

# Ending Chronic Homelessness

## Indianapolis Action Plan

### What are our goals?

*Indianapolis' goal is that nobody will experience homelessness for a year or more or return to homelessness after being housed. There will be no individuals or families experiencing chronic homelessness in Indianapolis, except for those who may move to Indianapolis from other locals. Those individuals or families will be housed within 90 days of being identified as chronically homeless.*

### What do we mean by ending chronic homelessness?

*Ending chronic homelessness is defined as having a system in place that addresses the needs of the homeless population and swiftly places individuals and families into appropriate housing, so that no individual or family who desires housing is homeless for longer than 90 days. This includes creating a system to prevent individuals and families who are currently housed from becoming homeless. Indianapolis will provide resources, housing and services for all chronic individuals that include services to assist with maintaining housing and not returning to homelessness.*

### How many individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are in our community?

The chart below highlights the numbers of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness who were identified through our Point in Time count:

Year	Number of Individuals Experiencing Chronic Homelessness
2016	128
2015	184
2014	231
2013	164
2012	214

### Who will manage this process?

*This will be a combined effort among housing providers; service providers and many committees in the Continuum of Care, including the Tuesday Housing Workgroup; the Veterans Homelessness Task Force; the Family Homelessness Response Group; Planning and Investment Committee and the Coordinated Access Task Force. The Tuesday Housing Workgroup will monitor progress and take the lead on implementing identified steps toward ending chronic homelessness in Indianapolis.*

### How are we defining chronically homeless?

*For the purpose of this plan, Indianapolis will utilize the HUD definition of chronic homelessness, which is defined as an individual or family with at least one disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more or has had four episodes of homelessness in the past three years that equal 12 months.*

## **Who is part of the Tuesday Housing Workgroup?**

*The Tuesday Housing Workgroup was formed in 2013, when all PSH providers coordinated on one common application and one common housing pool listing. The Workgroup began meeting weekly to fill vacancies and brainstorm prevention ideas for those at risk of eviction. Homeless service provider organizations were encouraged to attend and have been actively involved since inception. The Tuesday Housing Workgroup continues to meet weekly, and has now increased capacity to include representatives from the Veterans Homelessness Task Force and agencies providing Rapid Rehousing programs. The following entities are an active part of the Tuesday Housing Workgroup:*

*\*Adult and Child Mental Health*

*Anthem*

*Aspire Mental Health*

*Coalition for Homeless Intervention and Prevention (CHIP)*

*City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development*

*\*Coburn Place (domestic violence)*

*Community Hospital*

*\*Damien Center (HIV)*

*Dayspring Center (family shelter)*

*\*Englewood Community Development Center*

*Eskenazi Hospital*

*\*Eskenazi Health/Midtown Community Mental Health*

*Gallahue Mental Health*

*\*Homeless Initiative Program (homeless service provider)*

*Horizon House (homeless day center)*

*HVAF (veteran service provider)*

*\*John H. Boner Community Center*

*\*Julian Center (domestic violence)*

*Outreach, Inc. (homeless youth service provider)*

*\*Partners In Housing*

*\*Pathways to Recovery*

*Pour House (faith based homeless service provider)*

*Professional Blended Street Outreach Team (PBSO)*

*\*Salvation Army Barton Center*

*Trusted Mentors*

*United Way*

*Veteran's Administration*

*Westside Community Development Center*

*Wheeler Mission*

*\*Designates housing providers*

Chronic homelessness has been a focus in the Indianapolis Community, with *Opening Doors* setting a goal to end chronic homelessness by 2015. Utilizing the goals set forth in *Opening Doors*, the following accomplishment outline Indianapolis' response to ending Chronic Homelessness.

**1. The community has identified and provided outreach to all individuals experiencing or at risk for chronic homelessness, and prevents chronic homelessness whenever possible.**

*Indianapolis has 2 men's shelters for individuals, 3 women's shelters for individuals, and 4 family shelters. Indianapolis has long had a large contingent of service providers, including the faith community that have provided services to those persons staying in a place not meant for human habitation. In 2013 the outreach teams formed a more coordinated effort, with service providers cross training and going on outreach together, to decrease duplication of services and provide more efficient and effective outreach services. The Professional Blended Street Outreach Team (PBSO) is made up of 56 individuals from 19 agencies providing outreach services in Indianapolis. The agencies include faith based providers; three mental health centers; homeless service providers; the probation and police department; shelter staff; the public library; as well as youth and veteran service providers. These street outreach teams coordinate to identify where persons living on the streets or in places not meant for human habitation reside; build rapport; engage them in needed services; assure that they are aware of available shelter; and assist with linking them to housing through Coordinated Entry efforts. The Indianapolis Continuum of Care Housing Committee has identified chronic homelessness as a priority population and prioritizes the chronic homeless population into permanent supportive housing. As we are working to improve and build our Community Coordinated Entry processes, Indianapolis will identify a means to track individuals at risk of homelessness and engage them in the Coordinated Entry process.*

**2. The community provides access to shelter or other temporary accommodations immediately to any person experiencing unsheltered chronic homelessness who wants it.**

*During Winter Contingency months or other periods of exceptional weather, all unsheltered persons are offered accommodations and relief from the weather. When bed space is unavailable in inclement weather, emergency plans are in place to assure that all persons are offered sheltered accommodations. The PBSO teams and IMPD staff work tirelessly throughout day and night to assure that persons are accommodated.*

**3. The community has implemented a community-wide Housing First orientation and response that also considers the preferences of the individuals being served.**

*Indianapolis has 9 agencies engaged in providing Permanent Supportive Housing in our Community. Housing First has been taught and embraced by this community and has been an expectation for all PSH providers for several years. A survey, conducted in early 2016, indicates that all providers are adhering to Housing First*

standards and that will remain the expectation with any new housing providers and those seeking to initiate rapid re-housing programs as well. Access to PSH and RRH programs is not contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, lack of criminal justice involvement (except where State laws prohibit, such as persons with a sex offense are prohibited from some project based programs due to location being close to a school) or other unnecessary conditions such as participation in certain activities.

