



COUNCIL ON HOUSING STABILITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

November 16, 2022

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Representative Sherman Packard, Speaker
New Hampshire House of Representatives
107 North Main Street, Room 311
Concord, NH 03301

Senator Chuck Morse, President
New Hampshire State Senate
107 North Main Street, Room 302
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Paul C. Smith, House Clerk
State House, Room 317
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In accordance with the State of New Hampshire 2022 Chapter Law 4-H:4, we are submitting the Annual Report for the Council on Housing Stability (Council). This report updates the activities related to the 2021 Strategic Plan, last updated in November 2021.

The Council continues to collaborate with stakeholders across the State of New Hampshire to carry forward the strategic plan to create housing stability for all citizens. We are engaged in a more formalized manner within our communities, identifying regional solutions to help individuals experiencing homelessness. During 2023, New Hampshire's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) will highlight the regulatory and financial tools needed to increase housing production across the State.

The Council will continue to document the impact of our work on homelessness, housing instability, and housing access as we continue to elevate the voices of those with lived experience, collaborate with our local communities, and align our strategies to have the greatest impact on the State of New Hampshire.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to review this report and discuss this critical work further.



Taylor Caswell,
Commissioner
Department of Business
and Economic Affairs



Christine Santaniello
Associate Commissioner,
Department of Health
and Human Services



Katherine Easterly Martey,
Executive Director
Community Development
Finance Authority

Overview of Strategic Plan

On June 22, 2021, the New Hampshire Council on Housing Stability (CHS) released its three-year Strategic Plan to promote housing stability and tackle homelessness for residents of the Granite State. In creating this plan, the Council developed the following vision statements to inform the work:

- Housing ends homelessness and creates stability for children, adults, families, businesses, and communities
- Greater access to affordable housing will assist New Hampshire businesses and strengthen the state's economy
- Individuals and families experiencing homelessness and housing instability often have other conditions impacting their circumstances
- Housing stability is one of the Social Determinants of Health and is essential for all children, adults, and families to thrive in New Hampshire
- Investing in housing is a better solution for individuals, families, and communities creating improved health, social, educational, and economic outcomes
- Needed services and support should be delivered in each community based on the unique assets, resources, strengths, challenges, and needs unique to each area of the state.

The Council established the following overarching goals to create housing stability:

- Address housing needs with an increase of 13,500 units of housing by 2024
- Make homelessness rare, brief, and one time

The Council developed a One-Year Action Plan with six objectives and associated actions to achieve these overarching goals. Furthermore, the Council developed a Three-year Strategic Plan to specifically address homelessness with objectives and associated actions.

In creating the One-Year Action Plan and Three-Year Strategic Plan, the Council followed a set of guiding principles to ensure the integrity of the planning and implementation process – all objectives and actions were person-centered, data-driven, equity-aware, and led with lived experience. Also, the objectives and actions aimed to align with other relevant statewide plans, including the [New Hampshire 10-Year Mental Health Plan](#).

The Following are the Three-Year Strategic Plan Objectives:

1. Promote increased housing stability at the state and local levels by improving crisis response, services infrastructure, and policies that support individuals and families to maintain housing in their community.
2. Remove regulatory barriers to affordable housing in order to expand New Hampshire's housing market for all persons with special emphasis on affordable, accessible options and using innovative approaches
3. Increase production of publicly-financed affordable housing with supportive services.

Accomplishments since the November 2021 Report: The Council continues to advance the strategic plan's goals and positively impact housing stability, homelessness, and housing access throughout New Hampshire.

