Oakland County Blueprint to End Homelessness, 2021

OAKLAND COUNTY MICHIGAN
NEIGHBORHOOD & HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Facilitated by:
MPHI®

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Vision Statement:

People at risk or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County will have timely, equitable access to shelter, and affordable, quality housing in the communities of their choice through organizations working together seamlessly to navigate a holistic range of supportive services.

Guiding Principles:

- Design innovative strategies, policies, and programs
- Create a housing system that leaves no one behind
- Make ending homelessness a shared priority
- Connect people with place and each other
- Guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement across the entire county
- Measure what matters
- Intentionally focus on cross-sector collaboration to leverage available assets
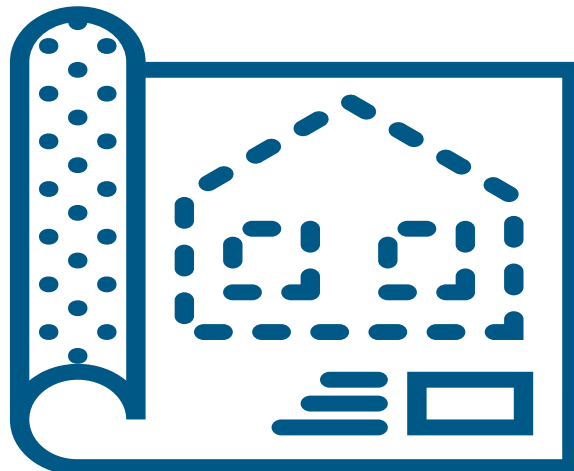
Acknowledgements

This plan was developed through collaboration and participation of many important partners. Oakland County benefits from a plethora of dedicated, knowledgeable service providers across disciplines who helped develop the Oakland County Blueprint to End Homelessness. The following individuals and groups were engaged throughout the development of the Blueprint. If any names are missing, please know that all of your time and contributions are greatly appreciated.

Steering Committee

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- Marc Craig, Community Housing Network
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- Brian Felice, Beaumont Health
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Purpose

Oakland County Neighborhood & Housing Development (OCNHD) is pleased to present Oakland County's 5-Year Blueprint to End Homelessness (Blueprint). Oakland County, Michigan, is committed to ending homelessness through prevention, housing with services, reforming the system of care, and engaging the community. This Blueprint outlines how Oakland County will prioritize actions toward eliminating homelessness.

Providers from across Oakland County's homelessness service system contributed to development of the Blueprint. These organizations collaborate to address needs in the community for those at risk or experiencing homelessness. The Blueprint is built on the expertise of these providers and harnesses the shared commitment to supporting individuals in need of housing support and ending homelessness. The contributing organizations will implement the Blueprint together, bringing in other individuals and organizations to address the goals and objectives of this plan.

Process

Oakland County Neighborhood & Housing Development (OCNHD) engaged staff from the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) to facilitate the process of developing the Blueprint. MPHI staff designed a collaborative, participatory, data-driven process to guide Blueprint development. This process built on the expertise of key partners and incorporated perspectives of those with lived experience with homelessness.

At the outset of the Blueprint process, the Steering and Advisory Committees participated in visioning to develop a statement describing the desired future state that will result from implementation of the Blueprint. The group developed the following vision statement:

People at risk or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County will have timely, equitable access to shelter, and affordable, quality housing in the communities of their choice through organizations working together seamlessly to navigate a holistic range of supportive services.

Participants in the planning process kept this vision statement centered throughout the next stages of the planning process, which included:

- Assessing the system of homelessness service providers and other Continuum of Care partners,
- Surveying organizations providing homelessness services and related supports,
- Engaging individuals with lived experience of homelessness through focus groups led by partner organizations,
- Scanning the current environment to better understand and draw lessons from data about the homelessness system and individuals experiencing homelessness,
- Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the system serving those at risk or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County, as well as opportunities the system could build upon or challenges the system might need to navigate around or address,
- Using the information from the previous stages to identify strategic issues, and
- Developing goals, objectives, and actions that will address strategic issues and build toward achieving the Blueprint vision.

The following section of the Blueprint includes a description of each goal area along with associated objectives. Detailed Action Plans are included in Appendix A. For a more detailed description of the planning process, see Appendix B.

Oakland County Blueprint to End Homelessness Goals

The collaborative, data-driven Blueprint development process resulted in the following five goals, which will work toward accomplishing the Blueprint's vision.

Goal 1: Prevent Root Cause of Homelessness

Goal 2: Increased Affordable, Quality Housing

Goal 3: Equitable Access to Shelter

Goal 4: Continuum of Care Outreach and Education

Goal 5: Support Organizations and Improve Collaboration

Implementation of the Blueprint over the next five years will be the responsibility of workgroups addressing each goal, comprised of homelessness service providers and other continuum of care organizations. The following pages provide more detail about each goal, as well as related objectives.

1 Goal 1: Prevent Root Cause of Homelessness

The reasons individuals and families experience homelessness vary. However, many root causes of homelessness can be addressed before someone loses their shelter, reducing risk of homelessness for many. Root causes that increase risk of homelessness include, but are not limited to, lack of affordable health care, domestic violence, lack of access to needed transportation, adverse childhood experiences, mental illness and substance use disorders without access to needed services, discriminatory policies and practices, and lack of livable wages. The Blueprint aims to address immediate causes that can be affected in the short-term. However, the partner organizations will also keep an eye on broader structural issues and advocate for policies and practices to address these root causes.

To prevent root causes of homelessness, partners plan to implement actions to achieve the following objectives:

1. Create diversion programs and/or service coordination programs for marginalized populations.
2. Develop an advocacy plan to address root causes of homelessness.

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Goal 2: Increased Affordable, Quality Housing

A lack of affordable housing and limitations of housing assistance programs are major contributors to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Housing is often the largest expense for residents and dramatically impacts the affordability of a particular location. In Oakland County, 26.7% of households have excessive homeowner costs. This is more significant for renters, with 41.4% of renter households paying 30% or more of their income on rent.[1] There is also a mismatch of rental prices and income in Oakland County. An individual working at minimum wage would have to work 65 hours per week to afford a modest one-bedroom rental home at fair market rent in Oakland County.

Exacerbating factors contributing to low availability of affordable, quality housing including stigmatization of homelessness, lack of understanding of the root causes of homelessness, lack of incentives to build affordable housing units, and "not in my backyard" attitudes about building new affordable housing or converting existing housing to affordable units. Additionally, there are limited funds available to build or convert affordable housing, or to support placing individuals or families into available affordable housing. Funding sources often also have strict requirements limiting who can access housing support programs and when, further constricting access.

To increase affordable, quality housing in Oakland county, partners plan to implement actions to achieve the following objectives:

1. Establish an Oakland County-wide affordable housing trust fund.

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[1] Western Economic Services, LLC, "Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice 2020". https://www.oakgov.com/advantageoakland/resources/Documents/CHI-FairHousing-FinalReport-2020.pdf.

2. Work with municipalities within Oakland County to address zoning laws that are perpetuating homelessness and pass zoning laws that support affordable housing.
3. Identify and develop at least one program to preserve existing and increase new affordable housing units.

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Goal 3: Ensure equitable access to shelter

While several shelters exist within Oakland County, individuals may face barriers to accessing shelter beds when needed. These barriers include a limited number of shelter beds, location of shelters, access to transportation, lack of knowledge of available shelter resources, limited hours of service, lack of a system for real-time accounting of available shelter beds, and specific populations served by individual shelters. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of shelter beds in Oakland County increased due to supportive emergency policies and funding; however, the number of available shelter beds still often do not meet the current need.

To ensure equitable access to shelter, partners plan to implement actions to achieve the following objectives:

1. Increase shelter space available in Oakland County.
2. Establish a centralized repository of shelter bed availability to improve system navigation.
3. Implement a plan to provide 24/7 services.
4. Provide case management with the authority to coordinate services across jurisdictions.

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Goal 4: Improve Continuum of Care Outreach and Education

The Continuum of Care (CoC) in Oakland County, Alliance for Housing, is a collaborative group of organizations working to end homelessness and increase affordable housing opportunities in Oakland County. As defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a CoC coordinates with and supports agencies to provide the following:

- Outreach, intake, and assessment in order to identify service and housing needs and provide a link to the appropriate level of both;
- Emergency shelter to provide an immediate and safe alternative to sleeping on the streets, especially for homeless families with children;
- Transitional housing with supportive services to allow for the development of skills that will be needed once permanently housed; and
- Permanent supportive housing to provide individuals and families with an affordable place to live with services if needed.[2]

Community and policy makers' attitudes and awareness can have a negative impact on the effectiveness of CoC activities. Factors such as stigmas about individuals experiencing homelessness, low understanding of the factors that contribute to homelessness, and lack of awareness of the benefits of providing safe and affordable shelter to those who need it can prevent effective provision of CoC services. Additionally, low awareness of available services and resources can prevent those in need from accessing needed supports.

To improve CoC outreach and education, partners plan to implement actions to achieve the following objectives:

1. Implement an education campaign to build awareness and support from Oakland County community members.
2. Implement an education campaign to build awareness and support from Oakland County policymakers.
3. Implement an outreach plan to effectively get information about services and resources to individuals and families at risk or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County.

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[2]https://endhomelessness.org/resource/what-is-a-continuum-of-care/

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5 Goal 5: Support Organizations and Improve Collaboration

There are many organizations that provide shelter and housing assistance, along with other supportive services, to individuals at risk or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County. These organizations collaborate regularly to provide needed services. However, they also face limitations to what they can provide based on available funding and policy restrictions tied to funding streams. Increased collaboration and support for individuals and organizations providing homelessness services can benefit the homeless population in Oakland County.

To support organizations and improve collaboration, partners plan to implement actions to achieve the following objectives:

1. Develop planning tools to support alignment of activities across organizations.
2. Provide training materials to support agency staff knowledge of the available homelessness services in Oakland County, improve well-being of service providers, and increase cultural competence of providers.
3. Establish a cross-discipline collaborative group to share best practices.

