Wiregrass Metro Area Strategic Plan to End Homelessness

JANUARY 2024

About this Project

Collaborative Solutions, Inc.

Collaborative Solutions was formally created in 2004 by a group of social work professionals concerned with the challenges our nation's most vulnerable populations face when attempting to access housing that is both adequate for meeting their needs and affordable. Many vulnerable populations (which include people living with HIV/AIDS, escaping domestic violence, living with disabilities, experiencing homelessness, etc.) are among the forgotten.

The overall purpose and goal of our work is to impact the system of supportive housing throughout the United States to ensure that vulnerable populations are adequately housed and can access supportive services. Through the delivery of training, technical assistance, research, and targeted community initiatives, Collaborative Solutions is able to strategically build the capacity of local communities and various types of organizations while also helping them maximize their long-term community impact in the areas of housing, health, and services.

Acknowledgments

The Wiregrass Metro Area Strategic Plan to End Homelessness was authored by Collaborative Solutions, working in close partnership with the Dothan Housing (DH) and the Southeast Alabama Coalition for the Homeless (SEACH). This plan would not have been possible without the participation and valuable input from DH and SEACH, and of course, the advocates, front-line staff, and collaborative partners within the homeless assistance system that participated in the community survey. We are grateful for their support and guidance in shaping this plan to accurately address the unique needs of the Wiregrass Metro Area.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This action plan envisions an ambitious future for homelessness and housing services in the Wiregrass Metro Area. Through innovative and cooperative efforts, the Dothan Housing Authority (DH) and the Southeast Alabama Coalition for the Homeless (SEACH), in direct partnership with homeless service providers and allied partners across a five-county region (Coffee, Geneva, Dale, Henry, and Houston) known as the Wiregrass Metro Area, will build a client-centered homeless assistance system designed to proactively prevent homelessness while swiftly providing a pathway to secure and affordable housing, along with essential services, for individuals facing homelessness in our community.

Background and Purpose

As part of its efforts to establish a Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) for the Wiregrass Metro Area, DH and SEACH entered into a collaboration with Collaborative Solutions to create a dynamic plan to steer the community's endeavors to combat homelessness. Engaging stakeholders from the five-county region, including Houston, Henry, Dale, Geneva, and Coffee, is an integral aspect of this initiative. This collaborative effort seeks to foster a sense of ownership of the plan and its implementation through a community-driven engagement process, elevate a unified strategic vision, and ensure alignment among the various agencies involved.

This plan is structured around guiding principles that emerged from this community-driven process. These principles encompass accountability, the meaningful inclusion of individuals with lived experience, enhancing housing and service options through evidence-based methods, and fostering effective communication and collaboration. To achieve the objectives outlined in the plan, the following strategies have been identified:

1. Implement a systems-level approach to homeless planning.
2. Create a client-centered homeless assistance system.
3. Decrease inflow into homelessness by increasing prevention and diversion efforts.
4. Improve the performance of the existing system.
5. Expand the availability of and access to lasting affordable housing solutions.

Bringing the community together to achieve these objectives will unify stakeholders around a shared mission and cultivate the strength and capability required to realize the long-term vision. This effort will leverage past achievements while forging fresh collaborative approaches and innovations to shape the future envisioned by our community.

The vision, principles, and strategies outlined have the potential to guide the Wiregrass Metro Area toward a more holistic, compassionate, and efficient approach to addressing homelessness among community members in the five-county region (Coffee, Geneva, Dale, Henry, and Houston).

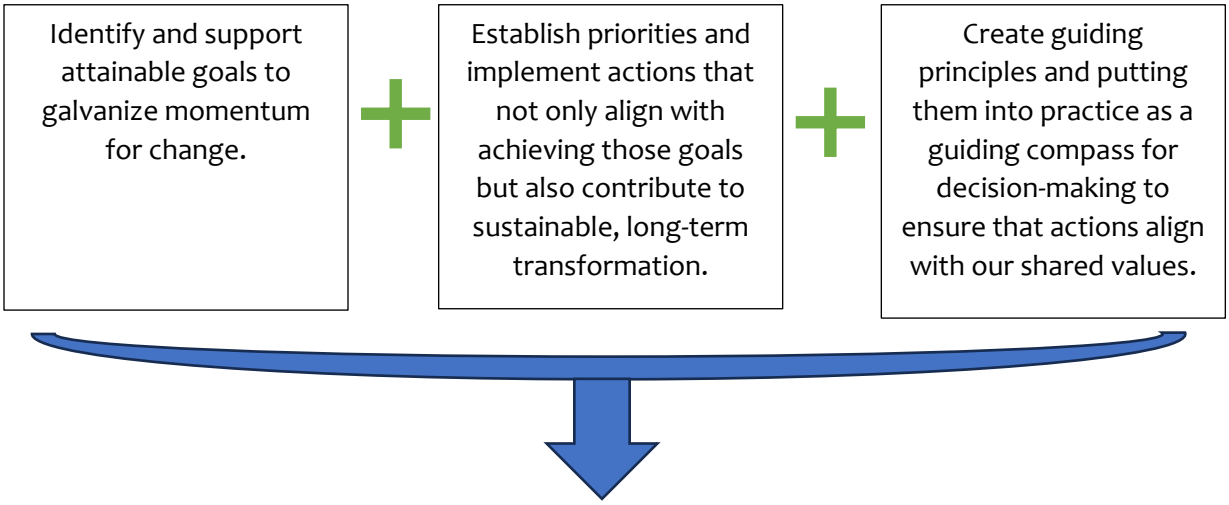
While comprehensive in scope, this plan is dynamic and designed to remain flexible and adaptable, ensuring alignment with federal objectives and responsiveness to evolving community needs.

Wiregrass Metro Area Strategic Plan to End Homelessness: A Roadmap to Reaching Our Goals

Long-term vision: Where do we want to go as a community?

Through innovative approaches, the Wiregrass Metro Area will build a coordinated, client-centered homeless assistance system that strives to prevent homelessness and expedites the path leading to secure and affordable housing and necessary services for individuals experiencing homelessness within our community.

How do we get there?



Leading to a robust and sustaining system that is adaptable and capable of addressing emerging needs and objectives effectively.

<u>Proposed Actions:</u>

1. Advance High Impact Solutions.

The Wiregrass Metro Area will give top priority to solutions that can have the most significant impact while maintaining a balance between addressing immediate, affordable housing crisis needs and long-term solutions. It is imperative to increase both affordable and supportive housing options for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

2. Support Strong Leadership.

Through the formation of the Wiregrass CoC, a governance structure that supports cross-agency collaboration, systems-level thinking, and accountability will be implemented. SEACH will serve as the lead agency to coordinate the activities of the CoC, including the annual HUD SNAPS CoC collaborative application process, operating a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to effectively collect, track effectively, and report on data to monitor progress with respect to performance and outcome targets, improve collaboration between direct service providers, mainstream partners, and other programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness, as well as conduct an ongoing census count of homeless persons within the five-county region (Coffee, Geneva, Dale, Henry, and Houston) known as the Wiregrass Metro Area.

3. Expand housing and service options.

DH has been selected as part of the HUD Moving to Work (MTW) Expansion Agency under the Landlord Incentives Cohort #3. This designation as an MTW Agency positions DH as a significant force in expanding housing opportunities through housing choices for the Wiregrass Metro Area. The designation also empowers DH to harness the capability and adaptability needed to develop inventive housing solutions through housing choice vouchers (HCVs), special purpose vouchers (SPVs), and project-based vouchers (PBVs) to effectively address the shortage of affordable housing by implementing cost-effective and efficient strategies that include attracting, retaining, and recruiting landlords with momentary and non-monetary incentives.

The DH's Mobility Program, called *Moving through the Wiregrass with Purpose (MTWP)*, will also support housing stability for people experiencing homelessness. MTWP encompasses wrap-around case management services, mobility and housing counseling, and the Ready to Rent (R2R) tenant education workshop certification for HCV participants. This initiative assists participants in setting goals and maintaining motivation for relocating to new homes while providing guidance to families on landlord expectations and unit selection.

Furthermore, DH provides self-sufficiency and supportive services through its **R.I.S.E. (Resume, Interviewing, Soft-Skills, Education) workforce development program**. These workforce development supportive services will provide *job-driven approaches to increase earnings and advance employment outcomes through work readiness, employer linkages, job placement, educational advancement, technology skills, and financial literacy for* residents and participants.

Over the next 10 years, it is anticipated that all special purpose vouchers (SPVs) will be available to provide housing options to community members at risk or experiencing homelessness. DH will also ensure the utilization of the project-based voucher (PBV) model as an affordable housing development tool and other homeless programs like Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to get people experiencing homelessness housed quickly.

4. Quickly address key issues.

DH and SEACH, in coordination with community and program leaders, will prioritize addressing pressing matters that require immediate attention, such as optimizing the coordination and deployment of housing vouchers in homeless programs, mitigating the adverse effects of individuals experiencing homelessness, and strengthening outreach coordination across the five-county region (Coffee, Geneva, Dale, Henry, and Houston).

Additionally, DH is recognized in the Wiregrass Metro Area, throughout Alabama, in the Southeast, and nationally for its innovative thinking and solutions-oriented approach to affordable housing. DH launched the Wiregrass Regional Voucher Program in 2021 and provides Housing Choice Vouchers in the same five counties (Coffee, Geneva, Dale, Henry, and Houston) of the planned CoC for SEACH in the Wiregrass Metro Area.

This plan is a call to action – it lays out a comprehensive approach for combatting homelessness across the Wiregrass Metro Area that requires unprecedented leadership, teamwork, and dedication from homeless and housing programs, local government, and allied community partners. By embracing a holistic, system-level approach, refining the existing system, expanding its reach, implementing best practices, and forging stronger partnerships, the Wiregrass Metro Area has the potential to bring about meaningful transformation in the lives of community members experiencing homelessness.

INTRODUCTION

This strategic plan envisions an ambitious future for homelessness and housing services in the Wiregrass Metro Area. Through innovative and cooperative efforts, the Dothan Housing Authority (DH) and the Southeast Alabama Coalition for the Homeless (SEACH), in direct partnership with homeless service providers and allied partners across the five-county service area, will build a client-centered homeless assistance system designed to proactively prevent homelessness while swiftly providing a pathway to secure and affordable housing, along with essential services, for individuals facing homelessness in our community.

Setting the Stage: Understanding Homelessness in the Wiregrass Metro Area

By the Numbers

Homelessness continues to be on the rise in many regions across the country, and Dothan is no exception. Approximately 600 individuals are believed to be grappling with homelessness in Dothan and the neighboring areas on any given day. Nevertheless, this figure is likely an underestimate, providing only a partial glimpse into the actual extent of homelessness in the Wiregrass Metro Area. During the course of a year, Wiregrass 2-1-1 received 1,009 requests for housing assistance, which included inquiries from

- 356 women
- 283 men
- 211 women with children
- 159 families

When asked about the community's awareness of the homeless population across the five-county region, more than 50% of respondents indicated the community did not have a clear understanding of the actual number of people impacted by homelessness.

Additionally, there is an increasing demand for affordable housing to support families and individuals who are at risk of experiencing homelessness. The City of Dothan, with a population of 72,000, is part of the larger Wiregrass Metro Area, which comprises approximately 125,000 residents. To illustrate the pressing need for affordable housing, rising rents and rent-burdened families are huge obstacles in the City of Dothan (Alabama rent-to-income rates rank high nationally wtvy.com). In August 2022, DH opened its Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program waiting list for three days and received 3,500 applicants. In August 2023, DH reopened its HCV Program waiting list, which tripled; DH now has approximately 12,280 applicants. The City of Dothan's population is 72,000; DH's waiting list makes up approximately 17% of the population, and 18% of the population in the City of Dothan lives below the poverty line. In other words, there is not enough affordable housing for people at or below 30% of the Area Median Income

(AMI) – generally the affordability level needed for community members with lower or limited income levels.

There is general agreement among those who participated in the community survey. When asked about the biggest barriers and challenges facing the homeless in the Wiregrass Metro Area, 97% of respondents indicated a lack of affordable housing. Similarly, when questioned about areas of opportunity that can make the biggest impact on the community, identified initiatives such as broadening the range of housing choices within affordable housing inventory and utilizing project-based housing vouchers (PBVs) as an affordable housing development tool and other homeless programs like Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) get people experiencing homelessness housed quickly because of formal partnership agreements between entities like SEACH and DH. Examples of these special purpose vouchers (SPVs) are VASH, Emergency Housing Vouchers, Family Stability Vouchers, Foster Youth to Independence (FYI), and Housing Opportunities for People Living With AIDS (HOPWA). DH was recently awarded 20 VASH vouchers, the first-ever VASH vouchers in the Wiregrass Metro Area.

Rural Homeless is Hidden Homeless: Challenges Identifying Homelessness in Smaller Communities

People experiencing homelessness in the Wiregrass Metro Area are less likely to live on the street or in a shelter and more likely to reside in less visible locations such as a car, camper, or abandoned building, couch surfing with friends, or staying with relatives in overcrowded or substandard housing.

Methods used to enumerate the homeless in larger urban areas are not as effective in smaller communities and rural areas due to the issue of hidden homelessness and the limited number of homeless service providers throughout the region. For example, urban counts have often been based on the number of homeless service users in an area. Still, this method almost certainly undercounts the homeless population in rural communities due to the lower number of service sites.

Future efforts to improve the annual census count in the Wiregrass Metro Area include hosting an expanded Point In Time Count event in which homeless community members will have an opportunity to come to a community venue, such as the Michael C. Patton Event Center at the DH's new headquarters, the Our Community Housing and Enrichment Center (OCHEC) located in the heart of the Baptist Bottoms Neighborhood (formerly the Magnet Street Magnet Elementary School) for a warm meal and on-site access to a wide array of service providers and resources. The OCHEC facility is the One-Stop-Shop for homeless and affordable housing services in the Wiregrass Metro Area. The goal is to attract a larger number of community members experiencing homelessness – particularly unsheltered homelessness – and conduct an onsite survey for the PIT count.

Data and Demonstrating Need

Obtaining accurate data to fully understand the number of people experiencing homelessness in the Wiregrass Metro Area is an ongoing challenge for the community due to several challenges:

- A lack of dedicated funding to provide a comprehensive census count across the five-county region;
- On-going difficulties enumerating the hidden homeless (i.e., unsheltered homeless) as outlined above; and
- Reliance on external sources outside of HMIS to provide unduplicated data on the homeless numbers.

Historically, programs in the local area that received HUD funding through the Alabama Balance of State CoC would input their homeless data into the Balance of State Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). However, the local 2-1-1 System has largely come to serve as the most dependable source for collecting non-duplicated data on individuals experiencing homelessness. 2-1-1 tracks data on the volume of individual calls and inquiries for resource assistance.

Having accurate data is essential in addressing the root causes of homelessness. Comprehensive data can shed light on factors contributing to homelessness, including economic disparities, mental health issues, substance use, other co-occurring behavioral health challenges, and lack of affordable housing, which in turn allows the Wiregrass Metro Area the ability to develop targeted solutions and prevention strategies.

Providing Housing is a Win-Win for the Community

The surprising reality: Housing is a cost-benefit to the community! Housing provision is significantly less than allowing someone to continuously cycle through public systems due to a lack of housing.

Cost Comparison

Housing Choice Voucher	$7,200 annually (less than $20 per night)
Permanent Supportive Housing (housing for a person with a mental or physical disability)	$10,000 – 12,000 a year (about $30 per night)
Hospital Stays and Emergency Room Visits	$1,000 - $2,000 a night*

Note:* Annual costs for hospital and ER visits depend on the number of nights incurred. Return visits by ***one person* can easily see costs escalate rapidly in a given year. See the case of Million Dollar Murray.

Homelessness imposes a significant financial burden on taxpayers, especially when individuals cycle between the emergency room and city and county jails, further escalating costs. Permanent supportive

housing (PSH) reduces the need for costly public services by providing chronically homeless people with permanent housing at a subsided rate and supportive services to help them maintain their housing.

Alternatively, housing positively impacts health and well-being while diminishing the likelihood of individuals returning to homelessness. Housing assistance decreases the chances of recurring homelessness and contributes to lower crime rates (i.e., reduced recidivism rates), increased employment opportunities, and enhanced overall health. According to a cost-benefit analysis, potential benefits within the initial 18 months offset up to 80% of the costs associated with housing assistance.

VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Vision

Through innovative approaches, the Wiregrass Metro Area will build a coordinated, client-centered homeless assistance system that strives to prevent homelessness and expedites the path leading to secure and affordable housing and necessary services for individuals experiencing homelessness within our community.

