

REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS IN GREENVILLE COUNTY 2019

An Update to the
2015 Homelessness White Paper

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Executive Summary 3**
- **Definitions of Homelessness 6**
- **What We Know**
 - Homelessness in Greenville County 7
 - Sheltered 8
 - Unsheltered 9
 - School-aged Children 10
- **Contributing Factors 11**
 - Race and Income in Greenville County 13
 - Housing Affordability 14
 - Economic Mobility 15
- **Priorities For Action 16**
 - Increase Housing and Exits from Homelessness 17
 - Reduce Barriers 21
 - Strengthen Coordinated Community Response 24
 - Support Transit 27
 - Impact Policymaking 30
- **What We Can Do 32**
- **Real People, Real Stories and Community Solutions ... 36**
- **Data Sources 42**
- **Appendix 43**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Homelessness in Greenville County, South Carolina, happens too often. It wears many different faces: veterans striving to reenter society, parents and children couch-surfing or living in their cars, men and women struggling with years of substance abuse or mental illness. It exists even as Greenville prides itself on its economic vitality and high quality of life.

This report, created by the Greenville Homeless Alliance as an update to the original 2015 Homelessness White Paper, is a snapshot of homelessness in Greenville County in 2019. It is a blend of hard data and human stories, grounded in the experiences of those who currently are living, or in the past have had to live, without a stable roof over their heads. The report shows that homelessness is not an isolated issue; it is caused, and perpetuated, by a combination of societal conditions and individual situations. The report also shows the pathways out of homelessness.

Data gathered from several sources document that at least — and without a doubt more than — [3,600 men, women, and children experienced homelessness in Greenville County in 2018-2019](#) (2,285 – Emergency Sheltered, 242 – Unsheltered, and 1,106 School-Aged Children). This includes people in emergency shelters or “sleeping rough” outside; people staying with friends or relatives; and people staying in transitional housing while waiting for a permanent home.

One third of the 3,600 are children. Data also reveals that of the 1,106 school-aged children in the Greenville County School District who experienced homelessness, only 10% qualified for homelessness services from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the primary government agency through which funding for homelessness flows. Since no federal funding is available for the remaining 90% of these children and their families, the question the Greenville community must grapple with is who will help cover the gap. A gap that becomes even more pronounced when paired with the reality that Greenville County has very limited emergency shelter beds for families, and extremely limited beds for single fathers with children, single mothers with a son age 10 or older, or large families.

Just as there is no single face of homelessness, there’s no single solution. The Greenville Homeless Alliance stakeholders have identified five key strategies to achieve the Alliance’s vision of a community where homelessness is brief and rare:

1. Increase Housing and Exits from Homelessness

Greenville County has 1,015 beds (emergency shelter, transitional and supportive housing) that are creating a pathway to exit homelessness. However, with most beds full regularly, an increase of 850 housing options with a range of rent and utilities from \$200-650/month located near Greenlink routes is required in three critical areas to meet current demands for beds:

- 100 exits for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness (based on 2019 unsheltered count of people living outdoors or the streets for a year or longer).
- 400 exits for individuals living in emergency shelters (based on 2019 emergency shelter beds).
- 350 housing options and diversion strategies for families (based on the 2018-2019 Student Homelessness Count for Greenville County School District with an average family size of three).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Reduce Barriers

In addition to housing options, the Greenville Homeless Alliance prioritizes:

- Increased collaboration between the 75 public and private partners tailored to the three data areas: sheltered, unsheltered, and school-aged children.
- A sustainable fund of local public and private dollars working collectively to end homelessness.
- Continued collection of data that drives and measures community progress and outcomes.
- Continued advocacy for expanded mental health services, residents who are returning from incarceration, and affordable childcare options.

3. Strengthen Coordinated Response

The Greenville Homeless Alliance asks all public and private partners to explore the implementation of a single homelessness system of entry and exit for Greenville County.

4. Support Transit

Advocate for full funding of Greenlink's Transit Development Plan through 2023 and expand transit to meet the needs of residents in our growing economy. Greenlink is an essential component of our community's mobility infrastructure. Housing and transit are economic development. Just as homelessness has no boundaries, neither does economic development.

5. Impact Policymaking

Engage at the local, state, and national level on policy issues that specifically affect those experiencing homelessness and housing instability. We invite everyone to join us in advocating for sustainable funding of local dollars and policies to address homelessness in Greenville County. While we know at least 1,106 children experienced homelessness last year, there are 40,000 children in the Greenville County School District who live at or below the poverty line, which for a family of four is ~\$25,000 or less per year. Policies can and should work to prevent homelessness.

Ensuring that homelessness is brief and rare means that we as a community, including, the City and County of Greenville along with other municipalities within Greenville County, must have a robust system that can quickly enter people into available emergency services and provide appropriate exits from homelessness that ensure long-term housing stability. The Greenville Homeless Alliance stakeholders have contributed to the creation of historic funding wins for local housing and transit dollars through education, advocacy, and collaboration. To reach the next stage of planning, we must move beyond what we have traditionally done. This must be a community-wide effort focused on consistent investment in and execution of a comprehensive strategy that measures housing opportunity, educational attainment, healthcare disparities, and the physical and economic mobility of the workforce.

Additional information and resources for the 2019 Report on Homelessness in Greenville County are available online at <https://www.gvlhomes4all.org/reports>. We encourage you to explore these resources and participate in the ongoing work.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

In 2015, the [Homelessness White Paper](#) was written and served as an important document for helping the Greenville community better understand the issue of homelessness and what could be done to help those experiencing it. This report is an update of the original White Paper.

The issue of homelessness continues to be complex, but the Greenville Homeless Alliance believes it is solvable.

There are many different pathways into and out of homelessness. There are even different definitions of homelessness based on an organization's funding, mission, or service offerings. This report gathers many different definitions, data sources, and perspectives on homelessness that exist in this community; offers a big-picture overview of what homelessness looks like in Greenville County; and shines a light on efforts to combat this human and societal challenge.

On the following pages, we will address what we know, who is affected, contributing factors that can cause homelessness, and what those experiencing homelessness are really experiencing.

We will use data gathered by the [Upstate Continuum of Care](#), [United Housing Connections](#), the City and County of Greenville, [SC Housing](#), [US Census Bureau](#), [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#), [Public Education Partners](#) and the [Greenville County School District](#) to give a more comprehensive look at the individuals experiencing homelessness in Greenville County.

We will also share the priorities for addressing homelessness that were collectively determined by more than 100 members of our community and [70 different organizations](#) committed to the idea that fair access to safe, affordable housing benefits everyone. Our decisions were informed by all areas of the community including service providers, government, business, medical, faith community, and those currently and previously experiencing homelessness.

This report aims to give you a deeper understanding about the residents of our community who are experiencing homelessness and what we can do as a community to help make that experience brief and rare.

DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

There are many different definitions of homelessness determined by an organization's mission, work, or many times, its primary funding source.

The Greenville Homeless Alliance defines homelessness as families and individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

[U.S. Department of Education](#)

Definition used by Greenville County School District

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homeless children and youth as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes doubling-up with family or friends and living in a motel.

[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#)

Definition used by agencies receiving HHS funding

A person “who lacks housing”.

[U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)

Definition used by Upstate Continuum of Care (covering 13 Upstate counties) and all agencies receiving HUD funding.

[HUD defines homelessness](#) for their programming into four categories. The categories are:

Category 1: Literally Homeless

Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness

Category 3: Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes - Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth.

Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

Why does this matter?

Understanding the definition of homelessness is important because it can directly affect funding for local agencies and determine who they can serve. For example, people who are doubled-up in the homes of others or in motels are not homeless by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition and therefore would not qualify for assistance from certain agencies that receive funding from HUD. However, these people do not have homes of their own and are at high and constant risk of becoming completely unsheltered.

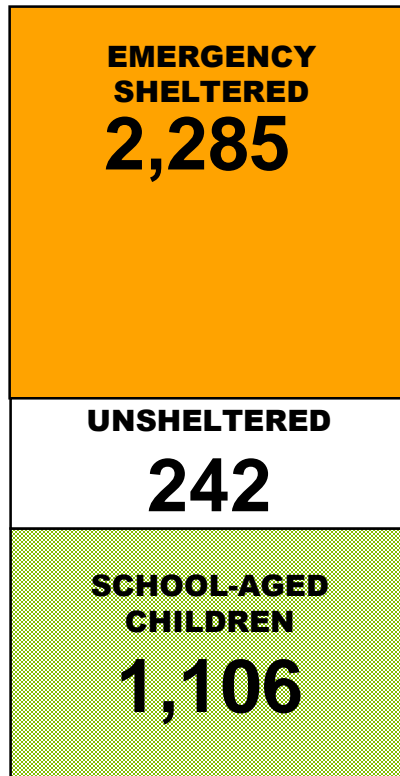
As the Greenville Homeless Alliance uses the term and as it is used in this report, these people are experiencing homelessness – but, because they do not fit the HUD definition of homelessness, they are not eligible for federal funding and local funding will be necessary to assist these individuals in securing safe and stable housing.

WHAT WE KNOW

Homelessness in Greenville County

At least **3,633** men, women and children experienced homelessness in Greenville County in 2018-19.

- The Greenville Homeless Alliance is focused on households earning \$15,000 or less annually. However, the reality is there is a wide range of households at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness in our community.
- Greenville County ranked 3rd in SC in number of persons experiencing homelessness in the 2019 PIT Count.
- The majority of those entering emergency shelter in this community are from Greenville County and the Upstate.



Data from South Carolina Interagency Council on Homelessness [2019 South Carolina State of Homelessness Report](#)

Data from Upstate Continuum of Care [2019 Point-in-Time \(PIT\) Count](#)

Data from Greenville County School District [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Count 2018-19](#)

REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES:

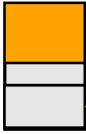
Climb or Jump: The Financial Cliff That Can Lead to Homelessness



Catalina Hawley, a single mother of two, took a \$10,000-a-year pay cut to make ends meet. Hawley, who has a bachelor's degree from the University of Rhode Island, worked as a human services specialist at the Department of Social Services interviewing applicants for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Family Program.

But after a relationship with her daughter's father ended and she moved to Greenville, Hawley discovered that while her \$33,154 annual gross salary was not enough to pay for childcare for the toddler, an after-school program for her then 12-year-old son, transportation to work, and a place to live, it was too high to qualify for government assistance. She and her two children found themselves homeless.

[Read the rest of Catalina's story on page 37.](#)

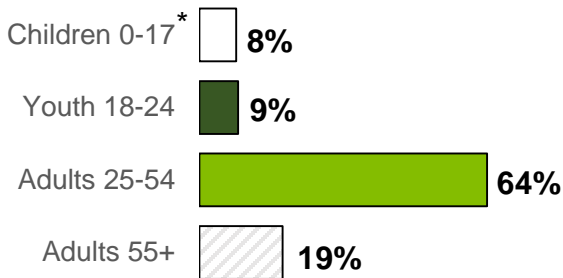


EMERGENCY SHELTERED

2,285 of the 3,633 total who experienced homelessness in Greenville County in 2018-2019 stayed in emergency shelter. Shelters provide housing, case management, meals, opportunities for personal hygiene, and access to medical attention.

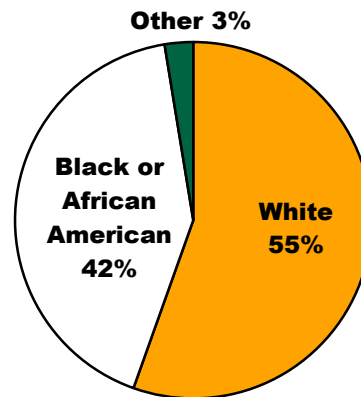


AGE

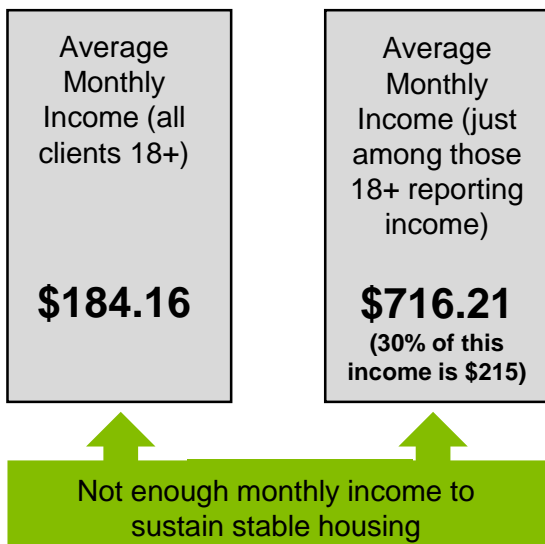


* May overlap with McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act data. Also includes children not school-aged.

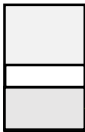
RACE/ETHNICITY



INCOME AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO EMERGENCY SHELTER

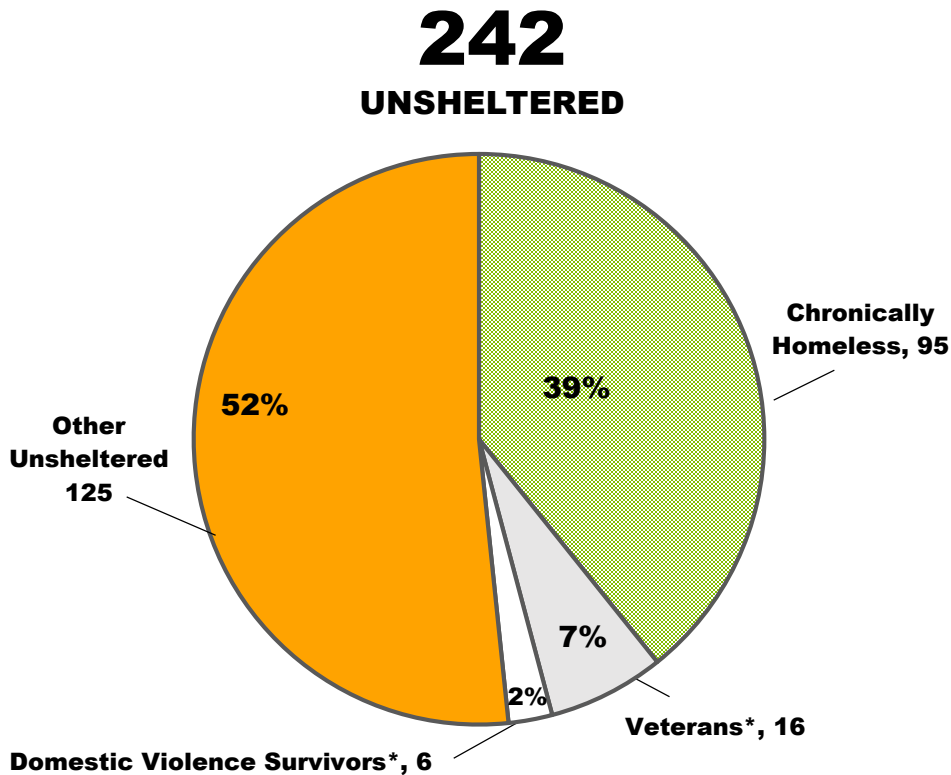


The most significant barrier identified in listening sessions was the difficulty for people to exit from emergency shelter. Ensuring that emergency shelter can catch people new to homelessness is key; 75% of those entering emergency shelter report having no income. **Outreach and emergency shelter services must act as bridges to housing.**



UNSHELTERED

Currently, the only federally mandated count of **unsheltered** men, women, and children occurs on one night annually in January and is referred to as the Point In Time (PIT) count. The 2019 count identified 242 people living in a tent, car or abandoned building, or on the street in Greenville County.



