

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager



CITY OF WORCESTER

Second Annual Report

Housing First Coordinating Council
December 2020

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1 Background

A 28-member Task Force for Sustaining Housing First Solutions was appointed by Worcester City Manager Edward M. Augustus Jr. in February 2018 with the aim of reversing the three-year increase in the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness within the city of Worcester. Chronic homelessness is defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as “an individual (or family) with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness totaling 12 months in the past three years”. The task force was charged with developing a plan to engage the appropriate community infrastructure necessary to support and sustain a long-term system of permanent supportive housing within the city of Worcester. Consequently, in conjunction with community stakeholders they jointly formulated a list of 26 recommendations with the overarching goal of achieving a “functional zero” of adult chronic homelessness in the city of Worcester. Functional zero is achieved when the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness within a community is less than the average number of people being connected with permanent housing each month. The recommendations build upon and enhance a community response which incorporates the five key components of the Housing First approach: i) Crisis response, ii) Housing supply and rental assistance, iii) Support services, iv) Housing stabilization, and v) Data.

This document comprises the second annual report on the Housing First Coordinating Council, which details the efforts that the Coordinating Council has made in addressing the established list of 26 recommendations which were accepted by the Worcester City Council on July 9, 2018. In September 2018, the City Manager appointed members of the Housing First Coordinating Council, which continues to meet quarterly to oversee and monitor the progress of the work carried out through four working groups charged with implementing the 26 recommendations. Four working groups— i) Data and evaluation, ii) Crisis response, iii) Housing supply and stabilization, and iv) Supportive services—comprised of members of the Coordinating Council and additional community members working in the field meet regularly to work on moving the recommendations forward. The following presents a report on the status of these 26 recommendations over the past two years. Additional background information can be found in the [First Annual Report](#).

2 Coordinating Council Members

Chair: Edward M. Augustus, Jr

City Manager
City of Worcester

Andrew Taylor

Assistant Chief Development Officer
Executive Office of Economic Development

Alex Corrales

CEO & Executive Director
Worcester Housing Authority

Amanda Wilson

Director of Housing & Health
City of Worcester

Brian Bickford

Central Mass PATH Regional Manager
Eliot CHS Homeless Services

Doug Quattrochi

CEO & Executive Director
Mass Landlords Inc.

Dave McMahon

CEO & Executive Director
Dismas House

Emily Cooper

Chief Housing Officer
Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Leah Bradley

CEO & Executive Director
Central Mass Housing Alliance

Janice Yost

President
The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, Inc.

Jim Cuddy

CEO & Executive Director
South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Ken Bates

CEO & Executive Director
Open Sky

Matilde Castiel, MD

Commissioner of Health and Human Services
City of Worcester

Michelle Smith

CEO & Executive Director
AIDS Project Worcester

Paul Therrien

Consumer Advisory Board

Nicole Bell

Founder & CEO
Living in Freedom Together, Inc

Robyn Kennedy

Associate Executive Director
YWCA

Sharon Krefetz

Professor Emerita
Clark University

Stephanie Page

CEO & Executive Director
Abby's House

Susan Gentili

Chief Homeless Manager
South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Tim Garvin

President & CEO
United Ways of Central Massachusetts

Tamara Lundi

CEO & Executive Director
Community Health Link

3 Working Group Members

Data and Evaluation

Chair: Leah Bradley

Brian Bickford
Chris Orcutt
Eniya Lufumpa
Eric Martin
Etel Haxhiaj

Evis Terpollari
Jack Moran
Jerry Schlater
Jim Cruickshank
Ron Hayes

Sharon Krefetz
Susan Gentili
Matilde Castiel

Crisis Response

Co-chairs: Nikki Bell and Tamara Lundt

Aaron Payson
Audra Doody
Brian Bickford
Eniya Lufumpa

Etel Haxhiaj
Evis Terpollari
Juliet Lesperance
Karen DUBY

Katherine Person
Matilde Castiel
Sara Bloksberg
Vanh Phommasinh

Housing Supply and Stabilization

Chair: James Brooks

Alex Corrales
Amanda Wilson
Amy Grassetto
Andrew Taylor
Andy Howarth
Anna Rice
Artie Rosenberg
Danielle Lariviere
David McMahon

Deborah Maruca Hoak
Donna Warshaw
Doug Quattrochi
Eniya Lufumpa
Evis Terpollari
Faye Rachlin
Grant Buchanan
Jan Yost
Jennifer Schanck-Bolwell

Jim Cuddy
Juan A. Gomez
Katherine Person
Larry Haley
Linda Cavaoli
Matilde Castiel
Michelle Smith

Supportive Services

Co-chairs: Brian Bickford and Keith Wales

Alfredo Noguera
Amy Grassetto
Audra Doody
Carly Wallace
Danielle Lariviere
David McMahon
Emily Cooper
Evis Terpollari
James Cruickshank

Jennifer Halstrom,
Juliet Lesperance
Karen DUBY
Katherine Person
Larry Haley
Linford Cunningham
Matilde Castiel
Meghan McLeod
Nikki Bell

Paul Therrien
Robyn Kennedy
Ryan Rodrigues
Stephanie Page
Tamara Lundt
Taylor Lacroix
Terecita Figeroa
Vanh Phommasinh

4 Status of Task Force Recommendations

The following section details both the overarching three recommendations, as well as the list of 26 recommendations specific to the four working groups. Furthermore, it provides an update on the work done over the last fiscal year— October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020—with respect to each recommendation.

5 Overarching Recommendations 1-3

Recommendation 1: Public entities, and nonprofit organizations, as well as private landlords should work together to produce 103 housing units with rental assistance and continue to preserve and develop adequate units for those who become chronically homeless in future years. About half of these units should be completed by December 31, 2019, and the other half by July 1, 2020.

Status of Response:

The Housing Supply and Stabilization Working Group has continued to meet approximately every six weeks during the past year and members have continued to reach out to various developers and building owners as well as nonprofit service providers to encourage the creation of additional housing units. Currently, there are four ongoing projects at various stages of development in the effort to develop up to 63 housing units out of the 103 housing units that will be built in the upcoming years.

- i. The Worcester Housing Authority (WHA) has been approved by DHCD for a 25-unit modular single room occupancy (SRO) project. This project has begun One Stop closing calls with DHCD and the City. The funding is anticipated to close March/ April 2021, with construction anticipated to begin in the summer of 2021 (see Appendix 1: Lewis street project).
- ii. The South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) has submitted a pre-application to DHCD for an 18-unit modular (SRO) project. The previous application submitted in 2018 was not accepted. DHCD debriefed SMOC on the insufficiencies of the application. SMOC has addressed those insufficiencies in this year's pre-application.
- iii. East Side Community Development Corporation (CDC) and CIVICO Development have submitted a pre-application to DHCD for a 21-unit Tiny Home Village. This village will encompass small homes of 300-500 sq. ft. In addition, a larger community building will be incorporated into the development. Open Sky Community Services has been designated by the Mass Department of Mental Health to provide resident supportive services to the development.
- iv. Worcester Community Housing Resources (WCHR) in partnership with Community Healthlink is exploring several development parcels for additional units.