Appendix A: Action Plans

To support implementation of each action plan, the partners that developed the Blueprint will convene a workgroup comprising the relevant Oakland County organizations whose responsibilities align with the stated goals and objectives. OCNHD and the Alliance for Housing of Oakland County will work to support and convene workgroups starting in December 2021, and each workgroup will convene for their first meeting by the end of 2021. Responsibilities of the workgroups will span five years.

The following action plans are aligned with each goal area and are intended to be living documents allowing for updates as changes in policy, funding, and other factors contribute to changes in the homelessness service system in Oakland County. Additionally, each workgroup will develop measures to assess outcomes of plan implementation, a timeline for implementation, additional sub-actions as needed, and will report progress toward achieving objectives on an annual basis.

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Goal 1: Prevent Root Cause of Homelessness

Objectives:

1. Create diversion programs and/or service coordination programs for marginalized populations.
2. Develop an advocacy plan to address root causes of homelessness.

OBJECTIVE #1: By December 2027, create diversion programs and/or service coordination programs for marginalized groups.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Develop protocol(s) for ensuring that returning citizens have a discharge plan of action. • Develop a tool or guidance to assess risk of homelessness when developing plan of action. • Include a link in protocol to available services and how to contact organizations. • Develop a process for ensuring referral follow-up.	April 2022	Oakland County Community Corrections	A written protocol shared with criminal justice partners and homeless service providers	Include outreach or education to criminal justice partners about recognizing the signs of homelessness so that they can address this during incarceration rather than after.
Develop a conviction expungement program to eliminate housing barriers.	December 2026	Street Democracy and Oakland County Community Corrections	A policy or protocol to address process to expunge convictions	This could include addressing policies that would prevent returning citizens from renting/leasing an apartment.
Create a regular mechanism for persons with evictions on their records to have them expunged once paid. • Identify processes needed by credit organizations. • Develop a plan/protocol with needed information and organizations that can support removing evictions from credit report.	December 2022	Street Democracy	A widely available guide, shared with partners, that details the steps to having an eviction removed from an individual's credit report	
Establish a flexible fund to assist families in quickly resolving housing issues. • Develop a proposal for housing assistance fund to support families who experience emergency housing needs • Identify funders and decision-makers to engage. • Secure stable funding to support housing assistance fund. • Build infrastructure to staff this program.	December 2027	Alliance for Housing	A stable source of funding secured with infrastructure built to support implementation	This could include supporting those who experience emergency housing needs, including those who don't have renters' insurance, and families of incarcerated adults who are at risk of losing their homes due to incarceration.
Create an eviction diversion program. • Develop educational materials with information about available resources. • Develop a guide to facilitate system navigation. • Disseminate information across relevant organizations.	June 2022	Alliance for Housing	A widely available guide including information about available programs and how to access them	Establish a communication pipeline with landlords regarding tenant rights and landlord responsibilities.

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OBJECTIVE #2: By June 30, 2022, develop an advocacy plan to address root causes of homelessness.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Develop a plan to advocate for increased/connected transportation access in the county.	June 30, 2022	SMART	An advocacy plan addressing root causes of homelessness.	There is currently an advocacy committee through the CoC that could be engaged in this work alongside other partners.
Develop a plan to advocate for health care access, including an equitable distribution of resources and clinics.	June 30, 2022	Homeless Health Care Collaboration in partnership with the Alliance for Housing		
Develop a plan to advocate for a livable minimum wage.	June 30, 2022	Baldwin Center		

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Goal 2: Increased Affordable, Quality Housing

Objectives:
1. Establish an Oakland County-wide affordable housing trust fund
2. Work with municipalities within Oakland County to address zoning laws that are perpetuating homelessness and pass zoning laws that support affordable housing.
3. Identify and develop at least one program to preserve existing and increase new affordable housing units.

OBJECTIVE #1: By December 2026, establish an Oakland county-wide affordable housing trust fund.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Determine the current amount or rate of affordable housing available in Oakland County, the estimated amount needed, and the gap between the two numbers.	March 2022	Alliance for Housing	A brief or infographic that clearly displays the need for affordable housing in Oakland County and how a housing trust fund could address that need	
Develop draft policy language to present to Oakland County government	March 2022	Community Housing Network	Draft policy language	Should include requirements for any housing built, obtained, or rehabilitated to be retained in such a way that it remains affordable.
Determine where funding could be available to begin and continue a housing trust fund.	June 2022	Community Housing Network	Identified source(s) of funding	Consider creating a Real Estate Tax Increment Fund: applicable when new development in communities increases overall property values, and therefore property tax revenues. Some or all of the increase can be earmarked for affordable housing.
Grassroots organizing to grow support for housing trust fund.	Beginning June 2022	Community Housing Network	Stated support from community members and organizations	
Present proposal to Oakland County Government.	January 2023 – initial proposal	Community Housing Network	Policy proposal	

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OBJECTIVE #2: By December 2024, work with municipalities within Oakland County to address zoning laws that are perpetuating homelessness and pass zoning laws that support affordable housing.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Identify staff or develop an RFP to hire a consultant to conduct a county-wide zoning policy scan.	June 2022	Oakland County Neighborhood & Housing Development	Identified staffing for county-wide zoning policy scan	
Conduct zoning policy scan identifying existing laws that are barriers to or supportive of affordable housing.	December 2023	Oakland County Neighborhood & Housing Development	Zoning policy scan report	
Develop policy templates for municipalities within Oakland County.	June 2024	Oakland County Neighborhood & Housing Development	Best-practice policies in templates for Oakland County municipalities	These could include inclusionary zoning laws, changing building codes, other zoning laws, and/or successful supportive zoning laws that currently exist within municipalities in the county.
Develop supporting materials (presentations, fact sheets, etc.) to share with policy makers.	December 2024	Oakland County Neighborhood & Housing Development	Supporting materials to build buy-in and support from policy makers from across Oakland County.	

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OBJECTIVE #3: By December 2026, identify and develop at least one program to preserve existing and increase new affordable housing units.	

Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Explore options for housing loss prevention programs - Conduct a literature review to gather information about successful housing loss prevention programs.	December 2023	Community Housing Network	Literature review report	Gather sample policies, etc. Collect data on what already exists
Choose one or two programs to pursue in Oakland County.	March 2024	Community Housing Network	Identified program(s)	
Develop supporting materials.	September 2024	Community Housing Network	Informational materials	Overlap with Goal #4
Develop grassroots support for potential programs.	Beginning September 2024	Community Housing Network	Stated support from community members and organizations	Overlap with Goal #4
Identify needed resources, including decision-makers and other important people or organizations to engage.	March 2025	Community Housing Network	Plan for securing resources and policy-maker support.	
Implement selected program.	December 2026	Community Housing Network	Program in place to preserve existing and increase new affordable housing units.	

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Goal 3: Equitable access to shelter

Objectives:

1. Increase shelter space available in Oakland County.
2. Establish a centralized repository of shelter bed availability to improve system navigation.
3. Implement a plan to provide 24/7 services.
4. Implement a plan to provide case management with the authority to coordinate services across jurisdictions.

OBJECTIVE #1: By December 2027, increase shelter space available in Oakland County.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Establish a year-round shelter in the southern part of Oakland County. 1. Develop materials describing need. 2. Share information with decision-makers. 3. Develop grassroots community support. 4. Secure needed funds. 5. Identify location. 6. Build/renovate shelter space.	December 2027 1. March 2022 2. March 2022 3. Beginning September 2022 4. December 2025 5. December 2025 6. December 2027	Welcome Inn & South Oakland Warming Center	Year-round shelter(s) space established in southern part of Oakland County	This is currently a part of a request to county decision-makers; shelter providers have begun these discussions/exploration of a shelter in this part of the county.
Coordinate with public & private interested parties to agree on an appropriate model for shelter beds across the county (given specializations, how to cover the whole population). Group has agreed on a new model based on: • Non-congregate model keeps people safe • Needs of families/single fathers – separate space in shelters • Giving people the respect of privacy	March 2022	HOPE Hospitality & Warming Center and Alliance for Housing	Stated support for plan	Data are currently available
Create a shelter development/rehab plan(s) for families and/or single persons experiencing homelessness.	March 2022	HOPE Hospitality & Warming Center and Alliance for Housing	Written shelter development/rehab plan(s)	
Develop a plan to destigmatize the concept of providing emergency shelter in their communities and reduce NIMBYism.	September 2022	HOPE Hospitality & Warming Center and Alliance for Housing	Written plan to cultivate community support	

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OBJECTIVE #2: By December 2023, establish a centralized repository of shelter bed availability to improve system navigation.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Identify a sustainable funding source to set up and support repository infrastructure.	December 2023	Alliance for Housing	Identified source of sustainable funding	Need to identify costs for building out, then identify funding source plus staff time to update it regularly. Identify best practices; existing models
Determine which agency(ies) will be responsible for setting up and maintaining/staffing the call center.	December 2023	Alliance for Housing	Assigned responsibility to staff member(s) at participating agency(ies)	
Establish a process for continuously feeding information into the call center.	December 2023	Alliance for Housing	Written and implemented process for keeping information up-to-date	
OBJECTIVE #3: By December 2024, implement a plan to provide 24/7 services.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Identify a sustainable funding source to cover extended staff hours.	December 2024	Lighthouse of Oakland County	Identified source of sustainable funding	Need transportation assistance, staff, a number, knowing the bed is open
Determine which agency(ies) will be responsible for extending hours.	December 2024	Lighthouse of Oakland County	Funding agreement for agency(ies) extending hours	Could happen simultaneous to above in setting up structure
Establish protocol(s)/ communication plan for other agencies to redirect people after hours.	December 2024	Lighthouse of Oakland County	Written communication protocol/plan	

OBJECTIVE #4: By January 2024, implement a plan to provide case management with the authority to coordinate services across jurisdictions.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Convene a workgroup to identify and address barriers currently hindering case managers from collaborating across jurisdictions.	June 2022	City of Ferndale and Community Housing Network	Workgroup roster and stated commitment to participate	
Identify barriers.	August 2022	City of Ferndale and Community Housing Network	Written report of identified barriers	
Identify level of need and source of flexible funds.	March 2023	City of Ferndale and Community Housing Network	Identified source of sustainable funding	
Develop a plan to utilize funds, share data, and work across organizations to coordinate services.	January 2024	City of Ferndale and Community Housing Network	Written plan	

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Goal 4: Improve Continuum of Care Outreach and Education

Objectives:
1. Implement an education campaign to build awareness and support from Oakland County community members.
2. Implement an education campaign to build awareness and support from Oakland County policymakers.
3. Implement an outreach plan to effectively get information about services and resources to individuals and families at risk or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County.

