

Memphis Counts.



Community Alliance
for the Homeless

2020 Annual Report



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Who We Are

Community Alliance for the Homeless is the Lead Agency for the Memphis/Shelby County Continuum of Care (CoC).

A CoC is a group of regional agencies that may include homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, public housing authorities, school districts, mental health providers, hospitals, affordable housing developers, formerly homeless individuals, and many other collaborative bodies. A CoC is responsible for the coordination and provision of homeless services and homelessness prevention activities in a certain geographic area.

Across Memphis/Shelby County, Community Alliance provides planning, technical assistance, and service coordination to public and private agencies that are working to end homelessness. We link planners, providers, data, and resources to develop an effective and outcomes-driven system for ending homelessness.

We believe that housing is a basic human right.

We believe that homelessness is a solvable problem.

We believe that our community is equipped with resources to impact positive change.

**Leading effective practices
to end homelessness in
Memphis and Shelby County.**



Memphis/Shelby County Homeless Consortium

The Consortium is the voluntary association that provides leadership, services, advocacy, and information related to Memphis and Shelby County’s homeless population and serves as the TN-501: Memphis/Shelby County Continuum of Care (CoC). The Consortium has over 52 active association and individual members from many different sectors across Memphis and Shelby County, and meets quarterly. Currently, it has nine open committees and working groups that meet more regularly and focus on specific populations or services provided by member agencies.

The mission of the Consortium is to develop, sustain and coordinate a comprehensive continuum of care for citizens of the City of Memphis and Shelby County who experience homelessness in order to establish pathways to self-sufficiency and ultimately to eliminate homelessness.

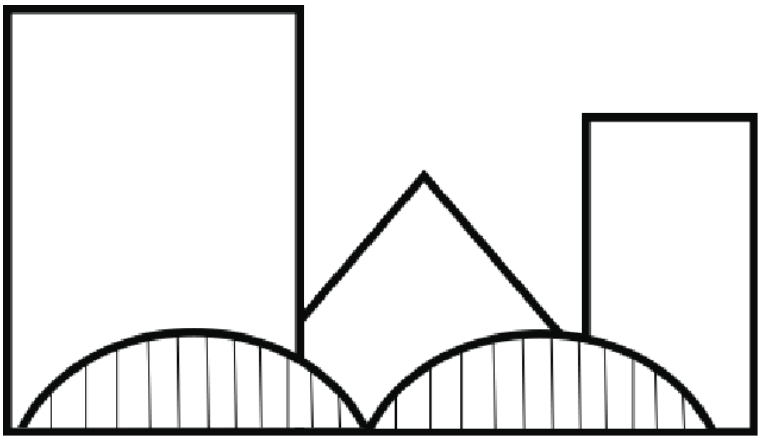


Interested in becoming a member of the consortium?

Visit cafth.org to learn more and sign up!

2019-20 Consortium Members

- AGAPE • Alliance Healthcare Services • Alpha House • Alpha Omega Veterans Services
- Baptist Operation Outreach / Christ Community Health Services • Barbara Johnson-McKinney
- Barron Heights CDC • Behavioral Health Initiatives • Calvary Church • Catholic Charities
- City of Memphis Housing & Community Development • CMI Healthcare Services • Door of Hope
- Dorothy Day House of Hospitality • Family Promise of Memphis • Family Safety Center
- Friends for Life • Hannah’s Hope • HOPE - Mid-South Peace & Justice Center
- Hope House • Hospitality Hub • Housing the Homeless • Kim Daugherty
- Lewis Davis CME Church Outreach Ministry • Living Grace • Lowenstein House
- Memphis Area Legal Services • Memphis VA Medical Center • Mending Vessels Ministry
- Meritan • MIFA • Minact • Odessa’s Foster Care Home - Visions of Hope • Open Door
- Operation Stand Down Mid-South • OUT Memphis • Patch • Promise Development Corporation
- Safe Place Emergency Shelter • Shelby County Division of Corrections • Shelby County Schools
- Shield • Synergy Treatment Center • The Hagar Center • The Jasmine Center
- The Life Church • Uplifting Veterans Center • Urban Family Ministries
- Youth Changes • Youth Villages • YWCA Greater Memphis



Planning

Each CoC is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to designate an agency to lead the operations of the CoC; an agency to maintain its Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a database in which homeless individuals are compliantly tracked; and a Coordinated Entry System (CES), through which a region’s homeless population are prioritized for housing solutions available both in and outside of the CoC. Community Alliance is responsible for all three components.

