



Agenda Item Report

City Commission - May 07 2024

Department

City Manager's Office

Staff Contact

Brandon McGuire, Assistant City Manager

Recommendations

Consider adopting Joint City/County Resolution No. 7540/24-09, adopting A Place for Everyone as the community's strategic plan to end chronic homelessness.

Executive Summary

A Place for Everyone is the community strategic plan for Lawrence and Douglas County to end chronic homelessness. This memo includes links to the full plan and past agenda reports which include more detail.

The goal of A Place for Everyone is to, by 2028, create a system that achieves functional zero through policy, system, and environmental changes resulting in all Douglas County residents having access to the fundamental human right of safe, accessible, attainable, and affordable housing, and in which homelessness is a rare and brief occurrence.

The plan is organized in five focus areas, each of which includes goals and strategies. The focus areas are:

1. Equity and Inclusion
2. Affordable Housing
3. Supportive Housing
4. Systems
5. Emergency Shelter and Services

A Place for Everyone was produced following assessments of our homeless response system and supportive housing needs, engagement with collaborative partners, and a public engagement process. City and County governing bodies received a mid-project presentation in April 2023 and a presentation of the final plan during a joint meeting January 17, 2024. Adoption of the proposed joint resolution will complete the planning process by officially adopting A Place for Everyone as our community's plan to end chronic homelessness.

The Community Health Plan (CHP) provides a structure for implementing A Place for Everyone and the plan is the CHP Safe and Affordable Housing plank. A Place for Everyone also provided the primary framework for the City's 5-year Consolidated Plan, a requirement of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) funding

programs.

Accountability for implementation of A Place for Everyone ultimately falls to the City and County, with collaborative partner support. The five work areas are led by City and County staff. Upon adoption of the joint resolution, the Affordable Housing and Emergency Shelter and Services focus areas represent the workplans for the City's Affordable Housing Administrator and Homeless Solutions Director.

Alignment to Strategic Plan

Strong, Welcoming Neighborhoods

Fiscal Impact

The table below provides 5-year cost estimates for the focus areas. A Place for Everyone commits the City to leadership in the focus areas of affordable housing and emergency shelter, but future funding decisions are subject to the annual budget.

The City already invests significantly in affordable housing and homeless response. The City recently invested more than \$8.3 million of American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds for affordable housing and homelessness projects. The 2024 City budget includes \$5.1 million for Homeless Solutions across all funds (including ARP funds), and the City continues leveraging the 2019 voter approved affordable housing sales tax (.05 cents) to spur affordable housing development. Finally, the County has acted similarly with ARP fund allocations and continues building capacity in supportive housing and behavioral health services using the 2018 voter approved behavioral health sales tax.

While current City and County budgets provide a foundation for plan implementation, additional funding strategies will be needed. These strategies will include grant applications and strategies to leverage public investment to spur private development.

Focus Area	Cost Estimate for 5-year Plan
Equity & Inclusion	\$45,023
Affordable Housing	\$218,268,351
Supportive Housing	\$28,431,000
Systems	\$25,000
Emergency Shelter	\$20,997,105

Action Requested

Adopt Joint City/County Resolution No. 7540/24-09.

Previous Agenda Reports:

[January 17, 2024, Regular Agenda Item No. 2](#)

Receive presentation on "A Place for Everyone" plan to end chronic homelessness in Lawrence and Douglas County.

ACTION:

Receive presentation on "A Place for Everyone" plan to end chronic homelessness in Lawrence and Douglas County.

[Agenda Item Report 24-033 - Pdf](#)

[April 4, 2024 Work Session Item No. 2](#)

Receive presentation on the proposed Lawrence Douglas County Affordable Housing and Homelessness Community Strategic Plan.

[Agenda Item Report 23-196 - Pdf](#)

Attachments

[Joint City-County Resolution No. 7540/XX-XX](#)

[A Place for Everyone](#)

COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. XXX

CITY RESOLUTION NO. 7540

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF LAWRENCE, KANSAS, AND THE COUNTY OF DOUGLAS, KANSAS, ADOPTING, AS OUR COMMUNITY’S STRATEGIC PLAN TO END CHRONIC HOUSELESSNESS IN THE CITY AND THE COUNTY, THAT DOCUMENT ENTITLED “A PLACE FOR EVERYONE.”

