



CITY OF SANFORD MAINE'S STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ENCAMPMENTS

*BASED ON THE 19 STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY The United States Interagency Council
on Homelessness (USICH)*

*A COLLABORATION BETWEEN
CITY OF SANFORD
SANFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY
YORK COUNTY SHELTER PROGRAMS
YORK COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION
AND
PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE
ADOPTED BY SANFORD CITY COUNCIL ON JUNE 4, 2024*

OBJECTIVE:

To address encampments in the community humanely and effectively, ensuring the well-being and dignity of all individuals while maintaining public health and safety. These strategies are taken directly from the April 2024 U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness document.

Additionally, this document will serve as a working plan using the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) 19 strategies for addressing encampments humanely and effectively, we have categorized the strategies into actionable steps, assigned responsibilities, and set timelines and metrics for success. Below is a detailed work plan:

EXCERPT FROM DOCUMENT:

“To solve homelessness, communities must use evidence-based strategies to collaboratively, equitably, and humanely address the housing and service needs of people without homes, even when permanent housing is not immediately available. When an encampment is prioritized for closure, the process must be implemented in a humane and trauma-informed way, and the goal must be to connect every person to housing and services to help them overcome and avoid future experiences of homelessness.

GUIDE:

Strategy completed and ongoing

Strategy in progress

Strategy on cue to start

Strategy not yet begun

ACRONYMS:

YCCAC: York County Community Action Corporation.

YCSP: York County Shelter Programs

SHA: Sanford Housing Authority

MHU: Mental Health Unit

CE: Coordinated Entry

GOPIF: Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future

PATH: Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness

OPTIONS: Overdose Prevention through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety

MAP: Maine Access Points

SPD: Sanford Police Department

HMIS: Homeless Management Information System

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

WIC: Women, Infant and Children Nutrition Program

ALICE: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed

PHASE 1: PREPARATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGY 1: EQUITY

Engage Encampment Residents in Efforts to Develop Solutions:

- **Action:** Identify a means to communicate with residents of the encampment, foster transparent engagement by sharing information with every resident around the closure of the Heritage Crossing encampment. **Resource Hub held at Sanford Housing on the following dates:**

June 11th from 10am-3pm

June 12th, from 10am-3pm

June 13th from 10am-3pm

June 14th from 10am-3pm

June 17th from 10am-3pm

June 18th from 1pm-3pm

June 19th from TBD

June 20th from 1pm-3pm

June 21st from 1pm-3pm

- **Responsible:** Communications Team. Sanford Housing Authority
- **Timeline:** November 2023 and ongoing.
- **Metrics:**
 1. York County Shelter notified people staying at the Warming Shelter of the closing of the Heritage Crossing encampment.
 2. Housing Navigators also to give unified message of closure and also resources.
 3. City to secure Mill Building as it is a dangerous building.
 4. City to put up signs indicating date of closure. Should be completed by 6/5/2024.
 5. Sanford Housing Authority to host area agencies with resource hub to assist residents with resources to shelter, treatment, and housing (temporary and permanent). Participating Agencies: YCCAC, YCSP, SHA, PATH, OPTIONS, It Takes a Village 207, MAP

STRATEGY 2: ADDRESS UNIQUE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC AND ACUTE HEALTH CONDITIONS

- **Action:** Work with outreach and housing teams with a strong health component to evaluate the health of people living in the encampment. Bridge the stigma that residents of the encampments feel they experience with healthcare facilities.

- **Responsible:** Nasson Health Center, Maine Access Points, Southern Maine HealthCare, and other advocacy groups.
- **Timeline:** Started in November 2023 at the Warming Center and ongoing.
- **Metrics:** How many people received assessments with chronic or acute health conditions.