These activities are additionally overseen by the Memphis/Shelby County Homeless Consortium’s Governing Council, the CoC Planning Committee, and various subcommittees. The Governing Council is the decision-making board of the CoC, and supports the work of its subcommittees. The CoC Planning Committee works alongside Community Alliance to develop all aspects of the Collaborative Application for the annual CoC Competition where federal dollars are awarded and renewed to providers within the CoC.

The CoC Planning committee also supports the planning and development of the CoC to provide effective programming and service coordination for persons experiencing homelessness, and in training the community in best practices.

Subcommittees & Workgroups

Families and Youth Committee

The Families and Youth Committee advocates for families and unaccompanied youth ages 18-24, coordinating strategies for engagement, and identifying housing and shelter options for youth and families, and advocates for youth and families within the CoC.

Single Adults Committee

The Single Adults Committee brings together housing providers and outreach workers for the purpose of case conferencing, resource sharing, and advocating for resources and services for single adults experiencing homelessness.

Employment Committee

The Employment Committee develops strategies to help households experiencing homelessness gain and maintain employment, while educating the community on employment resources and programming available to increase the job readiness skills of clients.

Veteran’s Committee

The Veterans Committee advocates for veteran services and resources, collaborates to share resources available to veterans, and operates a Veteran By-Name list to help veterans experiencing homelessness find housing.

Homeless Management Information System

The HMIS Committee leads effective data management to ensure standards and practices are met and to ensure that community data is accurate and up to date. It helps implement and oversee a strategy for improving data quality and technical assistance.

Youth Action Board

The Youth Action Board, composed entirely of youth aged 18-24 who have experienced homelessness, advocates for youth specific services, resources, and housing programs for youth who are experiencing housing instability or homelessness.

Best Practices

Housing is a basic human right.

Housing First practices have existed in Memphis for over a decade, and ensures that anyone—even those with the highest barriers—can receive housing. While traditional approaches may require individuals to meet preconditions like following service participation requirements, maintaining sobriety, or gaining income before placing someone into housing, the Housing First approach prioritizes placement in permanent housing as the first step.

However, Housing First does not mean housing only; Housing First ensures that individuals and families have access to the supportive services they want and need to remain in housing. These services are flexible and client-driven; Housing First recognizes that people have the agency and autonomy to choose the services that they need, and they are more likely to successfully utilize these services and remain in housing if given the choice.

The goal of our community’s Coordinated Entry System is to ensure that those who are the most vulnerable receive the housing and supportive services that are the best fit for them. While some individuals and families may need only short- or medium-term assistance and successfully regain housing in a rapid re-housing (RRH) program, others may need long-term assistance in a permanent supportive housing (PSH) program.

Homelessness is a solvable problem.

Housing First practices are evidence-based; this model has proven to be an extremely effective intervention for ending homelessness in Memphis/Shelby County, as well as across the United States. In our community, overall homelessness has declined an average 6% a year since 2012, per the point-in-time count.

Our community is equipped with resources to impact positive change.