OBJECTIVE #1: By December 2023, implement an education campaign to build awareness and support from Oakland County community members.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Progress Notes
Identify a funding source for a multimedia community campaign.	March 2023	Lighthouse of Oakland County	Identified funding source	
Design local messaging to raise awareness of the importance of housing, housing needs, and the high cost of homelessness.	December 2023	Lighthouse of Oakland County	Developed marketing campaign	Messaging should include inclusive storytelling and sharing stories of individuals and families impacted by successful models.
Launch and monitor multimedia campaign.	December 2023	Lighthouse of Oakland County	Implemented marketing campaign	Track number of impressions on social media, audience size of radio ads, etc.
Develop a menu of deep engagement opportunities for individual volunteers and organizations who are already involved with homelessness service providers.	December 2023	Lighthouse of Oakland County	Regularly updated and widely available written information about engagement opportunities	
Develop a strategy and educational program that will promote better coordination between public and private or faith-based resources.	December 2022	Lighthouse of Oakland County	Written and implemented strategy	Invite other organizations to meetings; do better outreach to share what is currently in place so organizations know where to refer individuals for needed supports

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OBJECTIVE #2: By December 2024, implement an education campaign to build awareness and support from Oakland County policymakers.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Develop and incorporate coordinated promotional talking points into provider plans.	March 2024	Oakland County Neighborhood & Housing Development and Alliance for Housing	Written talking points incorporated into provider plans	Can build on information for policy makers under Goal 2.
Determine a mechanism for regularly updating and promoting talking points with policymakers.	June 2024	Alliance for Housing	Written plan	Should include a focus on reducing NIMBYism, as well as the high cost of homelessness vs. when individuals are housed
Design a one-pager/infographic to highlight local needs and the cost-effectiveness of providing housing.	September 2024	Alliance for Housing	Informational materials developed and disseminated	
Develop a data system that allows for access to real-time information to answer leaders' questions about the system.	December 2024	Alliance for Housing	Expanded data system and plan for updating needed information on an ongoing basis	Some real-time data already available

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OBJECTIVE #3: By December 2025, implement an outreach plan to effectively get information about services and resources to individuals and families at risk or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Perform an audit of existing resources for people experiencing homelessness and translate materials into different languages.	June 2023	Samaritas	Widely available informational resources in multiple languages	Many of these resources already exist – need to know who to call to get it.
Establish robust outreach to engage individuals living rough or experiencing homelessness.	December 2025	HOPE Hospitality & Warming Center	Sustainable funding to expand staffing for this work	Need more money to provide outreach day and night and build those relationships – Need more money and need more people – is already happening
Develop a website and/or app including infographic(s) with accessible resources, and a connection to the central repository call center.	December 2024	Community Housing Network	Updated website/developed app	A website currently exists that could be built out as needed

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5 Goal 5: Support Organizations and Improve Collaboration

Objectives:
1. Develop planning tools to support alignment of activities across organizations.
2. Provide training materials to support agency staff knowledge of the available homelessness services in Oakland County, improve well-being of service providers, and increase cultural competence of providers.
3. Establish a cross-discipline collaborative group to share best practices.

OBJECTIVE #1: By June 2023, develop planning tools to support alignment of activities across organizations.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Assemble group(s) to be responsible for plans.	March 2022	Alliance for Housing	Identified group with stated support from group members	
Determine cadence for updating plans.	June 2022	Alliance for Housing	Group workplan with dates	
Establish a mechanism for promoting and measuring progress on plans.	June 2023	Alliance for Housing	Written and implemented promotion plan and measurement strategy	
OBJECTIVE #2: By December 2023, provide training materials to support agency staff knowledge of the available homelessness services in Oakland County, improve well-being of service providers, and increase cultural competence of providers.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Determine which agency(ies) will be responsible for each training.	December 2022	Samaritas	Agreement in place for agency(ies) providing each training	
Establish protocols for new and existing staff trainings.	January 2023	Samaritas	Written protocols for staff training	Who will be required to be trained? When / How often?
Design and implement trainings.	April 2023	Samaritas	Written training materials and implementation plan	
Gather feedback from trainees to improve programs and determine what further supports are needed.	December 2023	Samaritas	Training evaluation tools and evaluation reports	

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OBJECTIVE #3: By December 2024, establish a cross-discipline collaborative group to share best practices.				
Action steps	Target Date	Proposed Lead Organization	Anticipated Product or Result	Process/Progress Notes
Determine which agency(ies) will be responsible for leading/hosting meetings.	December 2023	HOPE Hospitality & Warming Center	Agreement in place for agency(ies) leading/hosting meetings	
Establish protocol(s) and cadence for meetings.	March 2024	HOPE Hospitality & Warming Center	Written protocol and schedule	What will be covered? By whom? Incorporate discussions around improving data sharing, and barriers to it (such as confidentiality).
Implement meetings and gather feedback to improve future meetings.	September 2024	HOPE Hospitality & Warming Center	Meeting evaluation tool and evaluation reports	
Conduct an assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement to build a more collaborative system.	December 2024	HOPE Hospitality & Warming Center	Written assessment report and plan to address areas for improvement	

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Appendix B: Blueprint Development Process

Oakland County Neighborhood & Housing Development (OCNHD) engaged staff from the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) to facilitate the process of developing the Blueprint. MPHI staff designed a collaborative, participatory, data-driven process to guide Blueprint development. This process built on the expertise of key partners and incorporated the perspectives of those with lived experience of homelessness.

Visioning

At the outset of the Blueprint process, the Steering and Advisory Committees participated in visioning to develop a statement describing the desired future state that will result from implementation of the Blueprint. Facilitators asked participants to envision themselves five years in the future at the completion of the Blueprint, by considering these three questions:

1. What are three words that come to mind when you envision the housing and homelessness system in Oakland county?
2. How does the county look different five years from now for persons experiencing homelessness than it does today?
3. In what ways has the housing system changed for organizations in Oakland county that support individuals experiencing homelessness?

Participants shared their responses to each question using an online polling program, Mentimeter. Following the visioning session, MPHI facilitators analyzed responses looking for main themes, as well as words or phrases that were most prevalent, then developed a set of draft vision statements utilizing the group's shared input. Next, the Steering Committee reviewed the draft vision statements and edited these into one final draft vision statement. Facilitators shared the final draft vision statement with the Advisory Committee and asked for opinions on what they liked about the statement and what might be missing. Based on this feedback, the resulting Blueprint Vision Statement is:

People at risk or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County will have timely, equitable access to shelter, and affordable, quality housing in the communities of their choice through organizations working together seamlessly to navigate a holistic range of supportive services.

Participants in the planning process kept this vision statement centered throughout the next stages of the planning process.

Primary Data Collection

Parallel to the Visioning and System Assessment activities, MPHI facilitators also engaged in two primary data collection activities, including a survey of homelessness service providers and partners, and focus groups with individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County.

Partner Survey

In July 2021, MPHI distributed a survey to a diverse group of homelessness service providers and partners utilizing REDCap online survey software. This survey allowed respondents to share their thoughts on the accessibility and alignment of homelessness services and supports within the system, and to share examples of programs, organizations, and projects currently addressing homelessness in Oakland County. The survey also asked about programs that might not be focused on homelessness directly but had a focus on moving upstream by addressing root causes of homelessness. A total of 63 individuals responded to the survey. MPHI analyzed survey data utilizing descriptive statistics and included results in the Blueprint Data Summary (see Appendix C).

To gather perspectives from individuals who have accessed services from homelessness service providers, partner organizations conducted focus groups with clients in early August 2021. MPHI and consultant Jason Wasserman developed a focus group protocol designed to learn more about experiences with homelessness and accessing supports in Oakland County, including:

- Factors that led to individuals becoming homeless,
- Challenges accessing services,
- How they learned about available services,
- The range of services they had been able to access, and
- Opinions on what could be done to end homelessness in Oakland County.

MPHI provided a focus group facilitation training session to four partner organizations and provided each with the focus group protocol and $50 gift cards to use as incentives for up to ten individuals per focus group. A total of 27 individuals participated in focus groups. Following the focus groups, participating service providers sent detailed notes to MPHI. After analyzing notes to identify common themes and important ideas, MPHI developed a summary of focus group findings for the Blueprint Data Summary (see Appendix C).

Environmental Scan

To better understand the current context of homelessness in Oakland County, MPHI staff developed a Blueprint Data Summary and led Advisory Committee members and other partners through a focused conversation to draw meaning from the data. The data summary included a variety of data to help the group have a common understanding of homelessness in Oakland County, including:

- Demographics of individuals utilizing homelessness related services in Oakland County in 2020;
- Housing and rental affordability in Oakland County;
- Residential segregation in Oakland County, and the effects of such segregation;
- Other factors influencing racial disparities and homelessness, such as poverty, rental housing discrimination, and incarceration;
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Oakland County;
- Poverty and disability in Oakland County; and
- A summary of highlighted partner survey results and the focus group summary.

Facilitators asked Advisory Committee members and other partners to consider these data, along with their experience and expertise, to answer several questions, including:

- What does this information reveal about the current experiences of homelessness in Oakland County?
- What does this information reveal about the functioning of the system serving those at risk or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County?
- What seems particularly important? What new insights do these data give you?
- Is there anything that feels like it is missing (where do we need more information)?