Recommendation 2: All community housing entities and mainstream support service providers that serve adults who experience homelessness should become part of the Worcester City & County Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry Systemic (CES), aimed at providing housing subsidies with individualized support services prioritized for chronically homeless individuals.

Status of Response:

The City of Worcester continues to encourage all organizations serving the adult chronic homeless population to participate in the Worcester City and Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry System (CES). The meetings have been taking place biweekly, with full participation from all agencies. Through the CES committee they regularly assess participation of all organizations and whether there are new support service providers who should be invited.

Recommendation 3: The City Manager should establish and support a “Sustaining Housing First Solutions Coordinating Council,” which will meet quarterly at a minimum to ensure a coordinated community-wide system that acts with urgency, and embodies these essential elements:

- i. Actionable, measurable goals;
- ii. Clear, accountable leadership;
- iii. Prioritized access to housing, with active case conferencing that respects confidentiality;
- iv. Public commitment & transparent reporting;
- v. Funder education, alignment & sufficiency of resources.

Status of Response:

The Housing First Coordinating Council which was established on September 26, 2018 continues to meet on a quarterly basis to strategize and implement the recommendations of the Task Force. Since its inception, the Coordinating Council has met on the following dates: October 10, 2018, January 16, 2019, May 29, 2019, and September 25, 2019, January 8, 2020, June 15, 2020, October 21st 2020; and plans to meet on February 17, 2021.

6 Recommended Working Group Components

Crisis Response Working Group

Recommendation 4: Outreach providers serving the chronic homeless should continue to build upon a coordinated system to deploy staff to locations most frequented by people who are unsheltered to engage and connect individuals to services and supports.

Status of Response:

Through the Crisis Response Working Group, there has been a shift in the model of care with deliberate efforts being made to bring support services directly to the homeless populations at the four shelters operated in Worcester. By bringing support services to shelters on a regular basis, the group aims to mitigate some of the barriers that chronically homeless individuals face when attempting to access services. The working group adopts a client-centered approach in order to ensure that their needs are being addressed in a tailored manner.

Furthermore, the Quality of Life Task Force, has been meeting on a biweekly basis to discuss the outreach process and address any barriers that agencies encounter when conducting outreach and engaging with chronically homeless individuals within the city. At present, outreach workers and coordinators from at least 15 agencies are actively involved in the Quality of Life Task Force. Due to the pandemic and increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, specific agencies have been working-from-home and reducing the number of outreach services that they are able to provide to chronically homeless individuals. The Task Force has been working to improve the referral process and coordination of care between agencies that are actively conducting outreach and those that are working-from-home.

Recommendation 5: Shelter providers should continue to follow best practices, which include “low barrier” access, safe environment, and appropriate diversion through problem-solving conversations.

Status of Response:

Currently there are five low-barrier sheltering facilities that are currently open— SMOC-operated shelters (25 Queen Street, and 237 Chandler Street— overflow shelter), Hotel Grace (winter overflow shelter) operated by Net of Compassion, and Veterans Inc who have beds available to non-veterans. An additional Harbor shelter operated by LIFT will be opening up mid-January 2021 and catering specifically to women. The capacity of the shelters is as follows:

Shelter	Capacity (beds)
25 Queen Street	50
MLK	40
Hotel Grace	50 (40 men, 10 women)
Veterans Inc	12 women
Harbor	15 women

Each shelter has been making efforts to create a safe environment for their guests. Guests have also been encouraged to provide feedback to both the shelters and the various agencies operating throughout the city. Through the feedback, shelters and agencies are able to engage in problem-solving conversations.

Due to unprecedented events with the onset of the pandemic, major changes were made to the shelter systems particularly during the height of the pandemic between March and May 2020. Shelter capacities across the city were reduced to a maximum of 25 clients, and closely followed the protocols outlined by both the State and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In addition to the 25 Queen Street shelter, four additional shelters were opened: Saint John’s Church (from March 20th to April 13th), Hotel Grace (from March 21st to May 22nd), and North High School (from March 20th to June 26th), and 237 Chandler Street (from April 23rd to present). Moreover, two sites were opened for COVID-19 positive patients: Worcester Technical High School (from March 28th to April 19th), and DCU Center (from April 17th to May 5th).

In order to ensure a safe environment for clients in light of the pandemic, COVID testing was done at all shelters beginning with 25 Queen Street on April 9th and April 11th for the remaining shelters. Through partnerships with Worcester EMS and Family Health Center, they were able to conduct three rounds of testing at all shelter sites with those who tested positive being referred to either Worcester Technical High School or the DCU Center.

Recommendation 6: The Coordinating Council should explore the establishment and piloting of an early warning system in the community that includes a Housing First Retention Fund, an adequate triage and assessment system of diversion, alternative residential or service referral, and reunification/relocation where appropriate, and rapid re-housing to prevent people from becoming homeless or to limit shelter stays.

Status of Response:

The Crisis Response, and the Data and Evaluation Working Groups continue to make diligent efforts in establishing and piloting an early warning system in the community that includes homeless prevention funds through supportive services in the City of Worcester. A key component of the early warning system includes the close examination and analysis of the data on chronic homelessness through the Data and Evaluation Working Group, and identifying the causes of key trends and any changes. Furthermore, outreach workers are also able to identify any changes to the population that is unsheltered.

Integral to the early warning system, is the component of prevention. Funds for rapid re-housing continue to be made available through the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance (CMHA), and the Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP) which operates through RCAP Solutions, and Community Legal Aid. Furthermore, the City of Worcester funded an additional position at Community Legal Aid to work specifically on eviction preventions and providing legal guidance. Outreach workers and support service agencies have also participated in efforts to educate and connect households to these resources.

Housing Supply and Stabilization Working Group

Recommendation 7: The City and Coordinating Council should encourage the production of a variety of housing units that are affordable for people with extremely low incomes, from individual scattered sites to small (e.g., 10-15 units) and moderate-sized (e.g., 25 units) congregate sites, which would include on-site resident managers, to accommodate the various current needs of clients, including special populations, and anticipate the need in future years.

Status of Response:

As previously mentioned in the update to Recommendation 1, there are currently four projects at various points of predevelopment which aim to increase the number and variety of affordable housing units for people with extremely low incomes. Through these homes, future residents will also be able to access and receive wraparound support services to ensure that they are provided with everything necessary to maintain their housing.

Revisiting the units that are in the process of development:

- i. The Worcester Housing Authority (WHA) has been approved by DHCD for a 25-unit modular single room occupancy (SRO) project. This project has begun One Stop closing calls with DHCD and the City. The funding is anticipated to close March/ April 2021, with construction anticipated to begin in the summer of 2021 (see Appendix 1: Lewis street project).
- ii. The South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) has submitted a pre-application to DHCD for an 18-unit modular (SRO) project. The previous application submitted in 2018 was not accepted. DHCD debriefed SMOC on the insufficiencies of the application. SMOC has addressed those insufficiencies in this year's pre-application.
- iii. East Side Community Development Corporation (CDC) and CIVICO Development have submitted a pre-application to DHCD for a 21-unit Tiny Home Village. This village will encompass small homes of 300-500 sq. ft. In addition, a larger community building will be incorporated into the development. Open Sky Community Services has been designated by the Mass Department of Mental Health to provide resident supportive services to the development.
- iv. Worcester Community Housing Resources (WCHR) in partnership with Community Healthlink is exploring several development parcels for additional units.

