



Liubovi and her daughter Angelina received help to move into housing in a county-financed building in 2024.

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## Hennepin County

# Housing Stability strategy, 2026 to 2030



# Housing Stability strategy, 2026-2030

Hennepin County has adopted a three-pronged strategy that guides our work to prevent and respond to homelessness. Our work focuses on making homelessness:

## Rare

Reduce the number of new entries into homelessness

## Brief

Help people who experience homelessness to exit homelessness to permanent housing as quickly as possible

## Nonrecurring

Minimize the number of returns to homelessness for people after they have established housing.

The goal of the 2026-2030 strategy is to deploy this three-pronged approach to minimize the number of people experiencing homelessness at any given time.

## Building on the 2020-2025 strategy

Over the period of the 2020-2025 strategy, our community allocated unprecedented resources to make homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring (see appendix B) even as global, national and local crises disproportionately harmed our most vulnerable residents.

Over this period, the rate at which people exited homelessness to permanent housing increased year-on-year in Hennepin County. In 2024 the number of children, women and men who exited homelessness to permanent housing was 65% greater than in 2019<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, more than 3,500 evictions were prevented in 2024 alone.

Unsheltered homelessness in Hennepin County decreased by 33% from the January 2020 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count to the January 2025 PIT Count, even as the national PIT count recorded a 21% increase<sup>2</sup>. Hennepin County residents currently experience unsheltered homelessness at less than half the rate of the US as a whole.

Total homelessness — combining sheltered and unsheltered homelessness — increased by 33% nationally but only by 1% in Hennepin County. In October 2024, Hennepin County became one of the most populous Counties in the nation to achieve the federal designation of having effectively ended Veteran homelessness.

<sup>1</sup> The number of people who exited homelessness to permanent housing was 1,535 (2019), 1,593 (2020), 1,384 (2021), 1,844 (2022), 2,171 (2023), 2,528 (2024) per the Homeless Management Information System

<sup>2</sup> National PIT data has not yet been released for 2025 so 2024 national data is used for these calculations.

## Refreshing the strategy

The progress we have made in Hennepin County relative to our own community's past performance and relative to the trends and trajectories occurring elsewhere in the US is an affirmation of the three-pronged strategy. Nonetheless, one person outside is one too many and so we continue to approach the work with urgency.

This document articulates the high-level values and priorities that will guide us through the coming years. We have significant learnings from our recent work to inform the next phase of our strategy. Data has informed our priorities — particularly with regard to which programs have proven successful — as has input from people with lived experience of housing instability and homelessness.

We also recognize that the social, economic and political context in which we operate has significantly changed and will continue to do so.

## Gratitude

We owe particular thanks to the Hennepin County Lived Experience Advisory Group and Youth Action Board and to the advocacy group Street Voices of Change for their leadership, insights and expertise. Their input was invaluable in informing and shaping the values and priorities in this document, as it has been in all efforts to improve the homeless response system in recent years.

## The values that support our work

Our work to date underpins our central beliefs, as does our collaboration with people with lived experience of housing instability and homelessness and our partnership with community-based agencies. These beliefs will guide all aspects of our work over the 2026-2030 period.

### 1. We believe in the people we serve

Everyone experiencing housing instability and homelessness deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Everyone has their own unique blend of strengths, resources and experiences. They are the experts on their circumstances. Services and systems must be person-centered and trauma-informed to be successful.

### 2. We believe that housing ends homelessness

The priority when working with people experiencing homelessness — in sheltered or unsheltered settings — must be helping them to access housing as a matter of urgency. When working with people who are currently housed, the priority should be to help them stabilize their housing. Everyone is 'housable' and everyone can be successful in housing with the right support.

### 3. We believe that we can increase the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of services

While additional resources and programming have been central to recent progress, we are always looking for opportunities to improve existing programs. Achieving improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and equity will allow us to better serve our residents using existing resources.

## Hennepin County values

Our beliefs align with and support Hennepin County's overarching values:

### **People first**

People are our purpose. Residents are at the center of everything we do, and our employees are our greatest asset.

### **Stewardship**

We act boldly in the stewardship of our resources and environment.

### **Integrity**

We act with the highest ethical principles and demonstrate professionalism and personal responsibility in our service to community.

