

green
town

GreenTown Rockford

November 12 | Embassy Suites Rockford Riverfront

Housing and Health

Safe housing as a
Prerequisite for healthy
communities

Caitlyn Baylor, Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity



What is affordable housing?

- ✓ < 30% OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME SHOULD GO TOWARD HOUSING
- ✓ LEAVES MONEY FOR HEALTHY FOOD, HEALTH CARE, WELLNESS ACTIVITIES, ETC
- ✓ FREE MONEYHIGHER-COST ITEMS THAT ARE SUSTAINABLY PRODUCED



Housing and physical health

“Housing can act like a vaccine to provide multiple long-lasting benefits.”

-Dr. Megan Sandel of Boston University

- Mold and dampness → asthma
- Instability of multiple moves → obesity and diabetes
- Lead → Inhibited brain development



Housing and mental health

Inadequate housing and unsafe neighborhoods lead to:

- Increased behavior disorders
- Increased anxiety, depression
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (ie; trauma)
- Psychological impact of Insecure housing tenure

What COVID laid bare

- Overcrowded housing
- Accessibility of healthcare
- Compounded inequities



Coexisting crises: housing and climate



Redlining and
neighborhood
temperature



Access to energy
efficient housing

Testimonials from Habitat Homeowners

“We are stable now. We are not moving from place to place, always keeping half of our stuff in boxes. My son no longer has asthma attacks from mold and dirty carpets... My daughter is more active, playing outside more.”

- 72% of surveyed Habitat homeowners reported a decrease in illnesses like asthma and allergies in their children since moving into their Habitat homes.
- Rebecca and Amber testimonial
- Accessibility testimonials

We cannot have safe, healthy communities
without safe, healthy housing

Caitlyn Baylor
Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity
Homeowners Services Director
Caitlynbaylor@RockfordHabitat.org
815-636-4573



Thank you!

Homelessness and Health



Angie Walker, City of Rockford Health & Human Services Dept.

Health in the homeless community

Health and homelessness are inextricably linked. Health problems can cause a person's homelessness as well as be exacerbated by the experience.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, people living in shelters are more than twice as likely to have a disability compared to the general population. On a given night in 2017, 20 percent of the homeless population reported having a serious mental illness, 16 percent conditions related to chronic substance abuse, and more than 10,000 people had HIV/AIDS.

Conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS are found at high rates among the homeless population, sometimes three to six times higher than that of the general population.

Homelessness is a public health crisis.



What does our local homeless population look like?

72.2% of the homeless population is Adult only households (singles or adult couples)

12.6% of the homeless populations are families with children

8.6% of the homeless population are youth (17-24 year old) singles, pregnant or parenting

4.6% of the homeless population are veterans (mostly waiting to find units for VASH)

2% of the homeless population are chronically homeless (homeless more than 12 months or 4 episodes in 3 years & a diagnosed disability)

51.30% identify as male

48.70% identify as female

49% report to having a diagnosed mental health disability

15% report to having other diagnosed disability (or a dual diagnosis)

19% report that they are currently fleeing from a domestic violence situation, many more are survivors from past episodes of violence.

So why should we house the homeless?

1. We feel that housing is a human right.
2. As discussed, housed people have better health outcomes
3. As shown by using the Housing First model, people who are housed are better able to work on other issues and barriers—including medical care, sobriety, working on interpersonal relationship, getting employment, etc.
4. Research shows that the cost of being homeless exceeds the cost of helping people obtain housing.



How much does homelessness cost tax payers?

- People struggling with homelessness are often frequent users of emergency departments. On average, they visit the emergency room five times per year. The highest users of emergency departments visit weekly. Each visit costs \$3,700; that's \$18,500 spent per year for the average person and \$44,400 spent per year for the highest users of emergency departments.
- People struggling with homelessness spend, on average, 3 nights per visit in the hospital which can cost over \$9,000. (greendoors.org)
- In Winnebago County:
 - the average cost of 1 night in jail is \$71/night, making a monthly cost of \$2,130 (WCSD)
 - The average cost of 1 ambulance ride (with non-life saving measures) is about \$500 (RFD)

Fair market rent on a 1 bedroom apartment in Rockford is \$606.



Housing Affordability and Homelessness

The nation is currently facing one of the most severe affordable housing crises in history. Not surprisingly, those living in poverty are the most significantly affected. Today, 8 million extremely low-income households pay at least half of their income toward housing, putting them at risk of housing instability and homelessness.

The Solution to Homelessness: Housing

The solution to homelessness is straightforward: housing. By connecting people experiencing homelessness to housing and services, they have a platform from which they can address other areas that may have contributed to their homelessness — such as employment, health, and substance abuse.

Homeless Assistance Programs:

- **Permanent supportive housing**
- **Rapid re-housing**
- **Public Housing and Voucher Programs** (While both PH vouchers are proven to end homelessness, only one in four households that are eligible for such assistance receive it due to lack of funding.)

Tackling the Affordable Housing Crisis

In many places across America, there is simply not enough available affordable housing. Without this housing stock, many homeless Americans are likely to continue to cycle in and out of homelessness.