WHEREAS, it is the goal and mission of the Governing Bodies of the City of Lawrence, Kansas, and the County of Douglas, Kansas, to protect the life, health, safety, and welfare of all persons in the community, regardless of race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, ancestry, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, socioeconomic status, or housing status, in order to create and maintain a community where all persons enjoy life and feel at home;

WHEREAS, the City and County, together, and in partnership and in collaboration with community partners and caregivers, are committed to assisting those persons in our community who, for one reason or another, experience houselessness;

WHEREAS, the number of unhoused people in the City and County has increased in recent years, approximately 50% since 2016;

WHEREAS, the City and County have, at any given time, in excess of approximately 300 persons experiencing houselessness in the community, giving rise to a housing crisis that transcends the municipal boundaries of the City and the County;

WHEREAS, in order to address the issue of houselessness, the City and the County, on May 19, 2021, through City Resolution No. 7373 and County Resolution No. 21-17, pledged and resolved to cooperate with one another and to work with community partners and caregivers to put into effect various measures to combat chronic houselessness in the community and to develop a strategic plan that would end chronic houselessness within the community; and

WHEREAS, over the past several years, the City and the County, together with community partners and caregivers, have worked ceaselessly to develop and to implement a strategic plan that would end chronic houselessness in the community by 2028 and that strategic plan is defined and outlined in that document entitled “A Place for Everyone.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODIES OF THE CITY OF LAWRENCE, KANSAS, AND THE COUNTY OF DOUGLAS, KANSAS:

SECTION 1: The City and County hereby adopt and incorporate herein by reference the above-stated recitals as if set forth herein *verbatim*.

SECTION 2: The City and the County hereby adopt, as the community’s Strategic Plan to end chronic houselessness within the City and the County, that document entitled “A Place for Everyone.”

ADOPTED by the Governing Body of the City of Lawrence, Kansas, this 7th day of May, 2024.

APPROVED:

Nathan Littlejohn III
Mayor

ATTEST:

Sherrí Riedemann
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Toni R. Wheeler
City Attorney

ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of Douglas County, Kansas, this ____ day of May, 2024.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
DOUGLAS COUNTY, KANSAS**

Karen Willey, Chair

Shannon Reid, Commissioner

Patrick Kelly, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Jameson D. Shew, County Clerk

A Place for Everyone



**Our plan to end homelessness in
Lawrence and Douglas County**



The City of Lawrence and Douglas County are grateful to be joined in this work by the following agencies that reflect the Housing and Homelessness Stakeholders in this community:

Artists Helping the Homeless
Bert Nash
DCCCA
Family Promise
Habitat for Humanity
Heartland Community Mental Health
Justice Matters
Kansas Balance of State Continuum of Care

Kansas Legal Services
Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition
Lawrence Community Shelter
Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority
Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health
LMH Health
Tenants to Homeowners
Willow Domestic Violence Center

***A Place for Everyone* is our community plan to end chronic homelessness in Douglas County.**

Our goal: By 2028, we will create a system that achieves functional zero through policy, system, and environmental changes resulting in all Douglas County residents having access to the fundamental human right of safe, accessible, attainable, and affordable housing, and in which homelessness is a rare and brief occurrence.

To reach this goal, we've established five work areas to be addressed:

- Equity and Inclusion
- Affordable Housing
- Supportive Housing
- Systems
- Emergency Shelter and Services



Currently, our community does not have sufficient capacity for people to access the type of shelter they need for their specific circumstance. According to the 2022 Douglas County Homelessness Needs Assessment conducted by the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research, more affordable housing and permanent affordable housing options are needed to serve the unsheltered population in Douglas County.

From this research and based on community conversations we've had with people in Douglas County, including those with lived experience, we've identified an overwhelming need to increase availability in these three categories of shelter: 1) affordable housing, 2) emergency shelter and services, and 3) supportive housing. All our work ladders up to these three goals:

1. Increased affordable housing

2. Increased emergency shelter and services

3. Increased supportive housing

As we work toward our goals for increased affordable housing, emergency shelter and services, and supportive housing, we need to be intentional in the way we do the work. There are two primary considerations to how we do our work: the first is Equity and Inclusion and the second is the Systems we have in place to connect our partner organizations behind one collective goal: ending chronic homelessness in Douglas County.