Data from [Upstate Continuum of Care 2019 Point-in-Time \(PIT\) Count](#)

WHAT IS CHRONICALLY HOMELESS?

Chronically Homeless includes any person with a disability who has been living in a place not meant for human habitation for the last 12 months continuously or on at least four occasions in the last three years where those occasions cumulatively total at least 12 months. Caring for the chronically homeless accounts for most of the societal costs associated with homelessness. A proven housing solution for this population is **long-term supportive housing**, also referred to as **permanent supportive housing**. This best-practice model utilizes a philosophy called **Housing First** that combines long-term housing financial assistance with intensive and equally long-term housing case management and supportive services. The 2019 Point-in-Time Count identified 193 chronically homeless individuals in Greenville County (this combines sheltered and unsheltered numbers).

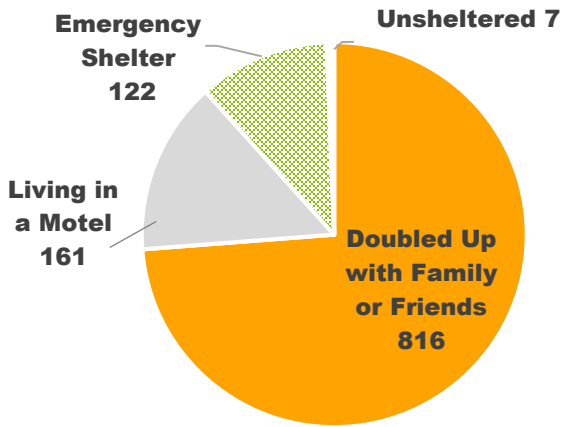
* These specific groups are counted because of the federal funding they receive.



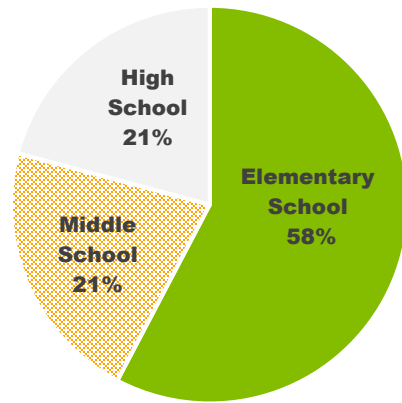
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

1,106 children in 86 of 101 (85%) different schools experienced homelessness in 2018-19. Homelessness and housing insecurity negatively impact children physically, emotionally, and academically. Children experiencing homelessness are far more likely to drop out of school which creates more barriers to finding employment and housing.

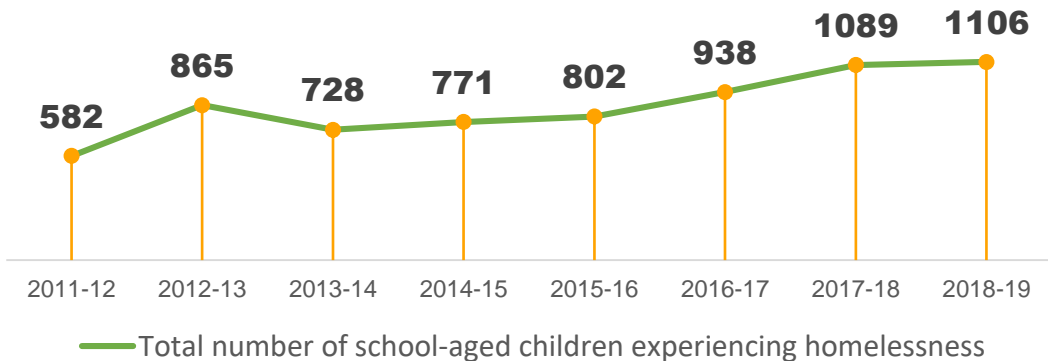
BY LIVING SITUATION



BY SCHOOL LEVEL



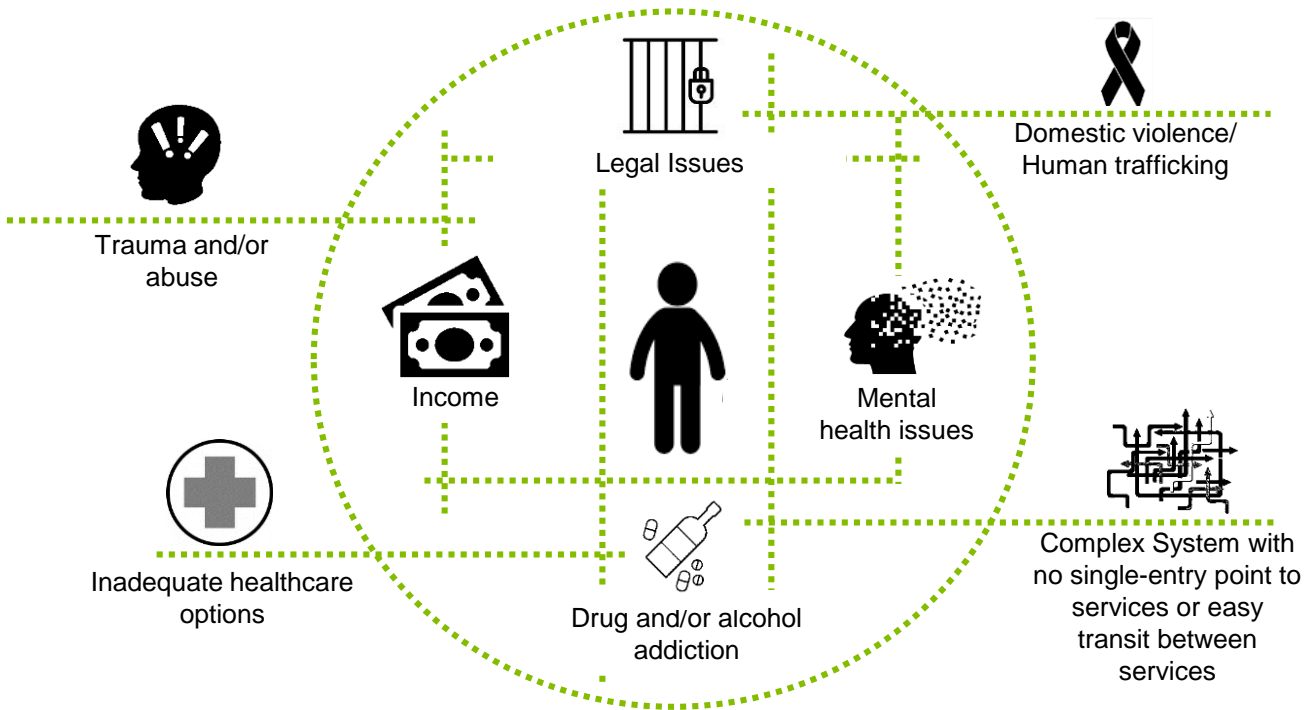
BY YEAR



Data from [Greenville County School District McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Count](#), [SC Interagency Council on Homelessness](#), [PEP Facts and Figures on our Public Schools April 2018](#)

CHALLENGES FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

In listening sessions with men and women currently experiencing and previously experiencing homelessness, the following challenges were identified. Without an adequate support system, these issues make it difficult for those experiencing homelessness to find their way to stable housing on their own.



REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES: Overcoming Challenges To Exiting Homelessness

Nettia Yates isn't who people typically think of when they hear the word homeless.

She worked full-time hours, had a car and a bank account. She had been a nurse's aide in Illinois and Indiana for 30 years before moving to South Carolina when her daughter was pregnant with her first grandchild. She grew up in a good home. In her words, "I did everything a person's supposed to do."

For people experiencing homelessness, it's easy to fall into the criminal justice system because "being human" -- sleeping, going to the bathroom -- becomes a criminal act.



She never imagined she'd experience homelessness.

[Read the rest of Nettia's story on page 37.](#)

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HOMELESSNESS

In our listening sessions, discussions with service providers, and conversations with those experiencing homelessness, numerous gaps and weaknesses in our community were identified as factors contributing to homelessness. Though divided into categories for the report, many of the issues are interrelated and often homelessness is experienced after a breakdown in more than one area.

Criminal Justice

- Criminal justice system involvement
- Systemic racial discrimination
- Accumulation of court costs (with no address, courts bills are not received, leading to increased fees)
- Criminalization of homelessness

Community/Environmental Factors

- High barriers to limited affordable housing
- Displacement from housing due to growing economy
- Limited access to jobs and housing after incarceration
- Lack of jobs with living wages
- Living in state with highest eviction rate in the country
- Available living wage jobs are NOT located near affordable housing or connected to transit

Economic Factors

- Unstable jobs
- Lack of medical insurance
- Lack of transportation
- Insufficient wages
- Inadequate subsidized childcare

Lack of Family/Support Network

- Mental health issues
- Unstable environments
- Lack of support systems
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Parental substance abuse
- Rejection by parent or guardian due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy

Lack of Supportive Services

- Inadequate welfare benefits
- Difficulty navigating resources and services
- Lack of shelter space year-round
- Lack of low-income mental health beds with supportive case management
- No formal Homeless Court
- No formal Eviction Court
- Inadequate dental services
- Lack of job skills

HOMELESS COURT AND EVICTION COURT

Homeless Court addresses criminal misdemeanor charges. Barriers for people can be reduced and collaboration can increase between law enforcement, service providers, the City Municipal Judge, magistrates, and Solicitor's office.

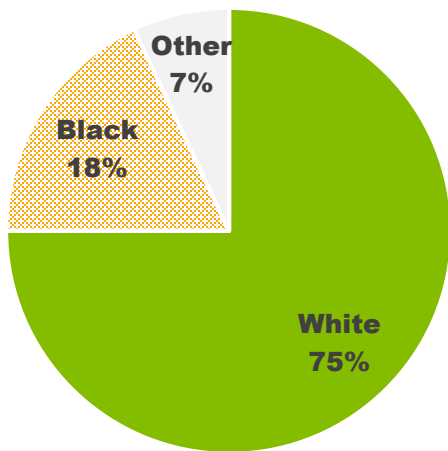
Eviction Court addresses civil charges where people facing eviction have no access to legal knowledge or representation. Eviction Court helps landlords and tenants resolve eviction disputes. Increased representation can ensure that the eviction is lawful, defenses are effectively asserted, and other relief that may help prevent homelessness is secured.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HOMELESSNESS

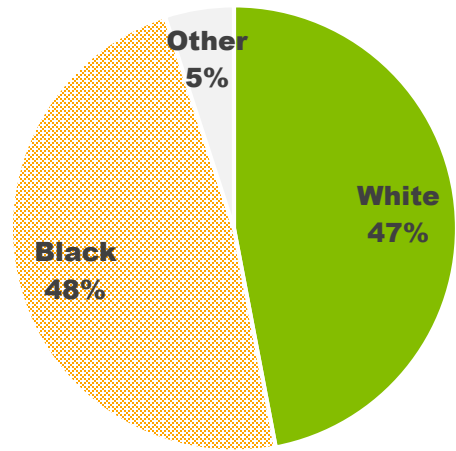
Race And Income in Greenville County

Inequalities exist that place certain residents in Greenville County at higher risk of homelessness. The Greenville Homeless Alliance strives to recognize and dismantle biases and discrimination in ourselves, our organizations, and our community. Fair access to safe and affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness benefits everyone.

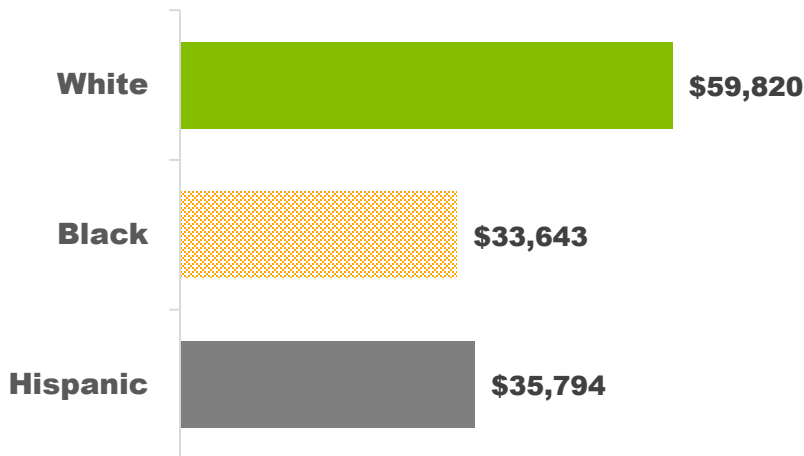
Census Population



Emergency Shelter Population



Median Household Income

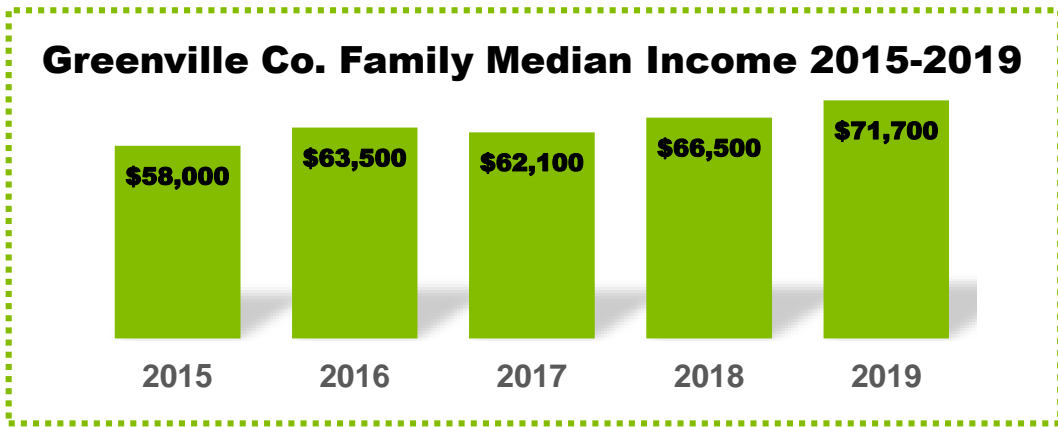


Data from [2019 SC State of Homelessness Report](#) and [2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#), US Census Bureau

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HOMELESSNESS

Housing Affordability

It is important to define the term **affordable housing**. Housing is considered affordable if a household spends no more than 30% of their income to live there. At the center of the definition of affordable housing for most social service programs is **Family Median Income, or FMI**. This is used to determine the federal government-calculated income limits for affordable housing programs. The FMI is used to create income categories, each of which is a percentage range of FMI that is typically based on a family of four. The FMI has risen by \$13,700 since the 2015 Homelessness White Paper was written. The homelessness and marginally-housed problem is worsening because incomes have not kept pace with the rising cost of housing in Greenville County.



