



# CITY OF CONCORD

*New Hampshire's Main Street™*

## REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** City Councilor Jim Schlosser

**DATE:** March 5, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Funding Appropriation to Support Concord's Plan to End Homelessness

### **Recommendation**

Approve the attached resolution appropriating the sum of \$84,000 to support efforts by Concord's Plan to End Homelessness and authorizing a transfer-in from the Community Development Reserve in the sum of \$84,000 for this purpose.

### **Background**

The Committee for Concord's Plan to End Homelessness (Steering Committee) seeks to advance the economic development of the City of Concord by building capacity to measurably reduce homelessness and create a coordinated system to align government, business and non-profits to achieve ongoing homelessness reductions.

In January 2024, the City Council adopted a priority on homelessness and the Steering Committee approved a two-year plan (Attachment 1). Moving from a monitoring approach to an action learning approach requires the dedicated staff support of a project manager. Five key strategies have been identified (Attachment 2) to advance the City Council priorities. These key strategies will be achieved by workgroups testing change ideas supported by a project manager. This system change (action) work will be complemented by periodic reflection and learning sessions. Quarterly, the workgroups will be convened in Learning Collaborative Meetings (Attachment 3). Annually, the Steering Committee will host a Homelessness Improvement Summit to celebrate progress and share lessons learned.

This work intends to serve the priority populations in Concord of unhoused residents, people with disabilities, and low-income people at risk of homelessness. There are currently 384 actively homeless individuals in the City; of which 70% have one or more disabilities. Our Community Development Index (38) is in the lowest tercile in Merrimack County: household income is low (74%), population growth is low (1.3%), and the % AGI >\$100k is low (23%). Taking on the challenge of reducing homelessness in our context of a state capital with a low community development profile (CDI) requires building on the tremendous good will and

interests of the many stakeholders impacted by homelessness (homeless persons, residents, the business community, social service providers, etc.), while also leading disciplined, system change efforts. Measurably reducing homelessness is one piece of a broader, City Council approved, set of priorities to advance the economic, social and cultural development in the City.

The Steering Committee membership demonstrates the collaboration of a broad array of stakeholders (Attachment 4). The place-based, innovative aspects of this work include a By-Name-List of homeless persons in our community; real time data derived from the NH Homeless Management Information System (Attachment 5); use of the *Model for Improvement* (Attachment 6) to guide rapid testing of system change ideas; and regular Collaborative Learning events using an “all teach, all learn” approach. The Collaborative Learning will include both subject matter knowledge (e.g., voucher types, trauma-informed care, etc.) with improvement skills (e.g. testing changes, team collaboration, measuring outcomes, etc.). The Steering Committee intends to engage the community broadly with a process of stakeholder listening sessions. This work will elicit the values and interests for reducing homelessness and will be led by a dedicated workgroup.

The long-term value of this project will be: 1) relief of hardship among our unhoused residents; 2) optimization of existing community resources to prevent and resolve homelessness; 3) a governance framework for ongoing reductions in homelessness; and 4) documentation and translation of lessons learned from a broad community collaboration around a powerful shared aim for adaptation by other NH communities.

## **Discussion**

Currently, homeless service providers collaborate actively through direct provider-to-provider communication and a monthly front-line Provider Network meeting hosted by the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness. Nonetheless, many portions of the system are opaque, confusing and difficult to navigate. Limited training opportunities and high staff turnover make the work of dedicated providers more difficult. Clarifying and simplifying complex processes, while building expertise in trauma-informed case management, will better serve both homeless persons and providers.

The leadership coordination and project management capacity of the Steering Committee will accelerate the work of measurably reducing homelessness. To secure long-term, sustainable funding, we will document the savings and value creation attributable to the enhanced collaboration and resource optimization. The Steering Committee believes this value proposition will win the ongoing support of city, county and state government; healthcare providers; and not for profit organizations. The Steering Committee is currently identifying funds for Year 1, and plans for CDFR Capacity Building funds to support this work in Years 2 and 3.

These resources will allow the Steering Committee to demonstrate the effectiveness of community-wide collaboration with real time data coupled with a systems improvement approach. Project success will be measured by the number of people housed, the number of housing units identified and matched, the value of contributions or savings through resource optimization, and the number of homeless veterans remaining.