Additionally, the City of Worcester committed a total of \$900,000 in HUD Home Funds for WHA, East Side CDC and SMOC housing projects towards the development of 63 housing units. The City of Worcester continues to look for new recruits for landlords who are willing to participate in the program and proposed in-laws apartments. Moreover, the Housing Supply and Stabilization Working Group has met approximately every six weeks during the past year and members continue to reach out to various developers and building owners as well as nonprofit service providers to encourage the creation of additional housing units.

Recommendation 8: The City and the Coordinating Council should assist in identifying sources of capital for the development of housing for the chronic homeless, including the enhancement of a Worcester-based low interest loan fund.

Status of Response:

Five local financial institutions— Bay State Savings Bank, Commerce Bank/Division of Berkshire Bank, Fidelity Bank, UniBank, and Webster Five—committed a total of \$4.5 million to participate as a consortium in capitalizing and administering the Finally Home Loan Fund below-market rate. Through the consortium, all loan applications are being evaluated and approved, with each financial institution contributing a prorated share of each loan. Webster Five, the lead financial institution, convenes the consortium and manages the underwriting and servicing of the loans. Greater Worcester Community Foundation, The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, and UMass Memorial

Health Care, have each committed \$500,000 to guarantee the loans, therefore ensuring that the loans are able to be made at a below-market rate.

Recommendation 9: The City and the Coordinating Council should assist in identifying and advocating for sources of rental assistance or operating support to ensure the rents are affordable for tenants who have experienced chronic homelessness.

Status of Response:

WHA has amended their Administrative Plan in order to target vouchers for chronically homeless individuals through the efforts of the Housing First Coordinating Council. The CoC is conducting procurement of the rental assistance by increasing supportive services as well as increasing the number of the CoC projects.

Recommendation 10: The Coordinating Council should review and advise lenders on proposals to access funds from the Worcester-based loan fund established to house the chronic homeless population, with the City offices that already review housing-related projects.

Status of Response:

The Finally Home Loan Fund has opened with \$4.5 million available for loans from the consortium of financial institutions, accompanied by a \$1.5 million loan guarantee pool. Initial inquiries by potential applicants regarding the guidelines and the process for applying to the loan fund are directed to The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts and the Executive Office of Economic Development- Housing Development Division from the City of Worcester will also participate in this process.

Three of the four projects mentioned in the response to Recommendation 1 intend to access short term construction financing through the Finally Home Loan Fund.

Recommendation 11: The CoC should continue to prioritize its HUD funding applications for Housing First programs and the expansion of the number of permanent supportive housing units, targeting especially those chronic homeless subpopulations that are the most difficult to house.

Status of Response:

The CoC continues to prioritize the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding applications for Housing First programs. The CoC's Coordinated Entry System reports the following data on the unit vacancy rate for households without children over the last year. The average vacancy rate during January 2020 and September 2020 is 1.0%. More specifically:

	Vacancy rate 2019 (%)	Vacancy rate 2020 (%)	% change
Jan. to Mar.	1.04	1.00	3.85% decrease
Apr. to Jun.	1.20	0.60	50% decrease
Jul. to Sept.	0.60	1.40	133% increase
Oct. to Dec.	0.60	–	–

Furthermore, CMHA awarded a total of 21 permanent supportive housing projects during the period of FY19/ FY20 which specifically target chronically homeless populations that are most difficult to house, see Appendix 2: FY19/FY20 Project Summaries and Awards.

Recommendation 12: The City should assist providers by continuing to sustain safety-related code enforcement to preserve safe housing, identifying properties appropriate for developing housing units, and when possible, donate City-owned property. The Coordinating Council should advise the City on regulations and zoning that promotes development of appropriate housing.

Status of Response:

The City of Worcester has been conducting systematic sweeps using Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) in order to sustain safety-related code enforcement to preserve safe housing and identifying properties appropriate for development of housing units. The city annually provides CDBG fund to the Inspectional Services Division. These funds result in systematic inspection of specific low and moderate income census tracts. These systematic sweeps ensure housing units are meeting minimum sanitary and building code requirements.

The Following Items are under discussion:

- Repealing the ordinance that states, “The renting of rooms by a resident family may be allowed in a Residential District to not more than two (2) non-transients provided that no more than 3 persons, who are not within the second degree of kinship, are living in a dwelling unit”. By repealing this ordinance, the City could increase the number of housing units that are available in the City of Worcester.
- The City of Worcester is helping identify parcels for tiny house villages. Please note that this is subject to procurement.

Support Services Working Group

Recommendation 13: Providers should assist chronically homeless clients to fully access healthcare, support and case management services through enrollment in an appropriate insurance product, including:

- MassHealth’s Community Support Program for People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness (CSPECH);
- MassHealth’s CSPECH for Seniors “Senior Care Options” (including Dual Eligibles);
- Commonwealth Care Alliance’s “One Care” (for Dual Eligibles between ages 21-64)
- Other products that may become available through the new ACO health care system

Status of Response:

Through regular CoC case conferences, service providers continue to assist chronically homeless individuals in accessing healthcare, support, and case management services. These include CSPECH, BH-JI, and Senior Care Options (SCO). Clients who meet the eligibility requirements are referred to one of the abovementioned MassHealth care management programs where they are able to receive ongoing support services. These services enable both housing retention and improved health outcomes.

In addition to the CoC, clients are routinely being connected to CSPECH and BHJI services through outreach efforts by through recovery coaching, care coordination, and case management support. In the past, individuals were exclusively presented to the CoC in order to access CSPECH and other case management services.

Recommendation 14: The CoC should continue to offer trainings on a regular basis for provider staff to help orient new staff, provide updates on eligibility and accessing CES, various benefits, and offer opportunities for peer learning on a variety of case management related topics, including accessing health insurance, social security and SNAP benefits, as well as motivational interviewing and engagement techniques. This should include mechanisms to receive ongoing feedback from local providers and clients.