### **Equity**

We are committed to the shared responsibility of advancing policies and practices that promote equitable access, outcomes and opportunities for all.

### **Innovation**

We drive innovation in policies, services and programs to achieve the best possible outcomes for people



Artisha received help getting housing for herself and her children at the end of 2025.

## Goals, objectives, program areas and metrics

**Community level goal: Minimize homelessness among Hennepin County residents; eliminate disparities in homelessness.**

To measure progress against the goal of minimizing the number of people experiencing homelessness at any given time, we have adopted the following community level metrics which we will track year-on-year:

Community level metric	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Calculation methodology
1.1 Rate of unsheltered homelessness per 100,000 residents	47	50		38	37	39	33	HUD Annual Point-in-Time Count / 2020 Census population data
1.1a Disparity rate ratio of unsheltered rate	-	-	-	-	-	3.91	3.07	HUD Annual Point-in-Time Count
1.2 Rate of homelessness — including sheltered and unsheltered homelessness — per 100,000 residents	265	238	-	209	258	302	240	HUD Annual Point-in-Time Count / 2020 Census population data
1.2a Disparity rate ratio of homeless rate	-	-	-	-	-	6.51	5.68	HUD Annual Point-in-Time Count

### Notes:

- The table does not display the rate of people experiencing homelessness in 2021 because of pandemic-related disruptions
- The disparity rate ratio measures the rate of homelessness for people of color relative to White non-Hispanic residents
- Comparable data for the disparity rate ratio is only available from 2024 onwards as a result of changes in HUD data standards

**Community level objectives: Achieve the necessary conditions to minimize homelessness**

To measure progress against the three-pronged approach, we have adopted the following community level metrics and will track them year-on-year:

Community level metric	What will measure?	2024 baseline	Calculation methodology
2.1 Minimize number of new entries into homelessness	The number of unique individuals who engage with any homeless crisis response service and who do not have any homeless service engagements in the 24 months prior. This will include all individuals irrespective of how long they engage services for (i.e. they may engage services one time only, for a single day or on an ongoing basis).	8,021	Homeless Management Information System
2.2 Maximize number of exits from homelessness to permanent housing	The number of unique individuals who are recorded as having exited homeless services to a permanent housing destination. This will only include individuals with confirmed exit destinations. The majority of people who exit homeless services do so without a confirmed destination and so will not be included.	2,526	Homeless Management Information System
2.3 Maximize percentage that do not return to homelessness after moving to permanent housing.	The percentage of unique individuals who exited a homeless service to a permanent housing destination in the previous year and who did not interact with any homeless crisis response services in the subsequent year. It should be noted there may be occasions where people in housing interact with homeless services yet still have housing.	86%	Homeless Management Information System

## Key program areas

Hennepin County has worked with partner agencies to establish a systemic response to homelessness that incorporates the following program areas. Within each area there are typically several specific programs being delivered by several different agencies.

The ‘components’ in the following table provide high-level detail on the services being provided in each program area. The ‘key programmatic metrics’ details important performance data to be collected. The ‘Housing Stability (HS) lead’ denotes which of the three areas within Housing Stability

— Homelessness Prevention (HP), Crisis Response (CR), Housing Services and Supports (HSS) — takes lead responsibility for each program area. Appendix A provides further information on the structure within Housing Stability.

As we enter an era of uncertain resources, we will strive to continually increase the efficiency, effectiveness and equity with which all resources are deployed. The desired ‘direction’ for each metric is denoted by (+) if the goal is to maximize and (-) if the goal is to minimize.

	Program area	Components	Key programmatic metrics	HS lead
1	Build housing stability among low-income renter households at imminent risk for eviction	Emergency financial assistance; connection to legal representation <sup>3</sup> ; connection to broader support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entries into homelessness (-)</li> <li>• Evictions prevented (+)</li> </ul>	HP
2	Foster short and long-term housing stability for households residing in unstable, temporary housing situations (i.e. doubled-up, motel stays)	Emergency and medium-term financial assistance; support services; school-based partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entries into homelessness (-)</li> <li>• Exits from unstable housing to permanent housing (+)</li> </ul>	HP
3	Promote housing stability for people involved in and exiting justice and human service systems (i.e. Foster Care, treatment)	Support effective discharge planning; access to specialist vouchers; connection to broader support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entries into homelessness (-)</li> <li>• Exits from unstable housing to permanent housing (+)</li> </ul>	HP