2019 Family Median Income by Number in Family

FY 2019 Income Limit Area	Median Family Income	FY 2019 Income Limit Category	Persons in Family							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC HUD Metro FMR Area	\$71,700	Very Low (50%) Income Limits (\$)	25,100	28,700	32,300	35,850	38,750	41,600	44,500	47,350
		Extremely Low Income Limits (\$)	15,050	17,200	21,330	25,750	30,170	34,590	39,010	43,430
		Low (80%) Income Limits (\$)	40,150	45,900	51,650	57,350	61,950	66,550	71,150	75,750

NOTE: The Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC HUD Metro FMI Area contains the following areas: Greenville County, SC; and Pickens County, SC.

Most of the individuals and families experiencing homelessness fall into and below the extremely low-income range. This annual calculation determines federal rental assistance so that the household pays no more than 30% of their income towards rent and utilities.

Data from HUD-User.gov

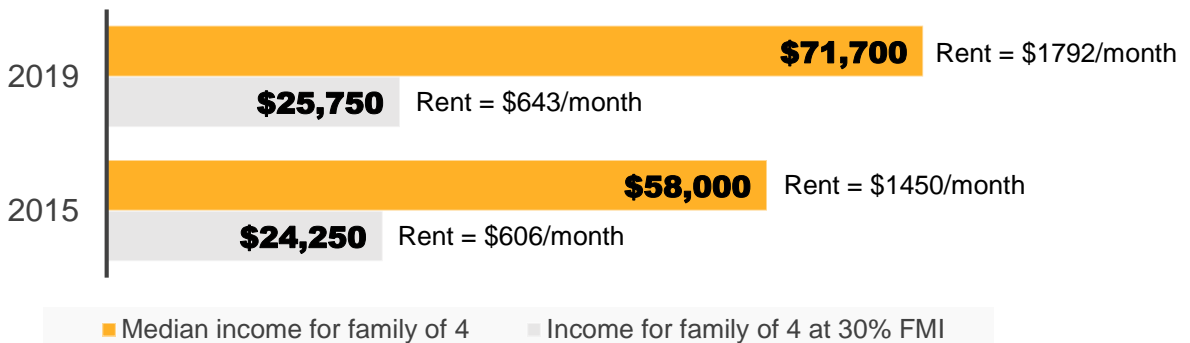
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HOMELESSNESS

Economic Mobility

Many terms and abbreviations are used in the community to define housing. What do people mean when they say “affordable housing”, “workforce housing”, or “extremely low-income housing”? **To whom is it affordable?**

When the Greenville Homeless Alliance refers to housing, it means affordable (paying no more than 30% of the household income towards rent and utilities) for individuals or families at zero to 30% of the income scale. A common term used for this category is **extremely-low income housing**.

5 Year Change for Extremely-Low (30%) and Median Income Families

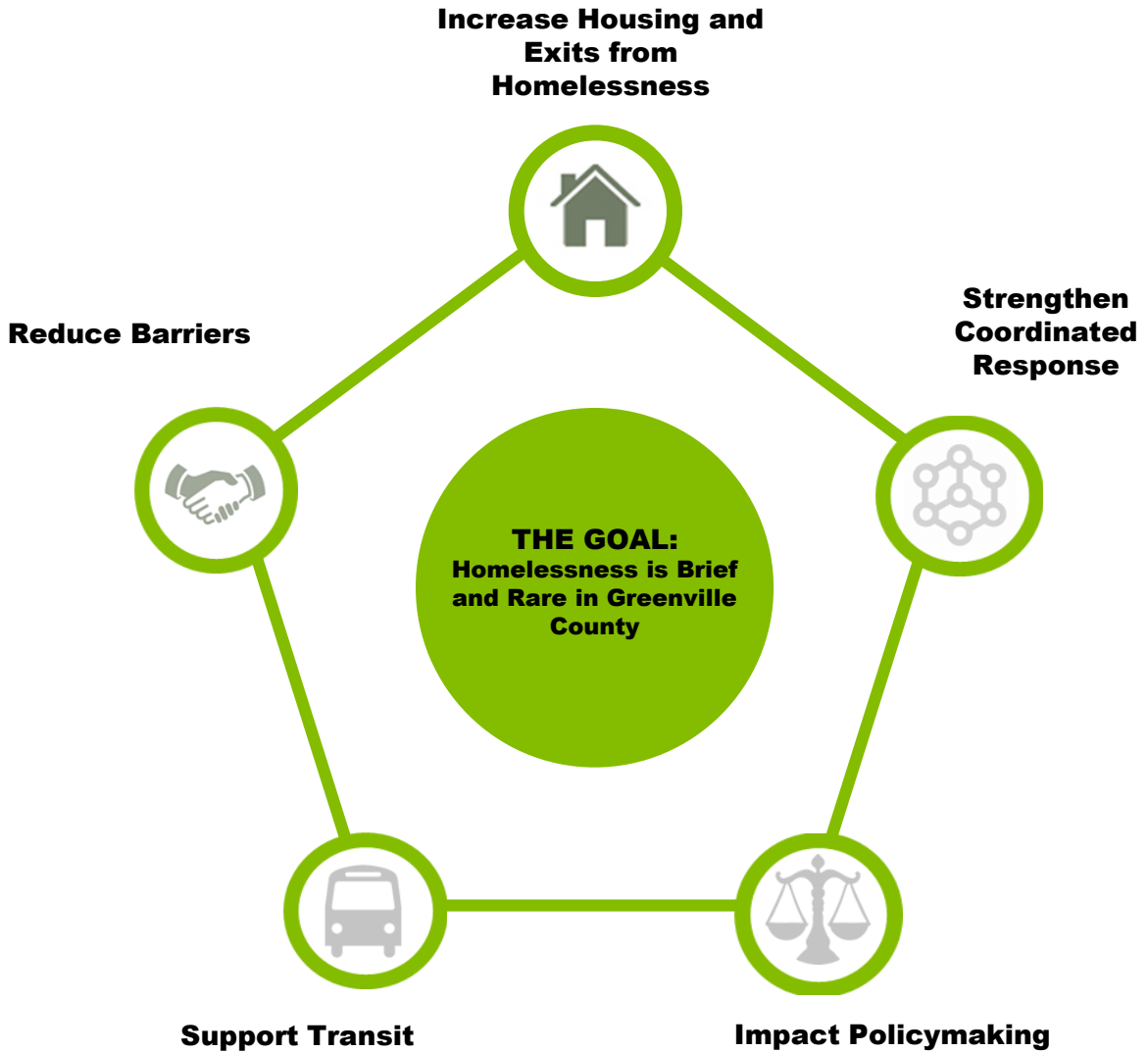


Options for Maintaining Housing Affordability

Income (for family of 4)	0-\$ 25,750	\$25,750 - 57,350	\$57,350 – 100,380	\$100,380 – 143,400	\$143,400 and up
Rent at 30% FMI	0-\$643	\$643 - 1433	\$1433 - 2509	\$2509 - 3585	\$3585 and up
Typical Occupations	Arts, Entertainment, Hotel, Food Service (minimum wage jobs)	Education, Law Enforcement, Social Services	Education, Health, Law Enforcement, Social Services	Professional, Scientific, Management	Professional, Scientific, Management
% of FMI Options for Maintaining Housing Affordability	0-30% FMI Subsidized Vouchers/HUD/ Housing Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Government pays subsidy Renter pays 30% of income to property owner 	30-80% FMI Affordable Tax Credit Deals @ 4% & 9% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowers rent overall Renter pays 30% to property owner No housing subsidy paid to property owner 	80-140% FMI Workforce Most difficult to build because no incentives to help fund construction and operation.	140-200% FMI Upscale	> 200% FMI Luxury
	Majority of City and County 12,000 home deficit in this income level		Numbers can work for builder when approximately 20% is workforce and 80% is upscale		Majority of new construction in Greenville.

50% or less FMI \$25,750 = Housing Authority Voucher

PRIORITIES FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN GREENVILLE COUNTY



PRIORITIES FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS



Increase Housing and Exits From Homelessness

Greenville County has 3,633 people experiencing homelessness but only 410 emergency shelter beds (and outreach services that help meet basic survival needs like shelter, food, and personal hygiene while people wait for housing services). An additional 249 transitional housing beds help individuals and families meeting specific criteria (e.g. veterans, previously incarcerated, domestic violence or sex trafficking survivors, addiction recovery) and another 356 supportive housing beds are available for those with mental or physical disabilities (and connected to housing financial assistance). All together, Greenville County has 1,015 beds that are creating a pathway to reducing homelessness. ([see complete chart in appendix](#))

Emergency Shelter Beds



410

Transitional Housing Beds



249

Supportive Housing Beds



356

While these beds help meet the needs for many, they do not ensure long-term housing stability for all. A safe, affordable home is the long-term answer to homelessness. In 2016, a City of Greenville study documented a 2,500-unit housing shortage for those earning \$20,000 or less a year. In 2018, a Greenville County study documented a 9,500-unit housing shortage exclusive of the City of Greenville for those earning \$25,000 or less a year. Collectively the housing shortage equals 12,000 units for those earning \$25,000 or less a year.

The front line of our community's response to ending homelessness consists of emergency shelters and street outreach by service providers. They face the pressing challenge of very limited safe, affordable housing options for those ready to exit shelter, extremely limited options for children and families experiencing homelessness, and limited supportive housing. The lack of housing options to exit homelessness is causing the length of stay in emergency shelter to increase, which limits the shelters ability to operate efficiently and catch individuals or families when they first experience homelessness. Without adequate long-term housing options available, outreach and shelter will struggle to address the immediate and growing crisis needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

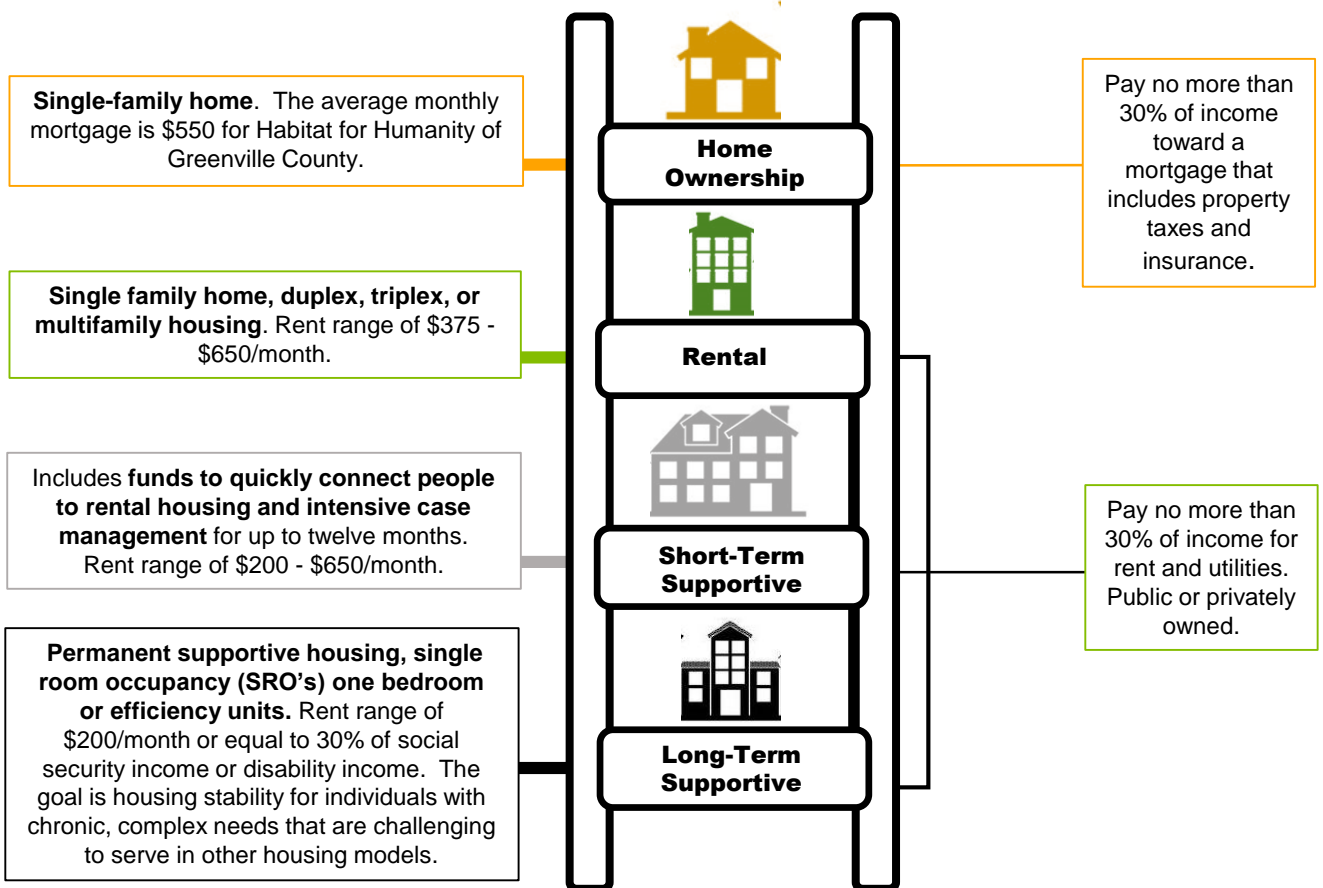
Data from [Balancing Prosperity and Housing Affordability Report, City of Greenville](#) and [Affordable Housing Study, Greenville County](#).