Making an Impact: By the Numbers

- ✓ [InvestNH](#) funded **\$60,000,000** to support the development of affordable housing.
- ✓ [New Hampshire's Emergency Rental Assistance Program \(NHERAP\)](#) has expended over **\$239 million since March 2021 to help more than 23,600 New Hampshire households** remain in their homes by making payments to property owners and utility companies.¹
- ✓ [New Hampshire's Regional Housing Needs Assessment \(RHNA\)](#) will be completed in March 2023, to date:
 - **22 Regional surveys** distributed
 - **3,191 respondents** surveyed
 - **487 participants** attended over **31 Workshops**, forums, or other outreach events
 - **8 Newspaper articles** captured the work of NH's Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)
 - **22 Key stakeholder** interviews were captured
- ✓ In partnership with 16 shelter and referral agencies, the state's Affordable Housing Incentive Program (AHIP) has moved **149 individuals** into permanent housing since January 1, 2022, opening more than **58** shelter beds on the Seacoast, moving **5** individuals out of places not meant for habitation, and diverting **39** individuals out of unstable housing situations (e.g., couch surfing).
- ✓ Engaged with communities in an ongoing community/process mapping activity consisting of 2 x 90-minute facilitated sessions focused on collaborative solutions for identified key issues:
 - Laconia/Belknap
 - Haverhill
 - Concord
 - Lebanon

1. www.nhhfa.org/emergency-rental-assistance/#success

Making an Impact: **Working Together**

The Regional Leadership and Coordination Workgroup

- Focused on Objective Two *“to promote affordable housing in communities around the State by removing regulatory barriers to affordable housing, thereby expanding New Hampshire’s housing market for all persons with a special emphasis on affordable, accessible options using innovative approaches.”*
- Through the InvestNH program, \$5 million has been committed to assisting local communities with developing regulatory changes to support housing development in their area.
- Administered by NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs who has contracted with New Hampshire Housing.

As part of the work to request State Departments to review practices/policies that impeded housing production and provide recommended changes, the workgroup met with the following departments to review regulatory barriers that may negatively impact housing development:

- The Department of Environmental Services,
- the Department of Safety,
- the New Hampshire Building Officials Association, and
- the Department of Transportation.

For 2023, the workgroup will initiate broader discussions to inform the next steps to bridge the gap between regulatory structures and developers and ensure the right protections are in place that are not overly cumbersome to development. The workgroup will continue to evaluate the need for other legislative priorities.

The Housing and Homelessness Workgroup

Since November 2021, the Housing and Homelessness workgroup has focused on Objective Three of the Three-Year Strategic Plan on Homelessness: *Create a Coordinated and Person-Centered Response System*.

■ Increase Leadership Opportunities for People with Lived Experience

The NH Coalition to End Homelessness offered two Granite Leader Programs, funded through the NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) utilizing GOFERR ARPA resources. These programs provided leadership and advocacy training, as well as mentorship to 13 individuals with lived experience of homelessness. This two-week program provided a curriculum on leadership skills, media relations, advocacy and legislation, and community engagement skills related to homelessness and housing. This training enhanced these graduates’ readiness for their current, as well as future, leadership roles across New Hampshire’s homelessness system, including the Council and the Continuum of Cares (CoC). Equipped with these leadership skills, graduates will collaborate with the state’s three CoC leaders to support the development of a Person with Lived Experience Advisory Board/Council.

■ Create a dedicated budget allocation in the BHS supports and DCYF that supports a statewide system to respond to youth and young adult homelessness.

While all three CoCs have prioritized youth initiatives, the Balance of State and Manchester Continuums of Care were two of 33 communities selected for an initiative to end youth homelessness in the 18 – 24 age group.

Funded through a two-year, \$2.2 million grant through HUD’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), [The Youth Success Project](#) (YSP) has collaborated statewide, growing into a larger organization supported by full-time employees. The funding also supported the development of the organization’s website, social media, and overall reach throughout the state, identifying New Hampshire’s youth with lived experience to help build the youth homelessness support system for the state and deliver localized solutions to youth homelessness. BHS prioritized working on youth and young adult homelessness by restructuring a current BHS position dedicated to statewide initiatives.

■ Publish a dynamic Coordinated Entry Data Dashboard for all CoCs to demonstrate real-time data on housing needs

In July 2022, the Housing and Homelessness workgroup met with the Institute for Community Alliances, to understand how the State’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) can best support local communities and the CoCs.

The HMIS system collects information from providers serving families and individuals experiencing homelessness to use in their needs analysis and to establish funding priorities. The data can also be used to coordinate services both within and outside of the coordinated entry process. HMIS provides for data-driven decision-making, allowing users to tailor the data to the local region’s needs and audience. ICA also supported the RHNA data collection this year.