<sup>3</sup> Hennepin County Adult Representation Services provide free legal representation for low-income households facing eviction (<http://www.hennepin.us/ars>)

Program area		Components	Key programmatic metrics	HS lead
4	Provide housing focused support services for people currently experiencing homelessness	Housing-focused case management and navigation in unsheltered and sheltered settings; connection to broader support services including health <sup>4</sup> and employment services <sup>5</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exits from homelessness to permanent housing (+)</li> <li>Length of time to achieve permanent housing (-)</li> </ul>	CR
5	Provide housing focused emergency shelter and shelter alternatives through diversion for households who would otherwise go unsheltered	Low barrier, safe, dignified indoor settings where people can stay during housing emergencies; support to help find more permanent alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exits from homelessness to permanent housing (+)</li> <li>Length of time to achieve permanent housing (-)</li> </ul>	CR
6	Make efficient, effective and equitable referrals to homeless-designated housing programs through Coordinated Entry System	System wide process of prioritizing households for programmatic housing openings and matching them based on vulnerability, personal preference and eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Length of time to make referrals (-)</li> <li>Ratio of successful referrals compared to unsuccessful referrals (+)</li> </ul>	CR

7	Provide Rapid ReHousing for families and individuals exiting homelessness	Time limited (up to two years) partial rental assistance and support services to help people find, move into and sustain leased housing in the private market, connection to broader support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exits from homelessness to permanent housing (+)</li> <li>Returns to homelessness (-)</li> <li>Days from referral to housing move-in (-)</li> </ul>	HSS
8	Support operations and service funding for scattered site permanent supportive housing	Operation and supportive service funding for programs that help people move into and sustain leased rental housing, particularly people exiting homelessness or other high-risk populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Returns to homelessness (-)</li> <li>Days from referral to housing move-in (-)</li> <li>Total capacity and utilization (+)</li> </ul>	HSS
9	Support operations and service funding for site-based Permanent Supportive Housing <sup>6</sup>	Operation and supportive service funding for programs that help people move into and sustain housing in physical units that are exclusively leased to people exiting homelessness or other high-risk populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Returns to homelessness (-)</li> <li>Days from referral to housing move-in (-)</li> <li>Total capacity and utilization (+)</li> </ul>	HSS
10	Support operations and service funding for other forms of affordable/ supportive housing	Other programmatic housing resources that support affordability and/or support services for people with barriers to housing stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entries into homelessness or returns to homelessness (-)</li> <li>Total capacity and utilization (+)</li> </ul>	HSS

4 Hennepin County Healthcare for the Homeless provides medical support to people experiencing homelessness in sheltered and unsheltered settings (<https://www.hennepin.us/hch>)

5 Hennepin County Workforce Development supports dedicated Employment and Training Services for People Exiting Homelessness (<https://www.hennepin.us/residents/human-services/workforce-development>)

6 Hennepin County Housing and Economic Development provide capital funding to create and preserve affordable and supportive housing units (<https://www.hennepin.us/housing/housing-programs>)

## Effective practices to continue and expand

Over the past five years we have seen that efficiency, effectiveness and equity were strengthened through the following practices. We will continue to focus on these three areas.

### **Elevating the role of people with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability in decision making**

Systems and services will only work for people if those same people are able to bring their insights, perspectives and strengths to inform and guide them. To authentically center the voices of people with lived experience, we need to engage with and listen to people and to the advocacy groups that include and represent them. We currently share decision-making power in funding, hiring and resource-allocation through the Lived Experience Advisory Group, Youth Action Board and with the advocacy group Street Voices of Change and ensure participants are appropriately compensated for their time. We need to build upon these practices and increasingly elevate the voices of the people we serve.

### **Using data systems to organize, coordinate and drive person-centered approaches**

A system as large as Hennepin County's—both in terms of the populations served and those involved in providing those services—requires a shared Homeless Management Information System and a commitment to using it across the full continuum of services. This allows for a clear understanding of who is experiencing homelessness and their needs while supporting connection to the right services. This allows for performance monitoring at a program and system level to ascertain how well needs are being met. This also provides the foundation to further best practices that reduce homelessness including the use of by-name lists, case conferencing and housing referral through the Coordinated Entry System.