Themes from this discussion included:

- The data seemed to underrepresent the amount of chronic health and mental health issues experienced by the population these providers served.
- Redlining occurring in the past has trapped people in certain areas and/or without supports.
- Renters experience high rent burden along with stringent rental requirements.
- The system serving individuals at risk or experiencing homelessness is reliant on grants that are scarce and leave the system vulnerable, and largely

dependent on a few individuals who can be supported by these grants and volunteers.
- There are physical (transportation) and knowledge barriers to effectively navigating the system providing homelessness support and prevention services.
- Societal attitudes present barriers to certain solutions to homelessness, including limits to expanding availability of affordable housing and shelters.

SWOC Analysis

Next, the Advisory Committee considered different factors that would support this work moving forward or pose barriers to the path to the shared vision. This involved an analysis of internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and challenges (SWOC) facing the group. The SWOC started with an individual brainstorm, and then partners shared their ideas via Mentimeter to ensure all voices were captured. The SWOC analysis resulted in the following themes for each area:

Strengths

- Strong network of providers
- Collaboration between providers
- A lot of experience amongst organizations
- Financial resources
- Dedicated, knowledgeable, caring tenured staff
- Able to stretch available resources
- Strong continuum of care

Weaknesses

- Lack of clarity for plan moving this work forward
- Insufficient affordable housing that is aging and in poor shape
- System under-resourced
- No centralized access
- Lack of knowledge about available resources
- Insufficient public transit
- No coordinated vision
- Need for partnering outside of the system
- System needs to be more trauma-informed
- Resources are disconnected across different agencies
- No stable local funding

- Lack of community awareness
- Lack of clarity about how to access services

Opportunities

- County is wealthy, has resources to address poverty
- County leadership has expressed commitment to addressing homelessness and committing American Rescue funds to this work
- ARPA Funds
- Wealth within communities – opportunity for charitable giving
- Pandemic has elevated the importance of housing
- Examples from pandemic spending provide a model for what adequate funding can do
- Trauma informed, passionate staff could improve PR
- Developing standardized services
- Creating a more inclusive data collection process
- Opportunities for partnerships
- Other organizations with funds that could be leveraged

Challenges
- Stigma/Attitudes
- At the whim of government focus
- Scale of problem is huge
- A few people do a lot
- Lack of safety net
- Zoning and land use laws
- Under-resourced public mental health system
- Reactive instead of proactive

Facilitators shared these lists back with Blueprint partners so they could keep an eye on the strengths, resources, and existing work to build upon, and the weaknesses or challenges to address or navigate around, while they worked on planning actionable work to address over the next five years.

Oakland County Blueprint to End Homelessness

Strategic Priorities

Using the information from the previous stages, MPHI facilitators led the Advisory Committee through several discussions to develop, organize, and name different categories of potential actions they could take to reach the Blueprint vision. Several goal areas were pulled from the vision statement, and strategic issues were grouped under those. Goal areas included:

1. Prevent Root Cause of Homelessness
2. Increased Affordable, Quality Housing
3. Equitable Access to Shelter
4. Continuum of Care Outreach and Education
5. Support Organizations and Improve Collaboration

Next, facilitators asked each Advisory Committee member to share one or two ideas of possible actions the group could take to address each goal area. Following this activity, facilitators led the Steering Committee through a process to organize and name different categories of possible actions, which then became the objectives for each goal. The actions under each objective were taken from the list of ideas generated by the Advisory Committee.

Finally, facilitators led the Advisory Committee through a process to assess consensus on the objectives. Advisory Committee members shared their support for the objectives to be included in the Oakland County Blueprint to End Homelessness.

Oakland County Blueprint to End Homelessness

Oakland County Blueprint to End Homelessness

Our Vision:

People at risk or experiencing homelessness in Oakland County will have timely, equitable access to shelter, and affordable, quality housing in the communities of their choice through organizations working together seamlessly to navigate a holistic range of supportive services.

Data Summary developed by:

MPHI®

Jan 1, 2020 – Dec 31, 2020

Core Demographics of individuals utilizing homelessness related services (e.g., emergency shelter, transitional housing, safe haven, and street outreach) in Oakland County.

Domestic Violence
24% were survivors of domestic violence
37% of them had experienced domestic violence within the last 6 months

Prior Living Situation – Prior to Seeking Services
38% Outdoors/Streets/Vehicle /Abandoned Building
22% Family of Friend's Residence
8% Hospital or Residential Medical Facility

Gender
56% Male
42% Female
1% Transgender
1% Non-Binary

Race
62% Black of African American
30% White
6% Multi-racial

Ethnicity
5% Hispanic/Latino

Impairing Disability*
7% Mental health problem
4% Physical disability
3% Chronic health condition
1.5% Substance misuse

Age Breakdown
-     Newborn to 4 **7.72%**
-     5 to 10 **6.14%**
-     11 to 14 **4.73%**
-     15 to 17 **5.73%**
-     18 to 24 **9.46%**
-     25 to 34 **16.43%**
-     35 to 44 **15.27%**
-     45 to 54 **15.85%**
-     55 to 64 **14.77%**
-     65 + **3.73%**

*Due to the Michigan Campaign Against Homelessness Data Warehouse report limitations, not all persons experiencing homelessness with an impairing disability are accounted for.

Housing & Rental Affordability

Housing is often the largest expense for residents and dramatically impacts the affordability of a particular location. Local data can help provide insights into local housing affordability. In Oakland County, 26.7% of households have cost burdens. This is more significant for renter households, of which 41.4% of renter households have cost burdens.

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Income in Oakland County, MI

	# of occupied homes
Rent is 50% or more of income	29,659
Rent is 40-49% of income	11,315
Rent is 35-40% of income	7,990
Rent is 30-35% of income	10,457
Rent is 25-30% of income	15,146
Rent is 20-25% of income	18,365
Rent is 15-20% of income	22,271
Rent is 10-15% of income	16,494
Rent is less than 10% of income	6,694

59,421
Occupied housing units
Have excessive renter costs
30% or more of income
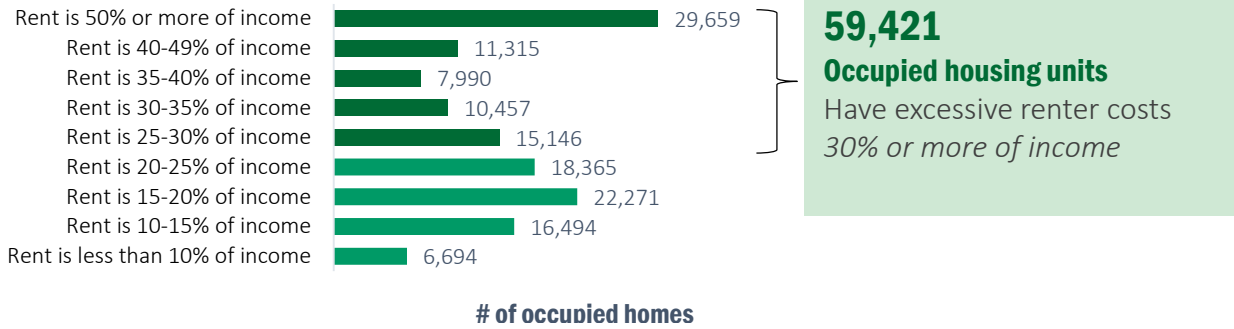
Monthly Home Ownership Costs Compared to Income in Oakland County, MI

	# of occupied homes
Home costs are 50% or more of income	28,429
Home costs are 40-40% of income	13,271
Home costs are 45-40% of income	10,978
Home costs are 30-35% of income	16,413
Home costs are 25-30% of income	26,148
Home costs are 20-25% of income	44,232
Home costs are 15-20% of income	66,327
Home costs are 10-15% of income	73,946
Home costs are 10% or less of income	76,614

69,091
Occupied housing units
Have excessive homeowner costs
30% or more of income

Rental Prices & Income Mismatch

Working at minimum wage
$9.65/hr

Each week you have to work
65 hours

To afford a modest 1-bedroom rental home At Fair Market Rent in Oakland County

Median Rent 2012-16 <$400 521 571 607 638 671 712 767 860 1.0k >$1.4k
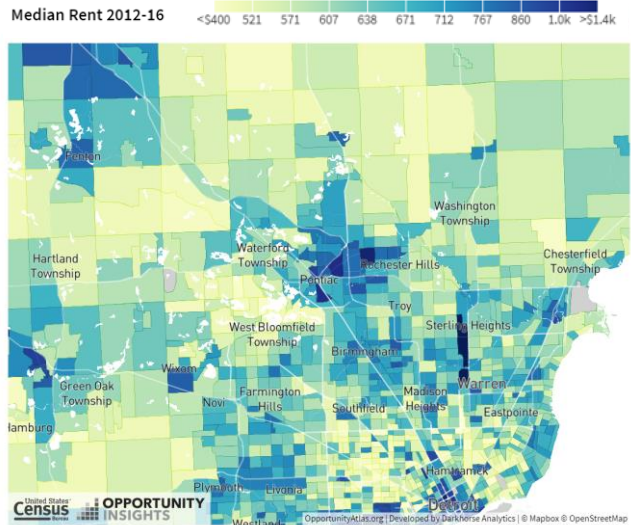
Residential Segregation in Oakland County

Among the thousands of area descriptions created by agents of the federal government's Home Owners' Loan Corporation between 1935 and 1940, the one that was written for Pontiac Michigan can be seen below.