■ Ending Veteran Homelessness

In the fall of 2022, the workgroup engaged Amy Cook and Shawn Jones of the NH Department of Military Affairs and Veteran Services to understand the needs of veterans experiencing homelessness and the Department’s plans over the next three years to develop its program to end Veteran Homelessness. Amy Cook and Shawn Jones have created a steering committee to review feedback and develop an action plan to address identified needs. Through regular participation in the Housing and Homelessness workgroup, the efforts will be coordinated.

Looking ahead, the Housing and Homelessness workgroup will continue to evolve to support the successful implementation of the strategic plan, reviewing the objectives and metrics regularly, elevating collaboration, and improving coordination across service providers.

Making an Impact: **Lived Experience**

The Council continues to value those with lived experience as critical in shaping strategies. Two members of the Council contributed significantly to the successes gained this year by sharing their experiences. The survey data from YSP and the RHNA will be considered in our future work.

Making an Impact: **Policy Considerations**

In early 2022, the first New Hampshire Housing Caucus was established within the Legislature to educate and inform lawmakers about the necessary steps to increase housing availability and stability for New Hampshire citizens, businesses, and communities. The bicameral, bipartisan caucus was created in 2021, stemming from the recommendation of the Council's Strategic Plan.

The New Hampshire Housing Caucus comprises sixteen state senators and representatives from a diverse range of geographic areas and committees. The Caucus is charged with tracking many housing-related bills and will continue to take an active role throughout the 2022 – 2023 legislative session and beyond, engaging and educating fellow policymakers on issues related to addressing New Hampshire's housing crisis.

In 2023, the Council will establish a workgroup to collaborate with Housing Action NH and the Legislative Housing Caucus to review legislative and budget proposals to advance the goals of the Council and continue to review the impact of pandemic response resources on housing stability in New Hampshire, including \$100 million InvestNH; ERAP; eviction prevention; and homeless service resources.

Making an Impact: **Emergency Rental Assistance**

Over the past two years, [New Hampshire's Emergency Rental Assistance](#) program has funded over \$239 million in rental assistance to landlords and tenants, providing countless New Hampshire residents relief from financial and emotional burdens during the pandemic and beyond. In October 2022, applications were paused pending a review of available funding and applications received and in process. The Council will continue identifying and supporting strategies that provide rental assistance and incentives to New Hampshire's residents and landlords.

Making an Impact: **Continuum of Care (CoC) Collaboration**

The Memorandum of Understanding between the 3 CoCs was amended to provide a "Moving On" voucher for people in any CoC-funded Permanent Supportive Housing. This Mainstream Voucher can be obtained through New Hampshire Housing (NHHFA).

Additionally, CoC leaders partnered on the Emergency Housing Vouchers and recently submitted a joint letter of support for NHHFA's application for a new set of vouchers.

2022



Housing Stability Solutions Summit:

Community Collaboration
Responding to Local Trends in Homelessness

Making an Impact: The Housing Stability Solutions Summit

On October 25, 2022, over 225 key stakeholders in housing and homelessness from the State of New Hampshire convened in Concord to collaborate and discuss local trends in housing and homelessness. Participants included service providers, local municipalities, city/town departments, librarians, and regional coordinators.

The Summit was organized by the New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness (NHCEH), and CDFR, with the support of the Council. The first half of the event highlighted housing solutions throughout the state in response to the immediate needs of the homeless in New Hampshire's local communities. In the afternoon, Summit participants were seated by their respective regions and guided through a process to identify problems, solutions, and initial action steps in addressing homelessness.

