

Rx:Housing

100K Homes/Louisville

December 2016 Progress Report

The Coalition for the Homeless has been the lead advocate for the homeless since 1986. Our mission is to prevent and end homelessness in Louisville through advocacy, education, and the coordination of our 30 member agencies. We were founded 30 years ago to provide programs that address the root causes of homelessness and make services to the homeless more cost-effective, efficient, and compassionate. Our member agencies provide housing, food, clothing, health care, counseling, and legal services to the homeless - from veterans living on the streets to families living out of their cars. Our job is to evaluate the needs of the homeless and of our agencies, to identify and address gaps in services community-wide, and to implement smart, long-term solutions. One successful effort toward this end is Rx: Housing which was created in 2011 to begin coordinating community efforts to address specific sub-populations of the homeless through concerted efforts in order to create a greater focus and result.

Rx: Housing began with a three-day survey of every homeless person on the streets of Louisville. The program creates a common by-name list of people to be housed and allows a committed group to collectively work on addressing the housing needs of this group. Success is achieved through coordination of dozens of agencies working together while The Coalition for the Homeless seeks to find resources to improve the process and/or fill funding gaps.

One source for the flexible funding needed to help the homeless pay for rental deposits, furniture and moving costs for new household items is the annual Give-a-Jam (GAJ) to End Homelessness. Now in its 6th year, GAJ has raised over \$100,000 to provide up to \$1000 per person to make it possible for many to have a home. Funds have also been provided through federal VA grants and local individual donations and foundations like PNC.

Homeless Veterans – In 2015, Rx: Housing agreed to focus on housing veterans as part of the national mayor's challenge signed by Mayor Fischer and others across the country. At the beginning of 2015, 360 homeless veterans were identified, but year end, participating partners including the Robley Rex VA Hospital, Family Health Centers, Volunteers of America Mid-states and Louisville Metro Housing Authority had housed 838 homeless veterans. In 2016, the partners continue to house veterans at the rate they become homeless (approximately 25 per month) to maintain "functional zero" for homeless veterans in Louisville.

Chronically Homeless - Since 2011, Rx: Housing has reduced the number of chronically homeless people (persons with a disability who have been homeless for a year or longer) in Louisville by 66%. In 2016 alone, 137 chronically homeless persons were housed or are in the process of accessing housing. This leaves 52 chronically homeless persons on the by-name list and 119 others who have been homeless for over a year

but have no documented disability. With continued cooperation from community partners including Family Health Centers, Centerstone and St. John Center we are confident we are on track to end chronic homelessness in Louisville by the end of 2017.

Young Adult Homelessness - In 2017, we are launching a new Rx: Housing initiative to end homelessness among unaccompanied young adults. Alarming, the Coalition noticed that, from 2008 to 2009, 2009 to 2010, and again from 2010 to 2011, the number of homeless young adults in Louisville doubled, reaching a peak of 562 in 2013. In 2015, we counted 418 young adults aged 18-24 living in adult emergency shelter or on the streets, plus an additional 450 youth below the age of 18 served at YMCA Safe Place. We propose is to intervene in the lives of these homeless young adults through housing and life-changing services that lead to health and self-sufficiency with nearly 50 partners including Family Scholar House, Home of the Innocents, YMCA Safe Place, KentuckianaWorks, YouthBuild and Centerstone. We will gauge our success on nine measurable outcome goals, including housing all identified homeless young adults and shortening the length of time young adults are unsheltered to no more than 30 days.

According to research by Clive Belfield, researcher and professor of economics, not addressing the needs of homeless youth leads to higher future costs. The largest costs to taxpayers are those of crime to victims and lost earnings by members of the cohort. Using this research, we estimate that the annual cost for 418 homeless young adults identified in Louisville is \$14,892,156. The likelihood of lifetime of government assistance for young adults increases exponentially if their needs are not addressed by the age of 24 so we have no time to lose as witnessed by increasing crime rates and the numbers of disconnected youth present in our city. This is an ambitious plan, but because we have had success with our previous Rx: Housing initiatives (reducing the chronically homeless by 66% and reaching functional zero for veteran homelessness), we know that we can be successful again, thanks to our collaborative and data-driven solutions, modeled on national best practices.

We continue to seek partners interested in helping to reach these important community goals. To receive a copy of the various plans or receive notices of planning meetings, please contact Natalie Harris at 502-636-9550 x 212 or nharris@louhomeless.org. As we continue to house more of the homeless, we also see the affordable rental market becoming tighter and the need for even more affordable housing in our community. The most effective ways that the community can get involved include:

- Donate to the Rx: Housing fund for deposits and furniture at www.louhomeless.org
- Hire or mentor a homeless or disconnected young person
- Contact John Miles at Metro Louisville to let him know you are willing to rent to a homeless person with a voucher and supportive services at john.miles@louisvilleky.gov
- Advocate for more funding for the Louisville Affordable Housing Trust Fund