STRATEGY 3: ESTABLISH A CROSS AGENCY, MULTI-SECTOR RESPONSE

- **Action:** Establish a task force including government agencies, non-profits, community organizations, and law enforcement.
- **Responsible:** City Manager
- **Timeline:** Initial kick off of Task Force and meetings are ongoing; meetings held every other Monday until April 2024 then went to administrative meetings.
- **Metric I:** Task force established July 26, 2023; number of meetings held with the following stakeholders:
 1. City Administration
 2. Mayor and City Councilors
 3. Police Department
 4. Fire Department
 5. Sanford Housing Authority
 6. York County Community Action
 7. Nasson Community Health (Federally Qualified Health Center)
 8. York County Shelter Programs
 9. Maine Access Points
 10. School Department
 11. Senator Collin's Staff
 12. United Way of Southern Maine Staff
 13. YMCA staff
 14. PATH worker
- **Metric II:** Through the Homeless Task Force and with data collected by MHU; a **Legislative Summit** was held on December 11, 2023 to inform local legislatures from York County. Municipalities from Sanford, Kennebunk, Biddeford, Eliot, Saco, and Kittery with area agencies presenting. Voice of a persons with lived experience were heard through a trusted community partner.
- **Metric III:** Creation of Food Committee to ensure unhoused population were getting food. Sanford Housing Authority and York County Shelter Programs partnered to offer a Community Free Meal on Tuesdays and Thursdays to serve anyone who wanted a meal. Ongoing until November 2023 when the Warming Shelter opened and served meals seven days a week. Other outreach teams were also putting food together to feed people who were living outside.

- **Metric IV:** Established a York County Legislative Committee to review legislative bills and funding being considered for the 131st Maine State Legislative Session and will continue into the new session.

• **Engage Encampment Residents**

- **Action:** Conduct outreach to encampment residents to understand their needs and build trust.
- **Responsible:** MHU, SHA, YCSP, and YCCAC.
- **Timeline:** Initial objective started in 2019 and ongoing.
- **Metrics:**
 1. Creation of Community Outreach Coordinator at the Sanford Police Department, this being the foundation for the Mental Health Unit (Two police officers, Mental Health First Responder, and OPTIONS Liaison).
 2. Outreach efforts by MHU.
 3. Housing efforts through vouchers by SHA.
 4. Housing Navigation by YCCAC.
 5. Warming Center operations by YCSP: 44 gravity chairs, meals, case management during the months of November through April 30, 2024.
 6. Housing navigation meetings to coordinate case conferencing on January 8, 2024 (ongoing).
 7. Nasson Community Health providing health care.
 8. MAP assisted people who needed wound care that was outside the scope of area centers; able to bring people to Maine Medical Center for treatment.
 9. Engagement at meal sites on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

• **Educate the Public and Build Support**

- **Action:** Launch public education campaigns to increase awareness and support for humane encampment strategies.
- **Responsible:** Communications Team.
- **Timeline:** September 27, 2022, held first housing and homelessness workshop. A second Workshop was held on September 26, 2023.
- **Metrics II:** Presented to Sanford City Council and Public in person and via Zoom; area agencies, MHU, and City Staff presented information on housing and areas of homelessness, including causes and solutions.

- **Metric II:** Through the Homeless Task Force and with data collected by MHU; a Legislative Summit was held on December 11, 2023 to inform local legislatures from York County. Municipalities from Sanford, Kennebunk, Biddeford, and Kittery with area agencies presenting. The voices of people with lived experience were heard through a trusted community partner.

STRATEGY 4: EMPOWER OUTREACH TEAMS AND HEALTH PROVIDERS TO LEAD THE EFFORT

- **Action:** Identify lead agencies for the encampment. Decide if, how, and when law enforcement will be involved, include multiple outreach teams and health providers in planning to prevent duplication of efforts, ensure there are outreach workers with cultural competencies.
- **Responsible:** SPD, YCSP, YCCAC and SHA.
- **Timeline:** May 2024 and ongoing.
- **Metrics:**
 1. Case Conferencing began with Housing Navigators in January of 2024 and will start to join Coordinated Entry Case Conferencing meetings being held by the HUB 1 Homeless Response Service Hub Coordinator.
 2. Administer task meetings to establish timeline of safely closing the encampment.

Ensure Safety and Sanitation

- **Action:** Provide sanitation facilities, regular waste collection, and safety measures.
- **Responsible:** City of Sanford.
- **Timeline:** June of 2023.
- **Metrics:**
 1. Number of Porta Potties made available.
 2. Sanford/Springvale Rotary Club paid for trash collection at the encampment on Heritage Crossing.
 3. Numerous clean ups of the area encampments by citizens, city staff, area agencies.

