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

a) Leveraging Housing Resources. Special NOFO Section VII.B.4.a.

(1) Development of New Units and Creation of Housing Opportunities – Leveraging Housing. Special NOFO Section VII.B.4.a.1. – Requires Leveraging Housing Commitment Attachment Only - No Narrative

In their approved project ranking priorities for the CoC Unsheltered NOFO, the CoC Governing Board prioritized PSH & RRH projects right behind increasing Street Outreach and Coordinated Entry capacity. At least 75% of the clients served through these projects will currently be or have a history of unsheltered homelessness. If funded, these subsidies will be available in early 2023.

(1) Development of New Units and Creation of Housing Opportunities – PHA Commitment. Special NOFO Section VII.B.4.a.1.- Requires PHA Commitment Attachment Only - No Narrative

(2) Landlord Recruitment. Special NOFO Section VII.B.4.a.2.- Narrative Required

Charlotte-Mecklenburg has been impacted by the affordable housing crisis that has impacted the rest of the country. One of the CoC's member agencies, Housing Collaborative, recruits and supports property providers, successfully places people in housing, facilitates access to resources to simplify the way people secure and retain housing. The successful, proven strategies Housing Collaborative and the CoC have used to engage landlords and facilitate housing placement include:

- Engaging landlords in person when possible and being as responsive as possible
- Starting with a "just one unit" approach and giving the landlords a good experience so they offer more units as they become available
- Providing Risk Mitigation Funds as needed
- Scheduling inspections within 1 business day of the unit being ready
- Working very closely with tenants through the application and lease-up process
- Providing assistance with eviction debts and upfront housing costs and paying them quickly
- Providing incentives signing and stability (lease renewal) bonuses
- Providing holding fees
- Paying rent before the 1st of the month
- Utilizing ESG-CV waivers to allow for higher rents to be paid

New strategies provided by Housing Collaborative include:

- Implementing a centralized hotline for our landlord partners to call with concerns threatening tenancy (launched 8/1/2022)
- Utilizing the same hotline staff to call all landlords monthly to proactively check on them and inquire about vacancies
- Financial assistance to preserve tenancies and retain landlords
- Engaging with landlords at eviction court
- Loading as many property "leads" as possible into a new Salesforce platform to assign to staff enabling salesperson-style tracking of lead engagement
- Loading all households served into the Salesforce platform to track housing outcomes, track how much is spent per household, etc.
- Launching a new website and social media late July geared toward landlord recruitment

The strategies Housing Collaborative is in the process of launching are:

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- Mailers that describe their services to include with all mailed payments
- Regular (monthly or quarterly depending on success) events with landlords
- Surveys of existing landlords and tenants placed
- Fundraising to continue providing landlord incentives and tenant financial assistance

One of the biggest barriers to landlord recruitment has been a lack of landlord marketing and communications strategy and funding for the strategy. Another issue has been lack of coordinated communication with partner agencies in the community about Housing Collaborative efforts, successes and failures. The CoC's Landlord Engagement Workgroup and Housing Collaborative's new Salesforce platform with its tracking and reporting functionality will begin to address that.

Earlier this year, our CoC created a Landlord Engagement Workgroup. The purpose of the workgroup is to bring agencies and property providers together to share ideas and best practices on landlord recruitment and strategies. As a result, the workgroup issued an RFP and hire a consultant to assist the CoC with strengthening its systemwide landlord engagement efforts. Using CoC planning grant funds, Erica Snyder Consulting, LLC was hired to provide strategic consulting services to support the evaluation and partnership development of our existing landlord engagement system. The work with Erica Snyder Consulting, LLC kicked off September 1, 2022, and will continue until January 2023.

