledge and experiences gained from the reverse financial literacy process



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Mecklenburg County
- City of Charlotte
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- Public/Private funders
- Employers
- Leading on Opportunity
- Charlotte Regional Business Alliance
- Charlotte Center City Partners
- Financial literacy/employment-related organizations
- Ownership entity
- People with lived experience



OUTCOMES

- Efforts toward establishing a livable wage and increasing affordable housing stability will be strengthened by input from and leadership with people with lived experience.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg will build momentum around a cross-sector movement to ensure livable wages.

Strategy 2

SUPPORT POLICY AGENDAS SEEKING TO ENSURE LIVABLE WAGES

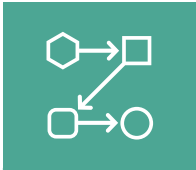


EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. Financial cash assistance
 - Center for Evidence-Based Solutions to Homelessness: [“The Impact of Homelessness Prevention Programs on Homelessness”](#)
 - *In the Midst of Plenty*, Shinn and Khadduri, p.144
 - Bloomberg City Lab: [“The Biggest Payoff from Stockton’s Basic Income Program: Jobs”](#)
2. HUD reform to peg the estimates to which subsidies and housing voucher amounts are pegged to the ZIP code level instead of metropolitan area
 - *In the Midst of Plenty*, Shinn and Khadduri, p. 155

Strategy 3

SUPPORT POLICY AGENDAS THAT CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOWER-INCOME AND BIPOC HOUSEHOLDS TO BUILD WEALTH AND ACCUMULATE ASSETS



ACTION STEPS

- Leverage mechanisms (e.g., property tax relief) to continue maintenance and/or expansion of NOAH homeownership
- Research existing groups and/or agendas that in alignment with strategy; understand barriers to feasibility and/or adoption by community
- Promote education and awareness in support of policy agenda
- Create more fair and progressive income tax system
- Expand financial literacy and expansion to investment instruments
- Creation of and investment in mortgage subsidies to create new homeowners with AMI less than 80% with a target less than 60%
- Pursue macro (businesses) and micro (employees) approaches to investment and wealth-building including increasing funding to minority-led CDFIs; provide increased access to capital for minority businesses; technical assistance provided to minority businesses; increased capital for growth incubators; grant/loan program to support entrepreneurs as they scale up; training/support for entrepreneurs
- Promote education and awareness in support of policy agenda
- Develop programs to build equity in renter households and assist low-income property owners with taxes (especially seniors)



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- City of Charlotte
- Mecklenburg County
- State of North Carolina
- Public/Private funders
- Employers
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders

Strategy 3

SUPPORT POLICY AGENDAS THAT CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOWER-INCOME AND BIPOC HOUSEHOLDS TO BUILD WEALTH AND ACCUMULATE ASSETS



OUTCOMES

- Lower-income and BIPOC households will build personal wealth through savings and investments.
- Lower-income and BIPOC households will build personal wealth through homeownership.
- BIPOC-owned businesses will increase market share and profitability.



EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. [“The Racial Wealth Gap: Why Policy Matters”](#)
2. [“The Economic Impact of Closing the Racial Wealth Gap,”](#) McKinsey & Company, August 13, 2019.

Strategy 4

SUPPORT POLICY AGENDAS THAT WILL FOSTER LANDLORD PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS



ACTION STEPS

- Research existing groups and/or agendas that in alignment with strategy; understand barriers to feasibility and/or adoption by community
- Promote education and awareness in support of policy agenda
- Partner with landlords/landlord associations in design, implementation and evaluation of subsidy models; ensure subsidies are aligned with market rates
- Scale risk mitigation funds for landlords
- Remove barriers to utilize subsidies, including excessive documentation, inspections and other administrative delays
- Address barriers to accessing housing including Source of Income Discrimination, criminal history, eviction history, etc.
- Develop network of landlords who become advocates and/or recruiters of others



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Mecklenburg County
- City of Charlotte
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Continuum of Care
- Public/Private funders
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders
- SocialServe; Greater Charlotte Apartment Association; other landlord networks



OUTCOMES

- Increase in the number and percentage of NOAH and other landlords who are willing to participate in programs that expand affordable housing access to lower-income tenants.
- Barriers to participation – by landlords and tenants – will be addressed and eliminated.