Area	Grade
6%	A "Best"
23%	B "Still Desirable"
40%	C "Definitely Declining"
31%	D "Hazardous"
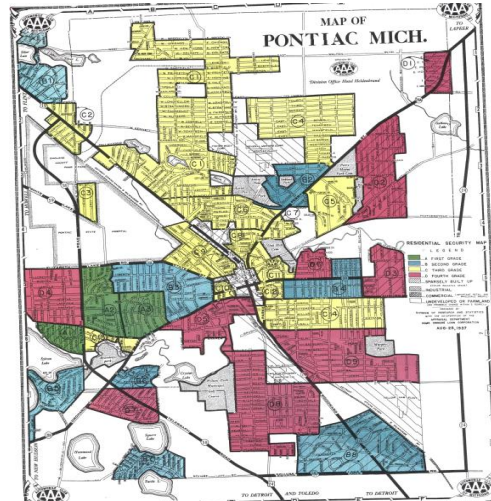
These grades were a tool for redlining: making it difficult or impossible for people in certain areas to access mortgage financing and thus become homeowners. Redlining directed both public and private capital to native-born white families and away from African American and immigrant families. As homeownership was arguably the most significant means of intergenerational wealth building in the United States in the twentieth century, these redlining practices from eight decades ago had long-term effects in creating wealth inequalities that we still see today.

Residential Segregation in Oakland County Today

HUD uses the "Dissimilarity Index" as a quantitative measure of segregation in an area based on the demographic composition of smaller geographic units within an area	Interpretation of Scores <40 = Low Segregation 40-54 = Moderate Segregation >55 = High Segregation
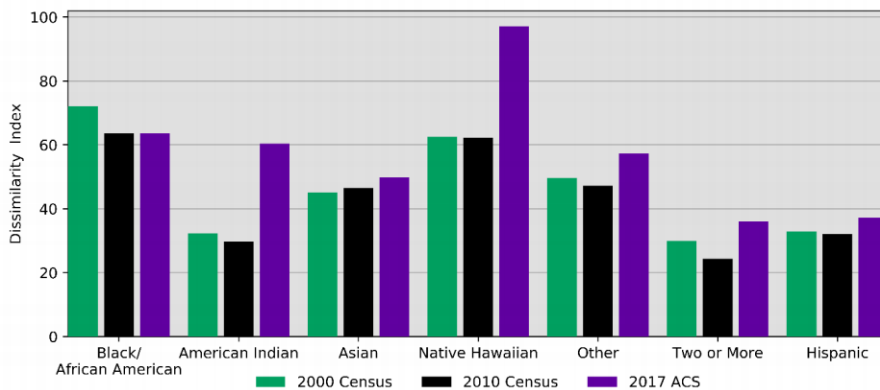
In Oakland County, Black/African American, Asian, and "other" race households have moderate to high levels of segregation, as shown above. In addition, other racial groups have high levels of segregation, but represent a much smaller proportion of the population.

These include Native Hawaiian and American Indian households, which account for less than one percent of the population.

The legacy of housing segregation also continues to impact modern homelessness. Staggering racial disparities in modern homelessness can be partially credited to the fact that Black Americans have been left out of this country's growth processes for so many generations. Looking forward, a particular focus on addressing disparities must be included in any plans to end homelessness.

Factors Influencing Racial Disparities and Homelessness

Poverty in Oakland County

Homelessness thrives in concentrated poverty partly because when poverty prospers, its expressions, including homelessness, tend to be concentrated in geographic space. Meaning poverty, and particularly deep poverty, is a strong predictor of homelessness. Black and Latinx groups are overrepresented in poverty relative to their representation in the overall Oakland County population and are most likely to live in deep poverty.
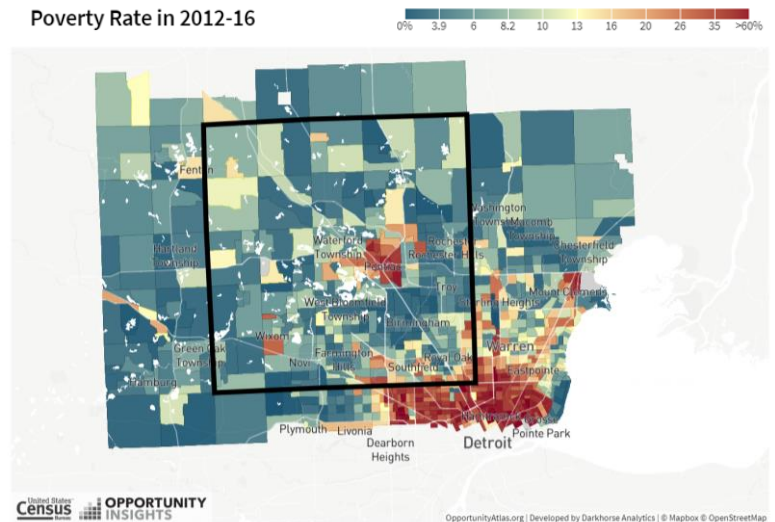
Segregation/Rental Housing Discrimination in Oakland County

For most minority groups, the transition to neighborhoods with less crime, no environmental hazards, and close proximity to services, are often met with challenges. In Oakland County, from 2008-2017 the average mortgage denial rate was 12.7% for white households; however, the average denial rate was 29.3% for Black/African American households (OC Fair Housing Choice Report, 2020). A study by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on racial discrimination found that people of color were often shown fewer rental units and denied more leases in comparison to White people. White people, on the other hand, were frequently offered lower rents. Deposits and other move-in costs were also quoted as "negotiable," making it easier for White people to secure units.

Incarceration in Oakland County
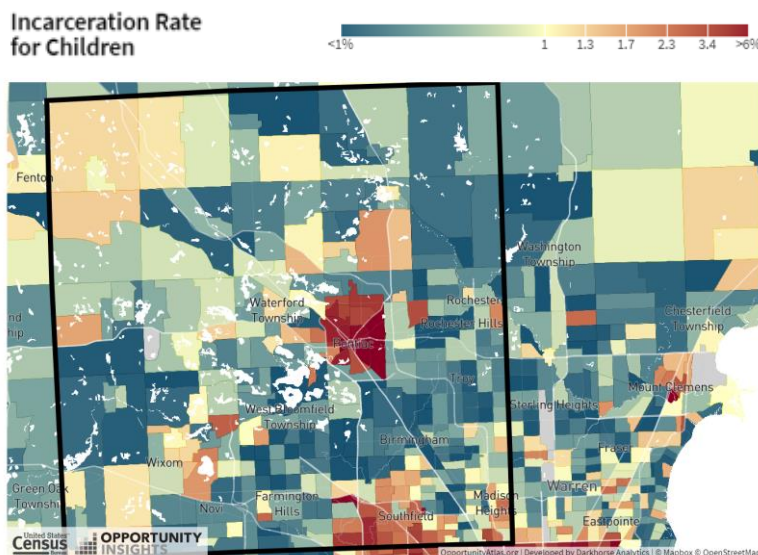
The racial disparity in incarceration rates has continuously worsened. The rate for African Americans has tripled between 1968 and 2016 and is more than six times the rate of White incarceration. The implications of overcriminalization are far-reaching: A criminal history can keep people from successfully passing background checks to secure both housing and employment. People exiting jails and prisons often face significant problems in accessing safe and affordable housing and their rate of homelessness is high.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Oakland County

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years), or aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding. These may include: experiencing or witnessing violence, abuse, or neglect, having a family member attempt or die by suicide, substance use problems, mental health problems, and instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance abuse problems. They can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential. ACEs are preventable.*

Of those who have experienced ACEs. . .**
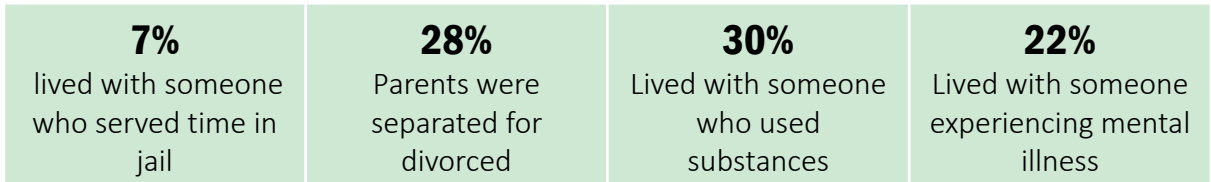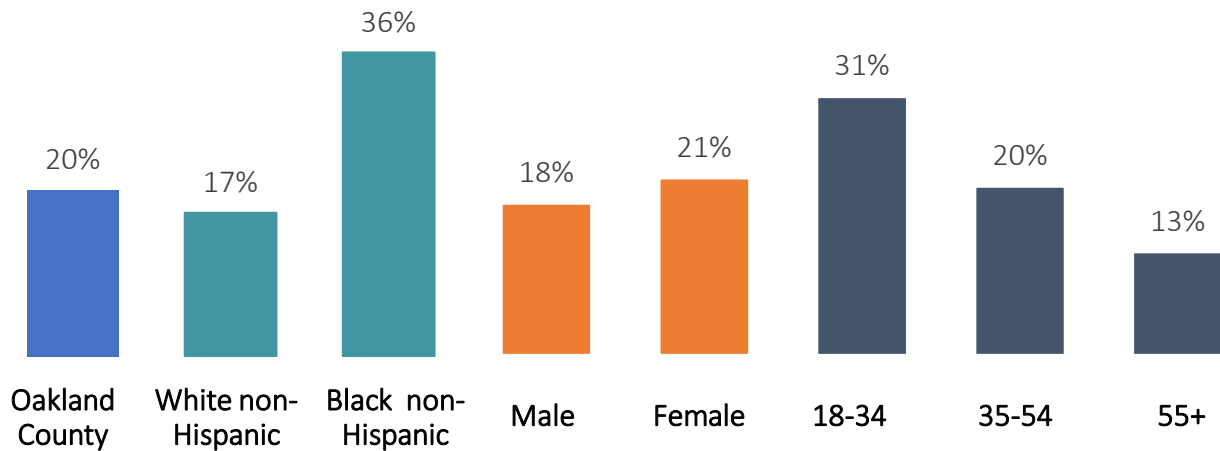
7% lived with someone who served time in jail	**28%** Parents were separated for divorced	**30%** Lived with someone who used substances	**22%** Lived with someone experiencing mental illness

% of populations experiencing 4 or more ACEs**:

Oakland County	White non-Hispanic	Black non-Hispanic	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
20%	17%	36%	18%	21%	31%	20%	13%

% of populations experiencing 4 or more ACEs**:

High school Or less	Some College	College graduate	<$20k	$20k-$34.9k	$50k-$74.9k	$75k +	Home-owner	Renter
29%	23%	13%	43%	38%	23%	15%	16%	38%
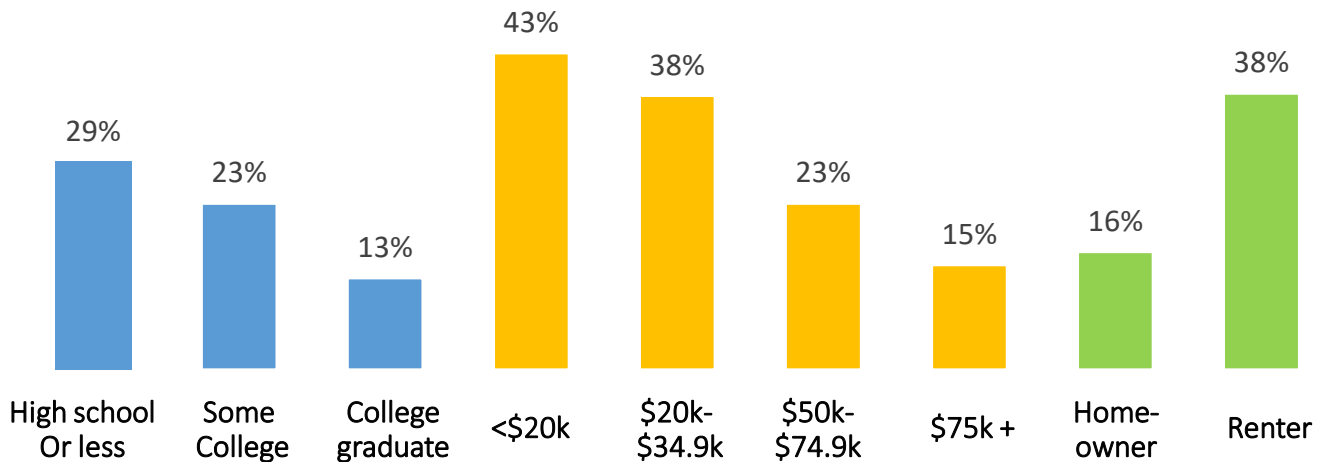
*CDC   **BRFSS   44

Poverty and Disability in Oakland County, MI

- A significant proportion of people in poverty ages 55+ live with disabilities. Of the 25,113 people ages 55+ who live in poverty in Oakland County, 43% of them struggle with disabilities. This means 10,913 people ages 55+ struggle with both poverty and disability.

- The disability rate for those who live in poverty and are 65+ is 10 percentage points higher than the rate for residents ages 55-64. While 38% of those who are 55-64 and live in poverty have disabilities, close to half (48%) of those who are 65+ and live in poverty have disabilities.

- Close to 1 in 5 (18%) people ages 55+ who live with a disability in Oakland county are veterans despite the fact that veterans make up only 11% of the total population ages 55+.

- Of those 55+, disability disproportionately impacts the most elderly of residents. The proportion of people ages 65+ who live with disabilities is twice the rate of those who are 55-64. While 15 percent of those 55-64 have disabilities (26,728 people), 32 percent of residents ages 65+ (63,821 people) have disabilities.

- Although disability affects men and women ages 65+ at roughly the same rate, more women in this age range have disabilities in Oakland County (27,767 vs. 36,054, respectively).

- For Oakland County residents ages 55+, more people have ambulatory difficulty than any other listed disabilities (16%). The second most common disabilities are vision or hearing difficulties and independent living difficulties (both 11%).

Almost ¼ of Oakland Co. residents who are 55+ live with disabilities.

Overall Disability Rates Among Residents 55+, Oakland County, MI
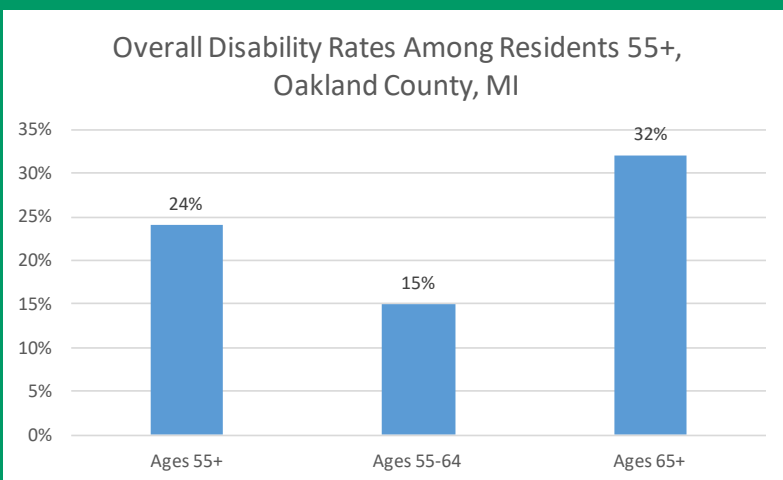
Table B21007, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Rates of Specific Disabilities Among Residents 55+ in Oakland County, MI

Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 9.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2019.
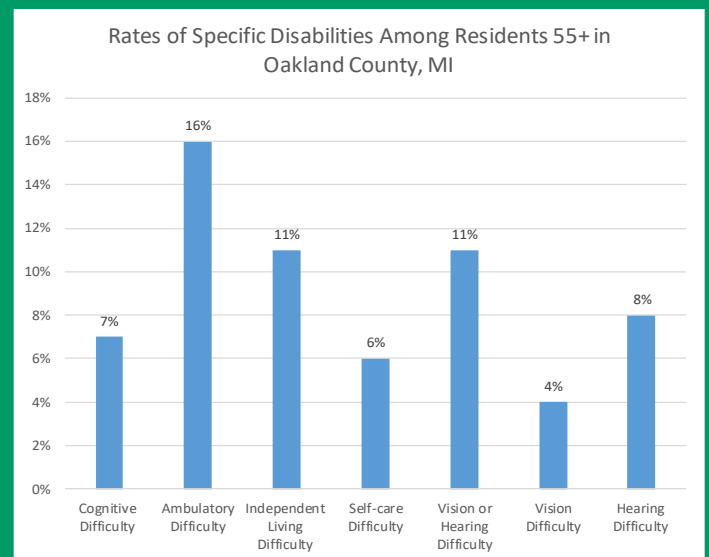
Environmental Scan Survey Summary

This survey was implemented by MPHI to understand providers' perceptions of the strengths, assets, challenges, and changes needed in the homelessness and related service systems in Oakland County. The survey was fielded in June and July of 2021 and was distributed via a snowball method. There were 63 responses from advisory Committee and Stakeholder Group members and their networks, including staff, partners, and other community stakeholders.

In Oakland county, how often do local organizations and collaboratives gather and use input from people experiencing homelessness about whether their programs or efforts are meeting their needs?

Never ———————⬤——————— Very Often

Average response

In Oakland county, how often are people experiencing homelessness engaged in decision-making about local efforts, programs, or services (e.g., decisions about what local issues to address, how to address them, what programs to offer, what times to offer them, etc.)?

Never ——⬤———————————— Very Often

Average response

To what extent are each of the following barriers in accessing housing supports?
The % of participants who rated each as a serious or moderate barrier

	Serious Barrier	Moderate Barrier
Citizenship requirements	13%	24%
Difficulties navigating systems	48%	46%
Age	11%	19%
Lack of availability of a service or support in one's community	17%	25%
Discrimination	43%	29%
Disability	28%	32%
Denial of services and supports by providers	21%	27%
Cost	55%	22%
Linguistic or cultural barriers	17%	24%
Mobility and transportation challenges	72%	20%
Unaware a benefit or support exists	26%	40%

Environmental Scan Survey Summary (Continued)

How often do service providers and programs in the community refer people experiencing homelessness to each other's services, supports, or opportunities?

Never ●————————————————●———————————— Very Often

Average response

How often are stakeholders and organizations sharing information to improve the quality of homeless and housing services, supports, and opportunities (e.g., data, research, lessons learned, etc.)?

Never ●——————————————●————————————————— Very Often

Average response

How often are stakeholders' and organizations' resources used to improve the alignment of homeless and housing services, supports, and opportunities (e.g., staff, funding, technology, trainings, etc.)?

Never ●——————————————●————————————————— Very Often

Average response
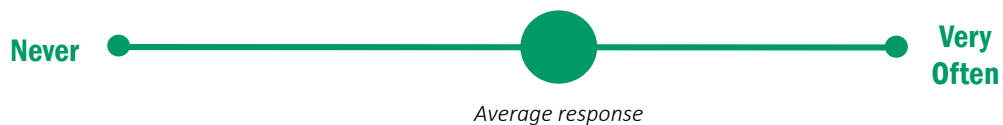
Responses to: In your opinion, what needs to change for homelessness to end in Oakland County?