Increase Housing and Exits From Homelessness

Housing Types Needed for Exiting Homelessness. Each rung of the housing ladder below has high demand as well as limited to no options to move upward. **The Greenville Homeless Alliance’s highest priority is to focus on proven solutions to end homelessness long-term for the most vulnerable individuals.** The listening sessions informed the Greenville Homeless Alliance that prevention services and significant increases in each type of housing are required to move people from homelessness in Greenville County. The [Greenville County Redevelopment Authority](#) (GCRA), [Greenville Housing Fund](#) (GHF), and the [City of Greenville](#) are working to produce a report outlining the number of units required according to household income within the identified 12,000 unit deficit for Greenville County. Most of this deficit falls within the range of 30% of the family median income according to the federal government-calculated income limits for affordable housing programs. In 2019, this is \$15,010 for an individual and \$25,750 for a family of four.

The Housing Ladder for Extremely Low Incomes

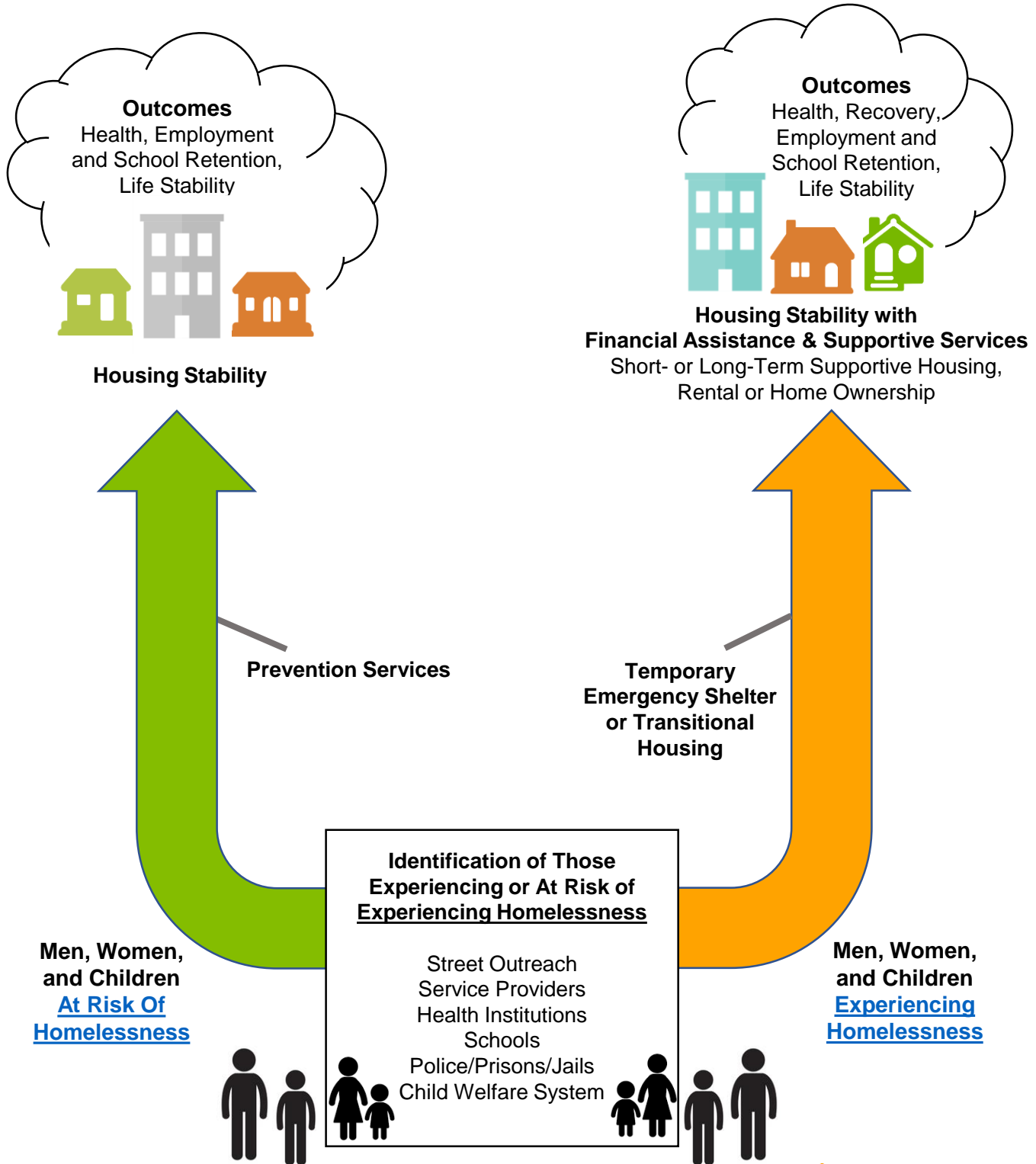


Rent at \$200/month for individuals to move out of emergency shelter based on average income of \$8500/year.
Data from SC Interagency Council on Homelessness 2019 [South Carolina State of Homelessness Report](#)



Increase Housing and Exits From Homelessness

Paths To Stable Housing





Increase Housing and Exits From Homelessness

A SHELTER IS NOT A HOME. The lack of housing with rent between \$200 - \$650/month is the primary reason emergency shelter beds are full. A stable housing continuum depends on a steady supply of safe, affordable options. The lack of a steady supply also contributes to evictions and people paying more than median rent to live in a motel room. We have a powerful economy that relies on both high-wage and low-wage workers. However, Greenville County has the highest number (32,312) of renter households in South Carolina who are eligible for housing assistance but are not receiving it according to the [2019 South Carolina Housing Needs Assessment](#) by SC Housing.

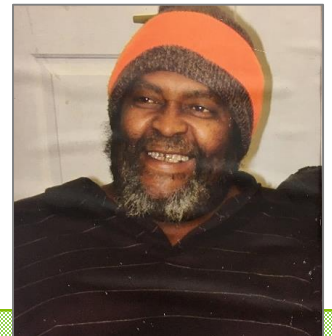
	Minimum Wage
	\$7.25
Full Time Earner Annual	\$15,080
Maximum Affordable Rent	\$419
Median Rent in Greenville County	\$787
Monthly Housing Assistance Gap	-\$368
Annual Housing Assistance Gap	-\$4,417

Data from [Greenville County Affordable Housing Study 2018](#)

Since federal funding is not available, the question the Greenville community must grapple with is who will cover the growing housing assistance gap.

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS: Housing First

Michael Massey, one of the first residents of Reedy Place, picked out a corner unit because he could look out the window and see Paris Mountain. It was Massey's first apartment – or any permanent housing for that matter – in about 20 years. Before Reedy Place opened near downtown Greenville, Massey was homeless and sleeping in the woods.



[United Housing Connections](#) established Reedy Place to serve the chronically homeless with serious mental illness. Mental health workers started telling Massey, who had schizophrenia and was actively using crack cocaine and alcohol, about Reedy Place about two years before it opened. At first, he was skeptical. Traditionally, help for those experiencing homelessness has come in the form of some program or case management, usually while residing in a temporary shelter or transitional housing.

Reedy Place was different, though. It uses the Housing First model, an approach that does not require sobriety or participation in services before a person can obtain housing or keep it. [Read the rest of Michael's story on page 39.](#)

A count on a single night in 2019 identified more than 321 residents as chronically homeless in the Upstate, and more than half of those are in Greenville County.

PRIORITIES FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS

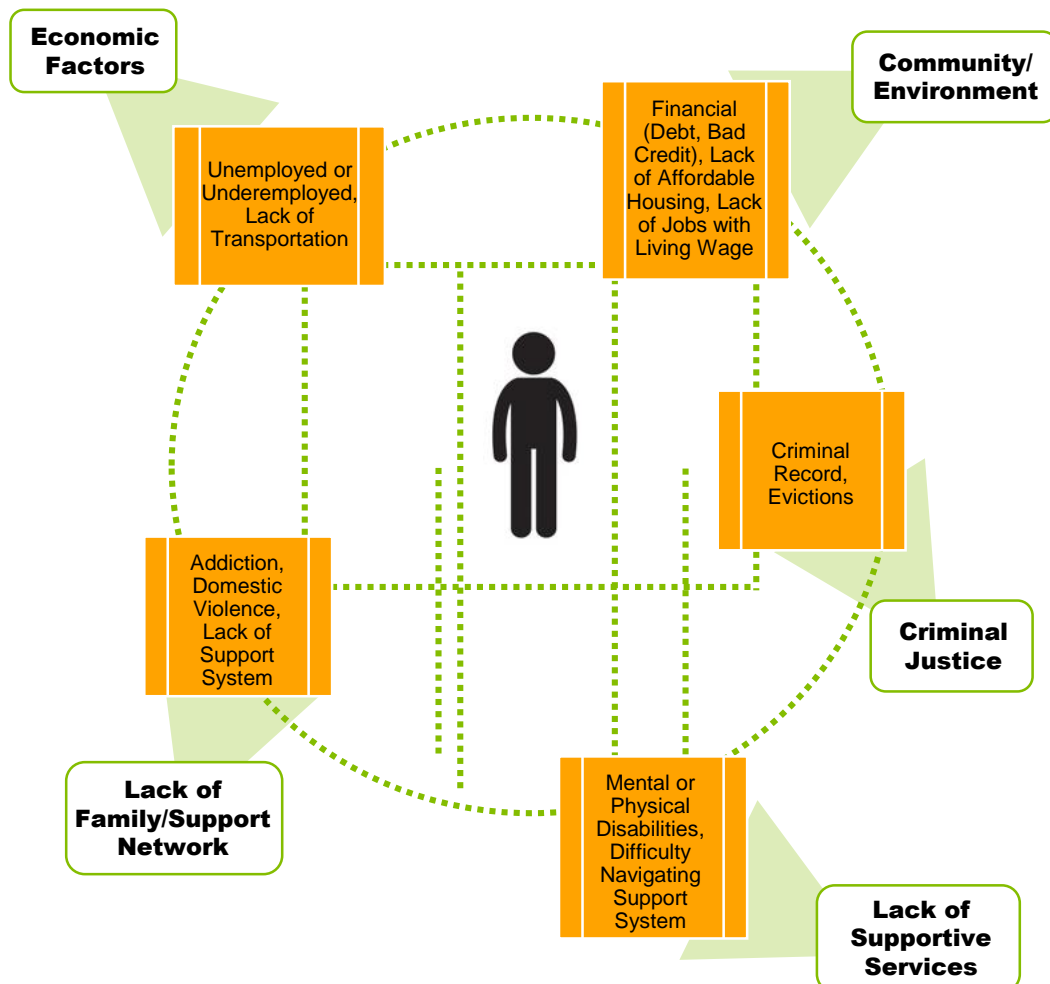


Reduce Barriers

INCREASE ACCESS. Exiting homelessness generally requires more than just finding a place to live. Many of the factors that contribute to causing homelessness are also the barriers individuals and families experience as they work to exit homelessness. Many of these barriers can be minimized or even eliminated with help from effective support services.

Participants in our listening sessions who are currently experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness repeatedly mentioned the need for greater access to mental and physical health support and more help with overcoming legal/financial barriers to work and housing.

BARRIERS TO EXITING HOMELESSNESS





Reduce Barriers

“Being homeless is like going to prison for the first time. The first night when you hear those doors slam, you’re scared as hell. After a while you get adjusted, then you get comfortable, then you’re lost. We need to catch people before they get comfortable.”

Geno
White Paper Listening Session

INCREASE OUTREACH. With barriers ranging from addiction, to financial challenges, to long-term mental or physical disabilities, the need for a case manager or social worker to help individuals identify what caused their homelessness and then navigate the pathway to exit homelessness is essential. Often, traumatic experiences are the reason homelessness occurs, and even if they’re not, homelessness itself is traumatic.

Connections to case managers can decrease the length of homelessness which can reduce the overall trauma experienced by individuals and decrease the cost to community services such as emergency healthcare, detention centers, and emergency shelters. Currently, only some case managers have a part of their workload focused on outreach. While their efforts are impactful, Greenville County currently lacks full-time dedicated outreach workers who can focus on meeting people living on our streets, assessing their needs, and connecting them with services.

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS: Coffee Club

*Without the Coffee Club fund, **Michael M.** would have been forced to live on the streets of Greenville.*

Michael served five years in prison on an arson charge and returned to Greenville as a citizen without a home, family, or support system. He struggled through two failed attempts to stay in an emergency shelter, finding it extremely difficult to live in such close quarters with so many other people. For people who have a mental illness, like Michael, structured group living environments are often incompatible fits.

That’s when the Coffee Club decided to pay for Michael to stay in a motel. The Coffee Club includes representatives from more than two dozen front-line service providers that work with Greenville’s homeless population.

[Read the rest of the story on page 40.](#)



Since Tent City closed, Coffee Club funds have been used to secure shelter for people who are homeless but unable to go to an emergency shelter because of their physical or mental health.



Reduce Barriers

INCREASE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING. For many experiencing homelessness, traditional emergency shelters aren't options because of barriers like criminal records, traumatic experiences, or addictions.

Transitional housing programs geared toward these people experiencing homelessness help fill that gap by successfully providing housing, case management, and services specific to shared experiences. Organizations such as [Soteria](#) (formerly incarcerated), [Jasmine Road](#) (sex trafficking survivors), [Safe Harbor](#) (domestic violence survivors), and [Alston Wilkes](#) (Veterans) are just a few of the transitional housing programs in Greenville County. ([See appendix for full list](#))

Families also face barriers when needing emergency shelter. That need becomes even more pronounced when paired with the reality that Greenville County has very limited shelter beds for families and extremely limited beds for single fathers with children, single mothers with a son age 10 or older, or large families.

REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES: Overcoming Legal Barriers To Exiting Homelessness

Fredrick Turner lost count of how many times he had been in and out of prison, but as he sat in a cell at Allendale Correctional Institution serving a sentence for distribution of crack cocaine in late 2017, he decided this time would be different, that he was never going back.

