

## **Homelessness Task Force Community-Wide Plan Overview**

The Homelessness Task Force has established a **community-wide goal of achieving functional zero homelessness** which means the number of people entering homelessness is never more than our community's ability to house them.

This will be **achieved through Housing First**, which places people into housing and provides wrap-around services. This has proven more effective and cost-efficient than the traditional approach, requiring a person to become "better" through things like treatment and employment before helping them move into housing. This is because vulnerable people are more responsive to support and services when their basic needs, like housing and safety, are guaranteed.

Achieving functional zero will **require system improvements and additions**, many already underway:

- A **coordinated, single point of entry** for all people entering homelessness
- An expanded **low-barrier, 24-7-365 emergency shelter** with enough capacity for anyone needing shelter
- **One-stop resource center** co-located with congregate and non-congregate emergency shelter and affordable housing
- More **available, affordable housing** because rising rents and less availability squeeze low-income households into homelessness
- **Real-time, accurate data, accessible to all providers**, including a by-name list of those experiencing homelessness
- Intentional **provider coordination** in cross-agency case conferencing and street outreach
- Increased **staff and peer counselors for more availability**
- **Real-time resource guide** with a single point of entry
- A plan for **ongoing, sustainable funding** to implement solutions

The Homelessness Task Force has all sectors of the community represented and through its 22 members and five work groups, is addressing these needs and more through a multi-year plan to achieve functional zero. Over 70 people have participated in the five work groups of Provider Coordination, Emergency Services, Housing, Community Engagement, and Funding.

### **Proof of Concept**

When communities work together, these goals are achievable. One example is [Bergen County](#), New Jersey, which has reached functional zero for both chronic homeless and veteran homeless populations. The director of the Bergen County program, Julia Orlando, is providing guidance and support to Wichita and other communities through the state of Kansas. Fourteen other communities have achieved functional zero for at least one identified group.

### **Initiatives Underway**

Through multiple collaborative key initiatives, many of the identified system improvements and additions identified are in process. One example is the Multi-Agency Campus and Center which will provide a physical one-stop resource center to be co-located with emergency congregate and non-congregate shelters. Funding efforts are critical for both capital needs and ongoing funding.