(1) More affordable housing
- Current housing needs to be more affordable
- More affordable/low-income housing needs to be built

(2) Easy access to resources and support services
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Employment acquisition services
- Healthcare and primary care

(3) Improved transportation systems

(4) Policy changes
- Eliminating 3 months rent income requirements
- Laws to prevent price gouging
- Laws to prevent discrimination of those using vouchers
- Incentives for landlords to rent to low-income families or those with criminal backgrounds

(5) Better collaboration between programs, landlords, and businesses

Prevention and intervention strategies rated as most central to ending homelessness:

- Ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing
- Poverty reduction strategies
- Supports for individuals with addictions and mental health challenges
- Rental assistance or supplements
- Case management and systems navigation
- Place-based supports and shelter diversions
- Dedicated supportive housing
- Permanent supportive housing
- Rapid re-housing

Focus Group Summary

Focus groups were conducted by four Oakland County service provider agencies to gain insight and input from people with lived experience dealing with homelessness in the county. Focus groups were conducted in August of 2021 by HAVEN, HOPE, Inc., Lighthouse, and Samaritas. There were a total of 27 participants, who were either currently or recently experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Barriers, Contributors to Homelessness

Individual level	• Being comfortable even in an uncomfortable situation • Bad habits and poor money control • Mental health barriers with the victim and abuser • Substance abuse • Accepting of the situation
Relationships/Interpersonal level	• Domestic violence • Lack of support system (especially for LGBTQIA+) • Not having a place or person to turn to
Organizational/Institutional level	• Slow progress (When you are desperate, it is hard to be patient. Everything takes too long) • Rejections and denials that don't come with a resolution plan (A "no" should come with a resolution plan of how a person CAN get help)
Policy/Societal level	• Lack of reliable public transportation • Qualifications that make a person ineligible if they earn more money • Severe lack of affordable housing units • Unsustainably high rent compared to low income after support from organizations end • Services that do not transfer across county lines (Sometimes a person needs to move away – either to get near supporting people or to get away from negative people) • Lack of educated community • Lack of accessible ESL programs

What Needs to Change

- Prevention in the form of education would help decrease homelessness. Educating people on domestic violence, on self-esteem and self-worth. Also, job training and GED/High School, College education courses to prepare people for the work force so they can earn wages that will sustain them and their families in a home. And more decent, affordable housing that people qualify for.
- Oakland County should make resources known to everyone in simple and clear language. Resources should be accessible to anyone. Once you get a benefit, you should keep it so that it doesn't become a negative motivator if you are to lose it as you start improving your life.
- Need easier direct access to service providers (not having to coordinate through a third party or it taking multiple attempts to set up an initial appointment). Refugees need help urgently with documentation and paperwork to avoid becoming homeless. Many others also need legal help and/or help obtaining IDs, birth certificates, social security cards, and medical records.
- More attention should be given to taking good care of the people on the front lines of this work, so that they have the motivation and energy to provide quality services. Focus group participants want to feel respect and genuine concern from workers, but too often workers seem burned out and lack the time needed to listen. This is a major influencer on the whole process.

Integrating Homeless Service Care Strategies – (Relational)

Oakland's system should aim to connect people with place and each other. A list of continuum of integrated care strategies can be found below—from the *macro* to the *micro*

Funding	- Pooling of funds (at various levels) - Prepaid capitation (at various levels
Administrative	- Consolidation/decentralization of responsibilities/functions - Inter-sectoral planning - Needs assessment/allocation chain - Joint purchasing or commissioning
Organizational	- Co-location of services - Discharge and transfer agreements - Inter-agency planning and/or budgeting - Service affiliation or contracting - Jointly managed programs or services - Strategic alliances - Consolidation, common ownership or merger
Service Delivery	- Joint training - Centralized information, referral and intake - Case/care management - Multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary teamwork - Around-the-clock (on-call) coverage - Integrated information systems
Clinical Care	- Uniform, comprehensive assessment procedures - Joint care planning - Shared clinical record(s) - Continuous patient monitoring - Common decision support tools (i.e. practice guidelines and protocols) - Regular patient/family contact and ongoing support

Housing System Strategies

Inclusionary Zoning: City and county planning ordinances that require or incentivize developers to build below-market rate homes (affordable homes) as part of the process of developing market-rate housing developments, ensuring units created remain affordable long-term.

Removing parking minimums: Residential parking requirements serve as barriers to housing affordability.

Create land bank of vacant publicly-owned land to be held in reserve for future construction of affordable housing.

Changing building codes: Support codes that make it easier to rehab older buildings and reduce the expenses associated with new construction. Regulations dictating density, minimum room sizes, parking requirements and how many unrelated adults can live in a single unit.

Preserve existing subsidized affordable housing:
- Invest in the improvement and preservation of existing subsidized affordable housing stock with MSHDA Low Income Housing Tax Credit program.
- Require 1:1 replacement of subsidized units within neighborhoods when units are removed through redevelopment or other public action.
- Enact county and/or local ordinances to provide tenants working with qualified nonprofit housing developers the right of first refusal to purchase properties from owners seeking to sell or exit subsidies that ensure properties are affordable.

Preserve affordability in the private market housing stock:
- Provide incentives such as rehab grants/loans or tax abatements to landlords in return for maintaining affordability
- Provide technical assistance to landlords on how to use programs such as the MSHDA Low Income Housing Tax Credit program to improve and preserve affordable multifamily housing.
- Enact rent-control ordinance, or amend ordinance to remove vacancy decontrol

New funding models:
- Create an Affordable Housing Fund to provide gap financing for projects that apply for and receive Low Income Housing Tax Credits from MSHDA and support projects that are eligible but may not receive low-income housing credits. Can be funded through county & city partnerships, mandatory developer fees, etc.
- Create a Property Acquisition Fund to make possible acquisition of privately-owned land for affordable housing development.
- Consider creating a Real Estate Tax Increment Fund: applicable when new development in communities increases overall property values, and therefore property tax revenues. Some or all of the increase can be earmarked for affordable housing.
- Use a portion of Oakland County's existing Federal HOME Fund Allocation to provide gap financing for projects that apply for and receive Low Income Housing Tax Credits from MSHDA.

☀ Using Social Innovation to Address Homelessness ☀

Measuring Service Outcomes Example: The Amsterdam Public Health Service has developed a Self-Sufficiency Matrix (SSM-D) tool to measure the self-sufficiency of vulnerable people, including homeless people, at intake and over time. Eleven areas of daily life (income, day-time activity, housing, mental health, physical health, family relationships, addiction, general daily skills, social network, social participation, judiciary) are given a self-sufficiency rating. This provides a quick, easy, standardized and reliable insight into the daily functioning of a client. The SSM-D tool is used by service providers for determining care needs and defining support.

Innovative Collaborations for Employability Example: The EU launched a project aiming to promote innovative forms of cooperation for work integration of socially excluded people around train stations in European capitals (Rome, Brussels and France). It has been developed with the notion that stations are both places where homeless and socially excluded people gather and important economic centers. The project brought together 3 stakeholders: railways companies, public employment agencies for the most disadvantaged, and social service providers. These stakeholders work together to define how cooperation can help homeless people to find a job in an environment that they are familiar with.

Prevention of Housing Loss Example: A mortgage to rent program was set up in Ireland. It targets homeowners with unsustainable mortgages that are in danger of having their home repossessed by the bank. Under the program, ownership can be transferred to a housing association, who buys the house from the bank at its current value using a new loan. The state provides a portion of the equity for the new loan. The previous homeowners remain in their property and become tenants of the housing association, avoiding losing their home.

Appendix D: Data Collection Instruments

Oakland County Blueprint to End Homlessness – Focus Group Protocol

Oakland County Blueprint to End Homelessness – Focus Group Protocol

Brief Focus Group Overview:
- Four focus groups total, arranged and/or facilitated by homelessness services providers in Oakland County, MI
- Up to ten individuals per focus group
- Participants will each receive a $50 gift card as an incentive to participate

Welcome and Introductions: (5 minutes)

Welcome and thank you for joining us for this conversation today. My name is [name], I am [title] at [organization], and I will be leading our discussion today. My role in this conversation is to remain unbiased and keep the conversation moving so we can touch on all the topics we want to cover today. I will also guide the process, so we hear everyone's voice is heard as a part of this conversation. My colleague, [name] will be helping to capture our discussion today through notes [and voice recording].

Thank you all for joining us today. We have come together to hear about your experiences with homelessness and accessing supports in Oakland County. The ideas you share today will help us as we develop a plan to address homelessness in Oakland County. Oakland County Neighborhood & Housing Development and partner organizations are working to better understand the experiences and needs of those experiencing homelessness in the county. We plan for this conversation today to take 90 minutes.

Today, we want to talk about what it means for you and your family to be healthy, what about where you live or stay may help you be healthy, or what about where you live or stay makes it hard for you to be healthy.

We also want to set some ground rules for our conversation today:
1. Please do not share what is said today with others outside the group
2. Please turn off or silence your cell phones
3. Only one person should speak at a time
4. Please avoid side conversations
5. The facilitator will try to allow all who have something to say to do so. [If you have something to say and feel that you are not being heard, please indicate to the facilitator that you would like to speak]
6. It is okay to disagree with the point, but not the person
7. [Ask the group if they would like to add to the list of ground rules]

Informed Consent: (5 minutes)

Before we launch into this conversation, I would like to share the following information with you about your rights as a participant in this conversation.

We have invited you here today to talk about homelessness and your experiences in Oakland County. In this conversation you can talk about your own experience, or the experience of people in your family or community. Your participation in this conversation is completely voluntary. You are free to answer any question or not, and you can stop participating at any time without any risk to you. The information you share today will be kept confidential, meaning your name and the specific information you share will not be linked or shared. We are also asking each of you here today not to repeat what is said by other participants in this group discussion. With your consent today, we will be audio recording our conversation for review and analysis. Your continued participation in the conversation will be considered your consent.

Only the facilitator and note-taker here today, and project staff from the Michigan Public Health Institute will have access to focus group tapes and discussion notes. Project staff will de-identify notes and transcripts, so even if you should mention your name or other identifying information, this information will be removed. Results of the analysis will only be reported in total, including general themes from across the conversation will be included in any reporting, but individual

responses will not be shared or tied directly back to you. We may share quotes but will only include attribution (linking your name or other general details about you) with your permission.

Should you have any questions about the focus group or your participation, please contact Jessie Jones [hand out contact information] at the Michigan Public Health Institute.

Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

Discussion Questions: 80 minutes

1. I want to start just by having everyone introduce themselves and telling us a little bit about your background, where you grew up, etc.

2. Can you share briefly your story about how you became homeless?

3. Thinking back to the things that lead up to you becoming homeless, what might have gone differently that would have prevented that from happening?

4. Since becoming homeless, as you've sought out different resources or services, what challenges have you faced?

   Additional prompts if needed:
   a. Have there been resources or services you've tried to access that you couldn't?
   b. Have you been denied any resources or services that you think you've needed? Why did that happen?

5. How did you hear about our organization? What lead you to us?
   a. What challenges did you have getting to us?

   Additional prompts if needed:
   b. Were their barriers or frustrations that you encountered as you were trying to connect with our agency and get services here?