While he was still incarcerated, he interviewed with [Soteria Community Development Corporation](#), a Greenville nonprofit that focuses on helping men who have been incarcerated successfully re-enter the community.

Jerry Blassingame, who was fresh out of prison after serving three and a half years when he founded Soteria in 1999, knows how past mistakes continue to haunt people with criminal convictions even after they've served their time.



[Read the rest of Fred's story on page 38.](#)

A criminal conviction in South Carolina has 714 collateral consequences including ineligibility for student income tax credits, inability to live near a daycare center or school, forfeiture of notary commission, and ineligibility to hold certain jobs or earn state-issued professional licenses.

PRIORITIES FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS



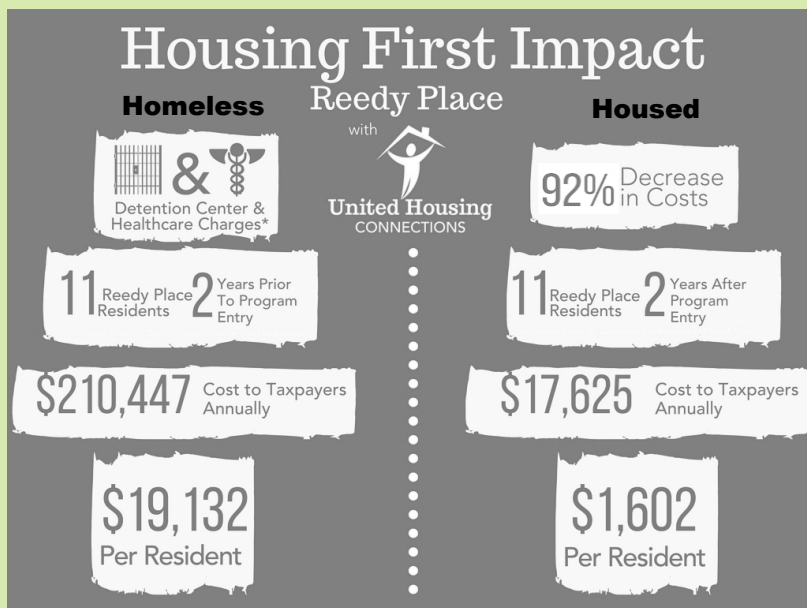
Strengthen Coordinated Community Response

SIMPLIFY THE SYSTEM. The listening session participants who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness say there is a need to simplify the system to respond to homelessness. Many services are available in Greenville County to assist those experiencing homelessness, but those who need them do not always know what those services are or where they can get access to them.

Coordination is taking place as organizations strive to improve the system. But Greenville County needs a single system to plug into, to ensure we are serving all the community's most vulnerable effectively and efficiently.

Efforts to improve coordination and move toward that single system are happening at the organization, community and regional levels. For example, a group of case managers and social workers meet weekly to identify individuals experiencing homelessness who have fallen outside the system or need a coordinated effort to become housed. This group called "The Coffee Club" has judiciously used financial resources, contacts, and professional experience to make sure some of the toughest cases of homelessness find a pathway out. (To learn more about Coffee Club, read the Community Solutions story on [pages 22 & 40.](#))

WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST?



The single most recommended course of action from experts in homelessness, especially chronic homelessness, is long-term supportive housing also called permanent supportive housing. Although chronic homelessness represents a small percentage of the overall homeless population, this population consumes more than half of services. Increasing Housing First options is likely to achieve the most substantial results in reducing financial, societal, and human costs. Greenville currently has one long-term supportive housing model, Reedy Place, which has been in operation for over ten years and is managed by [United Housing](#)

[Connections](#). Available data from the SC Department of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs for Reedy Place supports the premise that long-term supportive housing reduces societal costs (in addition to humanitarian costs.)



Strengthen Coordinated Community Response

Another example of the effectiveness of coordinated response to those experiencing homelessness is the local movement to reach effective zero homelessness for Veterans. Case managers and Veteran organizations meet regularly to examine the list of known Veterans experiencing homelessness in the area. Each person's situation is assessed, a course of action is determined, and personnel plus resources are deployed to help end homelessness. These actions are even more effective due to the financial and support resources specifically allocated to addressing Veteran homelessness.

EFFECTIVE ZERO HOMELESSNESS

Effective zero does not mean that no one will ever experience homelessness again. It does mean that homelessness becomes brief and rare because we as a community, including the City and County of Greenville and other municipalities within Greenville County, have developed a robust system that quickly connects people to available emergency services and provides appropriate exits from homelessness that ensure long-term housing stability.

Similar to the process for achieving zero homelessness for Veterans, the [Upstate Continuum of Care](#) meets weekly to assess the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness across the Upstate and match with available housing. These efforts, however, are limited by funding, the narrow definition of homelessness they are required to use by the Federal Government, and the lack of housing inventory. These constraints leave many men, women, and children waiting for an opportunity to exit homelessness.

Strengthening the coordinated community response is a priority because proven solutions to ending homelessness save our community significant dollars. Medical respite beds are one example of a collaboration resulting in significant cost savings.

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS: Medical Respite

The truck driver didn't see him.

*At the end of his walk to work one morning, **John D.** was run over by a tractor-trailer making a delivery to his place of employment. He was hit with enough force to fracture his skull and cause bleeding on his brain. The collision was so violent that it ripped the quarter panel on the truck's driver side completely off.*

John D. was hospitalized for a month.

While he had recovered enough to be released, he hadn't healed enough to return to the streets. Enter the first medical respite program for the homeless in South Carolina. Run by [Miracle Hill Ministries](#) and [New Horizon Family Health Services](#), the medical respite program provides a place for men who are too sick to stay in a regular shelter but not sick enough to be in a hospital to continue their recovery. While shelters are set up to help the homeless, they are not medically supported, so patients often don't get the follow-up care they need to prevent re-hospitalization. [Read the rest of John's story on page 39.](#)

The program could save millions of dollars a year, based on a national average cost of respite care of between \$68 and \$200 per day compared to the national average daily hospital cost of between \$1,200 and \$2,000.

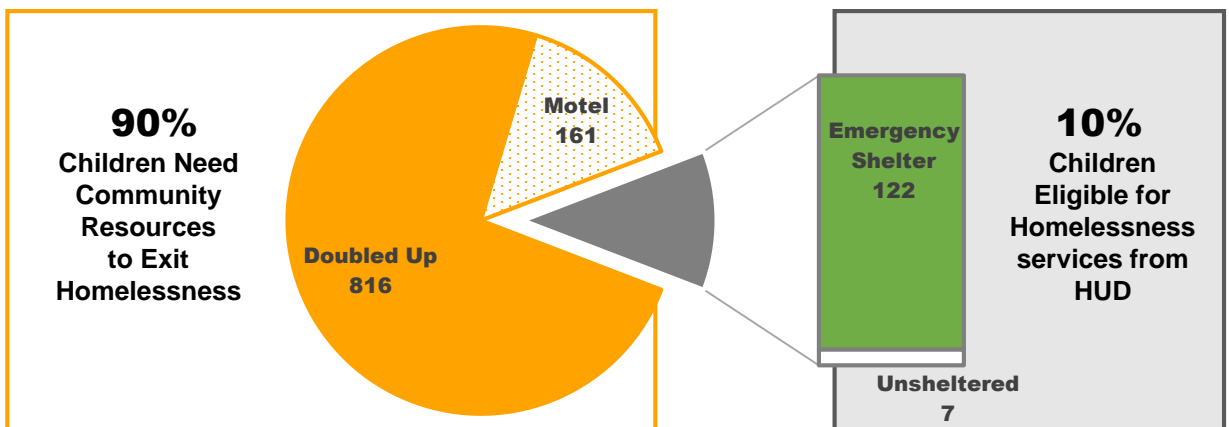


Strengthen Coordinated Community Response

REDUCE CHILDHOOD HOMELESSNESS. Each year, Greenville County Schools tracks the number of children experiencing homelessness as required by the U.S. Department of Education.

The data collected over the 2018 - 2019 school year provides a glimpse into who is eligible to receive federal assistance to exit homelessness in Greenville County. Based on the HUD definition of “homeless” — living in an emergency shelter, living outside, or living somewhere not suitable for human habitation — 129 Greenville County schoolchildren qualified for federal assistance. But another 977 lived without a stable residence: couch surfing, with friends or neighbors, or in a motel. This is an example of how the very definition of homelessness can be a barrier to getting help.

1106 SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN GREENVILLE COUNTY



Of the 410 emergency shelter beds in Greenville County, there is a range of 10% - 30% of the total available to serve families year-round. That number depends on how many women with children seek emergency shelter and meet the age requirements at Shepherd’s Gate and Salvation Army. United Ministries Interfaith Hospitality Network is the only emergency shelter for single fathers with children, single mothers with a son age 10 or older, or large families. Safe Harbor provides emergency shelter for survivors of domestic violence and their children who are attempting to flee their homes.

The Greenville Homeless Alliance convened a pilot initiative to address this issue called A New Lease on Life. With families identified by the Homeless Coordinator for the Greenville County School District, this innovative partnership pairs participants with case management, financial assistance for upfront costs like security and utility deposits, and housing financial assistance that ensures the household will pay no more than 30% of the total family income for housing. A New Lease on Life partner organizations help families address and overcome the barriers that keep many other families homeless in Greenville County.

Data from [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Count 2018-19](#), [Greenville County School District](#) and HUD

PRIORITIES FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS



Support Transit

**Limited transportation =
Limited job opportunities =
Limited housing opportunities**

Continued support of transit is Greenville County's top need for empowering all experiencing homelessness or financial instability to become self-sufficient, stable contributors to our community. This is an issue that impacts all segments of the population and requires priority-setting and voice-lifting from every stakeholder group.

Significant progress occurred this year when both the City and County committed additional funding to [Greenlink](#) allowing the expansion of service hours to 11:30 p.m. Monday – Saturday thereby providing a bus service to all job shifts. Additional funding is required to complete Greenlink's transit development plan by 2023 which will allow for Sunday service, more routes, better schedules, and 30-minute bus frequency. Greenlink's routes and services must continue to grow past 2023 to meet the needs of current and new residents. Greenville County expects an increase of 220,000 new residents by 2040.

Limited transportation = Limited access to





Support Transit

Many people living in emergency shelter are working in the occupations listed below and don't have cars. Without public transit, they can't get to work. Additionally, the median wage for these jobs will not provide enough income to move into even a one-bedroom apartment without being rent burdened (paying more than 30% of income for rent and utilities).

A robust Greenville City/County transit system with longer routes, better hours, and more frequent buses provides three levels of support to employees like these:

1. Job retention and ability to access higher paying jobs
2. Access to other essential services such as medical care, food, daycare, schools, parks, etc.,
3. Housing stability due to balancing higher housing costs with more affordable transportation costs. The cost to ride Greenlink is \$50/month with an unlimited pass. (\$42 for students/\$25 for seniors).

Occupation	Median Hourly Wage in Greenville County
One-bedroom housing wage	\$14.67
Food Prep Workers, Fast Food	\$8.93
Waiters and Waitresses	\$9.01
Cashiers	\$9.43
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	\$9.59
Janitors and Cleaners	\$10.63
Restaurant Cooks	\$11.13
Retail Salesperson	\$11.23

Data from [2019 Out of Reach Report](#), [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)

“People working in these occupations have extreme difficulty being able to live in our community but are needed for our community to run smoothly. In my opinion, these are the people we need to stand up for. They provide vital services and yet are unable to live near their jobs due to high rents.”

Bruce Forbes, SHARE



Support Transit

Many of the individuals and families experiencing homelessness in our community work full-time jobs, often at minimum wage (\$7.25/hr.).

The annual income for someone working full-time at minimum wage is \$15,000.

The rent affordable to a household at minimum wage is \$377/month.

At minimum wage, a person would have to work 81 hours a week to afford a modest one-bedroom apartment in Greenville County at the fair market rent of \$763/month according to the [2019 Out of Reach report](#) published by the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

Reducing transportation costs by accessing an efficient and affordable public transit system can lower monthly cost and help rent burdened individuals and families maintain housing.

REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES: Overcoming Transportation Barriers To Exiting Homelessness

Robert Turner would love to get a job at Target, the national retailer that wants to pay a minimum hourly wage of \$15 an hour by the end of 2020. Or BMW. Or Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport. Or countless other better-paying Greenville County employers.

But he can't.

He doesn't own a car and that limits his employment opportunities. Turner's options for higher-paying jobs narrow because of the hours, days of operation, frequency, and areas served by Greenlink, Greenville County's bus system. Greenlink has been one of the most-underfunded bus systems in the South.

Access to reliable transportation is essential to maintaining stable employment, taking advantage of educational opportunities, and having access to health care. A 2015 study by Harvard researchers found it to be the single most significant factor in escaping poverty and avoiding homelessness.

A 2015 study by Harvard researchers found access to reliable transportation to be the single most significant factor in escaping poverty and avoiding homelessness.

"I was literally homeless because I didn't have transportation to get to work," said Turner, who now is housed and lives near the corner of Cedar Lane Road and West Blue Ridge Drive outside of downtown Greenville.

For a time, he walked from the Greenville Rescue Mission to the Dollar General on Rutherford Road for work. "I'm not somebody who is complaining because I don't want to work," Turner said. "I want to work. But I can't walk to BMW. It's too far."

[Read the rest of Robert's story on page 38.](#)

PRIORITIES FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS



Impact Policymaking

The Greenville Homeless Alliance aspires to be a collective voice for people experiencing homelessness and for those working to eliminate homelessness. We strive to support policies that remove barriers for people experiencing homelessness and encourage collaboration among all stakeholders.

While this report focuses primarily on Greenville County's needs and the appropriate local responses, there are key statewide gaps that contribute to homelessness in Greenville County as well. Housing affordability and eviction rates have reached a national crisis level, and renters with the lowest incomes face the most significant challenge in finding and sustaining housing that is affordable for their income. The Greenville Homeless Alliance is committed to strengthening partnerships and broadening public and private support necessary to create systemic change.