Progress & goals around ending homelessness in Rockford.

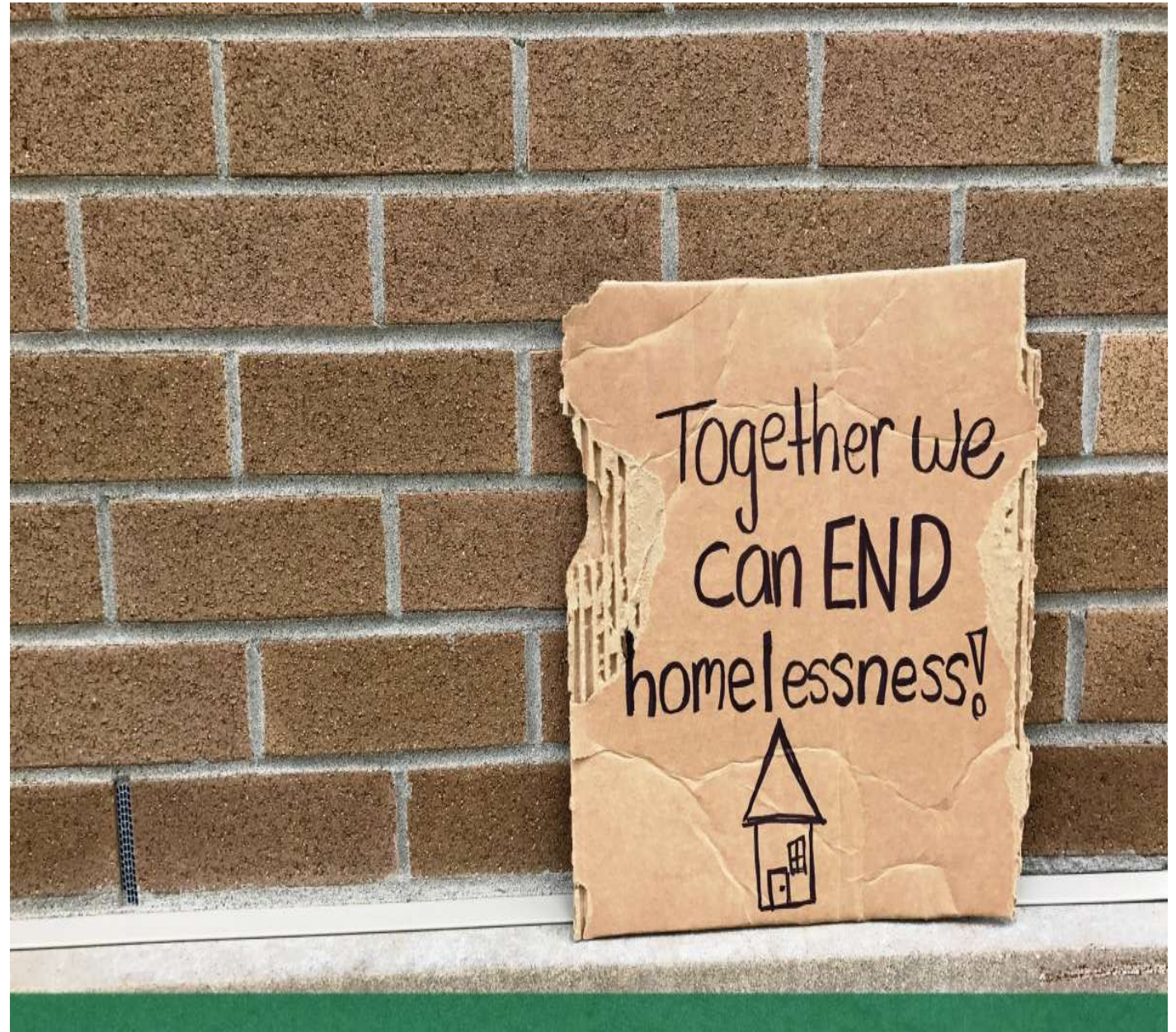
- ❖ Rockford is 1 of 3 communities in the United States that have been confirmed as reaching “functional zero” in 2 populations (veterans and chronically homeless)—meaning that we have the ability to place more people in those populations in housing than we have entering the homeless system (placements are greater than inflow). About 15 communities have reached functional zero in one population.
- ❖ Rockford is a test community for federal partners at Built for Zero (a federal initiative to end homelessness that we have been part of since 2015)—we are the first to try out the new federal definitions around ending ALL HOMELESSNESS. We are just now beginning the work to start using these definitions
 - ❖ Definitions will look at returns to homelessness, time it takes to get people housed when they enter the system (45 days is the new goal), and that services are being offered in a racially equitable way.
- ❖ **Services are provided in conjunction with our partners in the Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition**

Thank you for coming!

For any questions, please contact me.

Angie Walker
Homeless Program Coordinator
City of Rockford Human Services Department

Angie.walker@rockfordil.gov



green
town

GreenTown Rockford

November 12 | Embassy Suites Rockford Riverfront