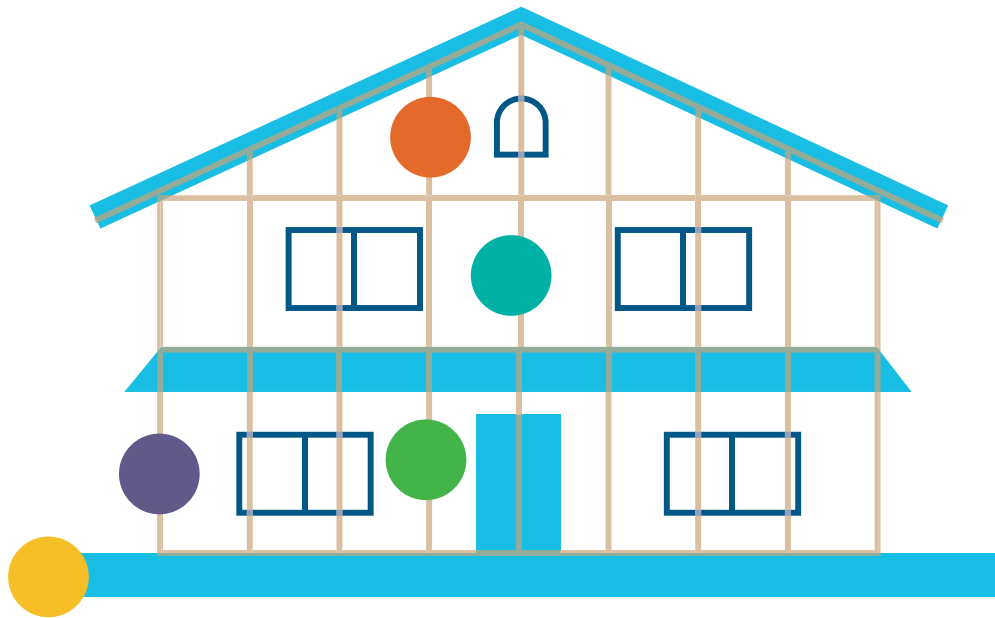


The Housing Needs Continuum shows the wide range of sheltering options that should be available in a community. Each part of the housing continuum serves a unique need to the individuals that utilize them.



Affordable housing is defined as when total housing costs exceed no more than 30% of a household's total income.

Our approach to ending chronic homelessness is like building a house. The five work areas are all important parts of the house we're building.



FOUNDATION

First, our house needs a solid foundation. The foundation of our work to end chronic homelessness is equity and inclusion as it will inform every other aspect of our plan.

INFRASTRUCTURE

After the foundation is established, we're building the infrastructure of our house: the walls, the plumbing, etc. For our plan to end chronic homelessness, the infrastructure is the Systems work area. Our Systems will govern over and hold the rest of our work together.

LEVELS

Finally, we have the different levels of the house itself. The first floor of our house is the most important and most used, and for our plan to end chronic homelessness, that is our work to increase affordable housing. The second floor of our house, which is also important but generally less utilized, is supportive housing. Finally, we have the top floor of the house, which for our plan is Emergency Shelter and Services. This is a necessary part of the house, but we don't use it nearly as often as the main living areas.





Our Foundation: Equity and Inclusion

According to the 2022 Douglas County Homelessness Needs Assessment, both racial and gender disparities in who experiences homelessness warrant further attention in our community. Additionally, the study identified a need to explore opportunities for engaging individuals with lived experience of homelessness to provide decision-making input.

Recognizing that homelessness disproportionately impacts women, Black, Indigenous, and other Persons of Color (BIPOC) in our community, this plan is designed to optimize equity by focusing on the following low-income populations in our community:

- Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness
- BIPOC individuals/households experiencing or at-risk of homelessness
- LGBTQ+ individuals/households experiencing or at-risk of homelessness
- Families with children younger than 18
- Single-parent, female-headed households
- Justice-involved/formerly incarcerated residents
- Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) in institutional setting
- Low-income seniors
- Transitional youth, unaccompanied minors, and youth aging out of foster care
- Individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) and severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI)
- Survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and/or stalking
- Immigrant individuals/households
- Individuals with English as second language
- Individuals with disabilities



WHAT ARE OUR GOALS FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION?

- By 2024, define a clear set of equity goals that will inform all areas of this plan
- By 2024, prioritize equity in community education resources
- By 2024, establish ongoing roles in this work for people with lived experience
- By 2025, use data to track success and sustainability
- By 2026, focus on equity in policy and budget decisions
- By 2026, target systemic inequities to increase diverse homeownership
- By 2027, promote best practices that improve diversity and equity for all service providers

HOW ARE WE GOING TO REACH OUR EQUITY AND INCLUSION GOALS?