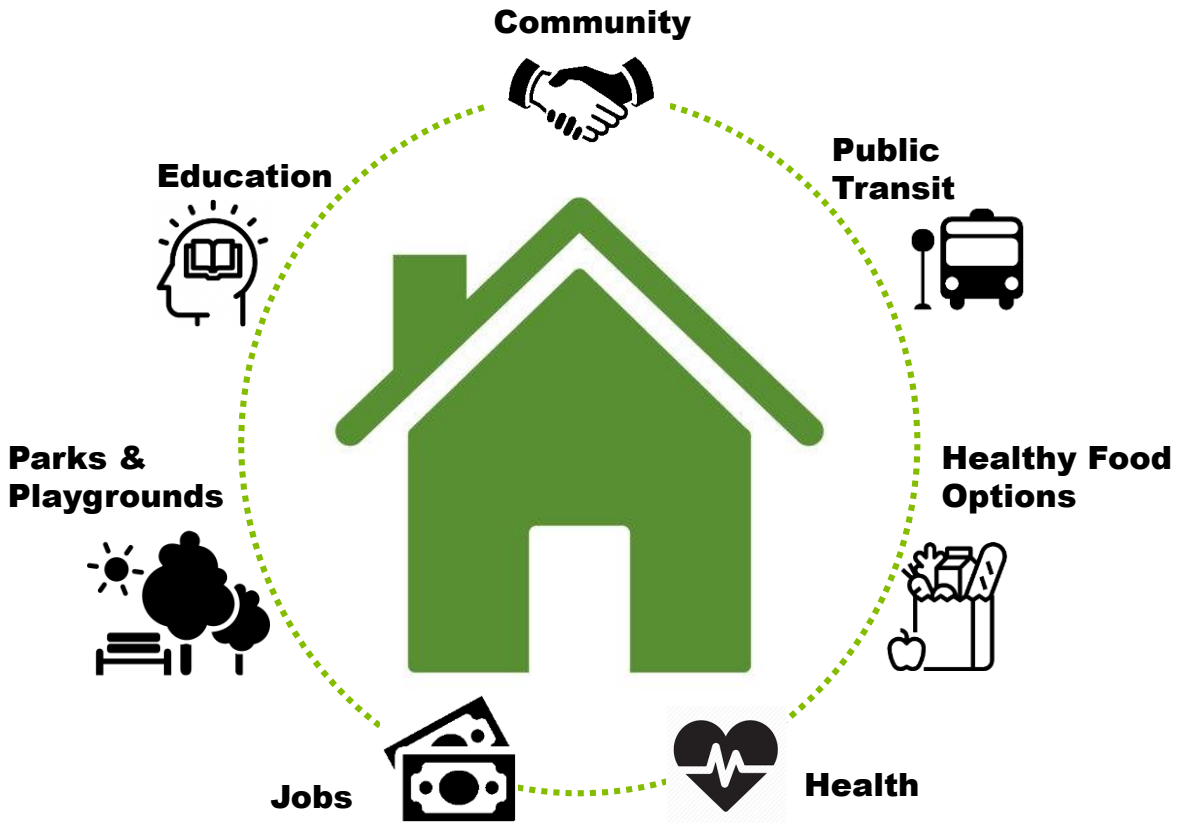
The Greenville Homeless Alliance is also charged with looking for sustainable solutions to homelessness. Policymaking changes systems related to housing, transit, healthcare, jobs, and other support services. It also provides funding that removes barriers, engages the private sector, and maximizes public dollars. Without state and local policies focused on homelessness, the increase in the population of Greenville County will continue to create downward pressure on housing and shortages in the marketplace, exacerbating to substandard unhealthy conditions. Greenville Homeless Alliance stakeholders have helped create historic funding wins to local housing and transit dollar with advocacy engagement.

**Greenville Homeless Alliance
is allied with the following coalitions
to create systemic change in our community.**

Greenville County Behavioral Health Coalition
Childhood Homelessness Project
(launched by the Greenville County Community Care Collaborative)
Greenville Re-Entry Coalition
Impact Greenville: Housing – Transit -- Health
Upstate Continuum of Care
Census 2020: We All Count GVL
Greenville Connects

OUR VISION FOR EVERYONE

Our vision is that our community will work to make homelessness brief and rare in Greenville County, ensuring safe, affordable housing for all with access to everything needed to have a healthy and fulfilling life.



POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF HOUSING

Following are excerpts from the [Homeownership Impact Survey](#) conducted by Habitat for Humanity Greenville. This study explores the connection between the affordable homeownership provided by Habitat and the positive changes experienced by low income families. **Some key results from the survey:**

96% feel their family is more stable
95% are more confident
70% report that a family member has attained a degree
75% feel their family's overall health improved
86% spend more quality time with their family

84% teach their children how to budget
67% state their children's grades have improved
66% say their children's school attendance has improved
32% have received a promotion or raise

WHAT WE CAN DO

Our hope is that this report has provided a better understanding of the current reality of homelessness in Greenville County. The five priorities outlined in this report were developed with feedback from listening sessions, service providers, community leaders, and those who have experienced or are currently experiencing homelessness. They were also adopted by the Greenville Homeless Alliance Steering Committee. They are designed to propel action so that Greenville County has a systematic response to homelessness that can address immediate needs, quickly connect people to housing, and provide services to ensure long-term stability. We envision a better future where homelessness is brief and rare.

As the Greenville Homeless Alliance works to **educate, advocate, collaborate** and **innovate** with policymakers and the community, we firmly believe everyone has a crucial role to play to build upon the positive momentum initially created by the 2015 Homelessness White Paper. We hope the following strategies will serve as a catalyst for connecting community partners around the goal of safe and affordable homes for everyone who lives in Greenville County.

- **Increase housing options located near Greenlink routes by 850 units in three critical areas:**
 - 100 exits for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness (based on unsheltered).
 - 400 emergency shelter exits for individuals (based on emergency shelter beds).
 - 350 housing options for families (based on average family size of three for school-aged children).
- **To create the 850 housing options required to move people off the streets, out of emergency shelter, and stabilize families, employ the following proven solutions to ending homelessness:**
 - Housing First units with long-term support for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.
 - Short and long-term supportive housing options for individuals. A portion should be in an environment that is alcohol and drug free.
 - Additional resources with effective support services for families experiencing homelessness. This includes shelter, transitional, and permanent options. It also includes exploring a comprehensive diversion strategy.
- **In addition to housing options, the Greenville Homeless Alliance prioritizes:**
 - Increased collaboration between public and private partners. The expanded partnerships should focus on evidence-based strategies tailored to the three data areas: unsheltered, sheltered and school-aged children. This could occur in a number of ways that have proven results in other communities. Examples that have been explored range from a formal Homeless Court to address criminal charges, dedicated outreach personnel to connect existing services with people on our streets, establishing an Eviction Court, and continuing to convene partners for the New Lease on Life initiative.
 - A sustainable fund of local public and private dollars working collectively to end homelessness.
 - Continued collection of data to drive and measure community progress and outcomes, such as data from medical respite, to enable long-term sustainability as well as build the case for expanding beds to women.

WHAT WE CAN DO

- **Strengthen the coordinated community response by asking our public and private partners to explore the implementation of a single homelessness system of entry and exit for Greenville County.**
 - Utilizing a shared dashboard allows for tracking individuals or family needs, along with community progress and outcomes. The Greenville Homeless Alliance is committed to working alongside the [Upstate Continuum of Care](#) to achieve a single system. The Greenville Homeless Alliance is also committed to convening partners to simplify the system both for people experiencing homelessness and for the larger community that interacts with Greenville's homeless population.
- **Reduce barriers by continuing to advocate for expansion of:**
 - **Full funding of Greenlink's Transit Development Plan through 2023 and expand transit to meet the needs of residents in our growing economy.** Greenlink is an essential component of our community's mobility infrastructure. Housing and transit are economic development. Just as homelessness has no boundaries, neither does economic development.
 - **Mental health services.** Higher levels of funding for the S.C. Mental Health System with adequate resources for staff, intervention, treatment, and supportive housing with case management for people with a mental disability.
 - **Opportunities for previously incarcerated residents.** Build upon expungement legislation and other options to increase support for workforce development, fair chance hiring, and housing solutions for men and women who were previously incarcerated and are returning to Greenville County.
 - **Childcare options.** Expanded affordable childcare options to make day care accessible so that parents who experience homelessness can become employed.
- **Engage at the local, state, and national level on policy issues that specifically affect those experiencing homelessness and housing instability. We invite everyone to join us in advocating for sustainable funding and policies to address homelessness in Greenville County.**
 - The Greenville Homeless Alliance stakeholders have contributed to the creation of historic funding wins for local housing and transit dollars through education, advocacy, and collaboration. To reach the next stage of planning, we must move beyond what we have traditionally done. This must be a community-wide effort focused on consistent investment in and execution of a comprehensive strategy that measures housing opportunity, educational attainment, healthcare disparities, and the physical and economic mobility of the workforce.



The Greenville Homeless Alliance (GHA) is a coalition committed to making homelessness brief and rare in Greenville, SC. Charged with looking for sustainable solutions to homelessness, the Greenville Homeless Alliance works to **educate, advocate, collaborate,** and **innovate** with policymakers and the community.

VISION: Safe, affordable homes for everyone in Greenville County

MISSION: To strengthen the partnerships and broaden support in order to increase options for individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness and who are seeking stability and a safe, affordable home.

VALUES: Equity, Integrity, Inclusiveness, Pragmatism, and Courage

STEERING COMMITTEE

Ryan Duerk, Chair
Miracle Hill Ministries

Lauren Stephens, Vice-Chair
The Salvation Army

Tish McCutchen, Treasurer
Jolley Foundation

Gerald Huskamp, Secretary
CRH Properties, LLC

Mary Kay Campbell
Greater Greenville Mental Health Center

Brandon Cook
New Horizon Family Health Services, Inc.

Lorain Crowl
United Housing Connections

Rebecca Edwards
City of Greenville

Matthew Johnson
Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak, & Stewart, P.C.

Tony McDade, Ex-Officio
United Ministries

Deb Richardson-Moore
Triune Mercy Center

Jeremy Strickler
Williams Wealth Management

Lovetta Walton
Greenville County Redevelopment Authority

GHA is governed by a steering committee, which sets the strategic priorities, coordinates action, and ensures the financial and human resources to support the collective agenda are available. GHA uses the five key elements of the collective impact framework as a basis for partnership: a common agenda, common progress measures, coordination of mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and support of the partnership through **United Ministries** as the host organization.

We invite everyone in our community to become fiercely committed to ending homelessness and participate in creating a systemic and empathetic community-wide response to do so.

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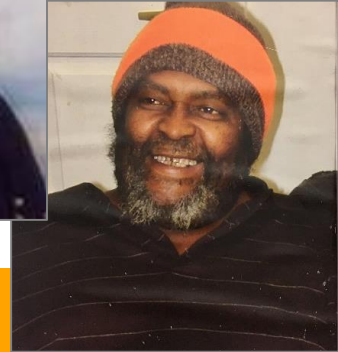


The Greenville Homeless Alliance (GHA) would like to thank everyone who participated in this creation of this report.

- Special thanks to Lawson Wetli, on behalf of the Upstate Mediation Center, who fearlessly led the listening sessions and helped direct the development of this report.
- Thanks to Cindy Landrum for uncovering great stories in the Real People, Real Stories and Community Solutions sections.
- Thanks also to the Greenville Homeless Alliance Steering Committee for their thoughtful discussions and direction of the final report.
- And finally, a very special thank you to the men and women who have previously experienced or are currently experiencing homelessness and shared their thoughts and stories with us. Your honesty and insight inspired our work.

Listening Session Participants

American Red Cross	Greenville County Planning Department	Safe Harbor, Inc.
Bank of Travelers Rest	Greenville Free Medical Clinic	Saad Resources, LLC
Bethany Christian Services	Greater Greenville Mental Health	SC Legal Aid
Bon Secours St. Francis Health System	Greenville Housing Fund (GHF)	Searchlight
Chick Fil A	Habitat for Humanity	SHARE
City of Greenville Community Development Department	Hollingsworth Funds	Soteria CDC
City of Greenville Planning Department	Homes of Hope	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
CRH Properties LLC	Hughes Main Library	St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church
Faces and Voices of Recovery (FAVOR Greenville)	Institute for Child Success	Taylor's Free Medical Clinic
Furman University	Jolley Foundation	The Greenville Housing Authority
Gateway House	Livewell Greenville	The Salvation Army
Greenlink	Loaves and Fishes	Triune Mercy Center
Greenville Chamber of Commerce	Meals on Wheels	United Housing Connections
Greenville City Council	Miracle Hill Ministries	United Ministries
Greenville City Police	Mother Teresa House	United Way of Greenville County
Greenville County Council	New Horizon Family Health Services	Unity Health on Main
Greenville County Code Compliance	Nicholtown Neighborhood Association	Upstate Forever
Greenville County Human Relations Commission	North Main Community Association	Upstate Mediation Center
Greenville County Redevelopment Authority (GCRA)	Ogletree Deakins Law Firm	Upstate Warrior Solutions
Greenville County Schools	OnTrack Greenville	Urban League of the Upstate
Greenville County Sheriff's Department	Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church	Veterans Administration
	Pendleton Place	Velo Valets
	Pride Link	Vision 25
	PRISMA Health Upstate	West End Neighborhood Association
	Project Care	Williams Wealth Management
	Project Host	Women's Right and Empowerment Network (WREN)
	Public Education Partners (PEP)	Plus 20 additional community members, many of whom have experienced homelessness.



REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES and COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS



Homeless get place to heal after hospital



Researcher Nathan Hill, hospital administrator, and homeless care center supervisor Timothy at Wakefield Hill's Community Resource Alliance. (Right) is on the board of directors for local homeless family health services. (Left) is a program manager at health care for the homeless program at New Haven. (Middle) is a homeless care center.

REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES

Challenges To Exiting Homelessness- Nettia Yates

Continued from [page 11](#)

But then the Spartanburg day labor agency she worked for closed and she moved to Greenville because it had a branch where she could get work. She got hired right away to work in a cabinet factory but had no place to lay her head.

“I was scared to death,” she said.

A couple of fellow day laborers told her about Tent City, the homeless encampment under Greenville’s Pete Hollis bridge. Some of Tent City’s residents had been there for years. In 2014, it grew to more than 100 residents, many drawn there by mounds of donations made by well-meaning Greenville residents after a series of newspaper articles about the people who lived there. As it grew, the camp became more overcrowded, more violent. Yates herself was arrested and served jail time for assault after she tore down a woman’s tent and pulled a knife after an altercation over loud music.

After she got out of jail, she found her criminal record was a barrier to getting a job or a place to live. For people experiencing homelessness, it’s easy to fall into the criminal justice system because “being human” -- sleeping, going to the bathroom -- becomes a criminal act.