Conduct Outreach and Engagement

- **Action:** Regularly visit encampments to build relationships and provide information on available services. The goal is to have residents of encampments engage in Resource HUB at SHA. **Funding for Outreach Team.**

- **Responsible:** Outreach Teams.
- **Timeline:** Onward.
- **Metrics:** Number of visits to Warming Center that were completed, visits to Salvation Army, Bike Patrol Community Policing, Coordinated Assessment completed at the access points of participating agencies: YCCAC, PATH, YCSP, and SHA; collaborating with Preble Street on their Street Outreach Program, funding conversations with GOPIF, Maine Housing, and the Legislature.

Offer Low-Barrier Shelter, Shelter, and Housing

- **Action:** Regularly visit encampments to build relationships and provide information on available services. The goal is to have the occupants of encampments engage in the Resource Hub at SHA.
- **Responsible:** YCSP, SHA, and YCCAC.
- **Timeline:** Continuing.
- **Metrics:**
 1. **Warming Shelter:** Opened in November and closed April 30, 2024. Twenty-five of the forty-four people staying overnight at the Warming Center were transitioned to the York County Shelter in Alfred, Layman’s Way Recovery, permanent housing through vouchers, and home sharing.
 2. **Community Policing Bike Patrol:** Started May 20, 2024 engaging with both occupants of the encampment and the community of Sanford. Data gathering, information sharing, and trust building.
 3. **Housing Navigation Services:** Coordinated Assessments, Case Conferencing, and Resourcing.

STRATEGY 5: PRIORITIZE CLOSURE BASED ON HEALTH AND SAFETY FACTORS

Address Urgent Health and Safety Needs

- **Action:** Provide medical, mental health, and substance use disorder at Resource Hub, set up transportation. Providing a Resource Hub at Sanford Housing Authority
- **Responsible:** SHA, YCCAC, YCSP, and PATH.
- **Timeline:** Onward
- **Metrics:** Number of health services provided, health outcomes; also see **Strategy 4**

Other Ways to Address Health and Safety Needs.

- **Action:** Review and examine local ordinances to see how they affect outcomes. Develop criteria to determine which encampments will be prioritized for closure and which would benefit from interim steps to mitigate or prevent health and safety concerns.

Evaluate the health and safety of people living in encampments and the surrounding neighborhood. Factors to assess include environmental health (presence of hazardous material), vulnerability of population (e.g. presence of children or human trafficking victims, domestic violence victims), and physical safety (flood zone, shoreland zone, road proximity).

- **Responsible:** Homeless Task Force.
- **Timeline:** Onward.
- **Metrics:**
 1. City Council review of ordinances (completed 2023).
 2. Environmental Phases I and II on Heritage Crossing encampment.
 3. Number of calls of service by first responders and types of calls to evaluate health needs and victim needs.
 4. Planning Department to assess flood zone, shore land issues.
 5. Homeless Taks Force to prioritize and evaluate encampments through the work of area agencies.

STRATEGY 6: ENGAGING NEIGHBORING RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

- **Action:** Engage nearby residents and businesses about plans for addressing encampments (writing and in person); provide ways for encampment residents to engage with their surrounding communities in healthy, equitable, and inclusive ways.
- **Responsible:** Homeless Task Force.
- **Timeline:** ongoing and onward.
- **Metrics:** Number of positive interactions with neighbors and businesses with task force.

PHASE 2: TRANSITION TO PERMANENT SOLUTIONS

STRATEGY 7: COLLECT AND SHARE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

- **Action:** Track the type of interventions people need and their barriers to housing (e.g., lack of ID, criminal record, evictions, document readiness).
- **Responsible:** Homeless Task Force and all agencies including Hub Coordinated Entry teams.
- **Timeline:** Onward.
- **Metrics:**
 1. Homeless Management Information System entries for Coordinated Entry.
 2. Assess and record the specific needs of each encampment resident regarding housing and shelter preferences to discuss during case conferencing.
 3. Educate the residents of the encampments on the purpose of the assessment and advantage to being in the CE system; obtain releases and explain why this is important to achieve housing goals.
 4. Planning Department to assess flood zone, shore land issues.