Additionally, the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County have partnered to preserve Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) and provide rental subsidies at these properties. In 2020, the City and County approved a pilot project in partnership with an affordable housing developer who received financial support from the City's Housing Trust Fund to purchase and rehabilitate a NOAH property. The County provides rental subsidy support so that tenants can continue to pay 30% of their income toward housing costs. The property is 144 units and at least 22 are for households earning 30% AMI or below. The developer partners with Housing Collaborative to place eligible families in the units. In September of 2022, the City and the County approved another partnership with the same developer to rehabilitate another NOAH property that will provide 292 affordable units—88 of which will be affordable to those earning at or below 30% AMI. Roof Above, a CoCfunded organization converted a hotel to 88 PSH units that will be for clients experiencing chronic homelessness with some units set aside for populations with significant barriers to housing.

In August 2022 and September 2022, the City and County respectively passed Source of Income Discrimination protections that prevent owners of City- and County-supported housing from denying applicants solely on their source of income (subsidies or vouchers). Violations will be reported and monitored through the Community Relations Committee and landlords and owners that are found to be in violation will pay financial penalties.

b. Leveraging Healthcare Resources – New PSH/RRH Project. Special NOFO Section VII.B.4.b. - Requires Healthcare Leveraging Commitment Only - No Narrative

c. Current Strategy to Identify, Shelter, and House Individuals and Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness: Special NOFO Section VII.B.4.c.

(1) Current Street Outreach Strategy: Special NOFO Sections VII.B.4.c.(1) - Narrative Required

While the 2022 Point-in-Time Count (PIT) showed a decrease in unsheltered individuals on the night of the PIT from the night of the 2021 PIT, our community data in HMIS shows that 1,342 people experienced unsheltered homelessness between 6/15/21 to 6/15/22. The proportion of persons in shelters vs. unsheltered on the night of the Point in Time count increased from 2021 to 2022:

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Year	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total PIT
2021	1,678 (86.2%)	269 (13.8%)	1,947
2022	1,609 (91.4%)	152 (8.6%)	1,761

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, a large encampment formed near our community's Day Services Center since people wanted to be close to the resources during a time of uncertainty. In February of 2021, Mecklenburg County stood additional non-congregate shelters (hotel rooms) for persons residing in the encampment since it had become a public health hazard. Our main street outreach team staffed the non-congregate shelters while many grassroots organizations stepped in to fill a widening gap in our CoC's street outreach efforts. Since then, our community has had a gap in organized, coordinated street outreach, which resulted in reactively responding to encampments when brought to light by community members and/or elected officials.

In early 2022, a CoC Governing Board member who represents the 6 towns in Mecklenburg County, brought to light the concern that unsheltered homelessness seemed to be increasing in the towns in the County. As a result, in May 2022, the CoC's Unsheltered Homelessness Workgroup was formed. The workgroup currently meets biweekly to discuss the needs of the unsheltered population. The workgroup is led by an ESG funded Street Outreach provider, Ada Jenkins Center and a grassroots Street Outreach provider, Hearts for the Invisible-Charlotte Coalition. Workgroup attendees include Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, Ada Jenkins Center, Roof Above, Block Love CLT, Hearts for the Invisible, Project Outpour, Freedom Fighting Missionaries, Alliance Health, Hearts United for Good, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services and many other grassroots organizations who conduct street outreach daily. Workgroup leadership created a survey to gain more information on where street outreach is conducted and when, what populations are served, what services are provided, and whether the agency holds an HMIS license and are trained to complete Coordinated Entry assessments. The survey showed that 100% of the county is covered by providers and all populations are served. The services that are provided with Street Outreach include food and food referrals, transportation, case management, assistance with PSH applications and required documentation, conducting coordinated entry assessments, employment services and mental health and substance use services. Street Outreach services are provided 7 days per week by various providers.

During unsheltered workgroup meetings, there are often agency presentations and discussion on how to improve outreach efforts and coordination. The workgroup discusses street outreach philosophies and evidencebased practices they use to conduct street outreach. Agencies that attend the workgroup utilize a Housing First, client-centered, strengths-based approach to conducting street outreach. They build trust and rapport with clients they serve and work with the client to develop goals, even if housing is not yet a goal. They partner and provide consistency for clients. Some street outreach providers have lived experience in homelessness and/or interactions with systems that intersect with the homeless services system (criminal justice, substance use, etc), which also builds trust with clients they serve.