Guiding Principles

To realize this vision, community leaders and system partners must rely on a set of guiding principles. Developed with input from the community, these principles and values serve as the compass for shaping policies, allocating resources across the system, and fostering community unity in the process.

1. **Embrace Accountability:** We take full responsibility for the goals, strategies, and actions we commit to, and we are prepared to make tough decisions when they are in the best interest of individuals facing homelessness.

2. **Innovate and Expedite Housing Solutions:** Our community will actively innovate and expedite the creation of new housing options. Given the urgency of the housing need, we must explore both short- and long-term strategies for expanding housing opportunities and allocate resources accordingly.

3. **Elevate and Incorporate the Voices of People with Lived Experience and Expertise:** We highly value the perspectives and voices of individuals with lived experiences, and these should play a pivotal role in shaping our proposed solutions. This encompasses meaningful and productive engagement at all stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

4. **Improve Services and Choices for Those Facing Homelessness with Evidence-Based Practices:** The Wiregrass Metro Area's approach to homeless services and interventions is built upon the foundations of Housing First and evidence-based methods, striving to improve the support and choices available to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Based on HUD's Point-in-Time (PIT) counts, an estimated 582,500 people in the United States were experiencing homelessness on a single night in 2022, roughly 40 percent of unsheltered locations unsuitable for human habitation. The research illustrates that Housing First works. The evidence demonstrates that the Housing First model focuses on placing unhoused people into housing as quickly as possible without preconditions and offering voluntary supportive services.

Several initiatives from HUD and other federal agencies, such as the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), emphasize and promote the adoption of evidenced-based Housing First models.

Housing First principles have been used through HUD programs and initiatives such as the CoC program, House America: *An All-Hands-on-Deck Effort to Address the Nation's Homeless Crisis*, and the Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) implemented with local partners across the country.

The evidence also illustrates that special purpose vouchers (SPVs) like VASH, Emergency Housing Vouchers, Family Stability Vouchers, Shelter Plus Care (S+C), Foster Youth to Independence (FYI), Housing Opportunities for People Living With AIDS (HOPWA), and other homeless programs like Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) get people experiencing homelessness housed quickly because of formal partnership agreements between entities like SEACH and DH. DH was recently awarded 20 VASH vouchers, the first-ever VASH vouchers in the Wiregrass Metro Area.

5. **Leverage Data for Informed Choices and Foster Transparency:** The community will adopt a data-driven approach when making system-wide decisions, emphasizing the allocation of housing assistance to vulnerable populations and promoting transparency in the process.

6. **Amplify Communication and Collaboration:** Improving the frequency and effectiveness of communication and collaboration among service providers, decision-makers, and across systems is essential for fostering trust.

7. **Build capacity:** Strengthen the capacity of both the system and service providers through investments in system-level planning, training, and ongoing quality improvement efforts.

8. **Generate Forward Progress:** To propel our community towards our vision, we should create positive momentum by identifying achievable goals and systematically enhancing the overall system by reaching these milestones.

Core Tenets

To optimize the effectiveness of our community's initiatives in tackling homelessness, the strategic plan incorporates three fundamental elements drawn from the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. These tenets encompass equity, data and evidence, and collaboration.

1. *Lead with Equity:* Historic disparities in housing, education, employment, criminal justice, and healthcare have resulted in unequal access to prosperity, economic opportunities, and an increased risk of homelessness. Intentional strategies and actions are needed to support the equitable design and implementation of the solutions outlined in this plan.

    - Ensure community efforts to prevent and end homelessness promote equity and equitable outcomes.
    - Promote inclusive decision-making and authentic collaboration.
    - Examine local policies and practices that may have created and perpetuated racial and other disparities among people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

2. *Use Data and Evidence to Make Decisions:* The gathering, examining, and disseminating timely, high-quality qualitative and quantitative data are imperative for pinpointing interventions, monitoring outcomes, making strategic choices, and distributing resources across the Wiregrass Metro Area.

    - Strengthen the community's capacity to use data and evidence to inform policy and funding.
    - Create opportunities to identify service and resource gaps and support innovative solutions.

    By shifting to evidence-based practices, we can ensure maximum results in addressing homelessness. Our plan will evolve as the evidence and our understanding of what works evolves.

3. *Collaboration:* Collaboration at all levels is needed to create comprehensive responses to the complex problem of homelessness effectively.

    - Encourage collaborative, cross-sector leadership at all community levels and within various systems, involving business and civic leaders, public officials, faith-based organizations, and mainstream services such as housing, employment, education, legal, human services, and healthcare.
    - Improve information-sharing with both public and private sectors and disseminate evidence for what works.

Goals

DH and SEACH, with feedback from the community, have identified 10 goals for the Wiregrass Metro Area to work towards collectively in the next 10 years.

1. Decrease unsheltered homelessness by 50%.
2. Expand permanent housing inventory by 30%.
3. Increase landlord engagement by 40%
4. End Veteran's homelessness.
5. Prevent and end youth homelessness.
6. Increase access to safe, permanent housing and permanent supportive housing for survivors of violence, veterans, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.
7. Increase affordable housing options for families with children.
8. Increase Special Purpose Voucher (SPV) Allocation by 50% for all funding Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) available.
9. Utilize the MTW Program flexibility under Local, Non-Traditional Activities for Rental Subsidy Programs, Service Provisions, and Housing Development Programs.
10. Utilize the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) as an affordable housing development tool to address the homeless in the Wiregrass Metro Area.

A Note about Housing First

What's the most immediate way to end a person's homelessness? Provide them with a safe and stable home.

Housing First is both a philosophy and approach that underscores the essence of this plan and the work we do. Housing First prioritizes giving people permanent housing, ***without preconditions***, like mandatory treatment programs, sobriety, or other services. This low barrier approach highlights the need for stable, secure housing above all, which then serves as a solid foundation for further supportive services.

It is a low barrier approach that can be applied in any program or system. Refreshing the community's understanding of this approach is incorporated into the strategies detailed in this plan.

Organizing the community to accomplish these goals *in 10 years* will unite stakeholders towards a common mission and expand the capacity needed to meet the long-term vision. It will build upon successes of the past and create new ways to work together and innovate towards the future this community wants to see.

These goals can be met through the implementation of the five strategies noted below and through actions taken to support those strategies.

Strategies:

The strategic plan has outlined a vision and delineated goals to unify the community, generate enthusiasm, and bolster the necessary capacity to achieve it. It has also identified principles for decision-making. What remains is the formulation of strategies and actions to chart the path toward success.

Foundational Strategies

1. **Implement a systems-level approach to homeless planning**. The Wiregrass Metro Area must transition to genuine systems-level thinking and decision-making to embark on a transformative journey toward a new vision. Achieving this shift entails empowering key community leaders to enhance capacity and infrastructure related to regional-level governance, strategic thinking, and systemic transformation/change management. This will provide essential support for the pursuit of the defined objectives.

2. **Establish a Client-Centered Homeless Support System.** In harmony with its guiding principles, the Wiregrass Metro Area will initiate measures to establish a homeless assistance system that centers around the clients and prioritizes the importance of their expertise and feedback in shaping the system's design and resource allocation. Actions in line with this objective will encompass reviewing and discontinuing practices that contribute to the criminalization of homelessness, providing system-wide training on trauma-informed care practices, creating and implementing formal mechanisms for gathering and integrating client input and feedback into policy and program decisions, and executing a system-wide Housing First approach, following proven models and best practices with fidelity.

System Impact Strategies

3. **Decrease inflow into homelessness by increasing prevention and diversion**. Working closely with the city and county governments in the Wiregrass Metro Area is vital for successfully executing this strategy. Specifically, collaborating with other systems to prevent homelessness whenever possible and, when appropriate, divert individuals away from the system entirely. Actions aimed at achieving this goal may involve bolstering resources for effective diversion programs and fostering connections with mainstream systems such as hospitals, jails, child welfare, and substance use facilities, with the aim of averting individuals from becoming homeless upon release. Additionally, implementing a data matching process with feeder systems (initiating with hospitals and jails) can help identify frequent system users and formulate strategies to reduce the inflow.

4. **Improve the performance of the existing system**. Establishing a discrete CoC for the Wiregrass Metro Area and implementing a systems-level approach requires transitioning from project-oriented

thinking to a systemic perspective and necessitates a comprehensive evaluation of existing practices, performance, and metrics. Initiatives associated with this objective could involve scrutinizing outcomes at the project level, formulating system-wide metrics for quarterly monitoring to assess the overall system's health, establishing funding priorities that encompass both system-wide and project-level performance objectives, increasing capacity at emergency shelters to expedite services, investing in system-wide training in practices such as Housing First, repurposing current transitional housing to align better with the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness (e.g., respite care beds), standardizing staff compensation across service providers, and reviewing coordinated entry and outreach protocols to optimize effectiveness and efficiency.

5. **Expand the availability of permanent housing solutions**. Undoubtedly, the insufficiency of low-income and affordable housing options impacts both the influx into the homeless system and the capacity to house those experiencing homelessness permanently. Actions to achieve this goal encompass broadening access to existing housing inventory through successful landlord engagement and incentive programs, leveraging political influence and innovative approaches to identify additional housing resources through collaboration with housing developers, maximizing and enhancing housing opportunities under DH's Moving to Work (MTW) Mobility Program, known as Moving through the Wiregrass with Purpose (MTWP) and partnering with other local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) within the Wiregrass Metro Area to access units via their programs and interlocal agreements. DH's nonprofit community development corporation arm, Our Community, Inc. (OCI), is utilized for affordable housing programs, neighborhood revitalization, and real estate development for people experiencing homelessness. Also, DH's nonprofit resident services arm, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency, Inc. (BOSS), is used for housing education programs like Ready to Rent (R2R), housing counseling, including homeless counseling, and other wrap-around services for people experiencing homelessness.

The vision, principles, and strategies identified can lead the community to a more comprehensive, humane, and effective approach to ending homelessness for people throughout the Wiregrass Metro Area.

Actions Already Underway

Progress on key foundational issues that complement the vision outlined in this plan has been made or is currently underway, including:

SEACH - The Southeast Alabama Coalition for the Homeless, Inc. (SEACH), established in 2003, was formed through a sustainable partnership among various agencies to address the community's goals of alleviating homelessness and assisting the underserved population in overcoming poverty. SEACH serves

five counties area in the Wiregrass Metro Area, including Houston, Henry, Dale, Coffee, and Geneva. The collective efforts of SEACH aim to foster independence and self-sustainability among those in need. There is a shared sense of accountability within SEACH to end homelessness, recognizing that collaborative endeavors are more effective than individual initiatives. To facilitate coordination and collaboration, SEACH organizes monthly meetings that bring together representatives from various agencies across all five counties in the region. These gatherings serve as a platform to address the homeless crisis and provide an opportunity for agencies to share resources, ideas, and expertise. By working together, SEACH and its partner organizations can provide comprehensive assistance and support to individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the entire Wiregrass Metro Area. By working together, SEACH and its partner organizations can provide comprehensive assistance and support to individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the entire Wiregrass Metro Area. With a twenty-year history as a true collaborative, SEACH takes pride in its collective effort to make a lasting impact on the lives of those in need within the community.

Throughout its history, the organization functioned as a sub-unit of the Alabama Coalition for the Homeless (ARCH), the Alabama Balance of State Continuum of Care. With growing regional needs, SEACH will serve as the lead coordinating agency in forming and implementing a CoC for the Wiregrass Metro Area.

Establishing a CoC Specific to the Wiregrass Metro Area – With growing interest and need, SEACH is leading the community effort to create a Wiregrass CoC for the five-county region.

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is designed to promote a community's commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. Broadly, the program is constructed to support community-wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness; improve coordination and integration with mainstream resources and other programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness; improve data collection and performance measurement; and allow each community to tailor its program to the particular strengths and challenges within that community. Its goal is to

1. Quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families,
2. Promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families, and
3. Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Working with guidance from HUD, SEACH will serve as the lead in establishing and operating the CoC and ensuring the requirements of the CoC Program Interim Rule are met. One of the most important issues to tackle immediately is creating a governance structure that supports cross-agency collaboration, systems-level thinking, and accountability. Priority first steps include:

- Establish a board (representative of organizations and projects serving people experiencing homelessness) to act on behalf of the CoC.
- Develop a governance charter to document all groups and sub-groups created to support the CoC and each group's relative responsibilities.
- Officially designate an HMIS lead agency and a collaborative applicant to assist with its responsibilities.

Selection of Dothan Housing (DH) as Moving to Work Expansion Agency under the Landlord Incentives Cohort #3 – DH has been selected to participate in the HUD Moving to Work Landlord Incentive Cohort. The MTW is a demonstration program for PHAs that allows designated agencies to design and test innovative, locally designed strategies that use federal dollars more efficiently, help residents find employment and become self-sufficient, and increase housing choices for low-income families.

Becoming an MTW Expansion Agency will allow DH the ability and flexibility to create innovative solutions through housing choice vouchers (HCV) and effectively answer the shortage of affordable housing challenges by employing cost-effective and efficient strategies to Attract, Retain, and Recruit landlords in the Wiregrass Metro Area. Expansion of housing choice vouchers is key for expanding housing options for low-income and vulnerable populations, including Veterans, survivors of violence, the elderly, chronic homeless, individuals with disabilities, and unaccompanied youth.

Through the newly established Moving through the Wiregrass with Purpose (MTWP) Mobility Program, DH will continue to utilize its existing project-based voucher (PBV) inventory while looking to expand the use of special purpose vouchers (SPVs) to expand housing opportunities for community members across the Wiregrass Metro Area.

MTWP Opportunities

Strategy	Targeted Population
Leverage project-based vouchers for vulnerable populations	✓ Veterans ✓ Survivors of Violence ✓ Chronic Homeless ✓ Unaccompanied Youth
Designate the use of special housing vouchers for specific programs.	✓ Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) ✓ Rapid Rehousing (RRH) ✓ Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) ✓ Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) ✓ Foster Youth to Independence

	✓ Mainstream Voucher Program (MVP) for non-elderly persons with disabilities ✓ Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) ✓ Family Stability Vouchers ✓ Shelter Plus Care (S+C) for homeless & mental health participants
Pilot and demonstrate innovative uses for existing resources	✓ Motel Conversion ✓ Single Room Occupancy (SRO) for Rapid Re-Housing
Pursue additional grant funding streams to support housing expansion.	✓ Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) ✓ Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) ✓ HOME Investment Partnerships Program
Establish housing preferences	✓ Homeless ✓ Other vulnerable populations

The Moving through the Wiregrass with Purpose (MTWP) Mobility Program provides housing options for the community and supports housing stability.

- MTWP helps Housing Choice Voucher(HCV) participants set goals and sustain motivation for moving to new homes, guiding families on the requirements of landlords and selection of units.
- MTWP will provide wrap-around case management services, mobility and housing counseling, and the Ready to Rent (R2R) tenant education workshop certification for HCV participants.

Moving to Work (MTW) Funding Flexibility Used to Address Homelessness Challenges with Solutions

I. Landlord Incentives

The Wiregrass Regional Voucher Program (WRVP) of Dothan Housing (DH) has developed a Landlord Incentive Program in an effort to expand housing opportunities for Voucher Holders. The incentive program is aimed at:

- Attract, Recruit, & Retain Landlords in the Wiregrass Area
- Develop better relationships with Landlords and increase Landlord Satisfaction
- Streamline the Operations of the WRVP and remove the bureaucratic red tape
- Increase the number of units available for Voucher Holders to rent
- Increase the Lease-up success rates for vouchers issued
- Increase the overall voucher utilization rate for the WRVP

The Section 8 HCV Program Incentives for Landlords include the following:

1. **Signing Bonus for New Units under a HAP Contract**
   All landlords who sign a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract for a New Unit that is leased up are eligible for a Signing Bonus payment up to the First Month's Rent, allowing a Voucher Holder to move in.

2. **Application Fee for a New Unit under a HAP Contract**
   Landlords are eligible for a **New Application Fee of up to $50** who sign a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract for a Unit that is leased up, allowing a New Voucher Holder to move in.

3. **Security Deposit for a New Unit under a HAP Contract**
   Landlords who sign a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract for a Unit that is leased up are eligible for a Security Deposit Payment up to the First Month's Rent, allowing a New Voucher Holder to move in.

4. **Referral Fee**
   Landlords are eligible for a $250.00 **Referral Fee** when new property owners join the Wiregrass Regional Voucher Program (WRVP), allowing a voucher holder to lease and move in. New owners must provide the name of the owner they were referred by, who is currently an active owner/landlord already leasing on the WRVP.