Local challenges and opportunities were categorized into the following areas of focus:

- Outreach and Service Coordination
- Landlord Engagement and Advocacy
- Creating new housing options
- Advancing Collaboration - Moving from informal to more formal efforts
- Data — Access, Reporting, Information Sharing

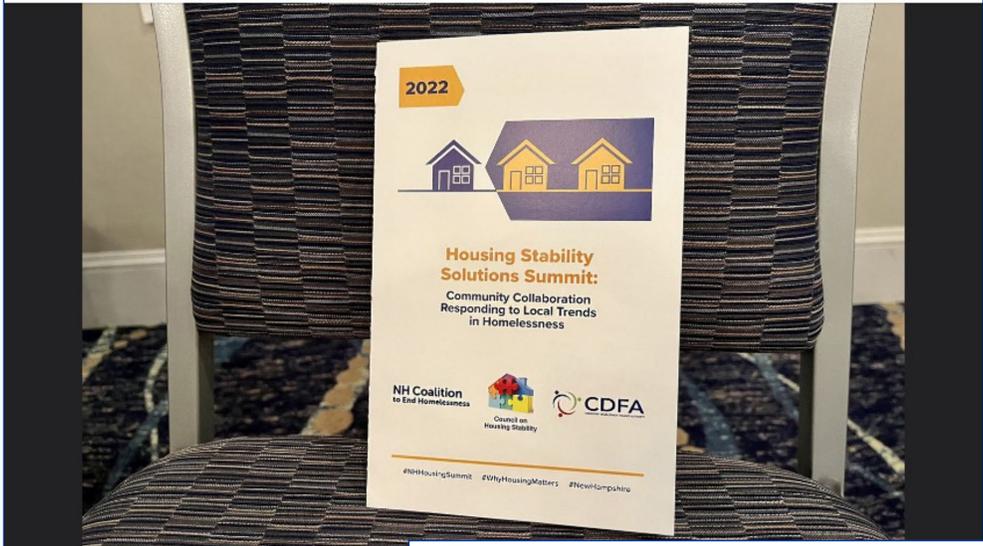


The Summit provided critical decision-makers throughout the State with the opportunity to collaborate, network, and champion local successes and address housing stability in New Hampshire.

The impact of the day-long summit was elevated throughout social media and the local news. New Hampshire's ABC affiliate, WMUR, showcased the event [here](#).

 **Alderman Will Stewart** ✓
October 25 at 4:07 PM · 🌐

Homelessness is not unique to Manchester, nor are solutions to reduce homelessness. To learn more about what's working elsewhere, today I traveled to Concord to attend the Housing Stability Solutions Summit put on by [Community Development Finance Authority](#), [New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness](#), and the NH Council on Housing Stability. #NHHousingSummit



 **New Hampshire School Social Workers Association**
October 25 at 2:57 PM · 🌐

School Social Workers & McKinney Vento Liaisons from around the state came together with municipal administrators, nonprofits, and state organizations to discuss the issues surrounding housing stability!
[#everyoneatthetable](#)
[#NHHousingSummit](#) [#WhyHousingMatters](#) [#NewHampshire](#)





Making an Impact: **New Hampshire's Youth Success Project**

The Youth Success Project (YSP) is a youth action board comprised of young people who have experienced homelessness and housing instability in New Hampshire without a parent or guardian. Funded by the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program grants, the YSP has undergone a tremendous amount of growth.

Since the YSP was founded in early 2020, the organization has worked alongside representatives from across the state to develop two Coordinated Community Plans to end youth homelessness and actively partnered with funding recipients to support the development of new programs.

The YSP has also been working closely with Waypoint, a service provider for young adults experiencing homelessness, and recently attended Waypoint's ribbon-cutting ceremonies for a new youth resource center in Rochester and the resource center and youth shelter in Manchester. The YSP is excited to continue to try to end youth homelessness through a partnership with the Balance of State and Manchester Continuums of Care and the Department of Education.

Making an Impact: **The Landlord Incentive Program**

Across the state, families and individuals are experiencing homelessness due to the lack of affordable housing. Subsequently, local shelters are reaching capacity more quickly and at capacity, staying full longer, resulting in a bottleneck for those eligible for permanent housing but unable to find it. In Granite United Way's Greater Seacoast Region, the Home for All Coalition, with funding from CDFA, is working together with local partners to create lasting solutions that reduce and end homelessness through the Affordable Housing Incentive Program (AHIP). Building on the success of the AHIP initiative, New Hampshire Housing has introduced a landlord program with similar incentives that is now available statewide.