**4. The community assists individuals experiencing chronic homelessness to move swiftly into permanent housing with the appropriate level of supportive services and effectively prioritizes people for permanent supportive housing.**

Since 2005, all new PSH housing programs have been awarded to programs that dedicate beds to only serve the chronically homeless. The Indianapolis community has struggled with having enough available housing to house all chronically homeless persons who are in need of housing. As housing is available (through attrition); the Indianapolis Housing Committee meets weekly to determine the next applicant from the pool. Each applicant has a vulnerability index (VI) and the pool is sorted by highest VI to lowest. The person who has the highest VI, is chronically homeless and meets all criteria for that particular program is placed into the available vacancy, if the applicant agrees to that placement. If the applicant does not agree, they are placed back in the pool to await another opening. With efforts of Coordinated Entry and rapid rehousing programs, the community is becoming more adept at identifying those individuals and families in the pool that may better be served through rapid rehousing. Additional efforts to identify and work with housed individuals on PSH programs who may be able to maintain housing without the PSH supports, are beginning. It is anticipated that this will result in increased turnover of PSH beds, decreasing the time that it takes for chronically homeless individuals and families to receive PSH subsidies.

**5. The community has resources, plans and systems capacity in place to prevent chronic homelessness from occurring and to ensure that individuals who experienced chronic homelessness do not fall into homelessness again or, if they do, are quickly reconnected to permanent housing.**

The Indianapolis community is working toward developing a system to prevent and end chronic homelessness. This includes the addition of rapid rehousing programs; working with individuals and families currently on PSH programs toward living more independently without the subsidy, thus opening up additional PSH for others; adding service staff to work with chronic individuals that do obtain housing to maintain that housing.

**What are the key action steps in the Action Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Indianapolis?**

**Indianapolis Ending Chronic Homelessness Action Plan**

Goal	Action Step	Primary Responsible Organization	Status or Deadline
Establish a Steering Committee	Establish a steering committee responsible for overseeing the end to chronic homelessness	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	Complete
	Define the end of chronic homelessness and what		Complete

	that looks like for this community	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	
Determine the extent of chronic homelessness in the community	Determine criteria for documenting chronic homelessness	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	Complete
	Work through issues of documenting chronic homelessness through outreach	Tuesday Housing Workgroup/PBSO/HMIS	Fall, 2016
	Work through issues of HMIS ability to report chronic homelessness	Tuesday Housing Workgroup/PBSO/HMIS	Winter, 2017
	Identify chronic homeless individuals and families in the housing pool	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	Began – ongoing but continue to have documentation issues
Establish protocol to prioritize households who are chronically homeless for housing as a priority for permanent supportive and rapid rehousing programs	Identify, adopt and implement protocols that establish households who are chronically homeless for housing as a priority for permanent supportive and rapid rehousing	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	Completed 3/2016
	Increase knowledge and coordination with veteran housing providers and establish procedures to determine appropriate provision of housing and services	Tuesday Housing Workgroup Veterans Task Force	Completed 5/2016
	Update policy manual to reflect housing chronically homeless for housing as a priority for permanent supportive and rapid rehousing	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	PSH Complete 3/2016 Fall, 2016 for RRH protocols
	Combine staffing of PSH and RRH opportunities to collaborate on best options for chronically homeless applicants	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	Begin combined meetings 8/16/2016
Establish a coordinated entry system for all homeless individuals, including chronically homeless individuals and families	Define how coordinated entry will work for chronically homeless individuals and families	Coordinated Entry Workgroup	Winter, 2017
Swiftly move chronically homeless individuals and families into permanent housing and expand the	Prioritize chronically homeless individuals for PSH openings and RRH openings	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	PSH Complete 3/2016 Fall, 2016 for RRH protocols

availability of housing in the community			
	Establish an initiative to assist those who can move on from PSH to more independent housing to open up availability for more PSH opportunities	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	Fall, 2016
	Partner with United Way to access RRH funds to expand availability	RRH programs United Way	Complete – implementation August, 2016
	Partner with Planning and Investment Committee to recruit landlords for PSH scattered site and RRH sites	Planning and Investment Tuesday Housing Workgroup	Winter, 2017
	Leverage ESG funding to support RRH programs in community	Planning and Investment	Winter, 2017
Address prevention and avoid evictions	Identify supportive service provider protocols/best practices to assist persons housed through PSH or RRH to retain housing	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	Fall, 2016
	Work with faith-based providers to deliver services to PSH and RRH residents to help build community among residents	Tuesday Housing Workgroup	Fall, 2016
	Educate landlords on resources that are available to assist them in retaining residents in housing	Planning and Investment Family Homelessness Task Force Tuesday Housing Workgroup	Winter, 2017