5. **Damage Payments**
   Landlords who provide proper documentation and proof of damages that are leasing to another voucher holder on the WRVP are eligible for Damage Payments. **Lessor of the cost of repairs OR 2 months contract rent (minus security deposit)**. MUST release to a voucher holder to qualify!

6. **Vacancy Payments**
   Landlords who provide proper leasing documentation to another voucher holder on the WRVP are eligible for Vacancy Payments. **Up to One month's contract rent**. MUST release to a voucher holder to qualify!

7. **Access to the Assistance Connect Portal**
   Landlords can access a 24/7 online portal to review payments/statements, receive real-time inspection updates, update owner information, send and retrieve documents, and manage rentals.

8. **Pre-Qualifying Unit Inspections (HCV)**

Landlords can request pre-qualifying inspections; once the HQS Inspections pass, the unit is available for 90 days for an HCV participant to lease the unit. This simplifies and streamline the inspection process for property owners.

9. **Alternative Inspection Schedule (HCV)**
Landlords with brand-new units built or that had a substantial rehab within the last three (3) years will only have to have their units inspected every three years.

II. **Project-Based Voucher Program Flexibilities**

1. **Increase PBV Program CAP**

DH can increase the PBV program from 20% to 30% for special populations such as low-income and vulnerable populations, including Veterans, survivors of violence, the elderly, chronic homeless, individuals with disabilities, and unaccompanied youth.

2. **Increase PBV Project CAP**
DH can increase the PBV project cap within a project by up to 100% to expand housing opportunities and help homeless families find permanent housing.

3. **Elimination of PBV Selection Process**
DH can award PBVs to properties owned by DHA or its instrumentality, Our Community, Inc., to expand housing opportunities and help homeless families find permanent housing.

4. **Alternative PBV Selection Process**
DH can award PBVs owned by non-profit and for-profit housing entities to expand housing opportunities and help homeless families find permanent housing.

5. **Alternative PBV Unit Type**
DH can attach and pay PBV assistance for shared housing units and manufactured housing to expand housing opportunities and help homeless families find permanent housing.

III. Local, Non-Traditional Activities

1. Rental Subsidy Programs
DHA can use MTW Funding to provide a rental subsidy to a third-party entity that manages intake and administration of the subsidy program to implement activities, which may include:

- Supportive housing programs and services to help homeless individuals and families reach independence;

i. Supportive living, shallow subsidies;
ii. Homeless/transitional housing programs; or
iii. Programs that address special needs populations.

2. **Service Provision**
   DHA can use MTW Funding for homeless supportive services using MTW Funding that are provided to eligible low-income individuals who do not receive either public housing or HCV assistance from the PHA.
   - Eligible activities may include services for:
     i. Homeless Counseling & Education
     ii. Case Management
     iii. Rapid Rehousing Programs
     iv. Housing First Programs

3. **Housing Development Programs**
   DHA can use MTW Funding to acquire, renovate, and build affordable units for low-income units for homeless and special populations.
   - Eligible activities may include gap financing for affordable housing, development of Project-Based Voucher (PBV) units, Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), or Housing Trust Fund (HTF) developments.
     i. Rapid Rehousing
     ii. Purchasing Motels for Conversion for:
       1. Homeless
       2. Permanent Support Housing (PSH)

Strategic Affordable Housing Implementation Plan **-** Despite the city's population growth since 2000, the number of available housing options for residents and workers has actually gone down. This is mainly because there aren't enough affordable housing options, especially in areas with more low-income households. When people earn low wages, they often spend a significant portion of their income on housing costs. Unfortunately, this is a problem faced by many lower-income households in Dothan and the surrounding Wiregrass Metro Area.

Data from previous studies indicates that more than a third of renters in Dothan and around 10% of homeowners are paying more than 30% of their monthly income to cover their housing expenses. As Dothan continues to attract more major employers and grow, the demand for good, affordable housing has reached a breaking point. In simple terms, more people are looking for housing than suitable options

available. To make matters worse, there are also concerns about the condition of some vacant housing units, which pose safety and habitability risks to tenants and homeowners.

To fully address the lack of affordable housing problem, the City of Dothan and DH joined forces with the APD Urban Planning and Management, LLC (APD-U) to develop the City of Dothan Strategic Affordable Housing Implementation Plan with the intent of highlighting the affordable housing challenge and identify clear and feasible strategies to address these gaps for the people of Dothan and Wiregrass Metro Area.

Purpose 2025 FY2022-2024 Strategic Plan – DH has implemented a modern-day leadership approach focused on creating a high-value organizational culture built on trust, getting the right people on the team, and coaching that team to greatness to meet the Goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the two-time award-winning Purpose 2025: FY2022-2024 Strategic Plan.

DH implemented its Purpose 2025: FY2022-2024 Strategic Plan. The Areas of Focus and Goals are as follows:

1. Area of Focus 1: Organizational Culture
   - Goal: Create a high-value organizational culture that unites team members around a common cause
2. Area of Focus 2: Training (Staff & Board Commissioners)
   - Goal: Provide ongoing, relevant industry learning and development opportunities for the Staff and Board Commissioners
3. Area of Focus 3: Technology
   - Goal: Streamline operations through technology and digital transformation
4. Area of Focus 4: Rebranding
   - Goal: Launch and sustain a rebranding campaign that accurately communicates the mission, vision, values, and principles
5. Area of Focus 5: Regional Voucher Program
   - Goal: Offer a comprehensive, high-quality Wiregrass Regional Voucher Program (WRVP)
6. Area of Focus 6: Affiliate Organizations (Return on Investment)
   - Goal: Utilize and establish affiliate organizations to support the mission of the Housing Authority
7. Area of Focus 7: New Headquarters (OCI Housing and Enrichment Center)
   - Goal: Secure funding and create a seamless transition of the entire Housing Authority's headquarters to the former school building
8. Area of Focus 8: Development Accreditation
   - Goal: Attain and maintain affordable housing development accreditation

Opportunities to Leverage Resources to Support Plan and Housing Expansion

There are additional areas of opportunity to explore to optimize the implementation strategies and community partnerships for expanding affordable, permanent housing and increasing access to resources for community members across the Wiregrass Metro Area, including:

Alabama Housing Trust Fund – Established in 2012, the Alabama Affordable Housing Act established a statewide trust fund to provide funding for creating and maintaining affordable housing units. The Housing Trust Fund is a mechanism to address the housing crisis statewide; however, funds have yet to be allocated. Estimates indicate that putting just $15 million a year into the housing trust fund would allow the state to build 500 affordable units yearly.

Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta - FHLBank Atlanta is committed to helping the communities of their member financial institutions grow and prosper (with member banks in the Wiregrass service area). They offer a variety of homeownership and rental products as well as services to help connect members to business drivers in their markets, including real estate professionals, developers, local governments, Housing Finance Agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

Each year, they set aside 10 percent of their annual net income to invest back into members' communities through our Affordable Housing Program (AHP). These resources help members provide critical funding for affordable housing development throughout their communities.

Leverage CDBG and Section 108 - The Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program (Section 108) provides Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) recipients with the ability to leverage their annual grant allocation to access low-cost, flexible financing for economic development, housing, public facility, and infrastructure projects. Communities can use Section 108 guaranteed loans to either finance specific projects or to launch loan funds to finance multiple projects over several years.

Consortium/Coalition of Local Banks focusing on Low to Moderate-Income (LMI) housing - Multibank Consortia sustains communities by advancing affordable rental housing. They share the risk, reduce the lending cost, and pool their expertise to meet their communities' affordable housing development needs. Guided by the principle that banks do well when their communities do well, banks form consortia so that community development investments, at lower cost and risk, can be tailored to meet local needs such as affordable rental housing while also meeting the requirements of the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 (CRA). Bank consortia can be flexible in their approach to community development activity so long as it profits the public and includes LMI members of the community. There are several potential financial institutional partners within the Wiregrass Metro Area, including:

1. PNC Bank
2. Wells Fargo Bank
3. Regions Bank

4. SmartBank
5. Friend Bank
6. Synovus Bank
7. All in Credit Union
8. Woodforest National Bank

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

As detailed in the Executive Summary of this document, five strategies have emerged as critical to progress toward ending homelessness in the Wiregrass Metro Area. The strategies include:

1. Implement a systems-level approach to homeless planning and implementation.
2. Create a client-centered homeless assistance system.
3. Decrease inflow into homelessness by increasing prevention and diversion efforts.
4. Improve the performance of the existing system.
5. Expand the availability of and access to lasting affordable housing solutions.

The following information summarizes the strategies and related actions needed to advance the community toward its long-term vision over the next 12 months. It outlines a blend of process-oriented strategy, actions, and specific outputs or results. Some of the strategies and actions listed are long-term but require incremental milestones to ensure progress over the period of this plan.

Strategy 1: Implement a systems-level approach to address homelessness, including planning and implementation.

In coordination with establishing a Continuum of Care (CoC) for the Wiregrass Metro Area	➢ Develop and implement an interagency steering framework to oversee the execution of the plan. ➢ Create and maintain a financial strategy to address the housing and crisis response needs identified in the Action Plan. ➢ Drive systemic transformation through alignment, communication, and strategic direction. ➢ Build system capacity through training and technical assistance. ➢ Increase system capacity and program development through coordinated training and technical assistance.
Improve the effectiveness of the current homelessness response system and identify strategies to help response systems meet the urgent homelessness crisis, especially unsheltered homelessness.	➢ Direct a systems-level approach to end unsheltered homelessness. ➢ Evaluate coordinated entry and provide tools and guidance on effective assessment processes that center equity, remove barriers, streamline access, and divert people from homelessness. ➢ Increase availability of and access to emergency shelters—including non-congregate shelters—and other temporary accommodations. ➢ Solidify the relationship between the Wiregrass CoC, public health agencies, and emergency management agencies to improve coordination when future public health emergencies and natural disasters arise. ➢ Remove and reduce programmatic, regulatory, and other barriers that systematically delay or deny access to housing for households with the highest needs.

Strategy 2: Create a client-centered homeless assistance system.

Provide clear guidance and capacity-building opportunities to service providers, collaborative partners, and community stakeholders regarding the system-wide Housing First model, including principles and methodologies.	➢ Provide training to providers to ensure clients have choices in their housing and service options. ➢ Facilitate change management efforts for service providers through provider feedback sessions, peer learning, and collaborative coordination opportunities. ➢ Monitor the adoption and performance of the Housing First approach across the Wiregrass Metro Area.
Elevate and integrate the voices of lived experience in system-level decision-making, program design, service delivery, and system policies.	➢ Increase participation in system and program planning by People with Lived Experience. ➢ Develop a process for People with Lived Experience and Expertise to vet decisions and identify challenges/solutions regarding the homeless assistance system. ➢ Create opportunities for people who have experienced homelessness to conduct community education and advocacy.
Promote equity through review of data, policies, and practices.	➢ Analyze current data and address disparate barriers to exiting homelessness and access to housing among marginalized populations. ➢ Initiate an assessment of cultural competence across homeless service providers. ➢ Review written policies and practices with an equity lens to identify areas for revision/improvement. ➢ Address root causes through broader cross-system coordination with the justice, foster care, and behavioral health systems.
Implement cross-system training in best practices, e.g., trauma-informed care, harm reduction, etc.	➢ Build system and provider capacity to implement client-centered approaches successfully. ➢ Identify the need for recovery housing (substance use) options.

Strategy 3: Decrease inflow into homelessness by increasing prevention and diversion efforts.

Identify and implement prevention-specific strategies to reduce the risk of housing	➢ Increase availability of and access to meaningful and sustainable employment, education, and other mainstream supportive services, opportunities, and resources.

instability for households most likely to experience homelessness, including families, youth, and single adults.	➢ Strengthen cross-system partnerships and expand existing programs that target or primarily serve youth, families, and individuals who have current or former involvement with publicly funded institutional systems. ➢ Increase access to home and community-based services and housing that is affordable, accessible, and integrated among older adults and people with disabilities—including people with mental health conditions and substance use disorders. ➢ Increase and improve coordination between VA and other partner agencies to identify and strengthen housing connections and services for veterans and service members transitioning from military to civilian life. ➢ Explore options for expanding existing programs that target youth or young adults, including programs for foster youth with and without disabilities aging out of foster care and pregnant and parenting youth, to focus on activities that will increase protective factors that will reduce the likelihood of experiencing housing instability and homelessness. ➢ Expand collaboration and partnerships with local and regional agencies to reduce housing barriers for survivors of human trafficking, sexual assault, stalking, and domestic violence, including family and intimate partner violence.
Increase diversion to at least 40 successful interventions per year.	➢ Expand the use of *housing problem-solving* approaches for diversion and rapid exit. ➢ Identify protocols and processes for conducting diversion at entry points and clearly define entry points. ➢ Conduct system-wide training for providers on diversion approaches. ➢ Explore how to expand eviction prevention resources. ➢ Review data on an ongoing basis and coordinate with providers and mainstream partners across the Wiregrass Metro Area ➢ Provide Ready to Rent (R2R) educational training programs through the Wiregrass Metro Area. ➢ Apply to become a HUD-Approved Housing Counseling Agency (HCA).

Increase opportunities for income and employment	➢ Increase meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for people experiencing or most at risk of homelessness. ➢ Increase the number of benefits case managers can access when completing applications for social security income and disability income, e.g., SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR). ➢ Explore expanding coordinated entry to streamline benefit coordination. ➢ Identify workforce development programs to link to current Rapid Re-Housing interventions to decrease returns to homelessness.

Strategy 4: Improve the performance of the existing system.

Spearheaded a community-wide effort to end unsheltered homelessness.	➢ Allocate funding and provide training and support to encourage collaboration among various programs, such as outreach teams, housing navigators, aging and disability network organizations, public health, emergency responders, law enforcement, hospitals, and mental health crisis intervention teams. ➢ Provide guidance and training on promising and best practices related to encampments, effective street outreach, harm reduction approaches, and alternative strategies for identifying the "hidden" homeless. ➢ Promote alternatives to criminalization and promote them across the Wiregrass Metro Area for adoption and implementation. ➢ Identify strategies for housing-centered outreach that link individuals to available permanent housing options, including rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and, when suitable, affordable and market-rate housing. ➢ Encourage, empower, and expand opportunities for people with lived experience to serve as outreach workers and service providers through programs like Peer Recovery Support and Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services.

Evaluate coordinated entry and provide tools and guidance on effective assessment processes that center equity, remove barriers, streamline access, and divert people from homelessness.	➢ Collaborate with people with lived experience and various service providers inside and outside the homeless response system. ➢ Review and revise federal policies and programs related to coordinated entry to identify challenges and barriers. ➢ Establish a comprehensive framework for a coordinated entry system encompassing all critical populations, entry points, programs, and cross-sector systems serving homeless community members. ➢ Provide guidance and training in partnership with people with lived experience and service providers on coordinated-entry system design, assessment processes, and performance measures, including addressing specific needs and goals of key populations.
Increase availability of and access to emergency shelters and other temporary accommodations.	➢ Increase the availability of and access to medical respite care to meet the needs of people who need recuperative care after hospital discharge. ➢ Expand the availability of and access to low-barrier and culturally appropriate shelters, including non-congregate shelters. ➢ Implement the Equal Access Rule to reduce barriers for LGBTQI+ people. ➢ Provide guidance and training related to the Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable federal fair housing laws to ensure compliance and that shelters meet the disability-related needs of people with disabilities, including those with mobility-based disabilities. ➢ Provide guidance on emergency shelter that defines the role of emergency accommodations, the connection to the larger system, the need to incorporate non-congregate shelter options, bridge housing, and strategies for downsizing shelter over time. ➢ Provide guidance and training for emergency shelter operators, including faith-based, family-focused, youth-focused, and domestic violence shelters, on (1) evaluating and updating shelter rules, structure, and operations to a low-barrier model that is more accessible and supportive of the needs of people and (2) providing housing-focused services and integrating health care and supportive services

	into the provision of non-congregate shelter. For families with children, this should also include resources to address children's health and developmental needs and improve the environmental conditions while children are living at a shelter. ➢ Promote the integration of high-impact harm reduction interventions within emergency shelters.
Solidify the relationship between the CoC, public health agencies, and emergency management agencies to improve coordination when future public health emergencies and natural disasters arise.	➢ Ensure an inclusive community crisis response plan is in place in the event of an emergency or a local surge in the need for shelter and housing placements. ➢ Expand training on disaster response and recovery planning for the homeless system, focusing on the disparate impact on already unhoused people. ➢ Facilitate greater collaboration between Wiregrass partners that play a key role in disaster and public health response.

Strategy 5: Expand the availability of permanent housing solutions.