Status of Response:

The following regular training sessions have been provided through the CoC over the past year between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020:

Planning Group

- July 23, 2019
Immigration Law and Access to Benefits/Impact of Race—Gina Plata-Nino and Kelly Morgan/Community Legal Aid
- September 24, 2019
Trauma Informed Care—Audrey Smolkin, Director, Child and Family Policy/University of Massachusetts Medical School and Danielle Ferrier, Heading Home, Inc.
- January 28, 2020
SNAP Presentation—Gina Plata-Nino, Staff Attorney, Central West Justice Center

Coordinated Entry Case Managers Working Group

- July 10, 2019
Maintaining Independence and Sobriety through Systems Integration, Outreach, and Networking – to Enhance Access to Medication Assisted Treatment--The MISSION-MAT Team
- August 7, 2019
Fallon Health/Navicare--Kathy Mullen

- August 21, 2019
Veterans Inc.—Sean Munroe/CSS Program Manager
- October 2, 2019
HMIS Data Standards Update—Eric Martin, Training Coordinator/Data Assistant
- December 11, 2019
New Resources: DHCD/BSAS/SOR—CMHA; Additional Mainstream Housing Vouchers from HUD—Open Sky C.S.—Jim Cruickshank
- January 8, 2020
CSPECH Program Review and Update—Ryan Rodrigues, CSPECH Supervisor/SMOC; Linking the Assessment Tool to HMIS—Jack Moran, CMHA
- January 22, 2020
PACE and SCO Program Review and Update—Steven Boyce, Outreach & Housing Manager/Summit ElderCare-Fallon Health
- June 10, 2020
Addressing Projects That Are Not Renewed: Avoiding Homelessness—Jim Cruickshank, CMHA

Veterans Committee

- November 18, 2019
Veterans Housing Rehabilitation and Modification Program—Daniel V. Fuentes/VHRM Program Manager
- April 13, 2020
COVID-19 and the Veterans Community—Katherine Person, Veterans Inc.

Recommendation 15: The CoC should continue to ensure the full utilization of Community Health Workers, Recovery Navigators, and Certified Peer Specialists in providing culturally specific and person-centered housing stability services.

Status of Response:

The CoC has sustained the involvement of Community health workers, Recovery navigators, and Certified peer specialists. A component of their involvement includes tailored training sessions led by the City of Worcester Police Department including person-centered trauma training on how to identify and address mental health, or addiction crises, and homelessness. These training ensure that support service providers are equipped with the necessary tools to ensure that they are able to provide tailored and person-centered support.

Recommendation 16: If a gap in support services is identified, the Coordinating Council should evaluate capacity, eligibility, or other policies that prevent resources from being made

available to those who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. For example, Legal Assistance related to CORI barriers to housing and employment, assistance with transportation.

Status of Response:

The Support Services Working Group continues to review the capacity of the system that serves chronically homeless individuals, with each participating agency identifying existing services and gaps.

Through regular meetings the working group discusses different models of care and needs within the Homeless Services Continuum. Most importantly there is a need for better service coordination among providers as well as, a low barrier, open access option on a daily basis where triage personnel, recovery coaches, peer specialists and/or case managers can effectively engage, assess, and support the referral process to appropriate care and stabilization services to support the myriad of needs homeless individuals contend with including but not limited to:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Benefits acquisition
- Substance use disorder treatment (e.g. recovery coaching, medication assisted treatment)
- Specialized treatment modalities to address complex trauma (PTSD), Clothing, Primary and behavioral health care

When offered in a low threshold, trauma informed/strengths based environment, these services foster accessibility into the homeless services system of care. Triage case management could be offered through an agency— or more ideally through a multi-service resource center.

Housing Supply and Stabilization Working Group

Recommendation 17: The City should explore the establishment and piloting of a Landlord-Tenant Insurance Fund, which reduces the perception of risk for private property owners and eliminates housing barriers on rental applications.

Status of Response:

The Landlord-Tenant Guarantee Program was created in August 2019, in partnership between the City of Worcester, The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, Masslandlords, Inc., and Central Massachusetts Housing. Since its creation, the program reimburses landlords up to \$10,000 in lost rent, court fees, and property damage from a tenant. The City continues to look for landlords to recruit and enroll in the Landlord-Tenant Guarantee Program, however, the eviction moratorium due to COVID has presented challenges with regards to this recommendation.

Recommendation 18: The Coordinated Entry System (CES) should continue to prioritize chronically homeless persons as top priority for access to permanent supportive housing and other resources that can eliminate chronic homelessness.

Status of Response:

The CoC continues to prioritize housing the chronic homeless population through an enhanced Coordinate Entry System (CES). Through the CES, homeless service providers meet biweekly to review the readiness of clients for housing, of whom those approved for housing are placed in a priority queue.

Recommendation 19: The City should partner with the CoC and Veterans programs to ensure that federal, state and homeless Veteran-specific resources are prioritized for Veterans who experience chronic homelessness.

Status of Response:

Through the CoC a master list for homeless Veterans is updated on a biweekly basis, with Veterans experiencing chronic homeless being prioritized for subsidized housing programs including:

- Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (HUD VASH),
- Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families (SSVF),
- Grant Per Diem (GPD),
- Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance (MHSA), and
- Emergency Services Grant (ESG) funding.

Furthermore, the City of Worcester is an active participant in the Veteran subcommittee meetings.

Recommendation 20: The Coordinating Council should annually review the sufficiency of permanent supportive housing inventory to attain and maintain a functional end to chronic homelessness.

Status of Response:

The Housing Supply and Stabilization Working Group in collaboration with the CoC annually review and assess the sufficiency of permanent supportive housing inventory. In order to do this, the CoC Monitoring Committee previously created a data dashboard which includes the following measures:

- New chronic homeless entry by month
- Living situation prior to entry
- Population outcomes
- Health insurance status at intake
- Total number of homeless persons – all household types
- Total number of homeless individuals
- Number of chronically homeless individuals
- Number of unsheltered individuals
- Number of unsheltered chronically homeless individuals

Data and Evaluation Working Group

Recommendation 21: All private funders of homeless service providers should require (unless prohibited by law) and help support providers to participate in the CoC's Homeless

Management Information System (HMIS), which will also feed into the Statewide Data Warehouse.

Status of Response:

Most of the social services providers of the City of Worcester are participants of the CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). In order to increase the participation of service providers in the CoC's HMIS, The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts and the Greater Worcester Community Foundation have agreed to encourage their grantees to participate in the CoC's HMIS.

Recommendation 22: All funders of homeless service providers should require providers to participate in active case conferencing for all Chronically Homeless individuals for coordinated entry administered by the CoC.

Status of Response:

The Coordinated Entry System (CES) developed by the Worcester City and County CoC continues to meet virtually on a biweekly basis; as of December 2020, there have been 24 meetings held in FY20 with 21 unique agencies having attended CES meetings on a regular basis. The CES adopts a clinical case conferencing model in which homeless households are matched to the specific housing and supportive services determined to best meet the needs of the household. During the meetings, the housing and service needs of the homeless households are briefly discussed during case presentations and are matched using a consensus process to the most appropriate available housing and services.

Recommendation 23: The City and the Coordinating Council should develop a system to aggregate and report homeless episodes among those released from correctional facilities, behavioral health institutions, and other public emergency services with a goal of providing more intensive and integrated services for people at high risk of homelessness.

Status of Response:

Mass Health has approved \$7 million for a pilot program in Worcester and Middlesex Counties for supportive reentry called the Behavioral Justice Initiative (BH-JI) for individuals who are currently incarcerated and scheduled to be released into the community within a two-month period. Through the BH-JI program, individuals are offered supportive and housing services in order to ensure that they do not get released into homelessness. Within both Worcester and Middlesex Counties, Open Sky Community Services and Advocates, Inc., have been awarded contracts to provide support navigators for the program for up to 225 clients between FY19-21. Open Sky has also partnered with UMass to collect and report the outcomes for the pilots—this includes the housing status of the individuals involved. Preliminary findings indicate that people are increasing housing stability while in the program.