6. What other resources or services have you been able to access?
   a. What was your goal in seeking out those services? (What resources were you seeking from them?)
   b. How easy or difficult was it to access those resources or services?
   c. [If appropriate] What made it easy to access those resources or services?
   d. What would have made it easier to access those resources or services?

7. Thinking about both your own experiences, but now also those of other people you know who have experienced homelessness, what would it take to end homelessness in Oakland County?

   Additional prompts if needed:
   a. So, if you were given unlimited resources, and asked to use them to completely end homelessness in Oakland County, what would you do?
   b. What keeps people who are homeless from getting out of that situation?

Oakland County Blueprint to End Homelessness – Partner Survey

In Oakland County, how often...

	1 - Never	2	3	4	5 - Very Often
...do local organizations and collaboratives gather and use input from people experiencing homelessness about whether their programs or efforts are meeting their needs?	○	○	○	○	○
...are people experiencing homelessness engaged in decision-making about local efforts, programs, or services (e.g., decisions about what local issues to address, how to address them, what programs to offer, what times to offer them, etc.)?	○	○	○	○	○

Are there any formal or informal policies or procedures affecting the ability of people experiencing homelessness to get the services they need in your community?

○ Yes
○ No
○ I'm not sure

Please share a few examples.

Consider the following: (1) How are the policies or procedures getting in the way? (2) Where are they in place? (3) Do they affect some groups of people experiencing homelessness more than others?

As it relates to people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness in Oakland County:

To what extent are each of the following a barrier in accessing the benefits, services, and/or supports they need?

	Not a barrier	Somewhat of a barrier	Moderate barrier	Serious barrier
They are unaware a benefit or support exists	○	○	○	○
Mobility and transportation challenges	○	○	○	○
Linguistic or cultural barriers	○	○	○	○
Cost	○	○	○	○
Denial of services and supports by providers who have discretionary decision-making power	○	○	○	○
Disability	○	○	○	○
Lack of availability of a service or support in one's community	○	○	○	○
Discrimination	○	○	○	○
Age	○	○	○	○
Difficulties navigating systems	○	○	○	○
Citizenship requirements	○	○	○	○

	1 - Never	2	3	4	5 - Very Often
How often do service providers and programs in the community refer people experiencing homelessness to each other's services, supports, or opportunities?	○	○	○	○	○

What is helping or hindering the ability to coordinate services?

What types of referrals are being made? Between what types of service providers?

What's in place that's helping providers make referrals?

	1 - Never	2	3	4	5 - Very Often
How often are stakeholders and organizations sharing information (e.g., data, research, lessons learned, etc.) to improve the quality of homeless and housing services, supports, and opportunities?	○	○	○	○	○

What is helping or hindering this collaboration?

	1 - Never	2	3	4	5 - Very Often
How often are stakeholders' and organizations' resources (e.g., staff, funding, technology, trainings, etc.) used to improve the alignment of homeless and housing services, supports, and opportunities?	○	○	○	○	○

What is helping or hindering this collaboration?

What skills or knowledge do you think service providers need to better support the delivery of quality services related to homelessness in Oakland County? Which settings are these needed in the most?

What local attitudes or beliefs might be getting in the way of providing quality services to all children, individuals, and families experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness?

In Oakland County, people experiencing homelessness are disproportionately Black or African American at 67%, compared to 14% for the county overall.

What do you think are the top three factors that, if changed, would have the biggest impact on ending Oakland County's racial inequities in homelessness?

Is Oakland County using all the available assets in the county to meaningfully address homelessness?
(i.e., individuals with certain skills, funding, building space, technology, data)

○ Yes
○ No
○ I'm not sure

What assets are currently being ignored? Why is this happening?

Please share an innovative or promising practice(s) you feel that Oakland County should consider implementing or expanding:

Please rank the following universal prevention and intervention strategies from highest to lowest priority in the effort to end homelessness:
(Universal prevention includes policies, programs, and investments that target the entire population without regard to individual risk factors. In order to reduce the risk of homelessness, structural and population-based approaches are intended to address risk factors and build assets.)

	1 - lowest priority	2	3	4	5	6	7 - highest priority
Poverty reduction strategies	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Income supports	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Early childhood interventions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Violence prevention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Anti-discrimination policy, practice, and training	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Landlord tenant laws and legislation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please rank the following selected and indicated strategies from highest to lowest priority in the effort to end homelessness:
(Selected prevention programs are aimed at people at risk due to membership in some group. Indicated prevention programs target people who face various disadvantages due to some individual characteristic or constellation of characteristics. Individual-level screening is usually required.)

	1 - lowest priority	2	3	4 - highest priority
Addressing the social, cultural, and economic exclusion of Black and Indigenous individuals, families, and communities	○	○	○	○
Youth-centered or school-based programs	○	○	○	○
Supports for individuals with addictions and mental health challenges	○	○	○	○
Supports for families in which there is interpersonal violence	○	○	○	○

Please rank the following reintegration supports from highest to lowest priority in the effort to end homelessness:
(Reintegration support is designed to stem the flow of individuals and families leaving institutional care into homelessness. It involves ensuring that people who are 'discharged' from institutional care have planning support prior to release, and immediate access to housing and necessary supports to enhance housing stability upon release.)

	1 - lowest priority	2	3 - highest priority
Young people leaving child protection or foster care	○	○	○
Transitional supports for people leaving corrections	○	○	○
Individuals leaving inpatient health and mental health settings	○	○	○

Please rank the following eviction prevention strategies from highest to lowest priority in the effort to end homelessness:

	1 - lowest priority	2	3	4	5	6 - highest priority
Information and advice (outreach) to landlords	○	○	○	○	○	○
Information and advice (outreach) to tenants	○	○	○	○	○	○
Legal support and representation	○	○	○	○	○	○
Landlord liaison, conflict resolution, and mediation	○	○	○	○	○	○
Emergency financial assistance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rental assistance or supplements	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please rank the following early intervention and crisis supports from highest to lowest priority in the effort to end homelessness:
(Early intervention and Crisis Support strategies target individuals and families who are at imminent risk of, or who have just become, homeless, and involves policies, practices, and strategies designed to address the immediate risk of homelessness through the provision of information, assessment, and access to necessary supports.)

	1 - lowest priority	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 - highest priority
Outreach, identification, and engagement	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Intake and assessment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Case management and systems navigation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Place-based supports and shelter diversion	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Emergency shelter (e.g., safe parking, transitional housing)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Family mediation and reunification	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
School-based early intervention programs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Intimate partner violence victim support	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please rank the following housing supports from highest to lowest priority in the effort to end homelessness:
(Safe and stable housing provides supportive services and housing assistance to support people as they return to permanent housing or permanent housing supported by a mainstream system resource.)

	1 - lowest priority	2	3	4	5 - highest priority
Rapid re-housing	○	○	○	○	○
Permanent supportive housing	○	○	○	○	○
Dedicated affordable housing	○	○	○	○	○
Rent supplements	○	○	○	○	○
Post-housing wrap-around care	○	○	○	○	○

Are there any lessons learned or additional insights you can offer with respect to the development of Oakland County's Blueprint to End Homelessness?

Lastly we would like to ask a few questions that will help us make sense of the survey data.

Are you currently or have you ever experienced being unhoused?

○ Yes, I have experienced being unhoused
○ Yes, I am currently unhoused
○ No, I have never experienced being unhoused

Is the organization you represent located in or provide services in Oakland County?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Not applicable

Which of the following best describes the organization in which you currently represent? Please select all that apply.

☐ Homelessness services provider/organization
☐ Housing services provider/organization
☐ Social services provider/organization
☐ Local public health
☐ Local/municipal government
☐ Healthcare provider/organization (including behavioral health services)
☐ K-12 schools/local school district
☐ Higher education/Academic institution
☐ Law, justice and public safety (e.g. corrections, courts, law enforcement agencies, etc.)
☐ Community-based organization including neighborhood group
☐ Community organizing/citizen-led group
☐ Religious/faith-based organization
☐ For-profit/business
☐ Foundation/funding organization
☐ Other non-profit organization
☐ Other, please specify

Other organization type, please specify:

_____

Which county do you live in?

- ○ Oakland ○ Alcona
- ○ Alger ○ Allegan ○ Alpena
- ○ Antrim ○ Arenac ○ Baraga
- ○ Barry ○ Bay ○ Benzie
- ○ Berrien ○ Branch ○ Calhoun
- ○ Cass ○ Charlevoix
- ○ Cheboygan ○ Chippewa
- ○ Clare ○ Clinton ○ Crawford
- ○ Delta ○ Dickinson
- ○ Eaton ○ Emmet ○ Genesee
- ○ Gladwin ○ Gogebic
- ○ Grand Traverse ○ Gratiot
- ○ Hillsdale ○ Houghton
- ○ Huron ○ Ingham ○ Ionia
- ○ Iosco ○ Iron ○ Isabella
- ○ Jackson ○ Kalamazoo
- ○ Kalkaska ○ Kent ○ Keweenaw
- ○ Lake ○ Lapeer ○ Leelanau
- ○ Lenawee ○ Livingston
- ○ Luce ○ Mackinac ○ Macomb
- ○ Manistee ○ Marquette
- ○ Mason ○ Mecosta
- ○ Menominee ○ Midland
- ○ Missaukee ○ Monroe
- ○ Montcalm ○ Montmorency
- ○ Muskegon ○ Newaygo
- ○ Oceana ○ Ogemaw
- ○ Ontonagon ○ Osceola
- ○ Oscoda ○ Otsego
- ○ Ottawa ○ Presque Isle
- ○ Roscommon ○ Saginaw
- ○ St. Clair ○ St. Joseph
- ○ Sanilac ○ Schoolcraft
- ○ Shiawassee ○ Tuscola
- ○ Van Buren ○ Washtenaw
- ○ Wayne ○ Wexford
- ○ Other (not in Michigan)

Thank you for providing your input on the homelessness services system in Oakland County. Your responses will help guide decision-making and ultimately improve the lives of Oakland County residents.