Maximize the use of existing federal and local housing assistance.	➢ Perform a community scan across the Wiregrass Metro Area to identify housing inventory and supports available for people at risk or experiencing homelessness. ➢ Optimize using housing vouchers available through the DH Moving through the Wiregrass with Purpose (MTWP) Program. ➢ Conduct an assessment of existing policies that can increase access to housing programs among community members experiencing or at risk of homelessness, covering such aspects as eligibility, housing preferences for the most vulnerable, and the potential obstacles posed by administrative fees. ➢ Provide guidance and training to build capacity, including serving people with complex needs, move-on strategies, accessibility strategies (e.g., use of assistive technologies and home modifications), the use of project-based vouchers, etc. ➢ Launch a landlord engagement campaign across the five-county Wiregrass Metro Area to help support local efforts to increase available rental units. ➢ Identify and implement measures to reduce the impact of documentation as a barrier in seeking housing, improve

	access to identification, medical records, and eligibility-related benefit documentation needed to determine eligibility, and foster closer collaboration with local and regional agencies to streamline these processes. ➢ Promote collaborations among housing providers, aging and disability service organizations, and healthcare providers -- which encompass mental health and substance use treatment -- to facilitate co-location, coordination, or integration of health services, mental health support, substance use disorder treatment, safety measures, and wellness services within housing facilities. ➢ Increase Special Purpose Voucher (SPV) Allocation by 50% for all funding Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) available. ➢ Utilize the MTW Program flexibility under Local, Non-Traditional Activities for Rental Subsidy Programs, Service Provisions, and Housing Development Programs. ➢ Utilize the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) as an affordable housing development tool to address the homeless in the Wiregrass Metro Area. ➢ Utilize the Community Preservation & Revitalization (CPR) initiative of Our Community, Inc. (OCI), DH's nonprofit community development corporation instrumentality for neighborhood revitalization by "Breathing Life Back into the Community." The CPR identifies permanent housing solutions that include acquiring or purchasing vacant land and houses or turn-key properties that have been foreclosed, abandoned, dilapidated, deteriorated, or have tax liens to redevelop them to address the housing challenge. ➢ Formalize interlocal agreements with Neighboring PHAs in the Wiregrass Metro Area to Expand Housing Opportunities to create economies of scale for the Portability process. ➢ Evaluate the opportunity and benefits of creating greater efficiencies and housing choices by implementing the PHA Regionalization under the Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration Program under PIH Notice 2023-08.
Expand engagement, resources, and incentives for creating new safe, affordable, and accessible housing.	➢ Explore opportunities to promote continued affordability of units built with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits after the expiration of the affordability covenant.

	➢ Explore mixed-income, mixed-use, and mixed-finance opportunities, including adding gap finance through the project-based voucher (PBV) model and the MTW Local, Non-Traditional funding flexibility for housing development programs for homeless and special populations. ➢ Expand the availability and supply of accessible and integrated housing opportunities that meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. ➢ Identify strategies to increase awareness, availability, and use of assistive technology and home modifications that enable people to address accessibility issues and continue to live in their homes. ➢ Encourage the use of programs like HOME, HOME-ARP, and other federal programs to support housing development for very low-income units that target people experiencing homelessness. ➢ Involve the Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) throughout the Wiregrass Metro Area in their efforts to revitalize and create public housing units or implement the streamlined voluntary conversion (SVC) for tenant protection vouchers (TPVs) and project-based vouchers (PBVs) and ask for their commitment to help prevent and address homelessness. ➢ Through DH Moving through the Wiregrass with Purpose (MTWP), continue to explore opportunities to strengthen project-based voucher (PBV) subsidy programs and vouchers to increase the supply of affordable housing. ➢ Advocate with local, state, and federal legislative and government bodies on allocating funding to support the Alabama Housing Trust Fund for developing new affordable housing. ➢ Meet with local, state, and federal elected officials to help pass the Choice in Affordable Housing Act and the Neighborhood Homes Investment Act. ➢ Join and participate with local, state, regional, and national collective action organizations to advocate for funding for homeless and affordable housing programs.
Increase the supply and impact of permanent supportive	➢ Conduct a gap analysis of permanent supportive housing needs in the Wiregrass Metro Area, including examining racial equity.

housing for individuals and families with complex service needs.	➢ Provide guidance and training to community programs on effective strategies to braid federal, state, and local funds to expand permanent supportive housing. ➢ Where federal funds are used to create permanent supportive housing and encourage the creation of non-discriminatory preferences for property owners who will agree to operate the property using a Housing First approach and will not further restrict or limit eligibility.
Increase and improve rapid rehousing (RRH) effectiveness for individuals and families.	➢ Provide guidance and training across the Wiregrass Metro Area to assess outcomes being achieved, tailor financial assistance and services to improve outcomes, and reduce returns to homelessness among individuals and families. ➢ Promote and amplify best practices in the RRH model. ➢ Promote effective landlord engagement strategies.
Support enforcement of fair housing and combat other forms of housing discrimination that perpetuate disparities in homelessness.	➢ Provide guidance and training on fair housing laws, including the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing mandate. ➢ Provide guidance and training on the connections between housing discrimination and homelessness. ➢ Foster collaboration between homeless programs and fair housing programs, including with landlords and property owners. ➢ Provide updated HUD guidance and training on the intersection between the Fair Housing Act and the Violence Against Women Act.
Strengthen the system's capacity to address the needs of people with chronic health conditions, including mental health conditions and substance use disorders.	➢ Explore options for allocating resources to evidence-based, accessible programs and broaden the network of service providers to address mental health conditions and substance use disorders. ➢ Invest in models that include peer support specialists. ➢ Promote harm reduction and low-barrier models to provide primary healthcare services and treatment for mental health conditions and substance use disorders.
Maximize current resources that can provide voluntary and trauma- - informed supportive services and income support to people experiencing or	➢ Examine local policy and programs to identify ways to encourage earned income, increased savings, and wealth-building to address the "benefits cliff." ➢ Identify opportunities to align eligibility criteria across programs (i.e., categorical eligibility) so that people do ➢ not have to apply and qualify for each program separately.

at risk of homelessness.	➢ Explore ways to invest in peer-led housing and service delivery models, like recovery coaches for substance use disorders, peer specialists in mental health conditions, and youth mentors/staff with lived experience in youth programs. ➢ Review local program requirements and policies associated with programs that serve people at risk of or who are experiencing homelessness to ensure greater compatibility with a Housing First approach with a priority on flexibility, accessibility, and personal choice. ➢ Provide guidance and training on accessible and inclusive models and approaches (e.g., person-centered, trauma-informed care, Critical Time Intervention, gender-affirming care, and harm reduction strategies for substance use and healthcare). ➢ Explore opportunities for philanthropic partners to provide funding for flexible and accessible supportive services.
Increase the use of practices grounded in evidence in service delivery across all program types.	➢ Promote service delivery models—such as Critical Time Intervention (CTI), Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams, and harm-reduction—that are person-centered, culturally appropriate, disability competent, support individual choice, and encourage voluntary participation. ➢ Provide guidance and training on cultural responsiveness and humility as well as disability competence in the context of service delivery. ➢ Identify strategies for expanding the usage of the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) model across the Wiregrass Metro Area Community. ➢ Provide tools to help communities evaluate the consumer experience in their programs and systems and implement improvements based on the feedback received.

Conclusion – Measuring Progress

This plan represents a long-term commitment of the Wiregrass Metro Area to end homelessness, and implementation of it will be dynamic, results-driven, and transparent. Progress will be assessed regularly by the CoC and its community partners, and the implementation work plans will be adapted in real-time to reflect new actions and commitments as well as new data and information that can inform

our future work. The CoC will provide annual updates to the plan, including progress toward the 10% reduction goal (established by the steering committee), plan adjustments, and implementation strategy updates.

HUD requires CoC communities to track System Performance Measures in HMIS, including:

- Length of time people remain homeless
- Returns to homelessness within 6 to 12 months and within 2 years
- Number of people who become homeless for the first time
- Number of homeless people
- Successful placement in and retention of housing from street outreach
- Racial disparities in homelessness, including inflow, length of time homeless, and successful
- housing placements

Additionally, metrics include:

- The total number of people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in the annual Point-in-Time Count
- The number of children and youth, including students in families and unaccompanied students, identified as experiencing homelessness at some point during the school year

The CoC will also work with its community partners and other stakeholders to identify additional data sources and metrics for measuring our overall impact to address homelessness. In the future, this data and information will be used to inform future work plans and annual progress reports to HUD and the Wiregrass Metro Area Community. This data will also be used for future City of Dothan's Consolidated Plan and Impediments to Fair Housing; DH's Annual Plan, Five-Year, MTW Supplement Plan, Baptist Bottom Neighborhood Transformation Plan, and Blueprint 2035 Real Estate Development Plan.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix A: Reference Guide
- Appendix B: A Brief History of SEACH
- Appendix C: A Brief History of DH
- Appendix D: Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) in the Wiregrass Metro Area
- Appendix E: Community Survey
- Appendix F: List of Participants Completing the Survey
- Appendix G: Moving to Work (MTW) Regionalization PIH 2023-08

Appendix A: Reference Guide

The purpose of this reference guide is to capture the diverse terminology and cite the resources used to create the Wiregrass Metro Area Strategic Plan to End Homelessness.

Definitions:

Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is constructed to support community-wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness; improve coordination and integration with mainstream resources and other programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness; improve data collection and performance measurement; and allow each community to tailor its program to the particular strengths and challenges within that community.

Diversion strategies and practices assist people to resolve their immediate housing crisis by accessing alternatives to entering emergency shelter or the experience of unsheltered living.

Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) is a voucher program funded through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)and is designed to assist individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness; at risk of homelessness; fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; or were recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having a high risk of housing instability.

Equal Access Rule requires equal access to HUD housing programs without regard to a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. Housing providers that receive HUD funding or that provide housing subject to HUD-insured mortgages, and lenders that make such loans, must comply with the Rule.

Family Stability Voucher initiative, similar to EHV, creates additional housing vouchers and seeks to get some of the most vulnerable people into housing. The initiative makes Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) assistance available to Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) in partnership with local Continuum's of Care and/or Victim Service Providers to assist households experiencing or at risk of homelessness, those fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and veterans and families that include a veteran family member that meets one of the proceeding criteria.

Foster Youth to Independence allows for Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to request housing choice vouchers (HCVs) to serve youth under the age of 25 with a history of child welfare involvement (see for up to 36 months, with Foster Youth to Independence (FYI vouchers).

Harm reduction is an approach that incorporates community-driven public health strategies — including prevention, risk reduction, and health promotion — to empower people who use drugs (and their families) with the choice to live healthy, self-directed, and purpose-filled lives.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is the local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to individuals and families at risk of and experiencing homelessness. Each CoC is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards.

Housing Choice Voucher is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments.

Housing First is an approach that prioritizes giving people permanent housing, ***without preconditions***, like mandatory treatment programs, sobriety, or other services. This low barrier approach highlights the need for stable, secure housing above all, which then serves as a solid foundation for further supportive services.

Housing Opportunities for People Living with Aids (HOPWA) program works in partnership with local communities and nonprofit organizations for projects that benefit low-income persons with HIV/AIDS.

Housing problem-solving (HPS) is an approach and set of techniques that support the effective implementation of diversion and rapid exit strategies that should be a part of every Coordinated Entry (CE) process and offered as potential alternative housing pathways for all populations.

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is an intervention that combines affordable housing assistance with voluntary support services to address the needs of chronically homeless people. The services are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and connect people with community-based health care, treatment and employment services.

Point in Time Count (PIT) is a count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness every other year. Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally by the Continuum of Care.

Project-based vouchers provide rental assistance for eligible individuals and families who occupy specific housing units managed by private owners who have entered into agreements with a PHA. The household pays an established amount to the owner each month (typically approximately 30 percent of monthly income) and the PHA pays the balance of the rent due.

Rapid exit strategies are appropriate after a household has entered emergency shelter or stayed in an unsheltered setting, and serves to help them move as quickly as possible back into housing with the support of services and a minimal level of financial assistance.

Rapid Re-Housing provides short-term rental assistance and services. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self- sufficiency, and stay housed. It is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the needs of the person.

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) is a model designed to increase access to disability income benefits for individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD VASH) is a collaborative program which pairs HUD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance with VA case management and supportive services for homeless Veterans. These services are designed to help homeless Veterans and their families find and sustain permanent housing and access the health care, mental health treatment, substance use counseling, and other supports necessary to help them in their recovery process and with their ability to maintain housing in the community.

Wiregrass 2-1-1 is a 24-hour information and referral helpline. Designed to reduce time and frustration by acting as a central access point to health and human services in the Wiregrass Metro Area. - https://www.wiregrass211.com/

Cited Resources:

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing - https://www.hud.gov/AFFH

Assertive Community Treatment - https://store.samhsa.gov/product/assertive-community-treatment-act-evidence-based-practices-ebp-kit/sma08-4344

Balancing at the Edge of the Cliff: Experiences and Calculations of Benefit Cliffs, Plateaus, and Trade-Offs - https://www.urban.org/research/publication/balancing-edge-cliff

CoC: Continuum of Care Program - https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/

CoC Program Interim Rule - https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/toolkit/introduction-to-the-coc-program/#coc-program-laws-regulations-and-notices

Critical Time Intervention - https://www.criticaltime.org/cti-model/

Equal Access Rule - https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/09/21/2016-22589/equal-access-in-accordance-with-an-individuals-gender-identity-in-community-planning-and-development

Fair Housing Act - https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/fair_housing_act_overview

Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness - https://www.usich.gov/All_In.pdf

Harm Reduction - https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/harm-reduction

HOME - American Rescue Plan Program - https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/home-arp

HOME Investment Partnerships Program - https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/home

Homeless System Response: Engaging Individuals with Lived Expertise - https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-Engaging-Individuals-with-Lived-Expertise.pdf

Homeless System Response: Housing Problem-Solving - https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-Housing-Problem-Solving.pdf

House America: *An All-Hands-on-Deck Effort to Address the Nation's Homeless Crisis* - https://www.hud.gov/house_america

Housing Assistance Improves Health and Well-Being, Reduces Returns to Homelessness - https://nlihc.org/resource/housing-assistance-improves-health-and-well-being-reduces-returns-homelessness

HUD Moving to Work Landlord Incentive Cohort – https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_22_019

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) - https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/lihtc.html

Medicaid Home and Community Based Services - https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/home-community-based-services/index.html

Moving through the Wiregrass with Purpose (MTWP) - https://www.dothanhousing.org/upages.php?id=111

Peer Recovery Support - https://store.samhsa.gov/product/what-are-peer-recovery-support-services/sma09-4454

Prevention, Diversion, and Rapid Exit - https://www.usich.gov/guidance-reports-data/federal-guidance-resources/prevention-diversion-and-rapid-exit

Ready to Rent Tenant Education - https://www.dothanhousing.org/news-view?id=91

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) - https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/about-the-model

Strategic Affordable Housing Implementation Plan - https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:6843cff7-5521-30be-a291-0810a63781b1.

Study Data Show that Housing Chronically Homeless People Save Money, Lives- https://endhomelessness.org/blog/study-data-show-that-housing-chronically-homeless-people-saves-money-lives/

Violence Against Women Act - https://www.hud.gov/vawa#close

What is Housing First? - https://community.solutions/what-is-housing-first/

Appendix B: A Brief History of the Southeast Alabama Coalition for the Homeless, Inc. (SEACH)

SEACH (the Southeast Alabama Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.) has more than a twenty-year history as a true collaborative in the Wiregrass Metro Area.

Organized in 2003 as a coalition of non-profit agencies and individuals whose common interests and mission were centered around ending homelessness in the region, SEACH functioned as a true collaborative for the first 9 years, holding regular monthly meetings on the first Thursday of every calendar month. Elections were held each year for the officers of the organization: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Although the mission of SEACH was held in common among the different non-profits, each maintained their own budgets and set their own goals; in fact, they each looked to SEACH to endorse and support their capital efforts. Each calendar year, these separate non-profits would contribute a membership fee to SEACH to offset a modest printing budget, but no payroll was included.

During the history of SEACH, the organization continued to function as a sub-unit of the Alabama Coalition for the Homeless (ARCH), the Alabama Balance of State Continuum of Care.

In 2012, it was decided to file papers with the State and with the Internal Revenue Service to become a non-profit charitable enterprise but to continue to function as before as a genuinely collaborative organization in the Wiregrass Metro Area (5 Counties: Houston, Henry, Dale, Coffee, and Geneva) under the umbrella of ARCH.

During all of the years of its history, SEACH has maintained the same monthly meeting date of the first Thursday of the month, even during the more than 2 years of Covid when many of the meetings were conducted remotely.