Home for All's AHIP program, launched in 2021 with United Way "Venture Fund" dollars, was created to bring together two key stakeholders – landlords and service providers – to help move individuals out of homelessness and remain stably housed. The program offers a comprehensive slate of financial incentives for landlords to keep rents affordable and encourage them to accept Housing Choice Vouchers and other forms of rental assistance.

In line with Home for All's mission, AHIP helps ensure that everyone in this program is housed with dignity. AHIP tenants are moving into clean, maintained units and a place that anyone (regardless of their circumstance) can proudly call home. In addition, AHIP offers financial assistance to partner shelter and social service agencies to provide 12 months of housing stability supportive services to help ensure even the most vulnerable individuals can maintain their housing.

Understanding and mitigating landlords' concerns is critical to addressing the need for more affordable housing units for individuals and families with rental assistance. AHIP addresses these concerns in a way that engages landlords in a solution and ensures that the most vulnerable populations can remain stably housed.

Since Home for All launched AHIP's pilot in 2021, the program has demonstrated that vulnerable populations can obtain and retain stable housing.

- AHIP has helped move over 149 individuals out of homelessness and into safe, permanent housing on the Seacoast
- Over 90% of these individuals and families remain housed after one year.
- Between the months of January and September this year, AHIP opened more than 58 shelter beds on the Seacoast

"I am very thankful of the funding you have afforded us. It has allowed us to get the work we need done and has been a real big help. My favorite things that have come from the program is being able to provide people a sense of stability in their lives where they can have a place to live and begin to establish themselves and improve their livelihoods. Where we live should be a comfortable sanctuary and the incentives, we receive ensure a nice living space while keeping the rents affordable."

LANDLORD

Affordable Housing Incentive Program

- AHIP moved five individuals out of places not meant for habitation
- 39 individuals were diverted out of unstable housing situations (e.g., couch surfing) that put them at risk of becoming homeless or unsheltered
- In partnership with NH landlords, AHIP enrolled 57 units of affordable housing into the program in five towns across Rockingham and Strafford counties
- 37 of the 57 housing units on the Seacoast were revitalized utilizing AHIP funds, offsetting the cost of creating safe and sanitary living environments to meet the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Quality Standards

Without access to these funds, landlords could not rent these units to voucher holders, as many would need to increase rents to offset the costs of required repairs or renovations. With additional funding, Granite United Way is poised to expand AHIP to support other regions of New Hampshire and further strengthen the pathways of opportunity essential for the health and well-being of the most vulnerable Granite Staters.

Similar programs offering landlord incentives and outreach to explain the benefits of working with voucher clients are underway across the state, administered by NH Housing, Manchester Housing & Redevelopment Authority, Keene Housing, and the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness. A focus of the next year will be sharing best practices and coordinating these efforts.

“A key component of our success in placing clients in permanent homes has been the “Affordable Housing Incentive Program” via Granite United Way’s “Home for All” Coalition! Each year since the AHIP pilot began we have used this collaboration with landlords under the AHIP umbrella as a segway for about 50% of our sheltered clients that have moved to home placements. It is programming that, when executed correctly, could be the solution to New Hampshire’s housing crisis for those at low-income levels.”

Tracy Hardekopf
Homeless Center of Strafford County

My last appointment of the day was in Somersworth with a client who has been living in a car for the past year. I accompanied the tenant to view the unit, and the conversation with the landlord went well. By the end of the showing, the client was offered the unit on the spot! The landlord stated that he would get a few things touched up in the unit, and my client would be able to move in two days later. My client was speechless and shook the landlord’s hand to show his appreciation. As we were leaving, I spoke with my client about the lease signing. The client stopped for a minute and started to cry. “I can’t believe this is happening. I’m sorry, but it’s been a really hard year for me. Thank you, thank you for helping me.”

Case Manager
Lakes Region Mental Health Center
Laconia, New Hampshire

Making an Impact: **Working Locally**

The Council helped to promote the need for people to think about housing in general, and that then helped our City Council to prioritize affordable housing as one of their seven Council goals. Then certainly more recently through the InvestNH program, where developers and Dover Housing Authority applied for grants, Dover receiving the Housing Navigator grant, and also at least one developer asked Dover to apply for the demolition grant have all had an effect. With our CBDG items, we are also looking at ways to help improve the existing housing stock through a rental rehab program. Also, Dover volunteered data for the Urban3 project/analysis.