- Support a shared vision of equity between all local agencies and government with a shared terminology list
- Determine four data performance measures that tie directly to equity goals and action steps
- Highlight equity in all community education resources and communication, with improved collaboration and availability of easy-read resources
- Establish ongoing roles for individuals with lived experience to inform planned strategies, including an advisory board and opportunities for paid work
- Develop a decision-making model that targets and reduces racial disparities by prioritizing funding for projects with an equity focus
- Identify policies that reduce the risk of homelessness, increase accessibility and uplift historically marginalized populations; target systemic inequities and increase diverse homeownership
- Create long-term Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training and assessments for all levels of organization and government



The Infrastructure: Systems

Ending chronic homelessness in Douglas County requires a coordinated system of resources in which many organizations work together. These “systems” help us gather an accurate picture of where things stand so that we can move this work forward.

The systems we are establishing in our community fit into the Built for Zero framework, which is an initiative both the City of Lawrence and Douglas County committed to in March 2020. In the Built for Zero model, we end chronic homelessness through the following strategy:

1. Build a single team that is accountable for ending homelessness throughout the community.
2. Commit to a shared aim of ending homelessness. We measure progress not by the goals of each organization but by whether we are collectively driving down the number of people experiencing homelessness.
3. Know everyone experiencing homelessness by name and in real-time.
4. Make data-driven, targeted investments for increased housing.

Our systems goals are all work items to be accomplished in the next one-to-two years, as our success in these areas will help inform and improve our work in the housing investment areas of this plan.



WHAT ARE OUR GOALS FOR SYSTEMS?

- By July 2024, achieve quality data through the Built for Zero framework
- By April 2024, launch a dashboard for real-time homelessness and housing data specific to Douglas County
- Increase participation in the Homeless Management Information System and Coordinated Entry System by 20%

HOW ARE WE GOING TO REACH OUR SYSTEMS GOALS?

- Collaborate among partners within the Homeless Management Information System and promote resource and service tracking
- Build a Built for Zero-specific report and dashboard and share it with the community
- Identify agencies who serve the unhoused population that are not able to use the Homeless Management Information System and create a plan for data integration for the dashboard
- Develop key performance indicators to utilize for public education
- Conduct a Housing Study through the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation
- Increase Lawrence and Douglas County representation at Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System Steering Committee meetings
- Make the Homeless Management Information System accessible for all homeless targeted programs and housing services throughout the community to review, input data and pull reports



The first floor: Affordable housing

Affordable housing is the solution to homelessness. It fosters economic prosperity and is a basic human right. And yet, Douglas County does not have enough housing that is affordable for people who live and work in our community. Housing costs continue to rise for both renters and homeowners, resulting in an increase in evictions and homelessness—and a decrease in homeownership. Meanwhile, wages have not kept pace with the rising cost of rent, utilities, interest rates and home sales prices, which has increased the number of households experiencing housing stress and insecurity. Housing stress is defined as spending more than 30% of income on housing costs.

A 'housing wage' is what a household must earn to afford rent at fair market value without spending more than 30% of income in housing expenses. The housing wage in Douglas County for a two-bedroom apartment is \$18.27 an hour—more than double the state minimum wage. This means that even working full time, many community members cannot afford the cost of housing. Almost half of renters and almost a quarter of homeowners in Douglas County experience housing insecurity, meaning that many of these households are one emergency away from homelessness.

The goals of the affordable housing portion of this plan are focused on increasing the amount of affordable rental and homeownership properties and improving access to the affordable housing that already exists.



WHAT ARE OUR GOALS FOR INCREASING AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

- By 2028, increase the supply of affordable rental housing units by 1,500
- By 2028, increase the supply of affordable homeownership units by 200
- By 2028, increase the supply of accessible and affordable units by 100
- By 2028, increase the supply of affordable units for families with minor children by 500
- By 2028, establish policy and system changes that realign power imbalances that currently prevent access to, or development of, affordable housing

HOW ARE WE GOING TO REACH OUR AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS?