The COVID-19 Pandemic was a trial for many non-profit volunteer organizations. Although the structure of SEACH was sorely tested, through the joint efforts of several member non-profits and emergency housing funds through ARCH, SEACH provided needed Case Management for a number of families and individuals. This, together with a greater need for homeless services in the Wiregrass Metro Area, has led to a new understanding of the critical need for SEACH to take on the role of becoming a Continuum of Care (CoC) for the Wiregrass Metro Area. This is evidenced by staff support from a grant of funds from CDBG from the City of Dothan, Dothan Housing, the Wiregrass Foundation, and this grant application to ADECA. These funds, plus increased annual membership fees from member organizations and supporting individuals, will enable SEACH to hire sufficient staff to manage its mission.

The monthly meetings, the sub-groups on mental health, veterans affairs, and community support will continue, and the overall goal is to end homelessness in the Wiregrass!

Appendix C: A Brief History of DOTHAN HOUSING (DH)

Established in 1942, Dothan Housing (DH) is an independent quasi-governmental public corporation funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). DH is governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners appointed by the Mayor of the City of Dothan. It is managed by a President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO). DH is not a City of Dothan Agency or Department.

DH has been a Moving to Work (MTW) Expansion Agency under the Landlord Incentives Cohort#3 since 2022. DH was granted flexibility and authority to develop policies in accordance with MTW for Expansion Agencies Operations Notice (Federal Register/ Vol. 85, NO. 168) FR/5994-N-05 outside the limitations of specific HUD regulations and provisions.

The MTW is a demonstration program for PHAs that allows designated agencies to design and test innovative, locally designed strategies that use federal dollars more efficiently, help residents find employment and become self-sufficient, and increase housing choices for low-income families.

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged DH to create a different platform for sustainability by "thinking outside of the box" and becoming a housing authority of the future. This was done through its digital transformation initiative. Meanwhile, DH has answered the challenge of evolution through transformational leadership and acknowledged the paradigm shift of public housing authorities (PHAs) of doing more with less, moving from paper to the cloud, and streamlining its operations through technology by embracing an online platform.

As a result of changing business needs as an MTW Expansion Agency, DH's goal is to bring its Purpose 2025 strategic plan to fruition by realistically aligning its human capital, stated values, organizational principles, demonstrated actions, and housing authority structure. DH's new business model has enhanced our efforts to attract, recruit, and retain an articulate, talented, and diverse workforce of the best and the brightest in the affordable housing industry.

DH provides affordable housing opportunities in the City of Dothan, Houston County, and the surrounding Wiregrass Metro Area (WMA) counties of Henry, Dale, Geneva, & Coffee. DH develops and redevelops affordable housing through its nonprofit instrumentality, Our Community, Inc. (OCI), and other public-private partnerships.

DH offers workforce housing and administers affordable housing programs to assist low and moderate-income (LMI) individuals, families, the elderly, veterans, and people with disabilities by providing rental housing units in either the public housing or private housing markets through the following:

- Public Housing
- Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs), formerly known as "Section 8"

DH offers a variety of resident services programs through its nonprofit instrumentality, Building Opportunities toward Self-Sufficiency, Inc. (BOSS), such as:

- Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)
- HCV Homeownership
- R.I.S.E. Workforce Development
- Housing Counseling, including Ready to Rent (R2R) Education

Mission Statement: Dothan Housing is dedicated to developing and strengthening affordable housing opportunities that embrace best practices in a high-value organizational culture.

Vision Statement: Dothan Housing is committed to providing affordable housing services by implementing 21st-century technological approaches as a housing authority of the future.

Slogan: You Are Our Why

Appendix D: Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) in the Wiregrass Metro Area

ABBEVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Henry County
Executive Director: Tom Wachs
E-mail Address: twachs@eufaulahousing.com

Street Address: 194 Ash Drive
Mailing Address: PO Box 515, Abbeville, AL 36310
Phone: 334-585-2165 Fax: 334-585-1777
Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2

Total # of Housing Units: 40 Public Housing: 40

ASHFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Houston County
Executive Director: Carie Magill - Housing Manager: Laura Adkison
Carie's Email: Ashfordhouse@graceba.net

Street/Mailing Address: 100 Bruner St. Ashford, AL 36312
Phone: 334-899-5463
Fax: 334-899-7198

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total Housing Units: 96 Public Housing: 76
Section 8: 20

COLUMBIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Houston County
Executive Director: Carie Magill
E-mail Address: headlanDH@comcast.net

Street Address: 225 Boynton Street
Mailing Address: 225 Boynton Street, Headland, AL 36345

Phone: 334-693-2525
Fax: 334-693-2510

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 27
Public Housing: 17
Section 8: 10

COTTONWOOD HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Houston County
Executive Director: Sharon Lee
E-mail Address: cpha@graceba.net

Street Address: 29 Willow Lane
Mailing Address: PO Box 356, Cottonwood, AL 36320
Phone: 334-691-2451
Fax: 334-691-2451

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 53
Public Housing: 53

DOTHAN HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Houston County
Executive Director: Samuel Crawford
E-mail Address: scrawford@dothanhousing.org

Street Address: 1001 Montana Street
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1727, Dothan, AL 36302
Phone: 334-794-6713
Fax: 689-910-1241

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 1385
Public Housing: 670
Section 8: 715

ENTERPRISE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Coffee County http://www.enterprisehousing.org
Executive Director: Shana Demby
E-mail Address: sdemby@enterprisehousing.org

Street/Mailing Address: 300 Mildred St., Nell Court Office Enterprise, AL 36330
Phone: 334-347-2538
Fax: 334-347-0133

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 340
Public Housing: 150
Section 8: 190

ELBA HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Coffee County
Executive Director: Laurie Chapman
E-mail Address: admin@newbha.org

Street Address: 1207 N. Claxton Avenue, Elba, AL 36323
Mailing Address: 1207 N. Claxton Avenue, Elba, AL 36323
Phone: 334-897-2737
Fax: 334-897-3834

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 244
Public Housing: 125
Section 8:119

HARTFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Geneva County
Executive Director: Carie Magill
E-mail Address: headlanDH@comcast.net

Street Address: 207 Newton Street
Mailing Address: 207 Newton Street, Hartford, AL 36344
Phone: 334-588-3303
Fax: 334-588-0052

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 70
Public Housing: 34
Section 8: 36

HEADLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Henry County
Executive Director: Carie Magill
E-mail Address: headlanDH@comcast.net

Street Address: 225 Boynton Street
Mailing Address: 225 Boynton Street, Headland, AL 36345
Phone: 334-693-2525
Fax: 334-693-2510

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 50 Public Housing: 50

MIDLAND CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Dale County
Executive Director: Kim Pennington
E-mail Address: **midlanDH@midlanDH.org**

Street Address: 111 Parker Drive
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 698, Midland City, AL 36350
Phone: 334-983-3581
Fax: 334-983-1510

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 96

Public Housing: 46
Section 8: 50

NEWTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Dale County
Executive Director: Teresa Reeder
E-mail Address: cityofdaleville1@centurytel.net

Street Address: #2 Spring Street
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 130, Newton, AL 36352
Phone: 334-299-3114
Fax: 334-299-3395

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 33
Public Housing: 33

NEW BROCKTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Coffee County
Executive Director: Laurie Chapman
E-mail Address: elbaha@elbahousing.org

Street Address: 329 King Street
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 159, New Brockton, AL 36351-0159
Phone: 334-894-5505
Fax: 334-894-0045

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 40
Public Housing: 40

OZARK HOUSING Community

Located in Dale County
Executive Director: Dannie Walker
E-mail Address: dwalker@ozarkhousingcommunity.org

Street Address: 241 Ed Lisenby Drive
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 566, Ozark, AL 3636
Phone: 334-774-8210
Fax: 334-774-7544

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 827
Public Housing: 393
Section 8: 434

SAMSON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Geneva County
Executive Director: Brenda Carter
E-mail Address: samsonhousing@brighthouse.com

Street Address: 10B North Wise Street
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 307, Samson, AL 36477
Phone: 334-898-7152
Fax: 334-898-2554

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 213
Public Housing: 213

SLOCOMB HOUSING AUTHORITY

Located in Geneva County
Executive Director: Teresa Reeder
E-mail Address: cityofdaleville1@centurytel.net

Street Address: West Bateman Street
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 340, Slocomb, AL 36375
Phone: 334-886-3473
Fax: 334-886-3473

Congressional District #: 2 Mini District: 2
Total # of Housing Units: 14
Public Housing: 14

Appendix E: Community Survey

Collaborative Solutions, collaborating closely with the Dothan Housing Authority (DHA) and Southeast Alabama Council for the Homeless (SEACH), created and distributed a community survey to obtain community feedback on priority areas for inclusion in the strategic plan to end homelessness in the Wiregrass Area. The survey contained 12 questions designed to collect community input around challenges and barriers in the current homeless and housing system, as well as areas of opportunity and system improvement. DHA and SEACH identified an array of community members for participation in the survey and provided their contact information to Collaborative Solutions. In turn, Collaborative Solutions distributed the survey to 132 individuals. Outreach efforts included the initial email request, plus two subsequent reminders. Thirty-six respondents completed the survey for a 27% completion rate.

Key Highlights:

- **Biggest Impact for the Wiregrass Area:** When asked about areas of opportunity that can make the biggest impact for the community, respondents listed expanded housing options (e.g., affordable housing inventory and new development, project-based housing vouchers such as emergency housing vouchers, VA supportive housing or permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, etc.), increased partnerships and improved coordination, as well as easier access to low barrier emergency shelter as their top choices.
- **Barriers and Challenges Facing those experiencing Homelessness:** Similarly, to the responses around areas of opportunity, some of the biggest barriers identified included a lack of affordable housing, transitional housing, and emergency shelter.
- **Project-Based Vouchers and Community Need:** In thinking about how DHA can support and enhance the quality of life within the Wiregrass area, respondents were asked to select which project-based vouchers were needed to help accomplish this. Participants listed Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) as their top three choices.
- **Data Driven Solutions:** When asked about the use of data to inform policy, identify gaps in service, and support innovative solutions, respondents were mixed in their replies. Approximately 43% were neutral (neither agree nor disagree) when asked if the community uses data driven solutions to inform policy and funding; while 40% were neutral when asked if data is effectively being used to identify gaps in service and inform innovative solutions.
- **Number of People Experiencing Homelessness:** It was also a mixed response when asked if the community has a clear understanding of how many people experience homelessness in the Wiregrass Area. Top answers included: Disagree (30%), Neutral (25%), and Strongly Disagree (22%). Only 20% agreed with the statement, and less than 5% strongly agreed.

Outreach

The Wiregrass Community Survey was distributed via email to a list of 132 community contacts provided by DHA. Potential participants were located across the five-county Wiregrass Area (i.e., Houston, Henry, Dale, Geneva, and Coffee counties). Outreach efforts included an initial invitation to participate in the survey with 2 additional email reminders going out to contacts who had yet to respond. The outreach timeline included: (1) Initial email: September 6, (2) Reminder email: September 12, and (3) Second reminder: September 19. There were 36 participants who completed the survey for a 27% response rate. Community contacts spanned across several areas of inter-related work, including anti-poverty programs, housing organizations, and homeless service providers. The breakdown of participants by cross-sector categories includes:

- Housing Sector: 27%
- Homeless Service Delivery: 8%
- Supportive services/allied professions: 58%
- Government: 5%

Survey Design

Collaborative Solutions worked closely with DHA on the survey design, framing of questions, as well as the selection of responses included. The survey instrument contained 12 questions designed to obtain feedback across an array of priority areas, with an average completion time of 12 minutes. Question composition included: multiple choice, select all that apply, and open-ended options. Participants were also asked to provide contact information and to indicate if they were amendable to follow-up post survey. Of the 36 respondents, 29 said yes to having follow-up contact.

Overview of Survey Questions and Responses

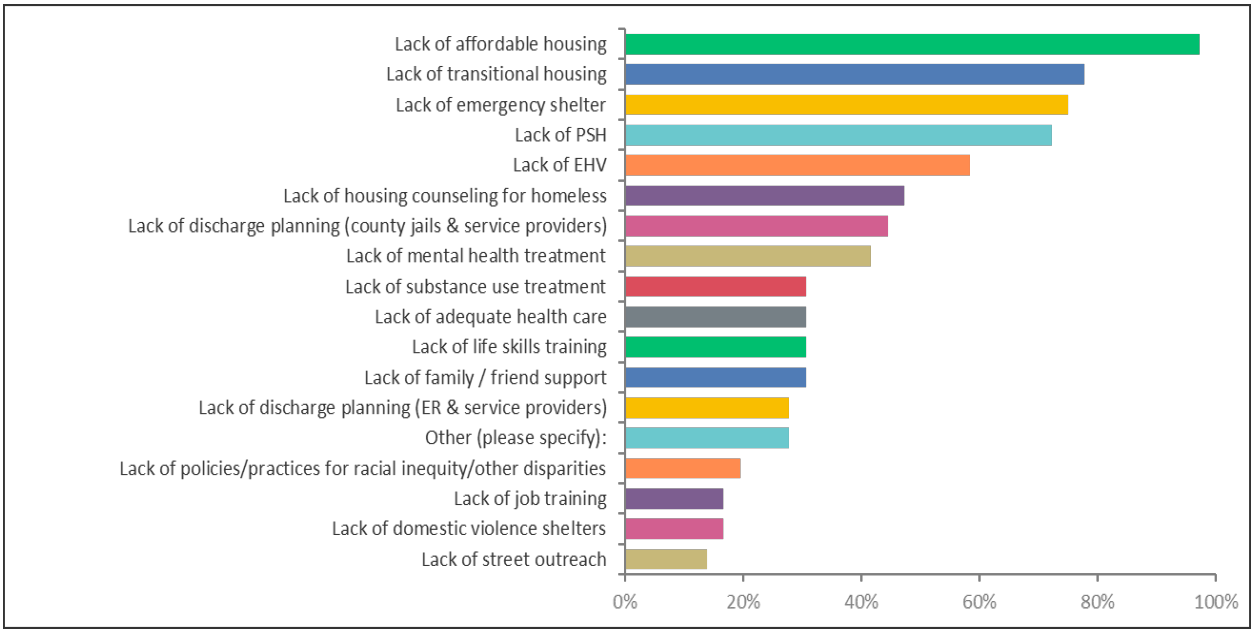
The following information outlines the survey questions and their respective responses. Some of the questions asked participants to rank their top three choices and the option of *other* was provided to allow for the input of additional context. This supporting information, along with a corresponding graphic, is included for the corresponding questions. The insight and feedback collected from the community survey will inform the strategic plan to end homelessness and will be incorporated into the appendices of the report.

Q: What are the biggest barriers and challenges facing the homeless in the Wiregrass area? *(Select all that apply and list any missing barriers / challenges.)*

Top Priority Areas:

1. Lack of Affordable Housing (97%)
2. Lack of Transitional Housing (78%)
3. Lack of Emergency Shelters (75%)

Responses



Other includes:

- Lack of emergency assistance for rent and utilities
- Lack of any local or regional transportation.
- Lack of landlord oversite to ensure housing is adequately maintained and in livable condition. Lack of affordable housing based on the average income from SSDI and SSI-rents currently require 2/3 of the monthly income for those in the low-income brackets.
- Lack of reliable public transportation. Can't get people to work or doctor appointments.
- Housing that people with a past that are working to better their lives can qualify for.