Additionally, the City of Worcester's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has created a Reentry Task Force that work to address the needs of homeless individuals who exit from correctional facilities with a focus on enabling employment, housing, and education. The Reentry Task Force includes members from HHS, Coalition for Healthy

Greater Worcester, Open Sky, WHOC, Chicopee Women’s Corrections, MassHire, UMass Medical School, BSAS, Bethany Ministries, and Project One. The City of Worcester has also hired two additional staff members— Community navigator and Recovery coach—who work directly with populations released from both correctional and behavioral health facilities, in order to prevent them from being released into homelessness.

In addition to the reintegration efforts through BH-JI and the Reentry Task Force, the Community Resources for Justice is currently looking into the possibility of building a 30-bed program for individuals who are coming out of incarceration.

Recommendation 24: The CoC should continue to provide the annual Point in Time Count, quarterly unsheltered counts, as well as quarterly updated estimates from the HMIS, including the number of housing placements, the duration of time it takes to house individuals and their housing retention rates to the Coordinating Council; and regularly update stakeholders in the form of a Status Dashboard.

Status of Response:

The Data Working Group has continued to provide the Annual Point in Time Count through the CoC. The quarterly unsheltered counts, is conducted by Eliot services in conjunction with outreach workers (with the participation of other agencies including QoL) as well as quarterly updated estimates from the HMIS, including the number of housing placements, the duration of time that it takes to house the individuals as well as housing retention rates. Furthermore, the Data and Evaluation Working Group has developed a dashboard of key tracking data to assist in identifying emergent issues, see Appendix 3: HMIS dashboard. System performance measures were calculated and reported to HUD from data submitted by the CoC Lead Agency.

Recommendation 25: The City’s staff should assist the Coordinating Council by developing and implementing an ongoing communications plan to inform the public about the issue of homelessness and the progress being made to achieve and sustain “functional zero.”

Status of Response:

The City of Worcester staff continue to assist the Coordinating Council by communicating and informing the public about the number of entries and exits from the data that is obtained from HMIS. The data obtained from HMIS has been a key component in assessing the progress that the Housing First Coordinating Council is making towards its aim of achieving “functional zero”.

Recommendation 26: The CoC, in partnership with the Coordinating Council, should complete the process to obtain federal recognition for achieving the designation as having attained the benchmarks and criteria for a functional end to chronic homelessness.

Status of Response:

The process for federal recognition has not yet begun, however, the Housing First Coordinating Council in partnership with the CoC continues to work actively on increasing

supply and service coordination. The City of Worcester will have achieved “functional zero” once the “the number of persons experiencing chronic homelessness within [Worcester city] is less than the average number of persons being connected with permanent housing each month”. In achieving this measure, the city of Worcester would demonstrate the system and capacity to quickly and efficiently connect people with housing and ensure that homelessness within the community will be rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Appendix 1: Lewis street project

A Place to Live





“A Place to Live”

- 25 studio units (2 wheelchair accessible)
- 24 residents & 1 resident manager
- Permanent housing – residents apply & are screened, sign a lease & pay monthly rent
- Wrap around services – onsite case management every day by contracted service agency

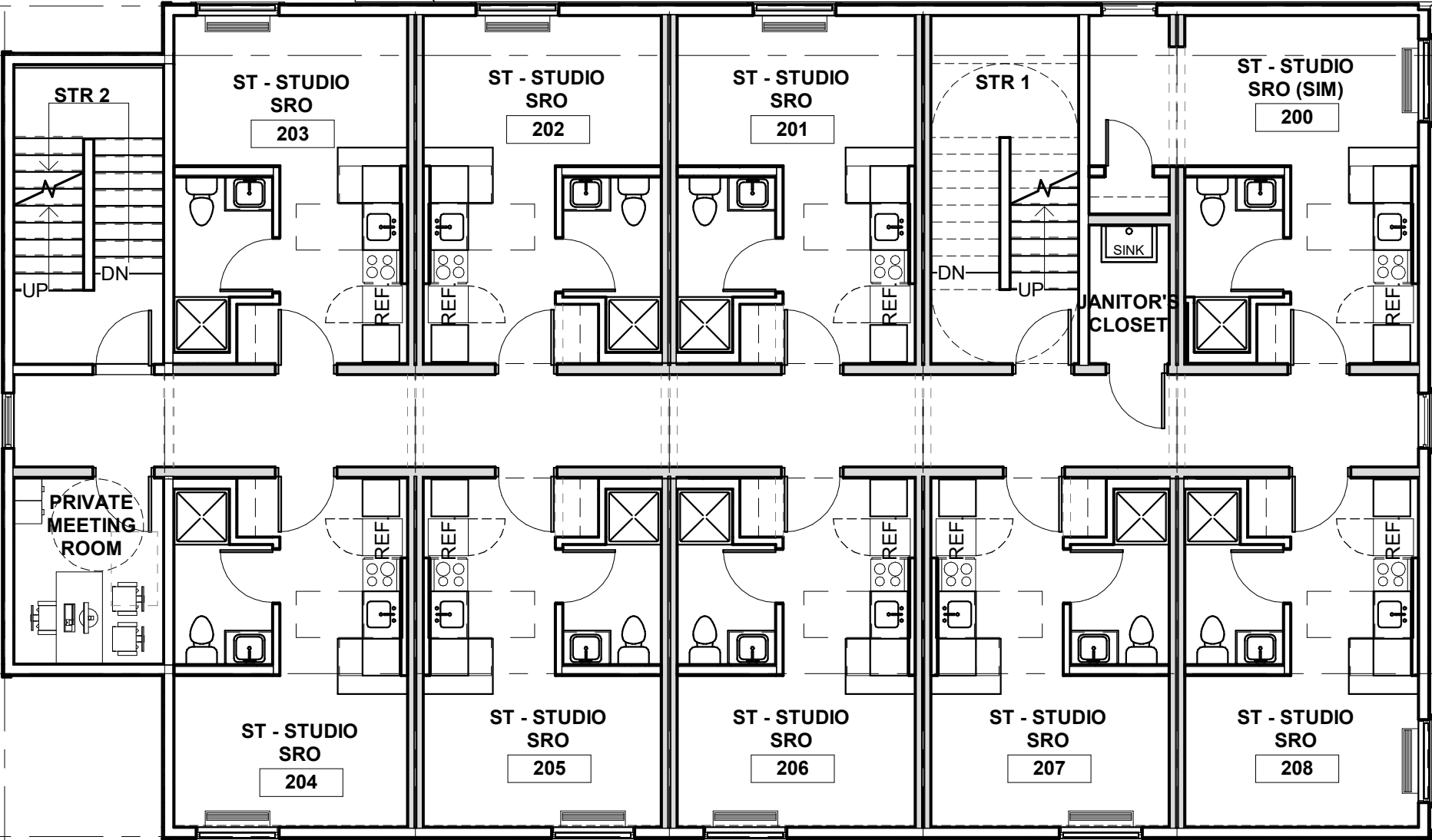




“A Place to Live”