STRATEGY 8: TRACK SHELTER AND HOUSING AVAILABILITY

- **Action:** Track the type of interventions people need and their barriers to housing (e.g., lack of ID, criminal record, evictions, document readiness); measure data on available and offered shelter beds, interim and permanent housing units, mental health and substance use treatment beds.
- **Responsible:** Hub.
- **Timeline:** Started on January 8, 2024 and ongoing.
- **Metrics:**
 1. Confidential meeting of housing navigators: spreadsheet of availability of all beds/units listed.
 2. Hub case conferencing to match people to resources through the creation of the by-name list.
 3. Develop a public facing dashboard that shows progress on unsheltered homelessness and encampment resolution strategies.

STRATEGY 9: TRACK STATUS OF PEOPLE HOUSED AND YET TO BE HOUSED

- **Action:** Work with the Sanford Housing Authority and participants who track data with HMIS to track housing data of those receiving vouchers, leased up with vouchers, and also area housing owned and operated by area agencies.

- **Responsible:** Hub.
- **Timeline:** Started on January 8, 2024 and ongoing.
- **Metrics:**
 1. Voucher utilization records by SHA.
 2. HMIS data.
 3. Property vacancy by agency owned housing.
 4. Process to track and stay connected with people who move between encampment sites, shelters, and/or health systems.

STRATEGY 10: ADDRESS BASIC NEEDS AND PROVIDE HEALTH CARE

- **Action:** Ensure access to healthy food, deploy outreach for medicine, ensure basic hygiene is accessible, and ensure access to opioid reversal medication to response to drug overdoses and needle disposal to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
- **Responsible:** YCSP, OPTIONS Liaison, MAP, and Nasson Health Center.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing.
- **Metrics:**
 1. Education by OPTIONS Liaison on safe use.
 2. MAP provides safe syringe disposal and safe use.
 3. Emergency Naloxone Boxes on SHA buildings.
 4. Meals by YCSP at Warming Shelter location.
 5. Nasson Health provides treatment for substance use disorder.
 6. YCSP provides residential treatment for substance use disorder.

STRATEGY 11: CONDUCT COMPREHENSIVE, COORDINATED, AND ONGOING HOUSING-FOCUSED OUTREACH

“While several previous strategies cited outreach in this document, not all outreach is identical. The most effective outreach connects people directly with housing and health care, including mental health and substance use treatment, and it is based on a foundation of trust and consistency (e.g., outreach that involves housing navigators and case conferencing.”

Sanford has been doing this type of housing focused outreach since January with Housing Navigators from YCCAC, YCSP, SHA and the City of Sanford’s General Assistance Director. Case conferencing with the start of the by-name list has been happening since the beginning of May with the PATH worker and YCSP doing the bulk of the assessments.

STRATEGY 12: PROVIDE STORAGE

- **Action:** Provide storage for personal belongings for an amount of time that aligns with how long it typically takes to get placed into permanent housing.
- **Responsible:** Homeless Task Force.
- **Timeline:** Onward.
- **Metrics:**
 1. Fundraise with local civic organizations for storage units.
 2. Organize the units with owner's name, contact information, and case managers name if available.

STRATEGY 13: ENSURE ACCESS TO HOUSING AND SERVICES

- **Action:** Ask encampment residents what housing and service options they need and want, determine funding sources available and need to connect residents to low-barrier housing and services appropriate for the needs, collaborate with agencies responsible for providing and connecting people to services and housing and connect resources to coordinated entry.
- **Responsible:** Homeless Task Force; City of Sanford, SHA, YCCAC, YCSP, and the HUB
- **Timeline:** Onward
- **Metrics:**
 1. Continue to conduct CE assessments; measure and analyze data.
 2. Housing First funding through County ARPA funds, City land, private land, DHHS to fund service program.
 3. Sanford Housing is coordinating "giving" targeted vouchers to CE system for prioritization of by name list.
 4. Ongoing advocacy to support resources for all housing by York County Legislative Committee.

Policy and Systemic Changes

Implement Coordinated Entry Systems

- **Action:** Use coordinated entry systems to prioritize and allocate housing resources.
- **Responsible:** Hub.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing.
- **Metrics:** Efficiency of resource allocation, housing placement rates.