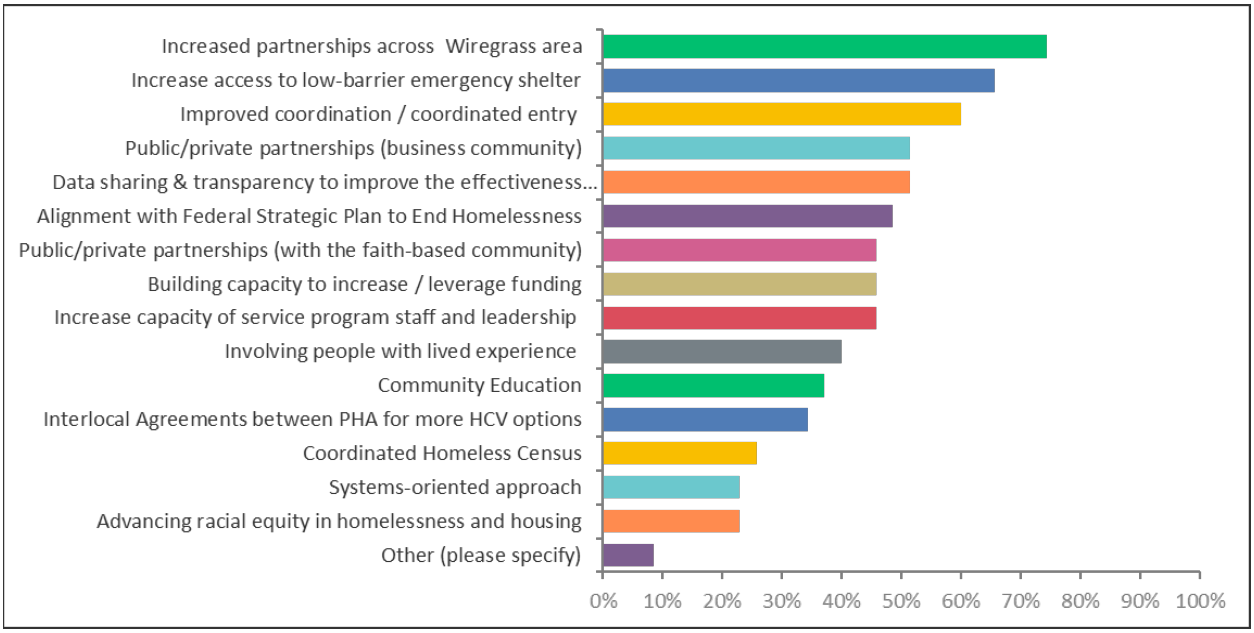
- Lack of public transportation - People need to be able to get to work in order to pay rent.
- Lack of public transportation system
- Lack of housing for folks with bad credit or rental history. Lack of oversight for landlords to repair and maintain, especially if someone has poor rental history they can end up in a place where a landlord charges outlandish prices for slum level housing
- I have seen one of my deaf consumers who had 3 three small children being homeless. There was no shelter for mothers with 3 children. Most shelter are for women who were abused or on drugs. This mother was not on drugs, and it was very hard to find a home for her. She now is living in Dothan Housing Authority. Right now, I have a deaf consumer being homeless. She lost her job and was kicked out of the house. She was not on drugs or abused. We need to find a shelter for people who are not on drugs or abused.
- Lack of supportive services (i.e., Intake, case management) for new homeless coming into area

Q: What are the biggest opportunities, policy options, and best practices that you believe will make the most dramatic impact in addressing homelessness in the Wiregrass area? *(Select all that apply)*

Top Priority Areas:

1. Increased partnerships across cities and counties in the Wiregrass area (74%)
2. Increase access to low-barrier emergency shelter (65%)
3. Improved coordination / coordinated entry system among homeless providers and allied partners (60%)

Responses:



Other includes:

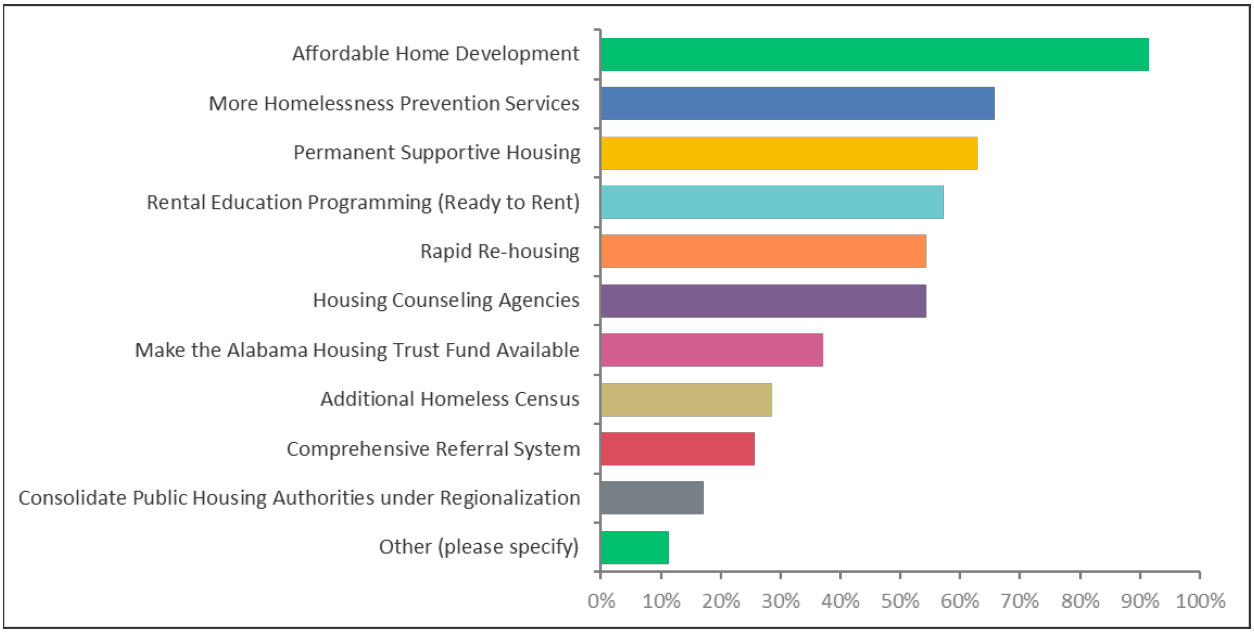
- Regional public transportation system
- Have housing options/opportunities partner and build relationships with local agencies that help place people in housing.
- Understanding the catastrophic effect of no emergency solutions.

Q: Similar to the question above, please select the biggest opportunities, policy options, and best practices listed below that you believe will make the most dramatic impact in addressing homelessness in the Wiregrass area. *(Select all that apply and list any missing opportunities, policy options and best practices.)*

Top Priority Areas:

1. Affordable Home Development (91.4%)
2. More Homelessness Prevention Services (66.7%)
3. Permanent Supportive Housing (62.8%)

Responses:



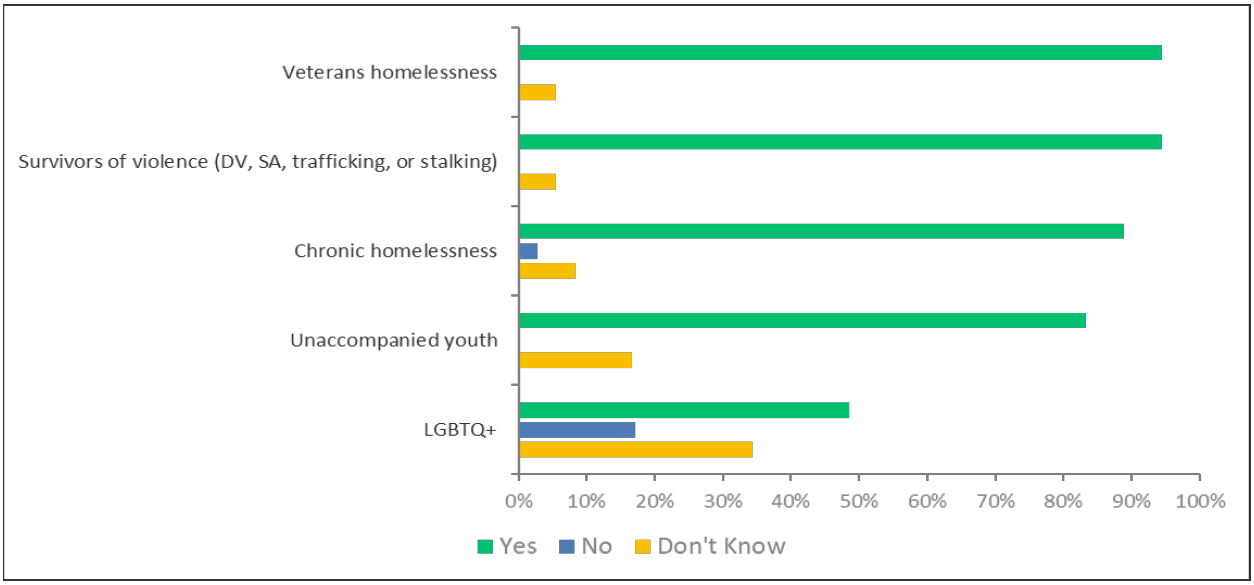
Other includes:

- Partnership between city/ county code enforcement and non-profits to identify blighted homes that could be obtained and renovated to provide housing for the poor and homeless
- Housing Vouchers for Pregnant Women experiencing homelessness
- Transitional services aimed at addressing barriers to stable living.
- Evictions start a vicious cycle. Many people live paycheck to paycheck. If one negative event causes a missed paycheck, tenants can face eviction. If late, a landlord can legally give 7 business days to pay current or they can file an eviction. Even if an eviction is dismissed in court, the court record is public and like a Scarlette letter, prohibiting the tenant in their search for housing years down the line. Emergency assistance, even something like a non-predatory small loan for tenants who get one month behind can help them avoid long term consequences. Often rent assistance takes too long to save a tenant from the eviction case being filed.

Q: Based on need, our community should prioritize services and resources for the following vulnerable populations. *(Note: respondents could indicate one or more priority populations.)*

Responses:

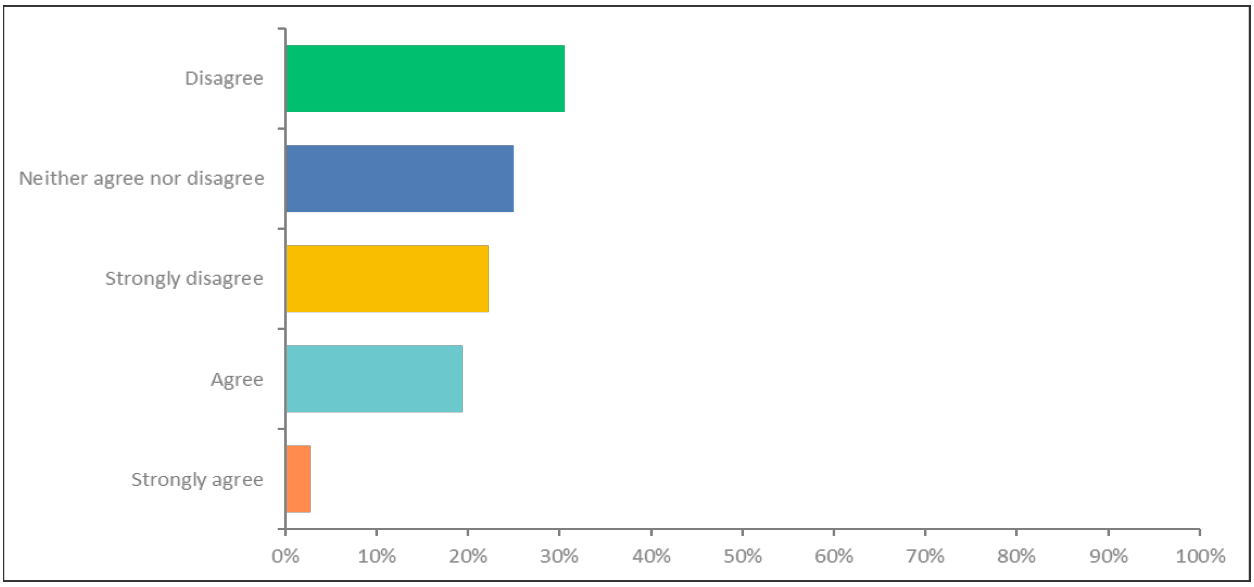
- Veterans Homelessness (94%)
- Survivors of Violence (94%)
- Chronic Homelessness (88.9%)
- Unaccompanied Youth: (83.3%)
- LGBTQ+ (48.5%)



Q: Our community has a clear understanding of the number of people experiencing homelessness across the Wiregrass Area with clear, measurable goals / targets for reducing homelessness. *(Rate on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree)*

Top Responses:

- Disagree (30.5%)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (25%)
- Strongly Disagree (22%)

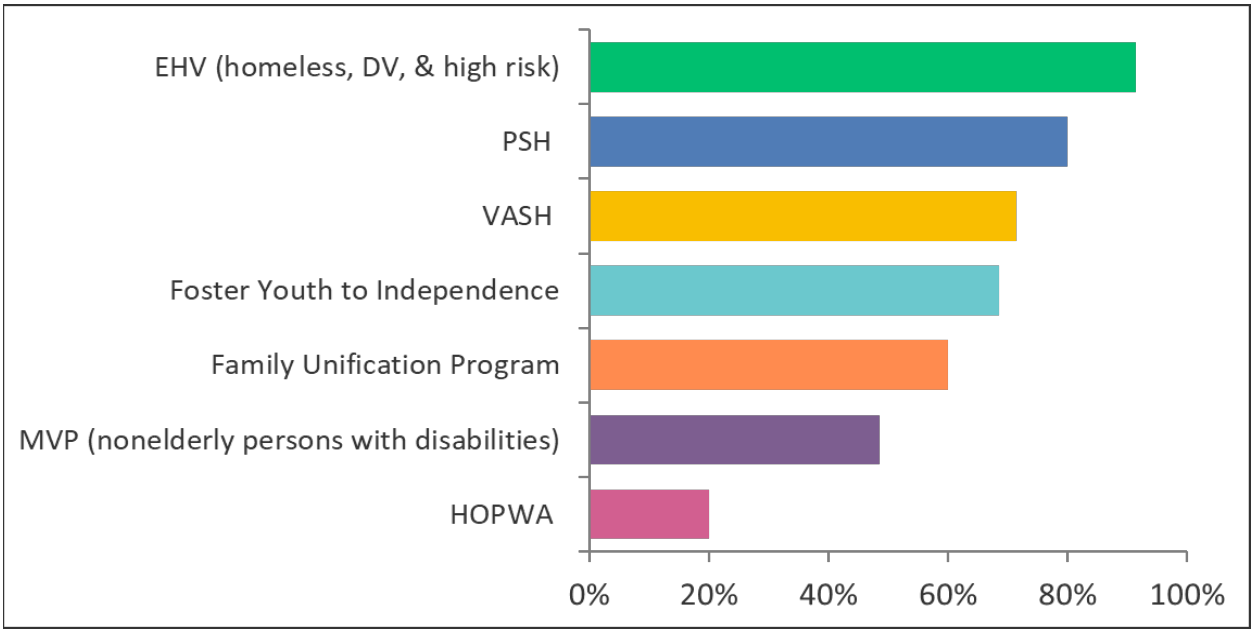


Q: Through Moving to Work Designation, the Dothan Housing Authority is looking to expand the use of special housing vouchers. Based on need, our community should designate special housing vouchers for the following programs. *(Select all that apply.)*

Top Priority Areas:

- Homeless Housing Vouchers (91.4%)
- Elderly Housing Vouchers (80%)
- Permanent Supportive Housing Vouchers (71.4%)

Responses:

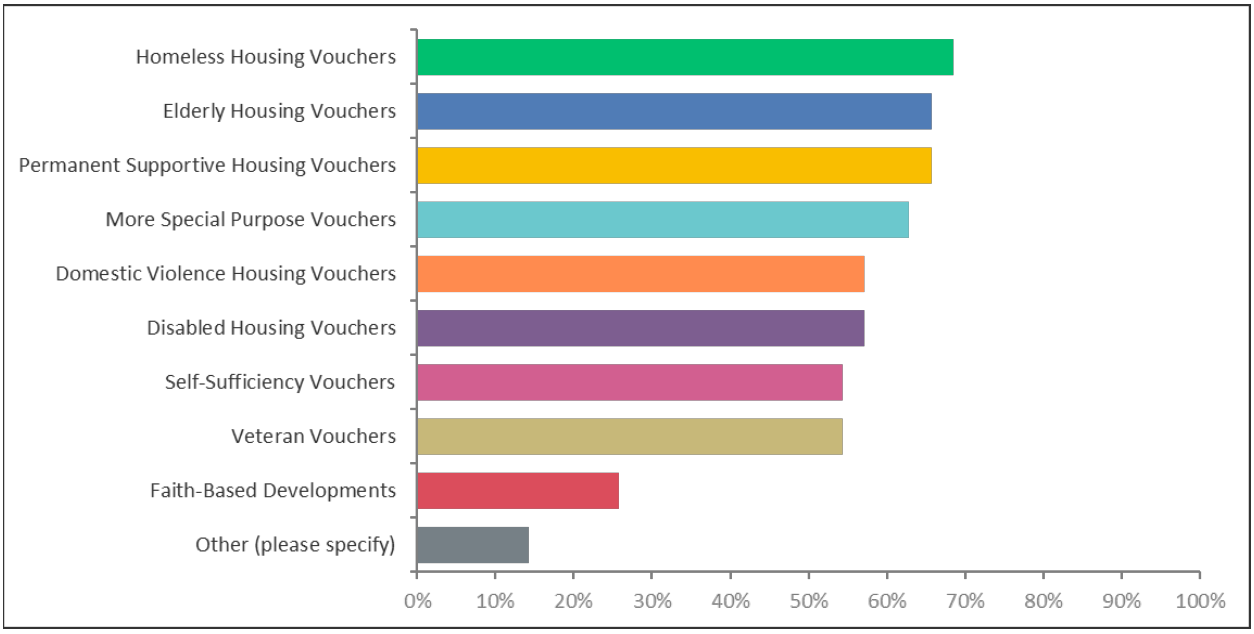


Q: Dothan Housing Authority is committed to supporting opportunities to enhance the quality of life in the Wiregrass area. Which of the following uses for Project Based Voucher (PBV) Development align best with community needs? *(Select all that apply.)*