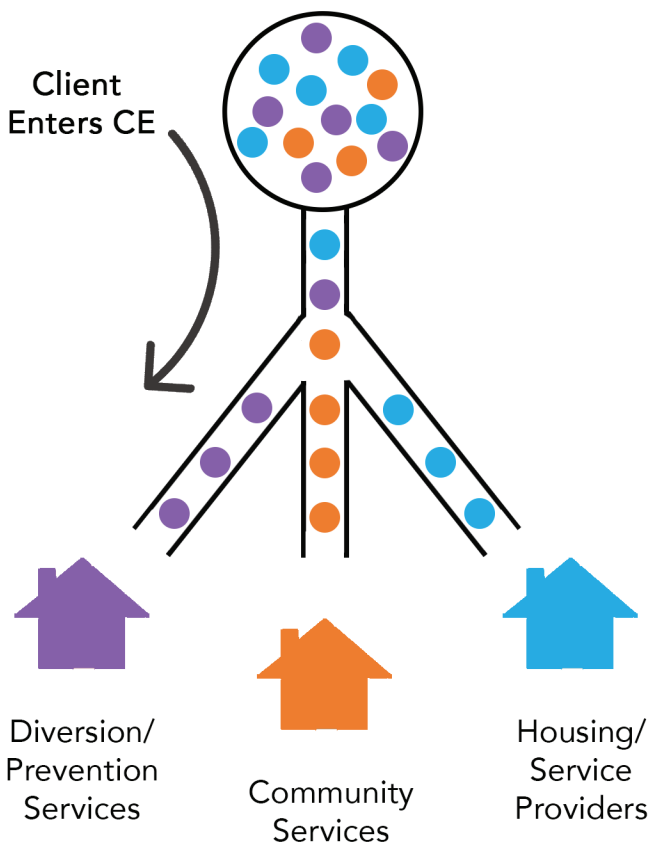
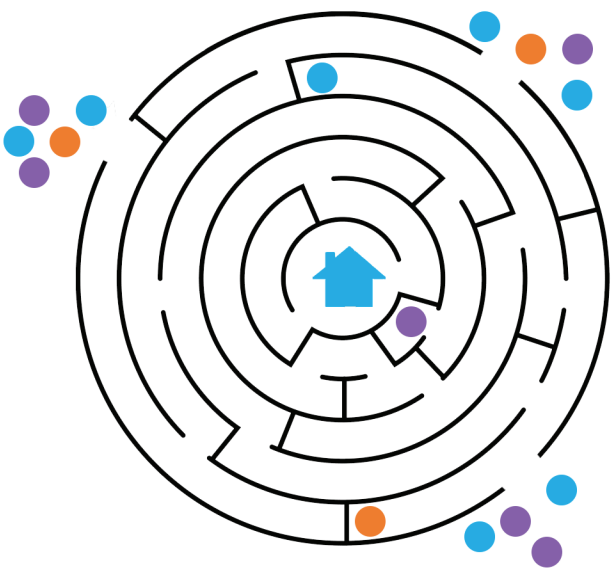
Housing First practices are a cost-effective solution to homelessness. Dozens of studies have reached the same conclusion—it is significantly less expensive to provide supportive housing than it is to manage homelessness in other ways. When individuals and families enter Housing First programs, they are much less likely to frequently utilize expensive systems like shelters, emergency rooms, and jails. By shifting resources that already exist within our community to embrace Housing First practices, the community benefits in multiple ways.

Without Coordinated Entry

Clients continually re-directed, creating delays in service or even distrust, especially the most vulnerable populations.

Available resources are underutilized or misused as clients are continually referred to multiple providers.

Multiple assessments leading to duplication of services, and poor data tracking.



With Coordinated Entry

No wrong door approach, meaning any agency participating in CE has the ability to direct a client to the resources that best match their needs.

Shared resources and assessments to better understand our population.

Clients are placed in safe and stable housing options faster and more effectively to reduce length of time homeless and returns back to homelessness.

By the Numbers

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. Each year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuums of Care (CoCs) conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter and transitional housing, on a single night. HUD mandates that CoCs conduct a count of unsheltered homeless persons every other year, but Memphis completes a PIT every year.