After Greenville County closed Tent City, Yates lived in another homeless encampment with Mack, a man who promised to feed her and keep a roof over her head.

Yates has two missions -- to let Greenville’s homeless know they have a voice and to help Greenville understand the stereotypical images it has of people experiencing homelessness aren’t necessarily true.

“All kinds of people are out there - teachers, doctors, lawyers, chemists,” she said. “Some are uneducated, sure, but that isn’t all of us.”

She has now been approved for disability income, something that allows her to pay for a car. She’s moved to Spartanburg to live with her daughter but plans to get her own place eventually. But she still comes to Greenville, drawn by [Triune Mercy Center](#) and the opportunity to participate in updating Greenville’s plan to address homelessness.

“I think I was brought to South Carolina for a calling,” she said.

Overcoming Financial Barriers To Exiting Homelessness – Catalina Hawley

Continued from [page 7](#)

[United Ministries’ Interfaith Hospitality Network](#) provided the family with emergency shelter through a network of local congregations that host homeless families with children for a week at a time. The program is the only collection of emergency shelters in Greenville for homeless single mothers with sons who are age 10 or older. She and her children moved into transitional housing, but Hawley soon realized she would have to find employment that paid significantly more to be self-sufficient or she would have to take a job that paid less so she fell under the federal poverty guidelines for a household her size to qualify for assistance.

She decided to take a job as a teacher’s aide at West Greenville School. The annual salary of \$23,000 allowed her to qualify for housing assistance.

Hawley said her career change is buying some time. Her daughter will be old enough to go to school in a couple of years and Hawley plans to go back to school herself to earn her master’s and doctorate degrees in education.

Hawley said she wants to find a job that allows her to provide for her children – and frees up the subsidized housing she is living in now for somebody else who is trying to better their circumstances.

REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES

Overcoming Legal Barriers To Exiting Homelessness – Frederick Turner

Continued from [page 23](#)

“People with criminal records face more barriers than others,” he said. A criminal conviction in South Carolina has 714 collateral consequences including ineligibility for student income tax credits, inability to live near a daycare center or school, forfeiture of notary commission, and ineligibility to hold certain jobs or earn state-issued professional licenses.

About 700,000 people are released from state and federal prisons each year. Within three years of their release, about two-thirds will be rearrested. With no job, no money, and no place to live, many find themselves in the same conditions that landed them in prison in the first place.

Soteria helps men released from prison with major challenges such as finding transitional housing, getting job training and finding employment, and with smaller things that most of us take for granted like getting a driver's license and getting a copy of their birth certificate or Social Security card. Soteria has helped more than 5,000 men and women re-enter the community after their releases.

But Blessingame said housing is the most important, saying it is difficult to go to work if you had to sleep on the ground or in a tent the night before.

Turner, who said he tried crack cocaine for the first time when he was 21 and quickly became addicted, was able to get a bed in Soteria's residential program. There's a six-month wait for one of the 16 beds and men in the program stay for up to a year.

Turner started working at the Greenville restaurant Kitchen Sync three months after his release. He began as a dishwasher and has worked his way up to prep cook. He's earned his Safe Serve certification from Greenville Technical College. Without Soteria's program, he doesn't think he would have gotten the job and perhaps would be in prison or on his way back.

He's got his driver's license, something he hadn't had since 1995, and a car. He also has a two-bedroom apartment. Turner said Soteria made a tremendous difference for him and life is looking up.

Overcoming Transportation Barriers To Exiting Homelessness – Robert Turner

Continued from [page 29](#)

Public transportation availability dictates where people who don't own cars or can't drive have to live. Turner, who has had half his foot amputated because of severe diabetes, said he could no longer legally drive a car. He said now he walks a mile and a half to catch a bus.

An increase in funding for 2019-20 will allow Greenlink to expand service to 11:30 p.m. weekdays. But the additional money from the city and the county wasn't enough to begin service on Sundays or increase bus frequency from once an hour to once every 30 minutes.

Turner said some retail businesses won't hire people if they can't work on Sundays.

He's lived in cities with good public transportation systems before. He lived in Portland, Oregon, and Bloomington, Illinois, the home of State Farm Insurance corporate headquarters and a city about the size of Greenville. Buses in Bloomington run every 15 minutes on weekdays and every 30 minutes on the weekend.

Turner said if government and business leaders were required to rely solely on public transportation, they would find the money to improve the system.

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Housing First – Michael Massey

Continued from [page 20](#)

People who are chronically homeless are often reluctant participants, according to Julia Mullen, a retired mental health worker. But often after they get a roof over their heads along with electricity and food, they become more agreeable to other services.

The first night Reedy Place was open there was a community dinner meeting. Michael didn't attend. He stayed out all night, likely drinking and using drugs. He stayed out all night long every night for the first two or three weeks.

That changed when he tripped on a curb on his way out one night and broke both of his ankles. When he returned to Reedy Place in a wheelchair after a six-week hospital stay, he was unable to go out at night.

"I teased him that it was divine intervention from God," Mullen said. Divine intervention or not, Massey started tracking his weeks of sobriety. He also sat on the porch of Reedy Place and tried to talk other residents into staying there instead of going out to use drugs. Massey lived at Reedy Place for about seven years until his death.

In addition to helping Massey turn his life around, the Housing First approach saves taxpayers a lot of money in the long run.

In the two years before their entry into Reedy Place, 11 of its first residents spent 397 days in jail, 252 days in the hospital for mental health treatment, made 10 emergency room visits and were transported by EMS 62 times. The cost: \$210,447, or \$19,132 per resident.

During their first two years as Reedy Place residents, those numbers had fallen to 30 days in jail, 40 days in the hospital for mental health treatment, one emergency room visit and were transported by EMS 7 times. The cost: \$17,625, or \$1,602 per resident.

Reedy Place has served 57 clients since it opened. The average income of residents is \$700/month and each person pays 30% of their income towards their housing cost each month.

Medical Respite – John D.

Continued from [page 25](#)

The idea to open a medical respite in Greenville got started when Brandon Cook, coordinator of [New Horizon Family Health Services Health Care for the Homeless Program](#), overheard a conversation while attending a meeting of the Coffee Club, an informal weekly gathering of Greenville's homeless services providers. Two Coffee Club members were talking about a man experiencing homelessness who had been discharged from the hospital but wasn't a good candidate for an emergency shelter.

Cook was aware of medical respite programs for people experiencing homelessness that were successful in other cities. Wanting to see such a project in Greenville, Miracle Hill provided six beds in a separate dorm at its downtown rescue mission, and New Horizon Family Health Services provided a nurse and case manager to provide medical care, coordinate follow-ups, and connect the patient to a primary care physician and community resources. The program opened in January 2019 and served 10 men in its first five months.

The program could save millions of dollars a year, based on a national average cost of respite care of between \$68 and \$200 per day compared to the national average daily hospital cost of between \$1,200 and \$2,000.

Cook said he hopes the medical respite program will be expanded to women and to patients with higher acuity.

John D. has been in medical respite for three months as he recovers from his brain injury, an injury to his arm, and vertigo. The program nurse has been on phone calls to explain his condition to his family, has accompanied him to doctor follow-up appointments to make sure all of his questions were asked and answered, and provided tips to help him remember things better.

Cook said that sometimes the personal attention given to patients matters as much as the medical care provided.

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Coffee Club – Michael M.

Continued from [page 22](#)

In 2014, Tent City was a homeless encampment under the Pete Hollis Boulevard bridge. After a series of articles in The Greenville News, people in the community flooded Tent City with donations of clothing, heaters, blankets, tents, sleeping bags, food, and water. They were intended to be helpful but proved to have the opposite effect. The attention caused Tent City's population to swell, from 30 longtime residents to more than 100, and it became violent and dangerous.

Local government and service providers worked to close Tent City and compassionately transition its residents into reunification with family members, admission into treatment facilities, and housing. Local foundations, individuals, and other entities committed more than \$130,000 in unrestricted funding. Service providers worked with Tent City residents one-on-one to address their unique needs. The money was used for such items as down payments for housing, transportation costs, short-term hotel occupancy while the individual received other stabilizing services, and for furniture and other household items.

Since Tent City closed, Coffee Club funds have been used to secure shelter for people who are experiencing homelessness but unable to go to an emergency shelter because of their physical or mental health.

The closure of Tent City ended homelessness for the majority of residents because service providers and the community met people at their unique level of need. A handful of individuals assisted by the fund have voluntarily paid their portion back, some in full, once they obtained stable income.

"The Coffee Club funds are virtually depleted, and needs are greater than ever," said Jeremy Huff, program manager at [Miracle Hill Ministries' Greenville Rescue Mission](#).

As for Michael, he's been in permanent housing for more than three years now. Working with the Department of Mental Health and having a place of his own gives him a sense of stability. He's working on his GED and volunteers at the food pantry.

"I'm happy to have a place because it's a lot better than being homeless," Michael said. "There's no other place I'd rather be. Support is everything."

"The overwhelming majority of those served through the funds that originated from Tent City remain housed and in the stable environment in which they were placed," said Lauren Stephens, [The Salvation Army's](#) social ministries director.

Welcome Home Club – Triune Mercy Center

At the beginning of our work at the Triune Mercy Center, we thought once we'd housed someone, our job was over. Problem solved. *Next?*

Then we watched as people, lonely and isolated, left their housing. Or invited in friends who cost them their housing. Or couldn't keep up the routine of paying rent and utilities.

So our case managers started Welcome Home, a monthly support group for newly housed people. The residents set the agenda and have had cooking lessons and field trips to Paris Mountain, sessions on power bills and banking and time management. And in every session, the subject of boundary-setting comes up; many people have lost housing when a stream of homeless friends came in to shower or sleep.

Our staff invites people by mail to Welcome Home and has found that even if someone cannot attend a meeting, the invitations keep the door open. When a challenge arises, the resident is more likely to call us.

*Deb Richardson-Moore, Senior Pastor
Triune Mercy Center*

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

- [United Housing Connections](#) and SEARCHlight Initiative launched a capital campaign to build 36 units of long-term supportive housing in 2019. This was identified as one of five priorities in the [2015 Homelessness White Paper](#).
- [Gateway](#) is currently building a new clubhouse that will double the number of people with mental illness it can serve. Gateway offers people a path to independence by helping them function in the community, be successful in the workplace, and live lives of purpose and dignity.
- [Bon Secours 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment](#) identified the top 5 community priorities indicated by community survey respondents as: 1) homelessness, 2) education, 3) access to healthcare, 4) alcohol/drugs, and 5) transportation. Focus groups also indicated affordable housing, gentrification, and economic mobility as concerns.
- The [Greenville County Reentry Coalition](#), United Way of Greenville County's Behavioral Health Coalition, and Steering Committee for the Childhood Homelessness Project, launched by the Greenville County Community Care Collaborative and led in 2019 by the Institute for Child Success all have housing and homelessness as areas of focus in their work.
- The [Hispanic Alliance](#) released a comprehensive study in conjunction with [Furman University](#) that provides data on the number of Hispanic Americans living in Greenville County and the number of households with an annual income below \$30,000.
- PrideLink partners with [Pendleton Place](#) and in July, 2019 a Youth Resource Center opened to offer support services and short term housing resources to offer a connection between foster care and youth experiencing homelessness. Collecting data for youth ages 17 – 24 experiencing homelessness in Greenville County has been identified as a priority for developing specific strategies (including LGBTQ youth).
- The [Institute for Child Success](#) released data in March, 2019 about the environmental factors such as parental unemployment, housing instability or insufficiency, hunger, inadequate nutrition or “food insecurity,” and toxic stress impacting children ages 8 and under in South Carolina compared to North Carolina, Georgia, and the United States as a whole.
- In 2019 the South Carolina Second Chance Justice Collaborative (SCJC) launched a partnership between [Soteria Community Development Corporation](#) and [Root & Rebound](#) to provide access to legal advocacy, education, and policy advocacy to support communities across South Carolina impacted by mass incarceration.
- Greenville County participated in the Southern Economic Mobility Network (NSEM) after being identified as one of the most difficult places to move out of poverty. Greenville NSEM built a high functioning highly collaborative team. The work is outlined and captured on the [NSEM website](#).
- [United Way of Greenville County](#) and [Furman University](#) released a first-of-its-kind study called [Home – Inclusive Greenville](#) that examined the impact of gentrification on 10 Greenville neighborhoods.
- Greenville County's [comprehensive plan](#) for 2040 includes an emphasis on affordable housing, transit, and land use.
- The City of Greenville has experienced strong civic engagement in the development of the [comprehensive plan](#) for 2040. Data on the economy, housing market, population, and other aspects of the city can be found in this [report](#).

DATA SOURCES

- [2019 State of Homelessness Report](#), South Carolina Interagency Council on Homelessness
- [2019 Point-in-Time \(PIT\) Count](#), Upstate Continuum of Care
- [Greenville County School District McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#)
- [Public Education Partners Facts and Figures on our Public Schools, April 2019](#).
- [2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#), US Census Bureau
- [2016 Balancing Prosperity and Housing Affordability Report](#), City of Greenville
- [2018 Greenville County Affordable Housing Study](#), Greenville County
- [2019 Out of Reach Report](#), National Low-Income Housing Coalition
- [2019 South Carolina Housing Needs Assessment](#), SC Housing
- [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)



To learn more about resources available for people experiencing homelessness, please visit the Greenville Homeless Alliance website @ <https://www.gvlhomes4all.org>

Take me to
[Resources for People Experiencing Homelessness](#)

APPENDIX

Key Terms and Definitions:

Affordable Housing is housing – rental (including utilities) or owner-occupied (including property taxes and insurance) – that does not cost the resident more than 30% of the gross monthly income. The range of rent identified to exit homelessness in Greenville County for 2019 is \$200 - \$650/month.

Case Manager (also referred to as social worker) provides assessment and coordination services. Uses knowledge of available services and housing to help individuals or families move through crisis towards stability.

Collective Impact Framework uses five key elements as a basis for partnership: a common agenda, common progress measures, coordination of mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and support of the partnership from a backbone organization. The Greenville Homeless Alliance is utilizing this framework and United Ministries is the backbone organization.