The workgroup formed a subgroup to research mapping technology for encampments that can be used by providers conducting street outreach. The workgroup is currently viewing demos of apps from vendors that can be used to enhance street outreach efforts.

The street outreach teams are integrated into Coordinated Entry (CE) with some still being trained. The teams have expressed interest in being trained in CE since they have so many good relationships already established people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. They have stated that many unsheltered individuals have no desire to speak with CE staff to complete an assessment since they do not know them. Agencies are currently in the process of signing the CE MOU, being trained in CE, and obtaining HMIS licenses.

CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs Once an individual or family experiencing unsheltered homelessness is identified and enrolled in Coordinated Entry, a street outreach or an emergency shelter project, they are added to the CoC's By-Name List (BNL). All community PSH and at minimum 50% of ESG- & CoC-funded RRH slots are filled through the CE prioritization process where the most vulnerable households on the BNL are matched to a program slot for which they meet the eligibility criteria. Street Outreach case manager work with clients to get documentation needed to be housed (homeless verification and for PSH, disability verification). NC-505's community application includes 4 project applications for street outreach workers to bring an additional 13 street outreach case managers into our community to ensure that all areas of the County continued to be covered and to ensure that there is enough capacity to meet the level of service needs of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Street Outreach workers and housing providers meet every other week in chronic case conferencing to review the BNL to identify who is going to work with clients to ensure they are document-ready for housing, identify barriers to quick rehousing (e.g., recent evictions, criminal history, low- to no-income, etc.), and identify strategies for overcoming these barriers. At least one of the street outreach project applications names an intentional effort to hire persons with lived experience. The application is a partnership between a large agency that is an established street outreach provider and two smaller non-profit agencies that have been conducting street outreach, but do not yet have the infrastructure capacity to apply for an manage HUD funding.

(2) Current Strategy to Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Shelter and Temporary Housing for Individuals and Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness: Special NOFO Sections VII.B.4.c.(2) – Narrative Required

Since the onset of COVID-19, the CoC has updated its Coordinated Entry system. One major shift removed the requirement to first call 211 to be screened for eligibility for a Coordinated Entry assessment. Feedback from clients and providers was that this process was confusing and added an extra step when clients could now call the CE hotline directly. Additionally, 211 call data showed that nearly 90% of calls to 211 were referred to call the CE hotline showing that it was not necessarily screening out ineligible callers as originally anticipated. This shift ensures that callers can reach local assessors who understand the changing nature of available resources.

Additionally, to address the continually increasing CE call volume, the CoC has created a process for agencies that serve specific, high needs populations (street outreach, release from jail or hospital into homelessness) to be trained to conduct CE with clients they serve who are literally homeless. This ensures that clients can complete the assessment with a case manager with whom they have an established relationship. The CE system is working with street outreach providers to develop a referral system based on geography wherein when a client calls CE and reports they are currently unsheltered, they will be referred to the street outreach provider that covers that area to be connected to services and complete the CE. The CoC & CE Lead is also requesting an additional CE position via an SSO-CE project under this NOFO, which will add additional coordination capacity at the CE level to focus on unsheltered homelessness including addressing encampments.

Many clients who are currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness are apprehensive about entering an emergency shelter. During the 2020 PIT Count, volunteers conducted surveys with clients experiencing unsheltered homelessness. This survey was not repeated in the 2021 or 2022 PIT counts due to the CoC's methodology of not utilizing volunteers to conduct surveys because of the ongoing pandemic. In 2020, 60% of the people experiencing unsheltered homelessness who responded to the survey had not stayed in an emergency shelter in the last two years. The main reason was due to overcrowding. Emergency shelters continue to operate non-congregate shelters as needed for overflow and focus on quickly identifying housing solutions to reduce the amount of time people remain in shelters. Additionally, to make emergency shelters more accessible to persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness, The Salvation Army Shelter is requesting funding to add 2 mental health clinicians to their staff to specifically serve clients who enter from unsheltered homelessness. Clinicians

CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs will ensure clients receive the services they need to remain at the shelter while quickly identifying a housing solution.