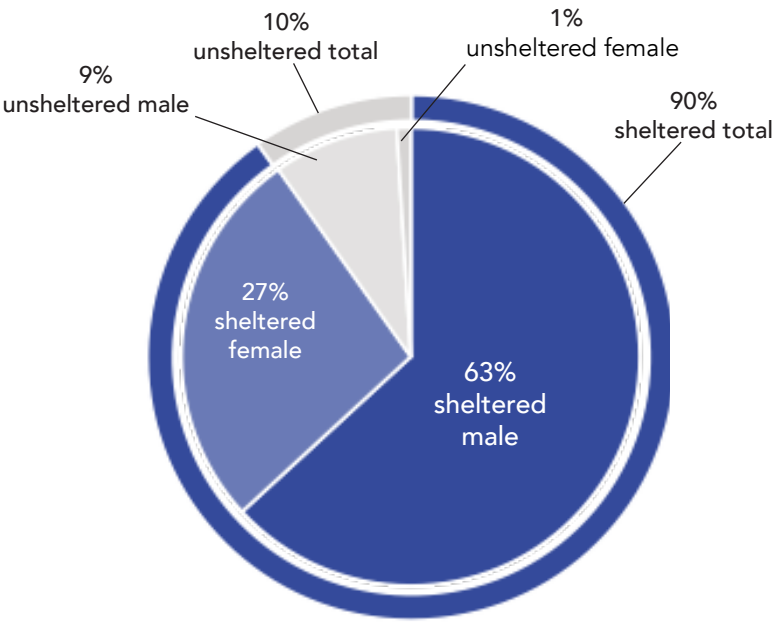
Each count is planned, coordinated, and overseen by CAFTH. With the generous help of volunteers and local service providers, CAFTH arranges PIT teams and assigns them different areas of the city and county to physically survey and count every individual. To best identify known areas, CAFTH works with local police precincts, analyzes data from the online sighting tool on our agency’s website, organizes with outreach workers, and utilizes public service announcements on radio stations and media outlets to spread the word.

In 2020, the total population counted totaled 1,022. Over the last three years, overall homelessness has decreased an average 4% each year, per the PIT count.

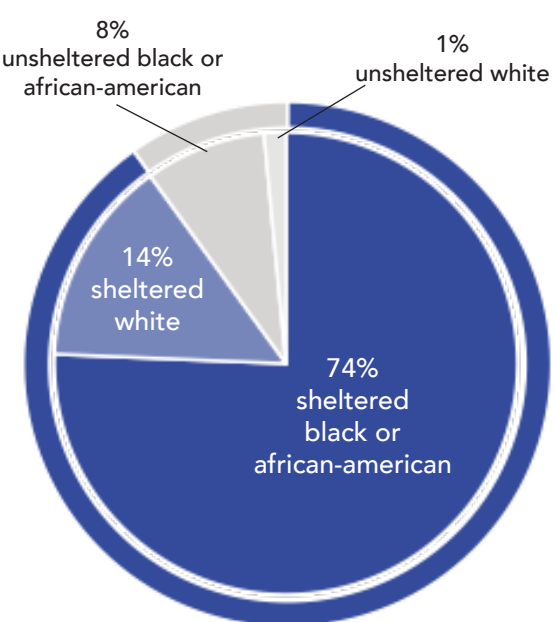


The temperature the day of the count was a high of 44 F, and a low of 28 F; these conditions likely impacted the ability to count, and how people sought shelter in places considered unsafe.

Sheltered				
921	284	11	80	34
individuals	in families	chronically homeless	veterans	youth households
Unsheltered				
101	0	10	3	5
individuals	in families	chronically homeless	veterans	youth (ages 18-24)



identity



race

Note on Demographics: These graphs only include percentages of primary demographics. During the count, all identities/expressions are self-reported. With regards to identity, in the 2020 count, there was 1 transgender and 0 gender non-conforming individuals counted (unsheltered), accounting for <1% of the population. With regards to race/ethnicity, in the 2020 count, there was 1 Asian individual, 16 American Indian or Native Alaskan individuals, 3 Hawaiian or Pacific Islander individuals, and 5 individuals reporting multiple races (all sheltered), accounting for <2% of the population. For more detail, please visit cafth.org.

Programs

CAFTH supports CoC funded homelessness programs in Memphis/Shelby County by providing technical assistance, monitoring, program evaluations, and additional support to ensure that programs are running efficiently and are effectively serving persons experiencing homelessness. Housing programs within the CoC that CAFTH supports include permanent supportive housing programs for those most vulnerable and in need, short-term housing assistance (Rapid ReHousing) aimed at getting people back on their feet, and additional supportive services such as outreach and case management that help identify individuals' needs and provide resources. CAFTH seeks out and implements best practice models designed to improve the overall performance of all CoC projects and how persons experiencing homelessness in our community are served. To help expand programming and resources for our community, CAFTH also has partnered with agencies outside of the CoC to develop more housing resources and programming for those in need.