Top Priority Areas:

- Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) (homeless individuals, domestic violence victims, & high risk for housing instability): 91.43%
- Permanent Supportive Housing (Homelessness and Mental Health): 80.00%
- VASH (Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing): 71.43%

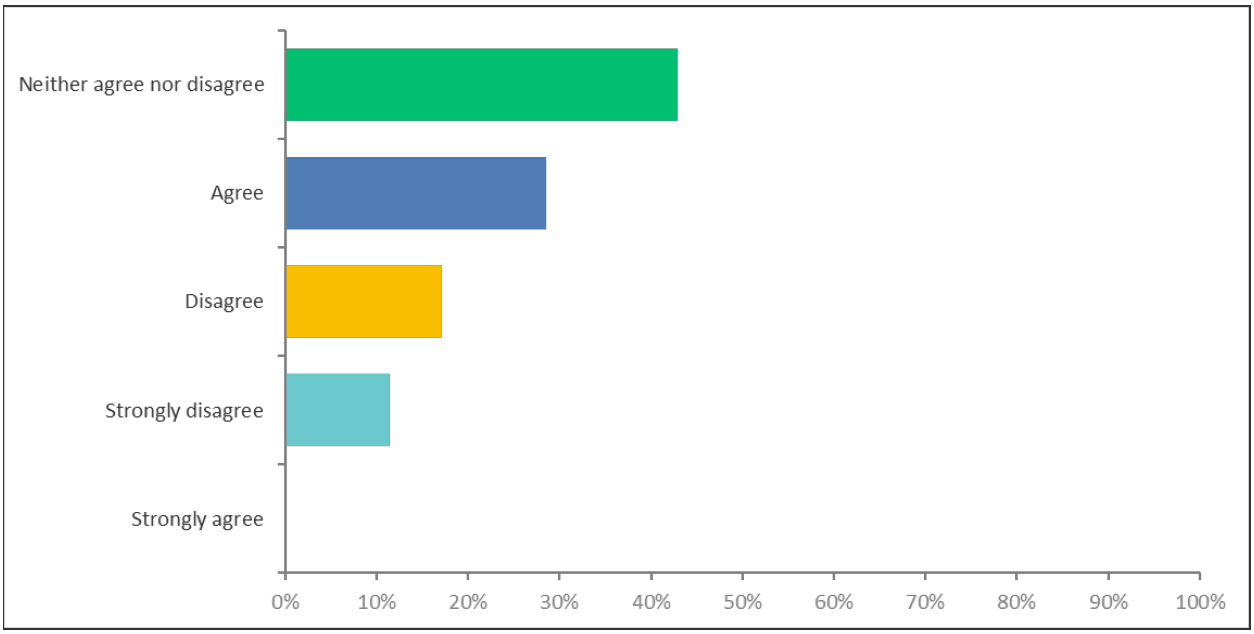
Responses:



Q: Our community uses data-driven solutions to inform policy and funding. *(Rate on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree)*

Top Responses:

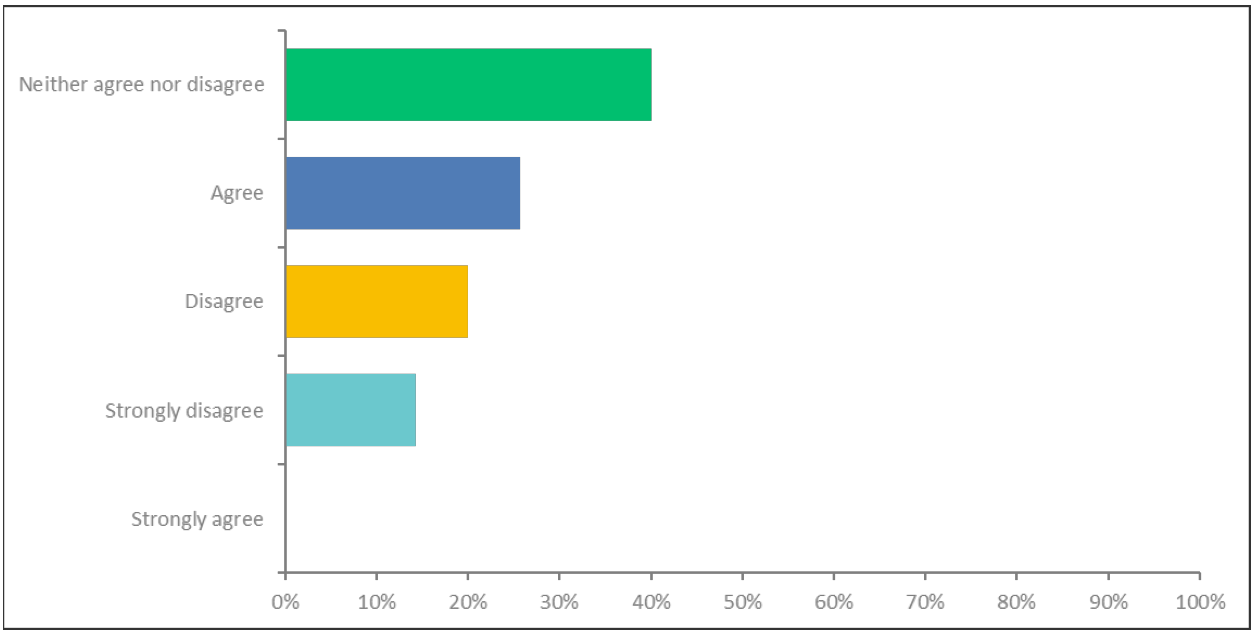
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (42.8%)
- Agree (28.5%)
- Disagree (17.5%)



Q: Our community effectively uses data to identify services and resource gaps and support innovative solutions. *(Rate on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree)*

Top Responses:

- Neither Agree nor Disagree (40%)
- Agree (24%)
- Disagree (20%)



Q: What else is important for us to know? What should be included in the strategy to end homelessness that is not included above?

#	RESPONSES
1	Dothan has so many great non-profit organizations in the area who work well together to address the needs of the community. Of course, they need more money and building space to be able to assist those in homelessness.
2	Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services for families and individuals transitioning to self-sufficiency.
3	Consistent emergency response plans for the homeless population. Incorporate agriculture into special voucher communities. This promotes self-sufficiency and health.
4	AGAIN, regional/local public transportation to allow homeless, poor and near poor population to access housing and services. Additionally, a public/regional transportation system is essential to expand business development and work opportunities.
5	Case management is critical to the success of any of these programs and the individuals. Case management is long term oversite not just a meet and greet and fill out forms and 2 or 3 additional meetings. Case management is 6 months or more weekly or bi-weekly meetings.

6	Community building efforts. Give people a new environment so they don't fall back into the cycles and situations that caused their problems the first time.
7	I attend SEACH meetings and on board. I am active in the Association of Service Agencies. I see the lack of affordable housing and public transportation as 2 of the most needed.
8	Strategies seemed to be covered.
9	Can't think of anything else to suggest.
10	That the City of Dothan and surrounding five counties of Houston, Geneva, Dale, Coffee, & Henry to support a Wiregrass Continuum of Care (CoC). Also, to analyze the feasibility of the Dothan Housing and SEACH merging similar to the San Diego Housing Commission.
11	How to overcome the homeless individuals who will not work with service providers to work toward ending their homeless situation.
12	I think within the strategy there needs to be a follow-up system whereas the consumer is followed up with to ensure they are self-sufficient and not revert back to homelessness.
13	Offer classes that train people how to become homeowners on a budget. Teach them how to take care of their homes on a budget.
14	Coordination with NGO service providers who participate in weekly outreaches and provide emergency services to those in need; require a public transportation system to be implemented; provide appropriate funding to meet the needs of the community.
15	Access to homeless shelters. A particularly vulnerable population are foster children who are aging out of foster care and end up homeless.
16	Convert unoccupied buildings to housing. Dothan once was a manufacturing town; we have manufacturing buildings that could be turned into housing.
17	All levels of local government need to be involved.
18	Dothan Housing Authority has a long waiting list. Most shelters are full. There is not enough space for the homeless. Most shelters are for people who were abused or on drugs, but there is no place for mother with children.

Next Steps

Collaborative Solutions is collaborating with DHA and SEACH to develop a strategic plan to end homelessness. Information from the survey and summary report will be used to guide and inform priority areas within the strategic plan. Additionally, this report will be included in the strategic plan's appendices as well.

Appendix F: List of Participants Completing the Survey

Vickie Alleman
SEACH

Morgan Blakenship
Dare to Hope

Hayden Camp
Southeast Alabama Works

Donna Cantu
AIDB Dothan Regional Center

Donna Clemmons
Wiregrass Habitat

Marc Cronin
Wiregrass 211

Wendy Deatherage
DHA

Mary Ann Drayton
Alfred Saliba Family Services Center

Lisa Eller
Christian Mission Centers, Inc.

Emily Gibson
Wiregrass Hope Group

Julie Gonzalez
Wiregrass Area Food Bank

Rachelle Greczyn
Legal Services Alabama

Leah Gunn
DHA

Taknocca Harris
House of Ruth Inc.

Jim Hartnett
Alfred Saliba Family Services Center

Walter Clinton Hill
Wiregrass United Way

Michael B. Jackson
Dubois Institute for Entrepreneurship, Inc.

David C. Jamison
Genesis Associates

Lorie Killingsworth
CASA of the Wiregrass Region

Dana Kirkland
DHA

Brandee Lukas
Lifted Higher Ministries

Briana Mathis
DHA

Kelly H. Mierkowski
City of Dothan

Mary Jane Oakley
Legal Services Alabama

Marilynne B Pippin
Association of Service Agencies

Jack Porter
SEACH

Klenton Smith
SEACH

Jacqueline Snell
Alabama Public Health

Jessica Spivey
Alfred Saliba Family Service Center

Katie Thomas
Southeast Alabama Works

Dr. Michael Threatt
DHA

Tiffany Trailer
DHA

Malissie Washington
DHA

Tera Wells
DHA / OCI

Jeff Williams
DHA

Appendix G: Moving to Work (MTW) Regionalization PIH Notice 2023-08

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-5000

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

Special Attention of:

Public Housing Agencies;
Public Housing Directors

NOTICE PIH 2023-08 (HA)

Issued: April 7, 2023

Expires: This notice will remain in effect until amended, superseded, or rescinded.

Cross References: Notice PIH 2014-24; Notice PIH 2018-12; FR-5994-N-05

Subject: Process and Requirements for Agency Regionalization under the Moving to Work Demonstration Program

1. **Purpose.** This Notice clarifies HUD policies, Federal statutes and regulations that apply to regionalization implemented under the Moving to Work (MTW) demonstration program, pursuant to Section 239 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Appropriations Act, P.L. 114-113, Sec. 239 (2016 Appropriations Act).

   In addition to authorizing the expansion of the MTW demonstration program to designate 100 additional MTW Agencies, the 2016 Appropriations Act also states:

   - The Secretary may, at the request of a Moving to Work agency and one or more adjacent public housing agencies in the same area, designate that Moving to Work agency as a regional agency.
   - A regional Moving to Work agency may administer the assistance under Sections 8 and 9 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 for the participating agencies within its region pursuant to the terms of its Moving to Work agreement with the Secretary.
   - The Secretary may agree to extend the term of the agreement and to make any necessary changes to accommodate regionalization.
   - A Moving to Work agency may be selected as a regional agency if the Secretary determines that unified administration of assistance under Sections 8 and 9 by that agency across multiple jurisdictions will lead to efficiencies and to greater housing choice for low-income persons in the region.

2. **Applicability.** Notices PIH 2014-24 and PIH 2018-12, and their successor notices, are amended per this Notice to incorporate requirements specific to Agencies participating in the MTW demonstration program.

This Notice applies to all MTW Agencies, including the 39 Initial MTW Agencies that were designated prior to December 15, 2015, and the 100 Expansion Agencies that have or will be designated as MTW pursuant to the FY2016 Appropriations Act, that are interested in regionalizing with other Agencies. Agencies that are participating in any HUD-sponsored research must disclose this within the application to become a Regional MTW Agency. HUD may not approve an MTW Regionalization application with an MTW Agency if it would compromise ongoing research until the research has concluded.

3. **Public Comment.** HUD welcomes stakeholder feedback on all aspects of this Notice via email at MTW-info@hud.gov. Please include "MTW Regionalization Feedback" in the subject line and organize comments by specific sections of the Notice. HUD will consider all public comments for a 90-day period. During the public comment and review period, MTW Agencies may apply for Regional MTW designation in accordance with the requirements in this version of the Notice.

4. **Background.** MTW allows agencies to design and test innovative, locally designed housing and self-sufficiency strategies for low-income families by permitting designated MTW Agencies to use assistance received under Sections 8 and 9 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 1437, et seq, (1937 Act) more flexibly and by allowing certain exemptions from existing Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program rules, as approved by HUD. An MTW Agency may regionalize the administration of its Public Housing and/or HCV programs, as provided under Sections 8 and 9 of the 1937 Act, in order to more efficiently provide housing assistance and services for low-income families, and to expand housing choice.

Potential Benefits to Regionalization

MTW Agencies that pursue regionalization with Partner Agencies may realize the following potential benefits:

- Expand access to low-income housing and affordable housing in higher opportunity areas.
- Achieve economies of scale and greater efficiency in administering a housing program across multiple jurisdictions in a single region, benefitting both the agencies and the residents. These efficiencies may be critical during emergency situations such as the current nationwide pandemic.
- Allow for jurisdictions to make local decisions to improve administration of assistance.
- Promote regional programs with unified administrative policies that can leverage best practices, streamline costs, promote portability and mobility.
- Reposition Public Housing portfolios (ex: leverage funding, change program platform).
- Leverage high-performing MTW Agencies to mitigate challenges faced by troubled or low-performing housing agencies.
- Lessen administrative burden between jurisdictions.

5. MTW Regionalization Options.

In order to achieve "unified administration of assistance", as required in the 2016 Appropriations Act, interested Agencies may pursue the following regionalization options:

A. **Option 1 - Transfer/Consolidation of Programs:** If an MTW Agency, in conjunction with a Partner Agency, is seeking to become designated as a Regional MTW Agency and extend all approved MTW flexibilities – including MTW funding flexibilities[1] - to the Partner Agency, they may pursue a voluntary consolidation, or full or partial voluntary transfer[2] of its Public Housing and/or HCV program(s) pursuant to Notices PIH 2014-24 and PIH 2018-12 and successor notices.

Additional benefits of this option include:

- The ability to utilize full MTW funding flexibility between Public Housing Authority (PHA) jurisdictions.
- As a single entity, leadership between the jurisdictions can determine roles and responsibilities between PHA staff, organizational structure, policy considerations and other programmatic decisions to ensure that all participants are involved in the administration of its program.
- Single Reporting to HUD, and single funding streams from HUD to the Regional MTW Agency.

B. **Option 2 – Management Agreement:** If an MTW Agency, in conjunction with a Partner Agency, is seeking to become designated as a Regional MTW Agency for the purposes of benefitting from joint MTW administrative flexibilities (i.e. statutory and regulatory waivers), and will not apply its MTW funding flexibility to the Partner Agency, the MTW Agency may administer all or a portion of a Partner Agency's Public Housing and/or HCV program and apply MTW flexibilities to applicable units within the Partner Agency's jurisdiction through a Management Agreement executed between the MTW Agency and the Partner Agency.

Additional benefits of this option include:

- PHAs remain separate and distinct entities with the ability to benefit from unified administration of a broad range of MTW flexibilities.
- As a partner of the Regional MTW Agency, the Partner Agency can more easily retain a visible role and prominent position as a housing provider, policy maker, and leader in its community.

[1] MTW agencies have the flexibility to apply fungibility among the three core funding programs' funding streams – Public Housing Operating Funds, Public Housing Capital Funds, and HCV assistance (to include both HAP and Administrative Fees).

[2] Please refer to Notices PIH 2014-24 and PIH 2018-12 and successor notices for definitions of a voluntary partial transfer, voluntary full transfer, and of a consolidation.