- Develop a long-term affordable housing plan
- Provide a grant subsidy for new development or rehabilitation of desired unit types
- Acquire parcels and units for the community land trust and future affordable housing development
- Provide recommendations for City code updates that allow for affordable housing development
- Establish the tenant's right to legal representation in Douglas County
- Enforce the City's protection against source of income discrimination
- Establish a City of Lawrence vacant and dilapidated structure registry
- Establish an incentive program for affordable housing development
- Establish funding resources
- Develop a plan for ongoing community engagement re: affordable housing
- Develop programs that increase racial equity in affordable housing access and land ownership



The Second Floor: Supportive Housing

An increase in supportive housing, especially permanent supportive housing, is needed to serve community members who have the most difficulty remaining housed. Data from the 2022 Douglas County Homelessness Needs Assessment points to a sizable portion of the population experiencing long-term and often cyclical bouts of homelessness. More than 40% of this population had experienced homelessness three or more times in the past three years, and almost 50% had been homeless for more than 12 months in the past three years. Data also indicated a high incidence rate of mental health and substance use issues within the population.

The rates of chronic/cyclical homelessness, mental health, and substance use issues, as well as conversations with community providers, indicate that more than 150 individuals may benefit from supportive housing to help them break the chronic homelessness cycle. The Corporation for Supportive Housing's needs assessment (released May 2022) focused on community permanent supportive housing needs within Douglas County. It found that 381 supportive housing units are needed in the community. Of those, individuals and families experiencing homelessness need at least 115 permanent supportive housing units.



WHAT ARE OUR GOALS FOR INCREASING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING?

- By 2027, increase the number of permanent supportive housing units dedicated to these groups:
 - Chronically homeless individuals (+30 units)
 - Chronically homeless families (+2 units)
 - Homeless individuals aged 55+ (+50 units)
 - Justice-involved individuals (+20 units)
 - Child-welfare involved families (+10 units)
 - Homeless individuals aged 17-23 (+8 units)
- By 2027, increase the number of transitional housing units dedicated to homeless individuals with substance use disorders or mental illness by 15 units

HOW ARE WE GOING TO REACH OUR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING GOALS?

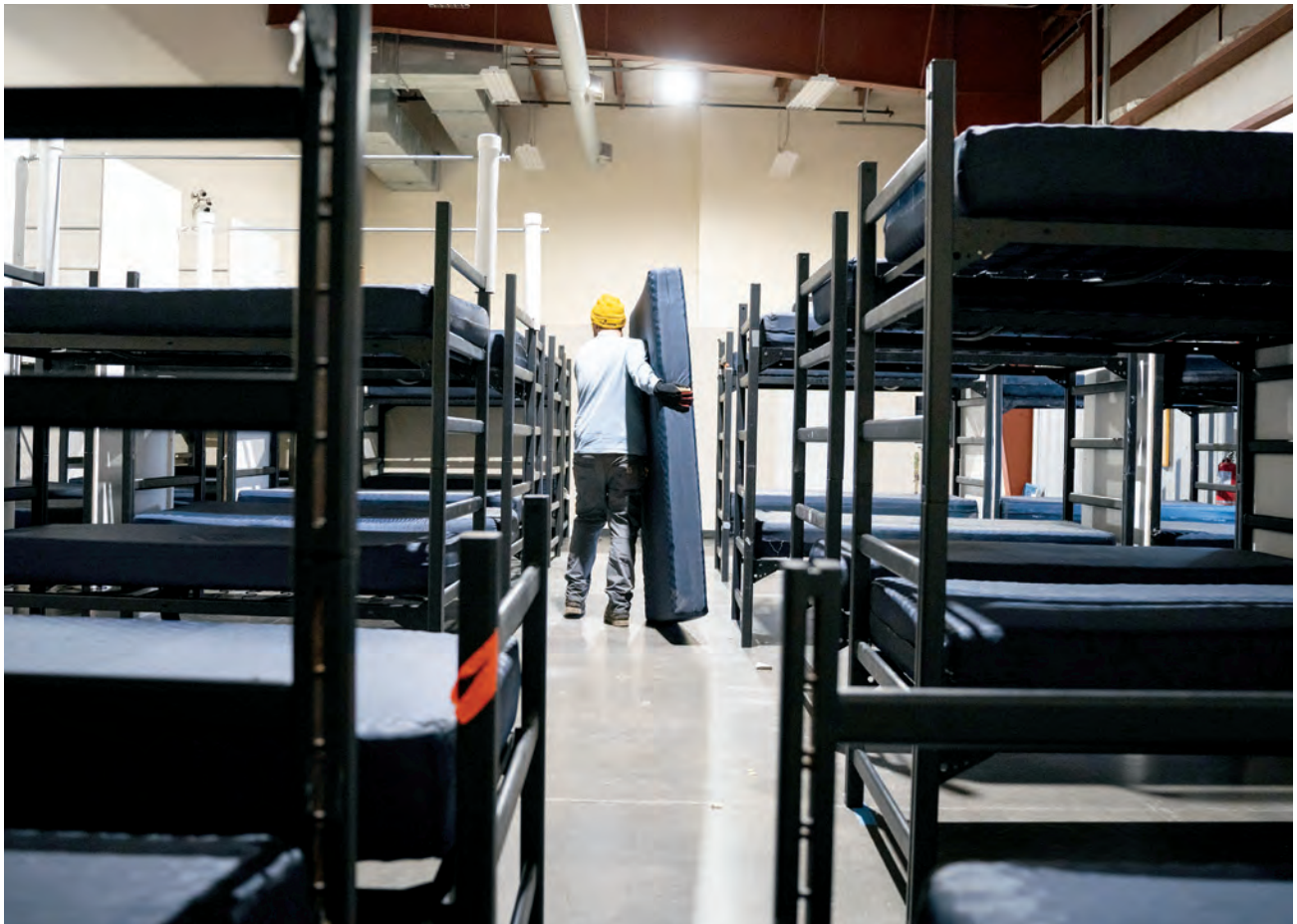
- Develop a five-year supportive housing Capital Improvement Plan
- Establish a community supportive housing case management program
- Establish sustainable funding resources
- Design and develop emergency, non-congregate shelter services
- Design a curriculum to build community buy-in and trust for supportive housing