### **Organizing around subpopulations**

Identification of subpopulations (i.e. Veterans, Foster youth, Seniors, people experiencing chronic homelessness and households fleeing or attempting to flee Domestic Violence) allows for more specificity and specialization to be developed to meet the needs of a particular group and to identify and target the resources that may be available to assist them. Focusing in this way — and using best practices like by-name lists and case conferencing at a subpopulation level — has been shown to be effective in leveraging and maximizing subpopulation specific resources. This approach can reduce homelessness for the specific subpopulation while contributing to a reduction in overall homelessness.

## Priority areas for improvement and development

We have identified the following three priority areas with feedback from staff and people with lived experience and from analysis of data, trends and trajectories.

### **Improve targeting approaches in homelessness prevention programs to identify and prioritize residents at greatest risk for homelessness**

Hennepin County is among a small group of early adopter communities that have invested resources to test and scale homelessness prevention strategies. Within this emerging discipline is a need to ensure these limited resources are reaching those who are most likely to become homeless through developing and testing predictive models, expanding data integration across systems and refining screening and assessment tools to align with the risk factors most associated with homelessness.

Irrespective of levels of need or resources — though recognizing the precariousness of both as our community enters this new period — Hennepin County is well-positioned to lead the way in maximizing the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of homeless prevention resources.

### **Further leverage wrap-around support from internal and external partners to address the holistic needs of households**

Across the United States, housing and service providers are experiencing an unprecedented acuity of household needs, exacerbated by the pandemic and opioid epidemic. At the same time, even residents with less acute needs may need help achieving self-sufficiency and increasing their incomes to address their housing crises given limited subsidies and affordable units.

In an environment of increased urgency of need and constrained resources, it is of paramount importance that the housing and homeless system increasingly leverages and coordinates with the full array of potential supports that other systems may be able to provide, from behavioral and chemical health to education and employment.

### **Identify and implement efficiencies to help people move more quickly into housing programs.**

Housing ends homelessness. Homeless-dedicated housing programs are among our most valuable resources. Shortening the time it takes for a vacant unit to be occupied — or for someone with access to rental assistance to move into a housing unit — means fewer people sleeping outside or in shelter at any given point. Any period when existing resources go unused represents a significant missed opportunity.

By leveraging all of Hennepin County's roles — funding, performance monitoring, quality assurance, Coordinated Entry System referrals, direct service provision, subject matter expert — there is opportunity to find ways to reduce the number of days it takes for people to move in to permanent housing, thereby increasing the utilization of existing housing resources.

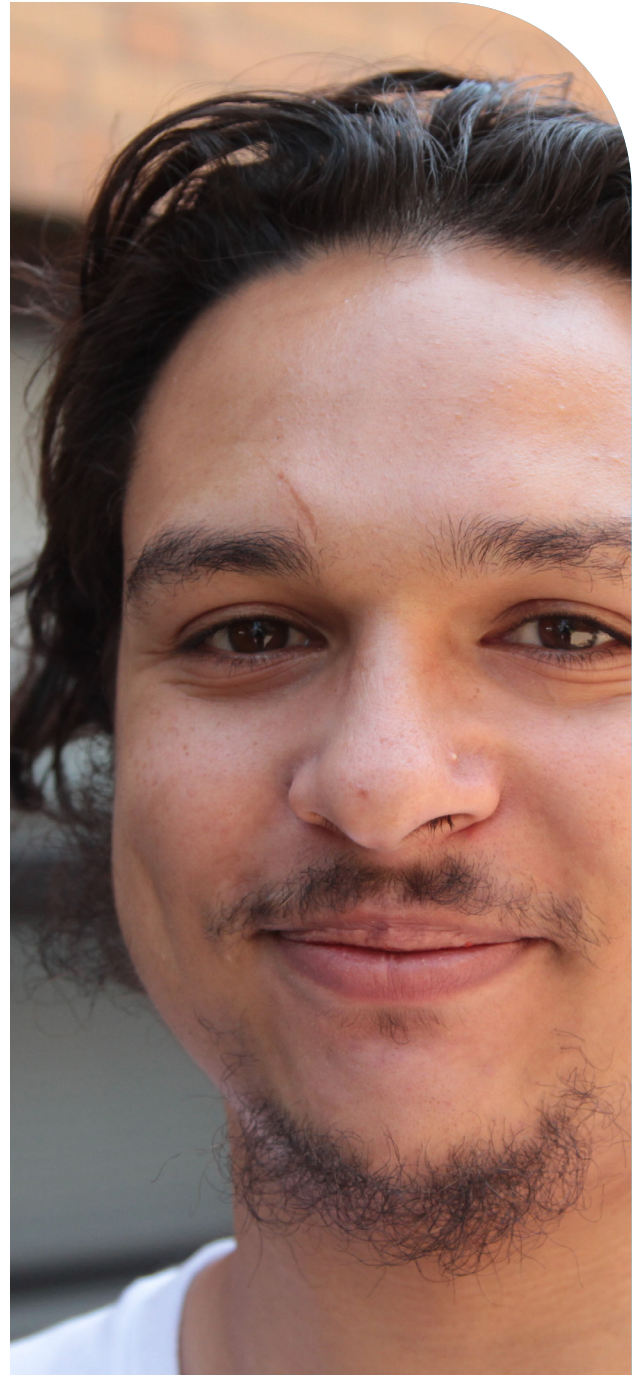
## Appendix A: Hennepin County Housing Stability area roles