- WHA manages site, selects residents, handles maintenance
- Oversee the contract with service agency
- Site will include security cameras both exterior and interior
- Onsite gazebo, bike rack, interior laundry facilities, private offices, multi-purpose room





STR 2

ST - STUDIO
SRO

203

ST - STUDIO
SRO

202

ST - STUDIO
SRO

201

STR 1

ST - STUDIO
SRO (SIM)

200

UP

DN

DN

UP

JANITOR'S
CLOSET

PRIVATE
MEETING
ROOM

ST - STUDIO
SRO

204

ST - STUDIO
SRO

205

ST - STUDIO
SRO

206

ST - STUDIO
SRO

207

ST - STUDIO
SRO

208



“A Place to Live”

- Application approved in April 2020 by DHCD
- Funding sources DHCD, City of Worcester, MHSA, WHA
- Dover Amendment Approved
- Lot size - Almost 13,000 Sq Ft
- Building size 10,500 total - 3 floors
- Design 95% complete
- Procurement in 2 steps - 30B & CH149
- Delays occurred with neighborhood residents and City permitting
- Procurement process to complete in Late Spring 2021



Appendix 2: FY19/FY20 Project Summaries and Awards

Worcester City and County Continuum of Care Project Summaries and Awards

A. Central MA Housing Alliance Recipient Projects

1. **Central MA Housing Options**

Worcester East Side CDC

Type: Permanent Housing/ Permanent Supportive Housing

Capacity: 8 Individuals

8 units, 8 beds, incl. 4 CH-dedicated beds

SRO, Single location

2. **Coordinated Assessment Program**

South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Type: SSO/Coordinated Entry

3. **Family Housing for the Disabled**

Friendly House

Capacity: 16 Families

16 units, 39 beds, including 10 CH-dedicated beds

4. **Friendly Family Housing**

Friendly House

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing/DedicatedPLUS

Capacity: 16 Families

16 units, 48 beds, including 15 CH-dedicated beds

5. **Genesis Supportive Housing**

Genesis Club

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing/100% CH

Capacity: 12 Individuals

12 units, 12 beds, including 12 CH-dedicated beds

6. **Green House**

Community Healthlink

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive housing/ DedicatedPLUS

Capacity: 10 Individuals

10 units, 10 beds, including 7 CH-dedicated beds

7. **GWHC PSH 2019**

South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing/100% CH
Dedicated

Capacity: 25 Individuals

25 units, 25 beds, including 25 CH-dedicated beds

8. GWHC Welcome Home Countywide Supportive Housing Program

South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing/CH Dedicated

Capacity: 29 Individuals

29 units, 29 beds, including 29 CH-dedicated beds

9. Healthy Impact Supportive Housing

Community Healthlink

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing

Capacity: 19 Individuals, 9 Families

28 units, 39 beds

10. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

CMHA

Type: Data Collection

11. MA-506 Planning Grant

CMHA

Type: Planning

Location: Worcester County

12. North County Supportive Housing

Community Healthlink

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing

Capacity: 5 Individuals, 3 Families

8 units, 12 beds

13. SMOC Greater Worcester Housing Connection SHP

South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing/100% CH
Dedicated

Capacity: 16 Individuals

16 units, 16 beds, including 16 CH-dedicated beds

14. South County Homeless Project

Open Sky Community Services

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing/DedicatedPLUS

Capacity: 5 Individuals, 2 Families

7 units, 12 beds, including 12 CH-dedicated beds

15. Supportive Housing for the Disabled

Montachusett Opportunity Council

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing/DedicatedPLUS

Capacity: 6 Families

6 units, 18 beds

16. Worcester Area Rental Assistance Project

Community Healthlink

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing/DedicatedPLUS

Capacity: 27 Individuals, 5 Families
32 units, 42 beds, including 15 CH-dedicated beds

17. Worcester County Leased Housing

Community Healthlink

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing

Capacity: 74 Individuals, 30 Families
104 units, 147 beds, including 41 CH-dedicated beds

18. Worcester Housing Plus Support

Community Healthlink

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing/DedicatedPLUS

Capacity: 43 Individuals, 9 Families
52 units, 65 beds, including 25 CH-dedicated beds

19. Worcester Transitional Housing Consortium

Friendly House

Type: Transitional Housing

Capacity: 18 Families
10 units, 44 beds

B. CHL Recipient Projects

1. Safe Haven

Community Healthlink

Type: Safe Haven

Capacity: 13 Individuals
11 units, 13 beds

C. NewVue Affordable Housing Recipient Projects

1. Leighton Street

South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Type: Permanent Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing/DedicatedPLUS

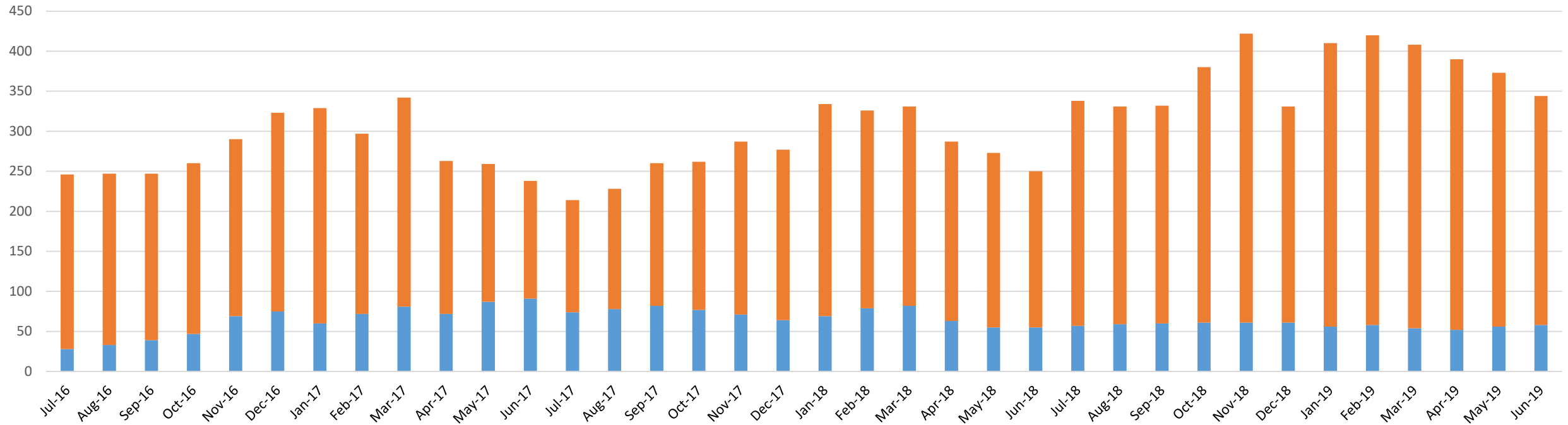
Capacity: 15 Individuals
15 units, 15 beds

