

**What the Community Wants for
Emergency Shelter Services for Individuals
In the Greenfield Area
May 20, 2022**

What does the Greenfield area need for emergency shelter services for individuals?

How should those needs be met?

This document includes answers to these questions gathered from a wide range of community members including:

- people with lived experience of homelessness
- service providers concerned with this issue
- community meals providers
- members of the faith community
- housing advocates
- residents of the region

See appendix for more information on the process used to compile this document.

We encourage organizations submitting applications in response to the Individual Homelessness Service System RFR to develop and budget for programs that address the issues raised in this document.

While the focus of this document is the Greenfield area, we recognize that people are in need throughout Franklin County, the North Quabbin region, and other western Mass counties. We strongly encourage any Greenfield-based services to have systems for providing services to individuals in other areas of Franklin County including transportation for people to shelters or overflow shelter. Any organization seeking funding for individual shelter services must consider how they are serving people outside of the Greenfield area.

Key Components of an Effective Emergency Shelter System for Individuals:

The following are key components of an effective emergency shelter system for individuals in the Greenfield area that were identified by community members.

Coordination Among Area Services for People Who are Homeless

- Create, fund, and support a position for a full-time coordinator of area homelessness services to make sure that all programs providing services to people who are homeless are well connected to each other and working together to provide coordinated services. This position could be within an organization providing services directly or in a partner organization such as the Three-County Continuum of Care. The services to be coordinated include emergency shelter, day shelter, meals, transportation, outreach, as well as various levels of housing.
- Develop and support a system where all organizations providing direct service to individuals who are homeless have a way to access and update information about those individuals.

- Support the creation of outreach, shelter, and day shelter services in the North Quabbin Region as envisioned by community members and organizations in that region. The mobility of people who are homeless requires coordination among service organizations.
- Develop a system for making sure that staff from local service organizations that do not serve unhoused people as their primary function have updated information regarding shelter services including correct phone numbers and ways to refer some to shelter services. Use the Franklin County Resource Network as part of this system.
- Coordinate Franklin County services for people who are homeless with such services in Hampshire, Hampden, Worcester, and Berkshire Counties.

Street Outreach

- Create, fund, and support additional full-time paid outreach workers in Franklin County. Additional outreach staff are needed in the Greenfield and Turners Falls area as are outreach workers who can regularly visit other parts of the county.
- Develop, fund, and support a fully operational resource center that serves as the hub for street outreach and triage/diversion services in Franklin County.
- Fund and support basic needs supplies for outreach workers to distribute to people who are living rough in the area, including camping equipment, clothing, and other basic needs supplies
- Provide all outreach workers access to funds to pay for transportation needed by people who are homeless to reach safe shelter.
- Fund and support a 24/7/365 overflow shelter system and make sure all outreach workers can connect people who are homeless to that system.
- Fund and support a system for outreach workers to be able to receive specialized support 24/7/365.
- Recognize and support outreach workers' connection to de facto day shelters such as libraries, senior centers, community centers, transportation centers, and similar community spaces. Support connections between staff of de facto day shelters and outreach workers.

24/7/365 Fully Staffed Triage/Diversion System

- Develop, fund, and support a 24/7/365 fully staffed triage line for emergency shelter that anyone can call to get assistance with accessing a safe place for that night and connecting to needed services.
- Develop, fund, and support a fully operational resource center that serves as the hub for street outreach and triage/diversion services in Franklin County.
- If the emergency shelter is the location of the 24/7/365 Triage/Diversion system, fund and support sufficient staffing to allow one staff person to focus on the person in crisis while the rest of the staff attend to other people in their care.
- Widely distribute the Triage/Diversion line phone number.
- Provide translation services for staff responding to calls on the Triage/Diversion line.
- Provide Triage/Diversion staff access to funds for transportation and overflow shelter options, including funds for vehicle repair that would allow someone to travel to a safe place out of the area.
- Provide Triage/Diversion staff access to and the ability to update information in the coordinated entry system.