The Coordinated Entry Oversight Committee (CEOC) is a committee of the CoC. The CEOC is responsible for operating an effective CE system that promotes equal access to resources and enables efficient allocation of available housing resource. The CEOC operates a coordinated access system that provides an initial assessment of the needs of homeless individuals and families for housing and services, and annually assess and reports to the CoC Governing Board regarding participation in the CE system by users throughout the CoC geography.

(3) Current Strategy to Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Permanent Housing for Individuals/Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness: Special NOFO Sections VII.B.4.c.(3). – Narrative Required

Unsheltered individuals and families are also matched to Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing providers with open vacancies per the CoC's match process. The matches occur utilizing the Housing First approach so matches occur regardless of the household's income, criminal history, eviction history, family size, etc. Households are enrolled in programs and then housed without requiring mandatory pre-housing services or other barriers.

Through the CoC's match process and population-specific case conferencing meetings, households experiencing homelessness are quickly identified for and matched to available resources. This includes all CoC-& ESG-funded resources, HOPWA vouchers and VASH vouchers. In case conferencing meetings, providers troubleshoot existing barriers to leasing up quickly. Specific attention is paid to coordinating contact with households experiencing unsheltered homelessness to reduce duplication of services and ensure that they are able to access items such as documentation that are required to obtain housing. HMIS, CE and CoC Lead Staff track barriers and those that are system related are elevated as concerns to CoC leadership and relevant workgroups.

Utilizing ESG-CV funds, the City of Charlotte funded subsidies for clients who were relocated to a hotel after the large encampment was closed after it was found to be a public health hazard. The City of Charlotte partnered with United Way to administer the project, which included Housing Collaborative to locate the units and administer the rental subsidy and 2 agencies to provide support services. The project successfully housed XX households. The City of Charlotte utilized HOME-ARP TBRA funding to extend this project and provide longer-term subsidy to households. Additionally, any new clients taken into this project have to have a history of experiencing unsheltered homelessness or currently be unsheltered.

The CoC partners with the PHA (Inlivian) to distribute the Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs). The CoC identified 6 target populations for the 178 vouchers that would most positively impact the overall system: those who have been sheltered & unsheltered the longest without a diagnosed disability (40%), families with 5+ members currently residing in ES, RRH or TH (in that order) (20%); households who have been in RRH for at least 6 months and do not have an ongoing source of income (10%); households in PSH who no longer need the intensive support services (10%), households with a history of criminal justice involvement (10%) and households fleeing domestic violence (10%). Households are identified for these vouchers via the By-Name List and partnerships with Victim-Services Providers. The EHVs have created a pathway out of homelessness for persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness that previously would not be prioritized for PSH. The PHA plans to build upon this model established in partnership with the CoC to request additional stability vouchers. Unsheltered individuals and families are also matched to Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing providers with open vacancies per the CoC's match process. The matches occur utilizing the Housing First approach so matches occur regardless of the household's income, criminal history, eviction history, family size,

CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs etc. Households are enrolled in programs and then housed without requiring mandatory pre-housing services or other barriers.

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NC-505's Collaborative Application includes a request for 1 PSH project and 1 RRH project to provide lowbarrier housing options for persons with a history of unsheltered homelessness.

<u>d. Updating the CoCs Strategy to Identify, Shelter, and House Individuals Experiencing Unsheltered</u> <u>Homelessness with Data and Performance: Special NOFO Sections VII.B.4.d. – Narrative Required</u>

The CoC continues to work toward having enough available street outreach providers so that when persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness call CE, they can be connected to a street outreach provider based on where in the County they are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. ESG-funded street outreach providers enter data into HMIS. Other street outreach providers are working on finishing their HMIS trainings. The CoC has incorporated new partners including law enforcement and healthcare providers into the unsheltered homelessness workgroup to coordinate efforts and services. The MCO (Alliance Healthcare) is working to be able to enter data into HMIS.