Continuum of Care (CoC) was established by HUD as a collaborative funding and planning approach that helps communities plan for and provide a full range of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing and other service resources to address the various needs of homeless persons. In Greenville, **United Housing Connections** serves as the lead agency for the 13 counties that make up the Upstate CoC. Its service area includes Greenville, Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Saluda, Spartanburg, and Union. The Upstate CoC is a community of individuals and providers that organize and deliver housing and services to individuals experiencing homelessness as they move to stable housing and self-sufficiency. The organization is made up of more than 90 agencies taking action to make homelessness brief, rare and nonrecurring. Greenville County has 50% of the people experiencing homelessness within the 13 counties of the Upstate according to the 2019 Point in Time (PIT) count.

Coordinated Assessment (CA) assesses the needs of persons experiencing homelessness and matches them to housing programs per level of need and program availability. CA prioritizes a person's level of vulnerability compared to other homeless persons within the 13 counties of the Upstate CoC who have been assessed with the same tool and prioritizes serving persons ranked most vulnerable first.

Diversion refers to family re-unification strategies that keep people from entering emergency shelters by helping them identify and access alternate, safe housing arrangements outside of the homeless service system. For example, providing a bus or air ticket to reunify with family outside of Greenville.

Housing Authority is a governmental body that governs aspects of an area's housing. The Housing Authority of the City of Greenville (TGHA) is The Greenville Housing Authority, and for Greenville County also includes the Greer Housing Authority of Greer, SC.

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) is financial assistance offered through local housing authorities to families, the elderly, and those with disabilities in the low-moderate income range at or below 50% of the HUD established Family Median Income (FMI) guidelines. Housing Choice Vouchers help pay the balance of a rental payment that exceeds 30% of a renters' monthly income. The 2019 FMI for Greenville is \$71,700.

Permanent Supportive Housing combines non-time limited affordable housing assistance with voluntary support services to address the needs of persons with complex mental or physical health, addictions, or cognitive challenges. The services are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and connect people with healthcare, substance treatment and employment services.

Rapid Re-housing is a HUD intervention designed to help individuals and families that don't need intensive and long-term support services to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing.

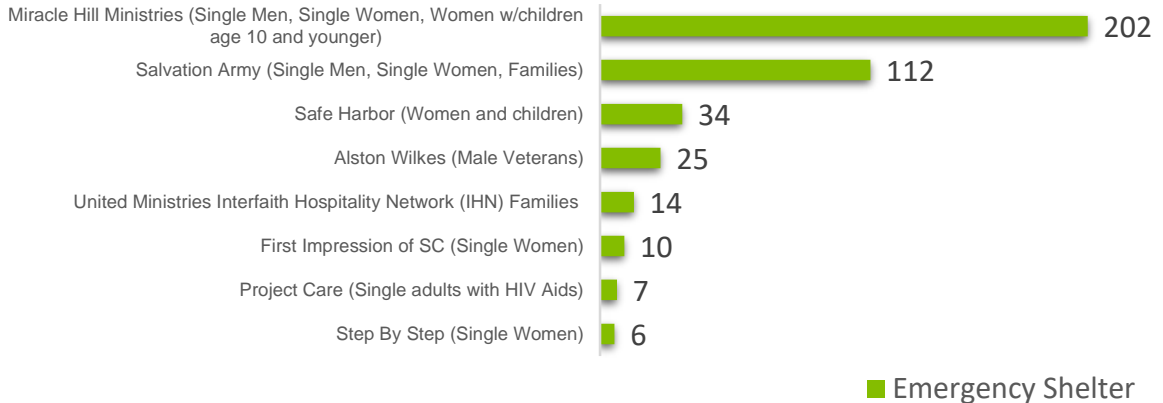
Support Services include employment services, education support, parenting classes, connections to benefits, mental healthcare, substance use treatment, and basic needs, food, and clothing services.

Transitional housing facilitates the movement of homeless individuals and families of all levels of need to permanent housing.

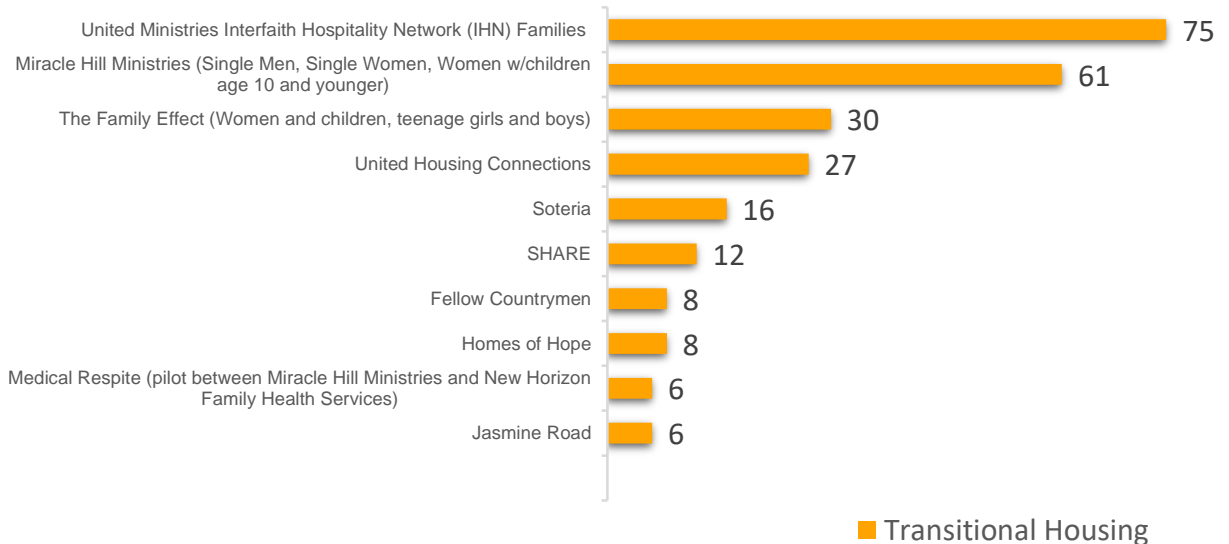
For more key terms and definitions, visit <https://www.qvlhomes4all.org/>.

2019 Community Assets for Persons Experiencing Homelessness

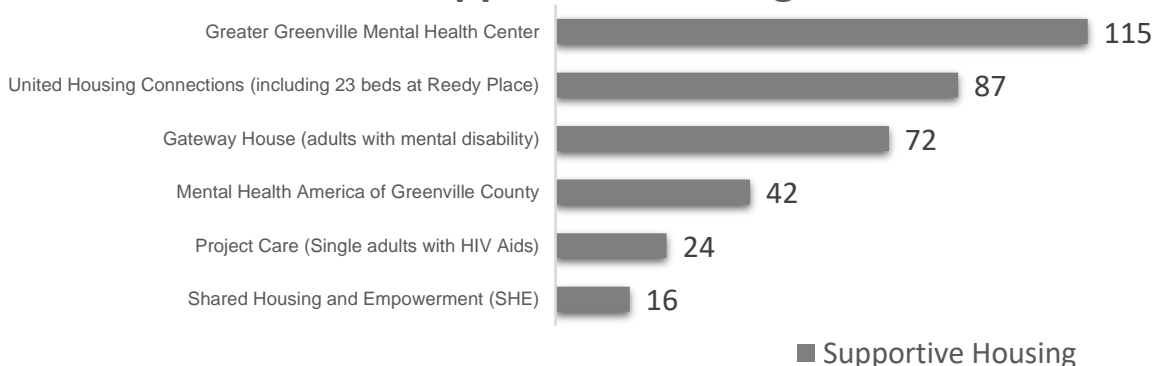
410 Emergency Shelter Beds



249 Transitional Housing Beds

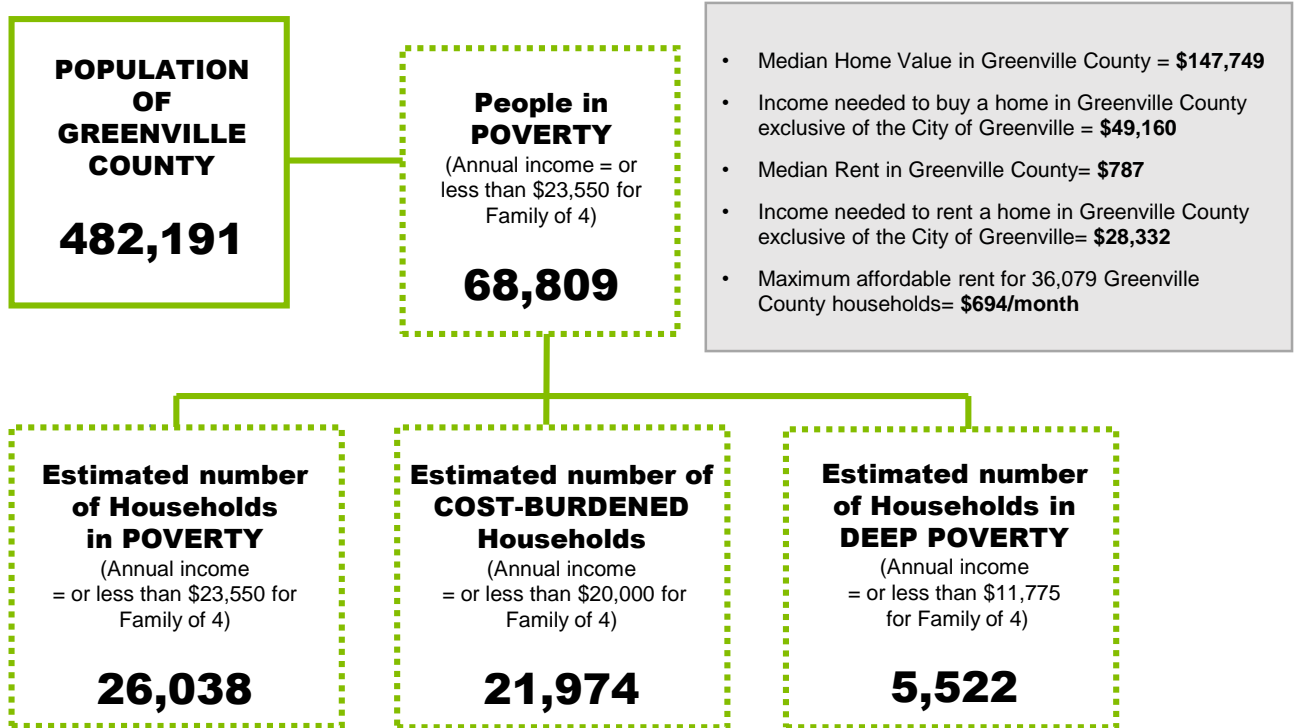


356 Supportive Housing Beds



Informing What We Know for 3,633 Who Experienced Homelessness in 2018-2019

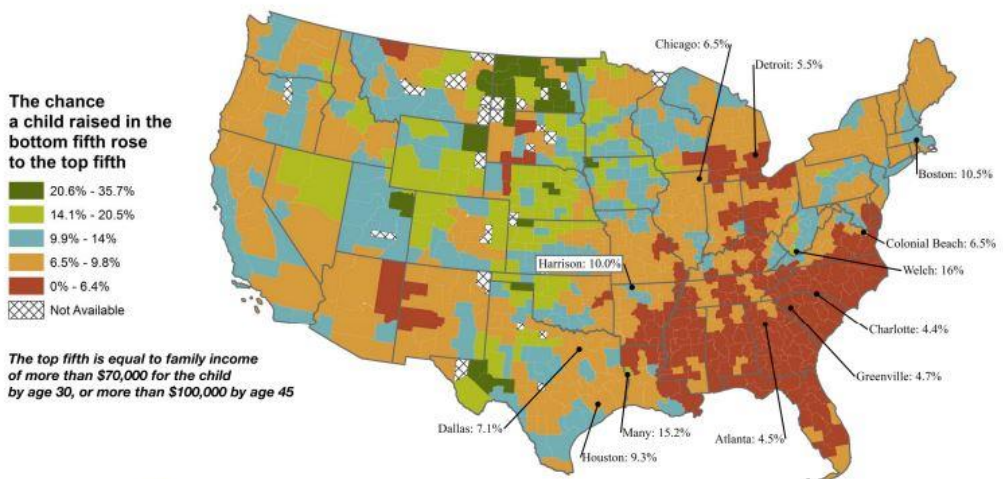
Key Numbers From [2018 Greenville County Affordable Housing Study](#)



Data Source <https://gcrs-sc.org/resources/studies/>

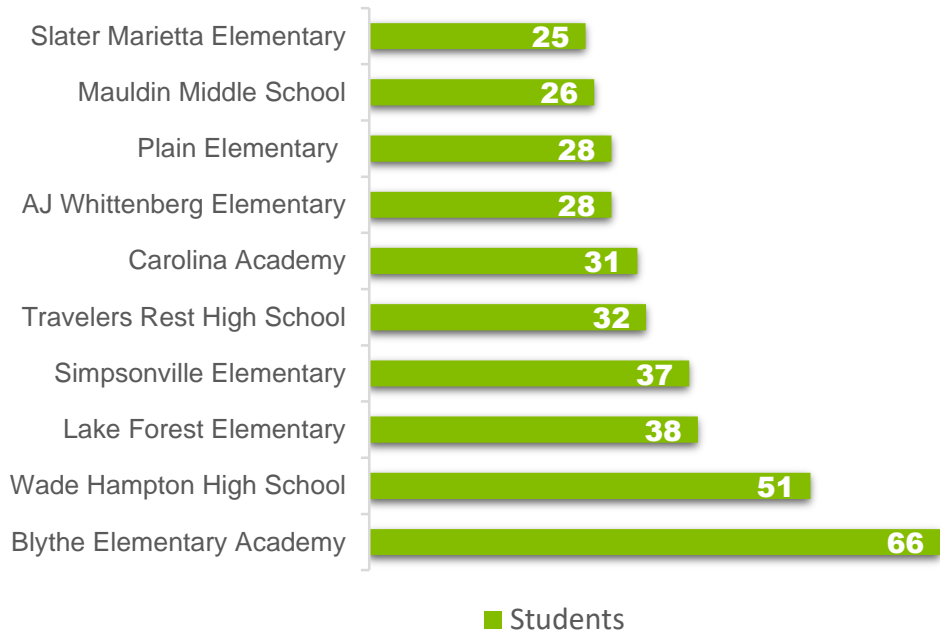
Complex Landscape, Common Challenge

Lack of Mobility: The South Stands Out



Data source www.equality-of-opportunity.org

Top Ten Greenville County Schools with Students Experiencing Homelessness 2018-2019 School Year



Elementary, Middle, and High School with Highest Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness 2018-2019 School Year