The Top Floor: Emergency Shelter and Services

Emergency shelter is temporary, short-term housing for people experiencing homelessness. It is an intermediary solution that helps move individuals off the street or out of illegal camping into a situation where they can have access to needed support services. Emergency shelter can also be extremely beneficial for service providers as it gives them a known location where they can help people experiencing homelessness get the assistance they need.

In Douglas County, there are currently an insufficient number of emergency shelter beds for people experiencing homelessness. The latest point-in-time count in 2023 listed 351 homeless individuals living in Douglas County. Of those, 95 people are currently unsheltered.



WHAT ARE OUR GOALS FOR INCREASING EMERGENCY SHELTER AND SERVICES?

- By 2024, enhance the regional coordinated entry system of agencies and access points to provide triage, diversion and care coordination to those at risk of—or currently experiencing—homelessness
- By 2026, establish a street outreach team to serve unsheltered homeless individuals
- By 2027, reduce the Douglas County Point-In-Time count for unsheltered individuals by 50%
- By 2027, provide women and families with immediate access to low-barrier emergency shelter services for up to 65 beds
- By 2027, establish a homeless community outreach and day center facility

HOW ARE WE GOING TO REACH OUR EMERGENCY SHELTER AND SERVICES GOALS?

- Define programmatic and operational expectations for community organizations to provide emergency shelter services
- Develop policy framework to build trust and accountability with our community
- Define and develop the Pallet Shelter Village program
- Expand street outreach services
- Establish a community severe weather and disaster response and recovery emergency shelter plan for houseless individuals

Conclusion

More detailed information on *A Place for Everyone* is available online at dgcoks.org/aplaceforeveryone. The website includes corresponding action items for the identified strategies.

A Place for Everyone is a living plan that will be reviewed and updated annually. The website will have the most up-to-date information on the current work being undertaken.

Photo Credit

Our thanks to Taylor Mah, City of Lawrence media and creative specialist, for the photos used in this document. Additionally, we thank and appreciate the following organizations for allowing us to take photos for use in this document:

Douglas County Housing Authority
Page 12: the Cottages at Green Lake project, which provides supportive housing for those with mental illness.

City of Lawrence
Page 4: Camp New Beginnings, an emergency shelter option in North Lawrence

Page 7: City crews building pallet cabins at The Village, an emergency shelter option on N Michigan St.

Artists Helping the Homeless
Pages 7, 14: Meraki House, which is a supportive housing option in our community.

Lawrence Community Shelter
Page 16: emergency overnight shelter facilities.

Tenants to Homeowners
Page 19: a completed house on Beatnik Ct.





A Place for Everyone