Strategy 4

SUPPORT POLICY AGENDAS THAT WILL FOSTER
LANDLORD PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS



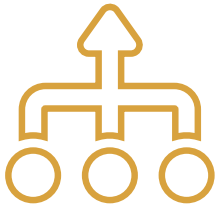
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. [“Preserving the Largest and Most At-Risk Supply of Affordable Housing”](#), McKinsey & Company, February 23, 2021



IMPACT AREA 5

**Eliminate race and ethnicity-based income disparities
and wealth accumulation gap**



IMPACT AREA 5 STRATEGIES

Eliminate race and ethnicity-based income disparities and wealth accumulation gap

1

Apply equity lens to all impact areas

Strategy 1

APPLY EQUITY LENS TO ALL IMPACT AREAS



ACTION STEPS

- Center racial justice and equity on all action steps
- Engage people with lived experience and who reflect the demographics of people experiencing homelessness into all elements of planning, decision-making, staffing and implementation
- Regularly assess impact of equity-based decision-making and make corrections to program design to ensure equitable outcomes
- Ensure strategies, communications efforts and funding decisions create opportunity and choice for all individuals
- Ensure implementation of all processes prevent predatory or discriminatory practices from occurring
- Ensure prevention services and/or resources are being implemented by an array of community-based organizations, including non-traditional partners best able to effectively reach into historically marginalized communities



KEY PARTNERS & CHAMPIONS

- Mecklenburg County
- City of Charlotte
- Public/Private funders
- Prevention Assistance System funders, providers, partners and stakeholders



OUTCOMES

- All aspects of the homelessness prevention redesign will be continually assessed for race- and ethnicity-based inequities.
- The redesigned prevention system will more equitably include nontraditional, grassroots organizations as partners.

Strategy 1

APPLY EQUITY LENS TO ALL IMPACT AREAS



EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES & RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY

1. [“What Is Behind the Persistence of the Racial Wealth Gap?”](#) Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, 2019.
2. [“The Economic Impact of Closing the Racial Wealth Gap,”](#) McKinsey & Company, August 13, 2019.

EVALUATE UPSTREAM NOTES ON POSITIONING THE BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

This section reflects the input from participants during the Ultra 5K session regarding how to best position the Blueprint for successful implementation. It is important to note that in addition to the content of the Blueprint, a separate roadmap for implementation of the recommendations will be developed.

FEEDBACK TO POSITION BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- Ensure that Blueprint attends to the head and heart components (need shift in mindset; integrate perspective of three lenses; elevate voices with lived experience); including within communication strategy for dissemination and implementation, utilizing multiple methods for connecting information (radio, folks on the ground, etc.)

- Translate content to specific audiences like employers and financial institutions, tailoring messages to help them understand why it benefits both them and the community and how they might be inadvertently causing/contributing to the problem. "You can be part of the solution and here's how ..."

- Connect components of Blueprint with existing initiatives, plans, systems and make that clear in communication and positioning of work

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- Ensure people with lived experience are empowered and part of every element (content, format and process)

- Use asset-focused language

- Focus on systems and structures that cause housing instability and homelessness versus individual interventions/problems to be solved

- Must simplify and streamline processes for people who experience housing instability; speed up time to housing

- Must ensure good data is collected and that data is used to inform system design/changes

- Quantify cost of recommendations; consider sequencing of steps and/or strategies; embed as many specifics as possible; develop roadmap for implementation to help community understand what implementation would look like

- Evaluate opportunity to utilize American Rescue Plan funding to support infrastructure

- Ownership Entity must be independent (County, CoC, City) that can truly support interests of community; equip ownership entity with roadmap for implementation; separate and different from key stakeholders/owners of specific strategies which should to the extent possible be included



EVALUATE UPSTREAM

WWW.EVALUATEUPSTREAM.COM

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