The Coordinated Entry Oversight Committee (CEOC) is a standing committee that provides oversight of the Coordinated Entry System by identifying and discussing issues and making recommendations to the CoC Governing Board and CoC Membership on system improvements, significant policy changes, and housing prioritization of households experiencing homelessness. The CEOC reviews and updates the CoC's strategies to identify, shelter, and house individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

The Data Advisory Committee (DAC) is another standing committee that provides oversight of the data collection, accuracy, and usage in the CoC. The DAC presents quarterly SPM progress updates to the CoC Board that show progress to date on meeting the Board-approved SPM benchmarks. ESG-funded street outreach projects are monitored on their rate of engagement and positive exit destination. New street outreach projects funded under this NOFO will also be monitored on these outcomes and length of time homeless. The SSO project that proposes to add mental health social workers at the emergency shelters to ensure low barrier access to emergency shelter will be monitored on number of clients served and length of time to housing as well as connections to services to address basic and socio-emotional needs. The two projects that will provide housing (RRH & PSH) to clients with a history of unsheltered homelessness will be monitored on length of time to housing, increase in income, positive exit destination and returns to homelessness.

All CoC- and ESG-funded projects will be monitored quarterly on performance outcomes and spending rates. The Data Advisory Committee will monitor performance against CoC Board approved benchmarks to ensure projects are positively impacting CoC system performance. The DAC will adjust performance benchmarks as needed. CoC staff will offer technical assistance to projects not meeting benchmarks and will carry out the CoC's reallocation policy as stated to ensure funding is directed at high performing projects.

CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs <u>e. Identify and Prioritize Households Experiencing or with Histories of Unsheltered Homelessness.</u> <u>Special NOFO Sections VII.B.4.e. – Narrative Required</u>

To carry out its commitment to end unsheltered and all homelessness, NC-505 will continue to direct all PSH resources to the most vulnerable households on the CoC's BNL. The CoC continues to evaluate its new prioritization process that a prioritization tool workgroup developed to address the disparities identified in VI-SPDAT. Eligibility for the PSH & RRH projects submitted with this NOFO will include that households have to either currently be unsheltered or have a history of unsheltered homelessness. Having additional street outreach providers as requested via this NOFO will ensure that households experiencing unsheltered homelessness can remain with the case manager until they are housed either through a community resource or through facilitating connections with natural supports identified by the household.

Our Street Outreach teams are well coordinated and responsive to the community's needs. They immediately mobilize to engage households living in encampments, on private property, and other locations throughout the CoC. The teams are also connected to the Coordinated Entry System and attend all case conferencing meetings.

<u>f. Involving Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness in Decision Making – Meaningful</u> <u>Outreach. Special NOFO Sections VII.B.4.f. – Narrative Required</u>

The Lived Experience Committee is a committee of the CoC that is responsible for providing the consumers' perspective to committees, workgroups and the CoC Governing Board. Currently, there is no application process to join the committee. Persons with lived experience of homelessness are welcome to join the committee at any time. The Lived Experience Committee is advertised on the CoC's website, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services Facebook posts and in CoC digests that are released by the Collaborative Applicant. Additionally, programs in the community advertise the committee to clients they serve in shelters and housing programs.

The Lived Experience Committee meets monthly and is currently comprised of 8 members with lived experience of homelessness, including members of the Youth Action Board (YAB). Committee members are compensated at a rate of \$30 per hour for meetings attended, which includes any CoC-related committee or workgroup meetings. The committee meets to review CoC activities and policies, provide feedback on the system as a whole and identify any gaps in services. There are 2 seats on the CoC Governing Board for persons with lived experience of homelessness. A member of the Lived Experience Committee is also a member of the CoC's Ranking Committee. This member is directly involved in the decision-making and ranking of ESG and CoC applications for funding. Members of the Lived Experience Committee are involved in all committees and workgroups of the CoC, including the Unsheltered Homelessness Workgroup.