- At the end of the term of the Management Agreement, the Partner Agency would retain the right to go back to solely operating its own program.
- Most reporting requirements to HUD do not change, and the mechanics of funding renewals and disbursements from HUD do not change.
- As it relates to expanding housing choice, would allow for aligned policies, possible waiver of fees associated with administering portability, uniform payment standards, housing search assistance, shared inspection services and other benefits of unified administration.

An MTW Agency may partner with one or multiple Agencies for either option, and additional Agencies may join the Regional MTW Agency at a future date, subject to the same requirements in this or successor notices. An MTW Agency may also pursue both options if they are pursuing MTW Regionalization for both the HCV and Public Housing program, where one option may be preferred for each program.

6. Definitions.

A. **Regional MTW Agency:** As authorized through the FY2016 Appropriations Act, this is a designation given to an MTW Agency that has extended its jurisdiction through a voluntary transfer/consolidation or has entered into a Management Agreement to administer the HCV and or Public Housing programs on behalf of the Partner Agency, resulting in unified administration of assistance within the requirements of the MTW demonstration program.

B. **MTW Agency:** The PHA that is designated as an MTW Agency will be the PHA that is designated as the Regional MTW Agency through either of the available MTW Regionalization options.

C. **Partner Agency:** A non-MTW PHA participating with a Regional MTW Agency through either of the available MTW Regionalization options.

D. **Management Agreement:** An agreement between the MTW Agency and a Partner Agency for the provision of services where the MTW Agency, as a Regional MTW Agency, is administering all or a portion of a Partner Agency's Public Housing and/or HCV program for the purposes of applying approved administrative MTW flexibilities, resulting in unified administration of assistance of a Regional MTW Agency within the requirements of the MTW demonstration program. The terms Management Agreement, Interagency Agreement, Cooperative Agreement, or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) have been used interchangeably and are treated the same for the purposes of this Notice.

7. Requirements for MTW Regionalization Options.

A. Option 1 -Transfer/Consolidation of Programs:

1) **MTW Requirements**

a) MTW Agencies that are seeking to pursue a voluntary transfer or consolidation will continue to be subject to all requirements in Notices PIH 2014-24 and PIH 2018-12, and successor notices, and HUD continues to reserve the right to disapprove any transfer/consolidation applications. Notices PIH 2014-24 and PIH 2018-12, and their successor notices, are amended per this Notice to incorporate requirements specific to Agencies participating in the MTW demonstration program.

b) Through an approved voluntary transfer or consolidation, the Regional MTW Agency portfolio includes the Public Housing and/or HCV program of an MTW Agency and of the Partner Agency. All MTW flexibilities authorized for the initiating MTW Agency may apply to all Public Housing and/or HCV units added to its program through a voluntary transfer or consolidation, at the discretion of the Regional MTW Agency.

c) As a result of a voluntary transfer or consolidation, the Regional MTW Agency is a single entity, and it must continue to meet all requirements in its respective guiding document (the Standard MTW Agreement or the MTW Operations Notice, as applicable), including, but not limited to the following: MTW flexibilities, reporting, funding, and cohort studies[3], as applicable.

d) The Regional MTW Agency's Annual MTW Plan/Annual MTW Report or the MTW Supplement/PHA Plan, as applicable, must include all units within the Regional MTW Agency portfolio. Agencies subject to the Standard MTW Agreement will require an amendment to its Attachment A.

e) All units added as part of the voluntary transfer or consolidation will be subject to the following five statutory requirements established under the 1996 MTW Statute:

i. At least 75 percent of the families served must have incomes at or below 50 percent of the area median income.
ii. Continuing to assist substantially the same total number of eligible low-income families.
iii. A comparable mix of families (by family size) must be maintained.
iv. There must be a reasonable rent policy.
v. Housing quality standards must be maintained.

f) The receiving Agency in a voluntary transfer must be an MTW Agency and therefore, will be able to apply MTW flexibilities to the transferred units.

[3] See https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/mtw/expansion for more information on the MTW Expansion Cohort Studies and requirements.

g) Per the 2016 Appropriations Act, Section 8(r)(1) of the 1937 Act on HCV portability shall continue to apply unless provided as a waiver as necessary to implement comprehensive rent reform and occupancy policies. The Regional MTW Agency may not apply any restrictions to portability on any HCV units originating from the Partner Agency's jurisdiction unless the units are part of a HUD-mandated evaluation.

h) For the eleven Initial MTW Agencies with an alternative Public Housing Operating Fund formula[4], the Operating Fund subsidy eligibility for any additional Public Housing units added as part of a transfer or consolidation will be funded in accordance with requirements from past, current, and future appropriations acts, as well as operating subsidy formula law, and regulations, including without limitation the 1937 Act and Title 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as they may be amended from time to time.

B. <u>Option 2 - Management Agreement:</u>

1) **MTW Requirements**

a) The legal form and nature of the agreement between the MTW Agency and its partner(s) governing the administration of the Regional MTW Agency shall not be determined by HUD, except to state that the agreement must conform to this Notice and all relevant statutes, regulations, and program requirements, including without limitation the 1937 Act and Title 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as they may be amended from time to time.

b) The term of the Management Agreement between the MTW Agency and the Partner Agency must be for at least five years. At least one year prior to expiration of the Management Agreement, the Regional MTW Agency shall submit a transition plan to HUD. It is the Regional MTW Agency's responsibility to be able to end all approved MTW activities that include any units from the Partner Agency's program. The transition plan shall describe plans for phasing out such activities, and any closed activities should be reflected in the MTW Agency's MTW Plan or MTW Supplement to its PHA Plan.

c) The Regional MTW Agency's authority to manage and/or administer assisted housing and approved MTW flexibilities within a prospective Partner Agency's jurisdiction must be permitted by state and local law. If, under state and local law, the Regional MTW Agency may not administer or manage assisted housing in the prospective Partner Agency's jurisdiction, the Regional MTW Agency and

[4] Chicago Housing Authority, Elm City Communities (Housing Authority of the City of New Haven), Delaware State Housing Authority, Oakland Housing Authority, Lawrence-Douglas County (KS) Housing Authority, Cambridge Housing Authority, Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Philadelphia Housing Authority, Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, Home Forward (Housing Authority of Portland, OR), and Seattle Housing Authority.

the Partner Agency may not establish the requisite relationship to take advantage of the newly established MTW Regionalization authority.

d) As the MTW Agency is only managing the Partner Agency's Public Housing inventory and/or HCV program and not absorbing it, the Partner Agency is not authorized to apply MTW funding flexibilities from its funding sources to support the Regional MTW Agency, and the MTW Agency may not combine the Partner Agency's funding with its own pursuant to its MTW funding flexibility.

e) The MTW Agency's administering of the Partner Agency's program must include all operational aspects of directly administering vouchers and/or managing Public Housing units, and roles and responsibilities of both agencies must be specified in the Management Agreement, MTW/PHA Plan, and other documents as applicable. The Partner Agency's policy recommendations, staff involvement, and other specific directions may be incorporated into the Management Agreement to ensure meaningful input in the administration of the vouchers and/or Public Housing units.

f) The MTW Agency would be answerable directly to HUD as the Regional MTW Agency for its performance in administering the Partner Agency's HCV and/or PH units. Both the MTW Agency and its Partner Agency shall be jointly and severally liable for any violation of statute, regulation, federal civil rights law, or program requirement that may arise in the MTW Agency's administration of the Regional MTW Agency. Accordingly, HUD may, at its discretion, take enforcement action against either of the agencies for the MTW Agency's failure to comply with program requirements and statutory and regulatory obligations.

g) The MTW Agency and Partner Agency remain bound by all applicable fair housing and civil rights requirements, including but not limited to those under the Fair Housing Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and their implementing regulations, as well as the duty to affirmatively further fair housing.

h) The Regional MTW Agency designation will be acknowledged in the MTW Agency's MTW Plan or MTW Supplement to the PHA Plan, as applicable, per the requirements of Section 9 of this Notice (Ongoing Reporting Requirements). Policy requirements for the Regional MTW Agency must also be included in a board-approved Section 8 Administrative Plan and/or Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) for both the MTW Agency and the Partner Agency, and the PHA Plan for the Partner Agency.

i) There will be no change to a Partner Agency's Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) as a result of its participation in a Regional MTW Agency. The funding the Partner Agency receives through HCV Housing Assistance Payments (HAP), Administrative Fees, Public Housing Operating Fund, and Capital Fund, as

applicable, will continue to be distributed by HUD to the Partner Agency in accordance with each annual appropriations act requirements.

j) The Partner Agency continues to have the responsibility to report on all of its HCV and/or Public Housing units in the Public and Indian Housing Information Center (PIC), or successor system, the Financial Data Schedule, Voucher Management System, its Annual PHA Plan, and in any other systems as required by HUD. The Partner Agency also continues to apply separately to HUD for shortfall funding or any other funding requests. HAP Contracts will be executed by the Agency whose jurisdiction the unit(s) is located in.

k) The Partner Agency is required to submit household data in PIC using the Form HUD-50058 MTW or the Form HUD-50058 MTW Expansion for any households that are participants in the Regional MTW Agency. MTW flexibilities cannot be implemented without reporting household data through the Form HUD-50058 MTW or the Form HUD-50058 MTW Expansion. Software currently utilized by agencies may have the capability to manage the Form HUD-50058 and the Form HUD-50058 MTW or the Form HUD-50058 MTW Expansion, but the Partner Agency should confirm this with its software vendor.

l) Per the 2016 Appropriations Act, Section 8(r)(1) of the 1937 Act on HCV portability shall continue to apply unless provided as a waiver as necessary to implement comprehensive rent reform and occupancy policies. The Regional MTW Agency may not apply any restrictions to portability on any HCV units originating from the Partner Agency's jurisdiction unless the units are part of a HUD-mandated evaluation.

8. Application Process.

A. **Both Options:** In addition to providing the requested application information as indicated in this Section, for both MTW Regionalization options, MTW Agencies must submit the following supplemental responses in a separate document:

1) **Supplemental MTW Regionalization Questions:**

a) Why is a Regional MTW Agency needed? What current inequities or barriers to housing choice exist that a partnership could alleviate/eliminate with MTW flexibilities?

b) How will a Regional MTW Agency lead to greater housing choice for low-income persons in the region per the 2016 statutory language on regionalization? Please provide specifics on how the MTW Agency and Partner Agency will align policies, procedures, etc. to streamline and enhance mobility between jurisdictions.

c) What efficiencies do the participating agencies expect to achieve (ex: administrative efficiencies, personnel time savings, cost savings)?

d) How would the proposed Regional MTW Agency achieve one or more of the three statutory objectives of the MTW Demonstration, and what are the specific impacts on that statutory objective?

e) Is the Partner Agency currently designated as "troubled" in either the Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) and/or Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS), and if so, is there an MOA or Recovery Agreement in place with HUD? Please describe any factors that the Regional MTW Agency may use to assess performance and improve outcomes related to any considerations that may have contributed to the "troubled" status designation?

f) Is the Partner Agency currently a defendant in a Fair Housing Act lawsuit or any other lawsuit alleging violations of federal civil rights laws? Is the Partner Agency currently under the terms of a Voluntary Compliance Agreement, a Conciliation Agreement, consent order, or any other agreement or settlement to remedy or resolve any violations of federal civil rights laws? Has the Partner Agency received a case determination or letter of findings concerning a violation of federal or State civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in housing that has not yet been resolved?

   i. If an MTW Agency or a Partner Agency is subject to a fair housing or civil rights remedial order or agreement (e.g., Voluntary Compliance Agreement, Conciliation/Settlement Agreement, consent order), the MTW Agency must include in its MTW Regionalization application a description of the applicable remedial order(s) or agreement(s) and how the use of any MTW waivers and the adoption of any local, non-traditional activities are consistent with any applicable remedial order or agreement for the MTW Agency and/or Partner Agency. HUD may disapprove an MTW Regionalization application or its use of any waivers or local, non-traditional activities if it is not consistent with any applicable remedial order or agreement.

g) State whether the proposed Regional MTW Agency will result in any cost implications (positive and/or negative) for the MTW Agency and the Partner Agency. If the proposed Regional MTW Agency does result in cost implications, provide an estimate of the amount, and discuss how the MTW Agency and Partner Agency will manage the surplus or deficit anticipated.

B. **Option 1 (Transfer/Consolidation of Programs):** MTW Agencies and Partner Agencies seeking HUD approval for a voluntary transfer or consolidation with one or more Agencies should submit its intent to the local HUD Field Office (with a copy to the MTW Office at MTW-info@hud.gov) per instructions in Notices PIH 2014-24 and 2018-12, including a document that provides responses to the **Supplemental MTW Regionalization Questions** identified above in this Section of the Notice.

C. **Option 2 (Management Agreement):** MTW Agencies and Partner Agencies seeking HUD approval for MTW administrative flexibilities (i.e., statutory and regulatory waivers, and not funding flexibilities) through a Management Agreement should submit its intent to the to the MTW Office at MTW-info@hud.gov (with a copy to local HUD Field Office) in accordance with the established guidelines and instructions below. HUD approval of this option will be based on the following information:

1) **Documentation to be Submitted:**

a) Responses to the **Supplemental MTW Regionalization Questions** identified above in this Section of the Notice.

b) Advance written notice of at least 120 days of the intent to form an MTW Regional Agency via a Management Agreement has been given to HUD. HUD may, upon a showing of good cause, provide an exception to this requirement.

c) A letter of intent signed by the executive director of every PHA wishing to join the MTW Regional Agency, with an accompanying board resolution of each PHA.

d) A general overview of the Regional MTW Agency with a description of planned regional initiatives, roles of both the MTW Agency and the Partner Agency, specific MTW flexibilities the Regional MTW Agency plans to utilize, and any other relevant information.

e) Any Management Agreement documentation between the MTW Agency and its Partner Agency governing the administration of the Regional MTW Agency, that outlines all administration components, including, but not limited to, terms, severability, fiscal impact, compensation, party responsibilities, etc.

9. Ongoing MTW Reporting Requirements. Subsequent to HUD Approval of an MTW Regionalization application and designation of a Regional MTW Agency, the Regional MTW Agency is required to provide ongoing updates on the Regional MTW Agency in its Annual MTW Plan/Report or the MTW Supplement to the PHA Plan, as applicable.

A. **Future and Retrospective Reporting:**

1) **Annual MTW Plan/Report and MTW Supplement to PHA Plan**

a) In an Appendix to the Annual MTW Plan or to the MTW Supplement to the PHA Plan, as applicable, provide information and updates on the status of any components of the Regional MTW Agency including, but not limited to, the following:

i. A general overview of the Regional MTW Agency and a description of planned regional initiatives.
ii. Specific MTW flexibilities utilized and any additional planned MTW flexibilities for the upcoming Fiscal Year.
iii. Cost and Program Implications.
iv. Any other information that the PHAs wish to report on as it relates to the Regional MTW Agency.

b) In the Appendix to the Annual MTW Report or to the MTW Supplement to the PHA Plan, provide retrospective updates on the Regional MTW Agency for the preceding Fiscal Year including, but not limited to, the following:

i. How did the Regional MTW Agency achieve efficiencies during the Plan Year?
ii. How has the Regional MTW Agency increased housing choice for households?
iii. Provide any other relevant updates, including milestones achieved or challenges faced.

c) For MTW Regional Agencies operating under Option 1 (Transfer/Consolidation), all relevant sections of the Annual MTW Plan/Report and the MTW Supplement to the PHA Plan must incorporate the added HCV and/or Public Housing units as applicable.

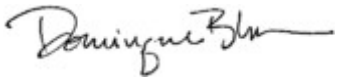
d) For MTW Regional Agencies operating under Option 2 (Management Agreement), the MTW Agency will indicate in the relevant sections of the Annual MTW Plan/Report or MTW Supplement to the PHA Plan any specific MTW activities/waivers that will be used or have been used for the Partner Agency's regional units.

10. Post Regionalization Requirements. A Regional MTW Agency will be subject to all compliance requirements in this Notice and the Standard MTW Agreement or the MTW Operations Notice, as applicable. Additional information on requirements and conditions upon completion of a voluntary transfer and consolidation can be referenced in Notices PIH 2014-24 and PIH 2018-12, or successor notices.

11. Paperwork Reduction Act. The information collection requirements contained in this Notice have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.SC. 3501-3520) and assigned OMB control number 2577-0216. In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, HUD may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

12. Further Information. For further information on the applicability of this Notice or questions relating to its requirements, contact John Concannon, MTW Program Director, at

MTW-info@hud.gov. General information regarding the MTW demonstration program can be found at: www.hud.gov/mtw.



Dominique Blom
General Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Public and Indian Housing