24/7/365 Fully Staffed Emergency Overnight Shelters

- Develop, fund, and support emergency overnight shelters that are open 24/7/365 days a year.
- Develop, fund, and support additional beds in emergency overnight shelters in the Greenfield area.
- Develop, fund, and support emergency overnight shelter options for everyone regardless of substance use history, mental health issues, etc.
- Hire, train, and fairly compensate staffing for the emergency overnight shelters. Minimum staffing for an emergency overnight shelter is 1 staff member to 10 residents. Additional staffing capacity is needed if shelter staff are responsible for the 24/7 Triage/Diversion line.
- Increase staff wages and benefits to attract skilled and dedicated staff. Salaries should reflect skill level, not just recognized degrees or certifications. Experience, including lived experience, should be valued along with education.
- Build into emergency shelter staff work schedules adequate time for updating and maintaining client files.
- Cross-train staff so they can fill in for others who are unexpectedly called away from their usual tasks.
- Train staff in the topics listed in the RFR's System Coordination section as well as additional topics. The following categories of training are listed as ones that the state considers "adequate, standardized, and appropriate" training for staff of programs funded by this RFR. The following are topics to include in training for all staff of emergency overnight shelters:
 1. Conflict resolution and crisis de-escalation
 2. CPR
 3. First Aid
 4. Housing First
 5. Motivational Interviewing
 6. NARCAN Administration
 7. Trauma Informed Care
 8. Diversity / Racial Equity
 9. Safety and risk assessment
 10. Negotiation
 11. De-escalation Techniques
 12. Service Coordination
 13. Sexual Harassment
 14. LGBTQ Awareness
 15. Sexual Exploitation
 16. Domestic Violence/Cycle of Abuse
 17. Key Resources in the Area
 18. How to obtain personal documents that have been lost or stolen, eg. various IDs including social security cards
 19. How to Make Referrals

Overflow Emergency Overnight Shelter System

- Develop, fund, and support a year-round system for providing emergency overnight shelter when the current shelter is full. The system can include temporary motel placements, transportation to shelters in other areas, or other strategies to make sure anyone who needs it has a safe place.
- Fund a system for paying for motel placements and/or transportation that is readily available to Diversion/Triage staff, shelter staff, and/or outreach workers.
- Expand the coordinated entry system to have the capacity to work with the people who are lower down on the By Names list and help them find safe shelter.

Day Shelters/Warming/Cooling Centers

- Develop, fund, and support year-round, 7-day a week day shelters that provide shelter, bathrooms, showers, laundry facilities, and support for people who are homeless.

Support for People Living Rough

- Develop, fund, and support a safe, sanitary, stable, and legal area for camping for people who are homeless. Provide supportive services to people camping in that area. Such a camping area minimally must include access to running water, trash receptacles, and toilet facilities with sharps containers. Preferably, it would also include access to showers, electricity, a covered area for cooking/eating, a “tool shed” for campers to keep the area clean, a safe place for belongings to be stored, and reliable transportation to and from any camping area for support services, work, library, clothes washing, etc.
- Fund and provide good-quality camping equipment including tents, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, and tarps to people who are living rough.

Transportation

- Incorporate funds and systems for transportation of clients into any application for emergency overnight shelters, day shelters, diversion/triage, and street outreach programs. Budget and plan for transportation for clients to shelter or other system components and from the shelter system to other resources.
- Train staff in how to arrange for transportation and how to access funds to pay for the transportation.
- Plan for providing transportation throughout the county as well as transportation to shelter or to family members or friends in other areas who can provide shelter.
- Budget for funds for vehicle repair that would allow someone to travel to a safe place out of the area.

Access to Resources Needed to Support Clients

- Train all staff working with people who are homeless in assessing resource needs as well as how to access resources. This includes concrete objects such as tents or other equipment as well as who within the organization has the skills to respond to a specific need.
- Train and support staff in what support is available and how to access support from other organizations.
- Provide language/translation services, particularly Spanish, Portuguese, Moldovan, and Russian. This need may be addressed by multilingual staff members or through a phone or online translation service.

- Prominently display signage in multiple languages in shelters and other programs that let people know how to request services if they cannot adequately communicate in English.

Special Populations

- Plan for and provide shelter to people whose specific needs make them inappropriate for congregate emergency overnight shelter services. The system needs to be prepared to deal with these contingencies even if the population of these individuals is small.
- Train staff in the individual emergency shelter system about how to refer people to specialized services for families, youth and young adults, and people fleeing domestic violence.
- Develop options for people who are in couple relationships and who avoid traditional congregate shelters because they are separated.
- Develop and implement plans for providing services to everyone in a way that includes safe, dignified shelter for everyone, including transgender people, people leaving incarceration, and people who have experienced being sex trafficked. In cases where sex-segregated congregate shelter is not appropriate for an individual, provide an alternative such as space in a motel.

Appendix: Process for collecting input/drafting this document

The information in this document was gathered through a Zoom meeting on April 28th, email message , additions to a collective Google document, and phone conversations. The people providing input included

- those with lived experience of homelessness
- former shelter guests
- staff from social service and other non-profit organizations
- faith community members
- Greenfield residents
- staff and volunteers from outreach programs
- and more.

This document was drafted by Susan Worgaftik (Housing Greenfield), Mary McClintock (Community Action Pioneer Valley), and Amy Clarke (Interfaith Council of Franklin County) and reviewed by everyone who provided input.