Included in the CoC scoring and ranking process is how projects involve individuals and families with lived experience of homelessness in decision-making processes at the agency level. Projects had to provide examples of how they incorporated feedback from program participants in changing program policies and procedures. Additionally, projects are scored on whether or not they have persons with lived experience on their Board of Directors. Persons with lived experience of homelessness were involved in the project panel presentations for the Special Notice of Funding Opportunity released by HUD. Feedback provided the panel was shared with the ranking committee during the project scoring process. Street Outreach teams and shelters include staff with lived experience. A YAB member will serve on the Membership/Nominating Committee in the upcoming CoC Governing Board recruitment process. The CoC will continue to seek meaningful ways to involve those with lived experience in the decisions that impact their lives.

f1. Involving Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness in Decision Making – Letter of Supportfrom Working Group Comprised of Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness. Special NOFONC 505 COC PLAN TO END UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS7

CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs <u>Sections VI.F.1.g and VII.B.4.f. – Requires Lived Experience Support Letter Only – No Natrative</u>

<u>g. Supporting Underserved Communities and Supporting Equitable Community Development.</u> Special NOFO Sections VII.B.4.g. – Narrative Required

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg CoC knows social and structural differences are deeply embedded in the fabric of our society. We look for ways to engage and collaborate with those from underserved communities rather than tokenizing those involved. Therefore, our CoC works hard to identify and understand the disparities that exist for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual, and queer community (LGBTQIA+) to ensure that no individuals experiencing homelessness will be discriminated against based on their race, gender, gender identity, or ethnicity.

Underserved communities interact with the homeless system in many ways. All project participants are referred through the centralized Coordinated Entry System, which captures demographic data. The CoC also analyzes whether any racial disparities are present in the provision or outcomes of homeless assistance during each CoC workgroup and committee meeting, where we examine data relevant to its target population disaggregated by race and ethnicity. The CoC gathers this data from its One Number, which is updated monthly on the Housing & Homelessness Data Dashboard: www.mecklenburghousingdata.org, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age and gender. The CoC also examines Stella P data. Data shows that while more persons that identify as BIPOC are served in programs that contribute data to HMIS, the percentage of BIPOC served align with the percentage of BIPOC in the homeless population, which consistently shows that BIPOC are disproportionately represented in persons experiencing homelessness. Additionally, at the recommendation of C4 Innovations, the Equity & Inclusion Committee (EIC) developed a system map showing which population(s) get "left out" of programs and services due to eligibility criteria. The EIC is partnering with the Lived Experience Committee to review the results and determine next steps.

The following racial disparities exist in the provision or outcomes of homeless assistance: Households that identify as Black or African American and Asian American remain homeless longer than the average for our CoC per Stella P data. The CoC's average number of days homeless in FY21 was 163 days. Asian American households (representing 1% of the total number of households served) remained homeless for an average of 176 days. Black or African American or African households representing 73% of the households served remained homeless for an average of 175 days. White households represented 17% of the households served and remained homeless for an average of 150 days, below the CoC's average.

Additionally, the EIC identified disparities in access to funding across the community. Although grassroots organizations are serving underserved communities, it is difficult for them to compete with larger organizations that have more available resources to complete grant applications and apply for various funding opportunities. Therefore, their capacity is limited but much appreciated.

The EIC identified the lack of data on the LGBTQ population in our CoC and advocated for new data elements to be added to the CE assessment workflow. In partnership with Carolinas Care Partnership, 2 new questions were added to the CE assessment: please identify your pronouns and if there were resources available to the LGBTQ population, would you be interested in those resources. This will allow for the CoC to have data on the intersection between the LGBTQ population and homelessness. Another population that is undeserved by the homeless system is the Latino/a/x population. The CoC partners with the Camino Center to ensure clients they serve that are experiencing homelessness are connected to the CE system and resources.