Appendix 3: HMIS Dashboard

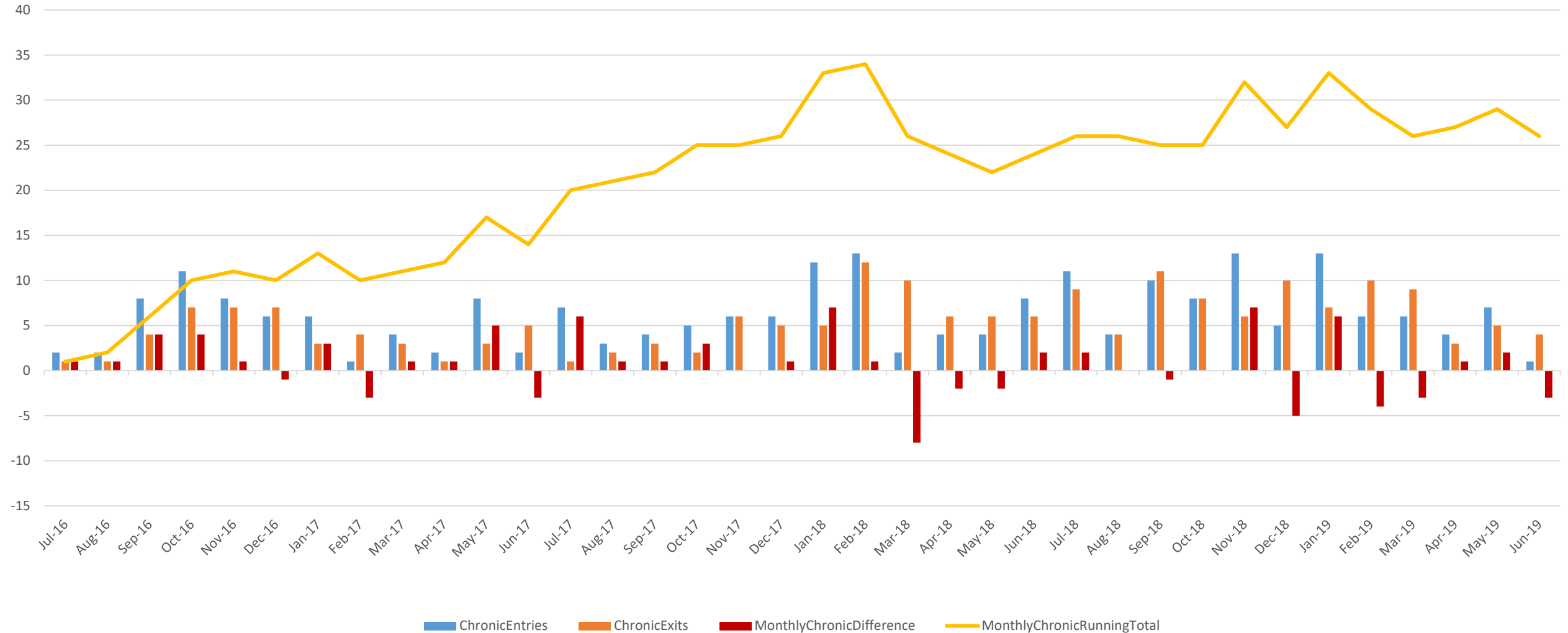
Worcester City Data
July 2016 thru June 2019

Monthly summary of sheltered and unsheltered persons in households without children the **City of Worcester**

■ Sum of Unsheltered ■ Sum of Sheltered

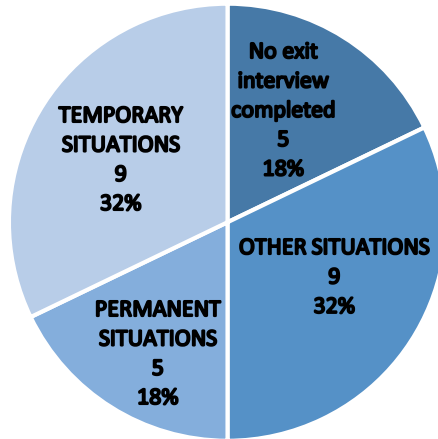


Analysis of the population of persons calculated to be Chronically Homeless at Entry into a City of Worcester Emergency Shelter or Street Outreach Project

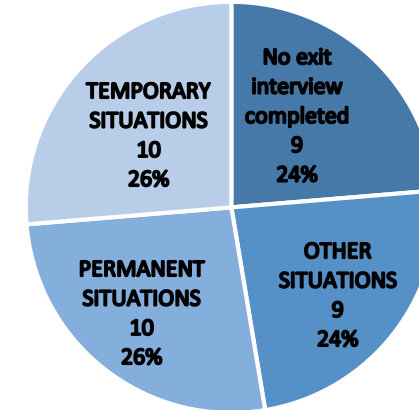


Exit destination situations by year for the sample population(244 clients) leaving a City Shelter or Outreach project where the client had an HMIS Calculated Chronic Homeless status during the target 36 month report period.

