



Caring for Allegan County

Our Work with the Homeless

Names, Terms, Acronyms

- **HUD** – US Dept of Housing and Urban Development
- **MSHDA** – MI State Housing Development Authority
- **COC** – Continuum of Care
- **BOSCOC** – Balance of State Continuum of Care
- **LPB** – Local Planning Body
- **HARA** – Housing Assessment and Resource Agency

Structures/Functions

- **HUD** – Funds homelessness programs
- **MSHDA** – Coordinates state level homelessness planning
- **COC** – 24 counties that access HUD funds directly.
- **BOSCOG** – A collective “COC” for the 59 counties in the “balance” of the state. It interacts with the Local Planning Bodies



Structures/Functions

BOSCOC

- **Develops a long-term strategic plan**
- **Prepares HUD applications**
- **Gathers data on homelessness**

Structures/Functions

LPB – 33 local planning bodies that:

- **Bring key partners in the community together**
- **Appoint liaisons to attend BOSCOG**
- **Hold monthly meetings**
- **Plan and coordinate a housing and service system**

Structures/Functions

LPB – 33 local planning bodies that:

- **Ensure use of the CoCs Homeless Management Information System**
- **Conduct the local “Point in Time” (or PIT) count**
- **Submit data** to Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) and participate with MCHA on the **Housing Inventory Count (HIC)**.

Structures/Functions

LPB Agencies

- **OnPoint**
- **Community Action Allegan County**
- **United Way**
- **Allegan Homeless Solutions**
- **Project Hope** (discount store, housing supplies, financial assistance for utility, deposit, arrearages)
- **Christian Neighbors** – (case management for housing crises - private \$ for security deposits, utilities, rent arrearages, etc.)
- **Love, Inc** (Transitional housing program, life skills training, furniture needs)
- **People Helping People**
- **Volunteers of America** (multiple counties; focused on military veterans)
- **Veteran Administration** (Battle Creek)
- **Sylvias Place/ Resilience** – Domestic violence shelter
- **Allegan Area Educational Service Agency** (liaisons for homelessness in schools)

Structures/Functions

HARA

- Every county has a **MSHDA-designated HARA** (Housing Assessment and Resource Agency). In Allegan County, OnPoint has been the HARA for over a decade.

Structures/Functions

HARA oversees a Coordinated Entry System (CES) to

- Perform centralized intake and housing assessments (HARA and other agencies).
- Divert people from shelters
- Rapidly re-house the homeless.
- Maintain MSHDA Housing Choice Voucher (formerly, Section 8) with Homeless Preference waiting list.

Structures/Functions

HARA constraints –

- **Can only do what funding allows**
- **Depends on an adequate supply of safe, accessible and affordable housing in the county**

MSHDA Campaign to End Homelessness

Action Plan 2023-2025 Goal 1:

“Increase amount of safe, accessible, and affordable housing targeted to households experiencing homelessness”

- Produce Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) units (non-SH) ...
- Produce 150 new Supportive Housing units
- Increase landlords accepting households experiencing homelessness
- Reduce the use of unnecessarily restrictive tenant screening practices
- Secure an additional \$20M for Supportive Housing services
- Expand Moving On initiatives to 3 Public Housing Authorities
- Identify & fund emerging housing models ...

Categories of Homelessness

Category 1 – Literally Homeless

HUD's Definition: *“Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:*

Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; or Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.”

Categories of Homelessness

Category 2 – At Imminent Risk of Homelessness:

HUD's Definition: *“Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance, no subsequent residence has been identified; and the individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.”*

- **Allegan's Cat 2 is much smaller than other communities; can support 5 people/year.**
- **The prioritization of Category 1 is a public policy stance that emerged in the 2010 Campaign to End Homelessness.**

Ethics of Intervention

A dilemma we face when faced with limited housing options:

What's the best option?

Living on the street,
housed in a marginally satisfactory home,
or under a marginally acceptable landlord?

Evaluating Success in Housing Development

OnPoint's Request:

As you develop housing plans in Allegan County,
please pay attention to the need for
safe, accessible and affordable housing
for those who at the beginning of their housing careers
and for those who face challenges along life's way.