STRATEGY 14: ENSURE INTERIM STRATEGIES PROMOTE DIGNITY, RESPECT, AND PATHWAYS TO PERMANENT HOUSING

- **Action:** provide standards of care.
- **Responsible:** Area Agencies and Community Policing by SPD.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing and onward.
- **Metrics:** Creation of policies and procedures that protect privacy to ensure services are person-centered, trauma-informed, and based on harm reduction strategies.

STRATEGY 15: DEVELOP PATHWAYS TO PERMANENT HOUSING AND SUPPORT

- **Action:** Work with housing developers to increase the supply of affordable housing.
- **Responsible:** SHA, City of Sanford
- **Timeline:** Ongoing
- **Metrics:** Number of affordable housing units created, SHA working on a 30-unit Housing First Project, 16-unit 55+ workforce housing project at the former Springvale District Court, and a 44-unit senior project, a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit project. Continue to work with Habitat for Humanity for single family homes and duplexes. Encourage the continuum of housing model to ensure all have access to housing. Measure through Planning Department Permits on housing.
- **Action:** Create individualized housing plans for encampment residents.
- **Responsible:** Hub.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing and onward.
- **Metrics:** Number of housing plans developed, housing placement rates.

STRATEGY 16: ENSURE ENCAMPMENTS ARE CLOSED HUMANELY

- **Action:** Determine who will be on-site the day of closure and what their role will be and communicate this information to encampment residents, provide encampment residents with verbal and written notices in plain language that is visible and posted multiple times at least 30 days in advance. Provide adequate notice that any belongings left behind will be removed.
- **Responsible:** Homeless Task Force/Communications Team.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing and onward.
- **Metrics:**
 1. **Warming Center:** Verbal communication of this message.
 2. **Housing Navigators:** Verbal communication of this message.
 3. **City of Sanford:** Bike patrol will verbally communicate this message.

4. **City of Sanford:** Will post closure date and provide written material through developed talking points.

STRATEGY 17: EXPAND SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Homeless Task Force is developing realistic and data supported projection of the number of affordable and supportive housing units needed. The Governor's Office has created a State of Maine Housing Data Portal that drills down on needed housing. The City of Sanford has an active Landbank Commission that has successfully returned blighted, abandoned, and/or foreclosed property to livable and affordable housing across the continuum. The Legislative Committee for York County continues to track legislation that supports affordable housing, shelter funding, and good policy around use of funding.

STRATEGY 18: INTERRUPT PIPELINES INTO HOMELESSNESS

9. **Ensure Access to Benefits and Services**

- **Action:** Identify opportunities for intervention and prevention measures. Assist residents in accessing benefits like Medicaid, SNAP benefits, WIC, housing vouchers, and other public systems that may serve people to prevent homelessness. Make homelessness brief and rare occurrences. Assign case managers to provide ongoing support and connect residents with services. Provide job training, placement services, and connections to income opportunities.
- **Responsible:** Hub
- **Timeline:** ongoing and onward.
- **Metrics:**
 1. Number of benefit applications submitted, approval rates.
 2. Recidivism rates at shelter.
 3. Eviction prevention measures through housing navigation.
 4. Diversion funding tracking.
 5. Number of people receiving case management, service utilization rates.
 6. Number of job placements, income increases.

PHASE 3: BUILDING LONG-TERM STABILITY

STRATEGY 19: BUILD AND STRENGTHEN SAFETY NETS

- **Action:** Create a homelessness prevention committee or working group that includes people who have experienced homelessness and a wide range of federal, state, local, and private programs that may serve low-income households broadly. Map out existing prevention resources and assess the demographics, characteristics, and location of people at risk of entering the homelessness response system.
- **Responsible:** Homeless Task Force and particular emphasis with working with United Way of Southern Maine on ALICE data and solutions.
- **Timeline:** Onwards.
- **Metrics:** Number of residents paying 30% of their income toward housing.

Implementation and Oversight

- **Project Manager:** Oversee the implementation of all strategies, coordinate between teams, and ensure timelines are met.
- **Regular Check-ins:** Monthly meetings with all team leaders to review progress and address challenges.
- **Reporting:** Quarterly reports on the progress, challenges, and outcomes to stakeholders and the community.

By following this structured work plan based on the USICH strategies, our Sanford community can address encampments humanely and effectively, providing comprehensive solutions that cover immediate needs and long-term stability.