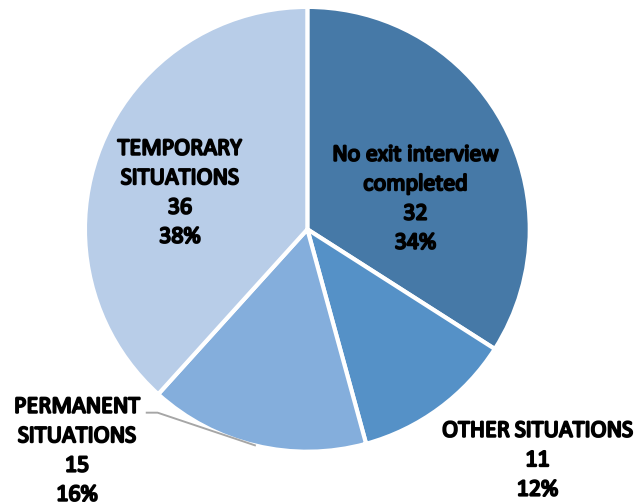
2016



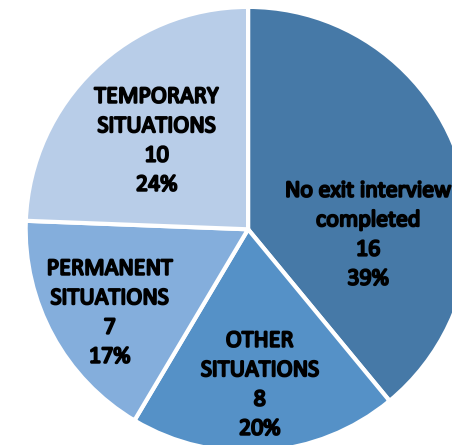
2017



2018

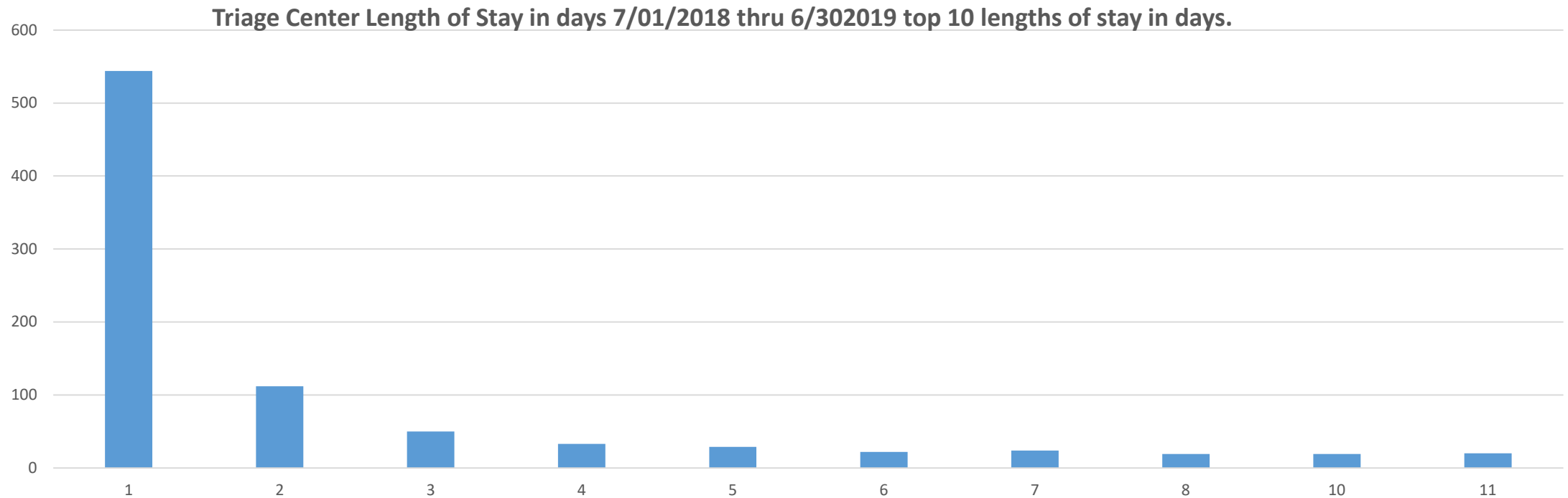


2019YTD

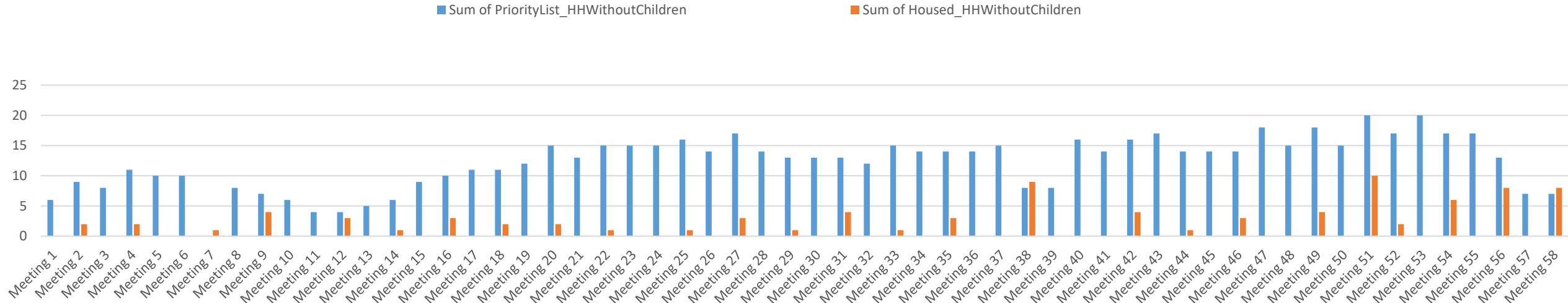


Triage Center Length of Stay Analysis

- Annual Length of Stay Average 17 days
- Annual Length of Stay Median 2 days



Coordinated Entry inflow and outflow January 2017 thru March 2019



This data was manually gathered and summarized by CoC staff documenting the CoC's bi-weekly case conference. As of this writing, HMIS support for this data does not exist, however HUD is in the process of implementing Information System support for Coordinated Entry. Going forward it is expected that more systematic data collection and reporting will be available to provide a view into these workflows

Vacancy in Programs serving Households Without Children

	Year	Vacancy Rate
The time line shown coincides with the implementation of Worcester's Coordinated Entry System	2017	12.02%
	2018	3.33%
	2019	1.04%

Appendix A – HUD’s Destinations with HUD’s situation classifications (2017 Standard Version 1.3)

Destination.ID	Destination.Name	Destination.Situation	Situation.Classification
26	Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH	CONTINUUM PERMANENT HOUSING	PERMANENT SITUATIONS
3	Permanent housing (other than RRH) for formerly homeless persons	CONTINUUM PERMANENT HOUSING	PERMANENT SITUATIONS
31	Rental by client, with RRH or equivalent subsidy	CONTINUUM PERMANENT HOUSING	PERMANENT SITUATIONS
1	Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher, or RHY-funded Host Home shelter	HOMELESS	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
27	Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA TH	HOMELESS	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
16	Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)	HOMELESS	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
18	Safe Haven	HOMELESS	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
2	Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)	HOMELESS	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
15	Foster care home or foster care group home	INSTITUTIONAL	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
6	Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility	INSTITUTIONAL	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
7	Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility	INSTITUTIONAL	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
25	Long-term care facility or nursing home	INSTITUTIONAL	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
4	Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility	INSTITUTIONAL	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
5	Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center	INSTITUTIONAL	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
14	Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	NON-HOMELESS TEMPORARY	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
29	Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria	NON-HOMELESS TEMPORARY	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
12	Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g. room, apartment or house)	NON-HOMELESS TEMPORARY	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
13	Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g. room, apartment or house)	NON-HOMELESS TEMPORARY	TEMPORARY SITUATIONS
22	Staying or living with family, permanent tenure	OTHER PERMANENT	PERMANENT SITUATIONS
23	Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure	OTHER PERMANENT	PERMANENT SITUATIONS
24	Deceased	OTHER SITUATIONS	OTHER SITUATIONS
17	Other	OTHER SITUATIONS	OTHER SITUATIONS
30	No exit interview completed	OTHER SITUATIONS	OTHER SITUATIONS
8	Client doesn’t know	OTHER SITUATIONS	OTHER SITUATIONS
9	Client refused	OTHER SITUATIONS	OTHER SITUATIONS
99	Data not collected	OTHER SITUATIONS	OTHER SITUATIONS
11	Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	RENT OR OWN NO SUBSIDY	PERMANENT SITUATIONS
10	Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	RENT OR OWN NO SUBSIDY	PERMANENT SITUATIONS
21	Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy	RENT OR OWN WITH SUBSIDY	PERMANENT SITUATIONS
19	Rental by client, with VASH housing subsidy	RENT OR OWN WITH SUBSIDY	PERMANENT SITUATIONS
28	Rental by client, with GPD TIP housing subsidy	RENT OR OWN WITH SUBSIDY	PERMANENT SITUATIONS
20	Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy	RENT OR OWN WITH SUBSIDY	PERMANENT SITUATIONS