Donna Benton, AICP

Director of Planning and Community Development
City of Dover, New Hampshire

The City of Keene Housing Needs Assessment is a comprehensive study that will articulate the critical issues, opportunities, and strategies to address the community's housing needs. The assessment will document existing housing conditions within the City of Keene; identify market and other forces that affect housing supply and demand now and over the next 10 years; and identify gaps or deficiencies in maintaining equitable access to safe, resilient, and reliable housing to as many City residents as possible. The final report will include recommended strategies to capture local housing development opportunities and address local housing needs.

Mari Brunner

Senior Planner
City of Keene, New Hampshire

Making an Impact: **Community Mapping**

In the spring and summer of 2021, Keene participated in CHS' strategic planning process. The plan called for community-level planning to improve coordination between agencies providing services to the unhoused residents of our communities.

Keene is a community that has a long history of building collaborative relationships and being creative when addressing complex issues. Community stakeholders identified ways to improve practices in promoting housing stability, homelessness prevention, and cross-agency communication and identify program/policy overlaps and gaps to inform strategies. Stakeholders also sought to align resources to maximize the benefit to community residents facing homelessness.

With consultant support from CDFR and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the mapping project was coordinated through Southwestern Community Services (SCS)' monthly Greater Keene Homeless coalition meeting, bringing together service providers and other stakeholders in the region.

These efforts produced several recommendations to improve the City of Keene's response to encampments, improve mental health linkages to prevent homelessness, and improve their homeless prevention and shelter diversion response. Since the mapping project concluded, the City of Keene has implemented many recommendations and continued this critical conversation.

Some of the City of Keene's most impactful process improvements include bi-weekly meetings between the city's human services department and their two local shelters to provide case management for the street homeless. A year ago, the City implemented joint case conferencing for some of its more complex homeless cases. This person-centered approach has been very effective.

Additional efforts resulting from the mapping process include:

- Piloting a part-time outreach position in the human services office to improve homeless access to services.
- Incorporating the HMIS into its process, eliminating duplication and increasing coordination
- Working with Human Service Director across Cheshire County. The broader regional conversation has helped better define each community's roles and responsibilities and improve communications. At the same time, the mapping process also helped to identify some of the barriers to receiving assistance.
- To improve access to these and other social services, Keene's public library has created opportunities for local social service agencies to hold office hours.
- Keene's two local shelters and the Monadnock Center for Violence Protection (MCVP) have strengthened their partnership as part of the Cheshire County Emergency Housing Collaborative. The collaborative is now sharing training. Their goal is to train each agency's staff in Trauma Informed Care and Harm Reduction, as well as Crises Prevention and CPR training.
- SCS has created a uniform case plan based on the scope of services outlined in many of its grants.

- Housing is one of the main contributors to homelessness; the city has focused much of its efforts on housing strategies. The city is beginning a comprehensive housing needs analysis. In March of 2022, the process started to amend the commercial zoning district to allow dwelling units above the ground floor. This zoning change has been approved.
- Mayor Hansel has formed a housing stability committee of community stakeholders.

The mapping project was a critical first step in identifying common resources and gaps in services. This process helped the City of Keene strengthen relationships through understanding and brought an expanding list of partners to the table. However, there is much more work to be done locally and at the state level. Significant complex issues require many people, organizations, and ideas to bring about positive change.

Making an Impact: **On-the-Ground Collaboration**

Under the pivotal leadership of Executive Director Ellen Groh, the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness has served as a model for community-based collaboration. Launching as a daytime resource center and winter shelter, the Coalition has evolved, moving the community towards a housing-first model to address housing instability in the Concord area.

This shift allowed the Coalition to focus on housing first, developing permanent housing solutions while serving many unstably housed individuals within the greater Concord community, demonstrating the Coalition's commitment to solving long-term challenges while meeting immediate needs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Concord Coalition pivoted to collaborate with the City of Concord, understand needs on the ground, and deploy critical resources to support our most vulnerable community members.

As 2022 ends, Concord Coalition's tireless leader, Ellen Groh, will retire.