Child Welfare Housing Partnerships

In 2012, Memphis received one of five demonstration grants in the nation from the US Department of Health and Human Services to provide permanent housing and services to families whose children are facing placement into foster care due to unstable housing and high service needs.

As a sustainability effort of this five-year grant, CAFTH grew our partnership with The Department of Children Services (DCS), along with the Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association and Promise Development Corporation, to help provide a variety of new housing programs that serve child welfare involved families and helped to prevent family separation.



“To see people who were homeless with pending child welfare cases, which is just a desperate situation, have things turned around so quickly—that was a beautiful thing.”

- Planning Director Kellie Cole, Route Fifty article, June 4, 2019

Housing Choice Voucher Program



CAFTH partners with the Memphis Housing Authority (MHA) to distribute Housing Choice Vouchers, awarded but HUD, within the community. Many of these vouchers are used to help persons that are in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs that no longer need supportive services “move on” so that they can sustain their own housing with a Housing Choice Voucher.

This frees up space within PSH programs for those currently in need of housing and expands the resources that our community has for those currently experiencing homelessness. Similarly to the Housing Choice Vouchers, CAFTH, MHA, and DCS also partner to distribute Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers for family reunification and for youth 18-21 years of age who have prior foster care involvement.

Project Homeless Connect

Ways to Get Involved

CAFTH hosts multiple events during the year that are aimed at connecting persons experiencing homelessness with services and resources that can help them leave homelessness. Volunteers are needed not only to fill important roles at these events, but also to help make persons experiencing homelessness feel heard and seen. Visit CAFTH's website for more information on volunteering at events like Project Homeless Connect and the Point-In-Time Count.

“I am proud to have served with a great team of social workers, who care about our community. The harsh realities of sleeping outside in the cold touched my heart, and kept me motivated to find help for those who need it most.”

- Point-in-Time Count Volunteer



Student volunteers from Southern College of Optometry help conduct much needed eye exams.

PHC is an annual event that brings a variety of service providers from across the community together under one roof so that persons experiencing homelessness can access multiple services. Transportation is often a huge barrier for persons experiencing homelessness, and this event aims to limit the barriers people may face to accessing needed services. These services often include resources around housing, legal assistance, medical care, hair care, education, and public benefits. In 2019, 258 persons experiencing homelessness attended PHC, and participants were able to access 102 eye exams, 64 housing assessments, 136 health screenings, and 60 haircuts. Volunteers are needed to help navigate persons experiencing homelessness through the event and provide them support, distribute food, hand out care bags, and more.

Point-in-Time Count

PIT is an annual event, required by HUD, that aims to get a count of all persons experiencing homelessness on a given night. Data from this event helps allow CAFTH and the CoC advocate for more resources and helps better understand trends in homelessness. Volunteers are always needed for the unsheltered portion of the count, where volunteers and trained housing professionals go out early in the morning to count and briefly connect with persons sleeping on the streets or in places not meant for human habitation. Volunteers help administer surveys, provide care bags full of essential items to persons experiencing homelessness.



Volunteers ready bright and early, wearing reflective vests to be clearly identified.

Looking Forward

CAFTH believes that our community has made great strides towards making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time; but we know there's still more work to be done. By continuing to partner with systems that engage with persons experiencing homelessness, working to expand resources for our community, and supporting the programs that serve persons experiencing homelessness, CAFTH will continue to drive efforts forward to end homelessness for our community. We can't do this work alone, and CAFTH is grateful for the strong partnerships and community collaboration that has helped our CoC grow and expand to better serve persons experiencing homelessness. Looking forward, our goal is to continue the progress we have made to expand resources and programs for those experiencing homelessness to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and stable housing.

Sign-Up for Updates!

Our community newsletter includes updates on what's going on in the CoC and more ways to get involved. To sign-up, please visit cafth.org.