Hennepin County is the Collaborative Applicant for the HUD Continuum of Care program and holds a lead role in terms of community-wide strategy and coordination of housing and homeless services aligned with the strategies in this document.

These services are primarily delivered by community-based agencies. The collective effectiveness of these agencies will drive the effectiveness of the overall system. Hennepin County provides support through funding and contracting, issuing and monitoring Housing Support agreements (formerly known as 'GRH'), applying for HUD Continuum of Care funds on agencies' behalf and supporting Coordinated Entry System participation.

Hennepin County is also a service provider in our own right; staff work directly with households to provide navigation supports, financial assistance payments, housing focused case management and outreach and shelter operations.

To fulfill these various roles, the Housing Stability area includes three sub-areas.



Eli received help with supportive housing in 2025.

## Homelessness prevention

Minimizes new entries into homelessness by leading communitywide strategy and coordination of prevention programming.

Key functions include:

- Providing emergency financial assistance for renters facing eviction
- Funding, supporting and providing oversight for community-based agencies that offer support services for households at risk of homelessness
- Funding, supporting and providing oversight and navigation services for school-based partnerships that provide financial assistance and support services to households at risk of homelessness
- Coordinating with specialty voucher programs for households at risk of homelessness
- Building capacity and coordinating with other systems that interact with households at risk of homelessness (i.e. justice, behavioral health)

## Crisis response

Helps people exit homelessness by leading community-wide strategy and coordinating shelter, outreach and related resources.

Key functions include funding, supporting, providing oversight and, in some cases, direct service delivery for:

- Community-based diversion services that help families and individuals who would otherwise sleep outside or in places not fit for human habitation to find safe alternatives to emergency shelter
- Housing-focused emergency shelter for families and individuals who would otherwise sleep outside or in places not fit for human habitation
- Housing-focused street outreach for families and individuals who are currently sleeping outside or in places not fit for human habitation
- Housing-focused case management and person-centered support to families and individuals to exit homelessness to permanent housing
- Coordination and operation of the Coordinated Entry System referral process, matching eligible high-priority households with openings in homeless-designated housing programs

## **Housing Services and Supports**

Helps people succeed in their housing by leading communitywide strategy and coordinating services and operations in different modalities of supportive housing.

Key functions include funding, supporting and providing oversight for services and operations in:

- Rapid ReHousing through a combination of county contracting and leveraging state and federal programs
- Permanent Supportive Housing through a combination of county contracting and leveraging state and federal funding
- Other forms of affordable/supportive housing through a combination of county contracting and leveraging state and federal funding

Additional key functions include:

- Selecting, supporting and providing oversight for DHS Housing Support funded programs that provide housing-based income supplements and support services for people with disabilities
- Coordinating and assuming lead responsibility for HUD Continuum of Care requirements for Hennepin County, including supporting HUD funded Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid ReHousing

## Appendix B: Progress against 2020-2025 strategy

The 2020-2025 strategy and a summary of how resources were deployed in support of its priorities and the impacts thereof can be viewed at [hennepin.us/homeless-response](https://hennepin.us/homeless-response).





## **Hennepin County**

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