



Redefining the Path Home

SYSTEM BUILDING FOR HOUSING STABILITY IN KENT COUNTY

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“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.”

– Desmond Tutu

Dear Kent County Community Partners,

On behalf of the Housing Stability Alliance, we are pleased to present you with this community plan for addressing housing insecurity in Kent County. This initiative is the response to an urgent call from passionate community members seeking better outcomes for children and families. It is the culmination of thousands of hours of collaborative work, completed over more than two years, by nearly 220 cross-sector partners who represent more than 130 public and private sector, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations. With our local Collective Impact organization — KConnect — serving as support, these courageous partners created this document which is intended to serve as the beginning of a movement that will continue forward as we work together to “Redefine the Path Home”.

This Common Agenda and Roadmap captures a shared vision to advance housing stability, and rests on a framework that includes the full spectrum of housing, from “No Housing” to “Housed by Choice”. The plan squarely confronts the root causes of housing instability, including systemic racism. It is built upon rigorous data analysis, thoughtful community reflection, meaningful input from those with lived experience, and a commitment to dissolving systemic inequities. Perhaps most importantly, this plan builds on the creativity, impressive pilot programs, best practice, and stellar talent that already exists in our community. Its components include a blueprint for Equity and Community Engagement, High-Leverage Activities, a Shared Measurement System, Continuous Communications, and a Backbone entity that we believe is central to a new way forward.

A staggering number of our neighbors are homeless, constantly moving from place to place. Without a dramatic redesign, they will never be able to afford a home of their own choosing. It is time for us to go “upstream,” acknowledge policies that are deeply rooted in racial bias, encourage balanced investment, and accelerate the meaningful change we know is possible. We invite you to join us on this journey as we all have a role in the problem and in its solutions. We look forward to working together with you for a stronger Kent County.



Mayor Rosalynn Bliss
City of Grand Rapids



Mandy Bolter
*Chair, Kent County
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Thank you to all our partners who have made this movement possible.

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Thank you to everyone who went to Housing Stability Alliance meetings, worked on an Action Team, attended our Housing Accountability Partners Council, or participated in any of the work leading up to the release of this Common Agenda and Roadmap.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Housing instability is a long-standing problem in Kent County. To combat this issue, numerous cross-sector stakeholders in the community came together for nearly two years to create a Common Agenda and Roadmap for housing stability. This process was facilitated by KConnect, Kent County's backbone organization for the community's Collective Impact initiative. The energy and momentum behind this process turned it into a genuine movement with the creation of the Housing Stability Alliance, a network that has a clear commitment to addressing systemic issues in housing stability, racial and ethnic disparities, and barriers to cohesive collaboration. **The mission of the Alliance is “to increase access to affordable housing and decrease homelessness for families, children, and youth, with an intentional focus on eliminating racial disparities in Kent County”.**

This document contains a “Current State Analysis” that identifies and defines major components of the housing system in Kent County. Major findings include the alarming disparities related to housing stability, especially in regard to the disproportional rates of homelessness for African American residents; the exponential rise in housing prices over recent years; the understanding that the current system in Kent County is built upon a history of systemic racism and lack of input from those with lived experience; and the lack of a common language to describe the many elements of the community's housing system. In order to have a common foundation from which housing stakeholders can work, the Alliance created the Housing Stability Spectrum, which identifies each possible housing situation in Kent County and provides shared language for the network to use in relation to these situations.

Based on the data, findings, and its vision and mission, the Alliance developed a Roadmap of strategies and actions that will be operationalized in the next phase of work to promote housing stability in Kent County. The Roadmap includes plans around Equity and Community Engagement, High-Leverage Activities, a Shared Measurement System, Continuous Communication, and a Backbone Entity. This structure follows a proven Collective Impact model that is designed to solve complex social problems.

The **Equity and Community Engagement Plan** outlines the key components to cultivating a more equitable housing system that integrates the voices of those with lived experience in housing instability. A major factor in this is utilizing an Appreciative Inquiry Model to promote positive organizational change. The **High-Leverage Activities** section identifies four main areas of focus for strategy development. The **Shared Measurement System** provides an infrastructure of Universal Goals, Success Measures, and Indicators by which the housing system can measure its progress toward stability and equity. The **Continuous Communication Plan** identifies an overall purpose, key messaging, and target audiences for communication between Alliance members and the wider community. Finally, the **Backbone Entity & Governance** section explains the interim plan for facilitating this work as the Alliance works to intentionally develop a Backbone entity that will effectively coordinate the many elements of the housing system in Kent County in order to align activities and maximize impact.

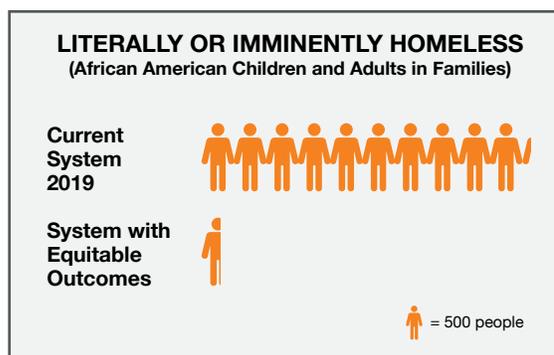
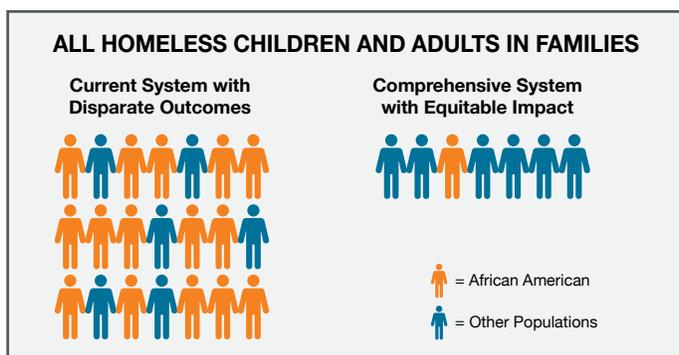
A Glossary of Terms in Appendix A contains terms and definitions for commonly used language found in this report.

THE COMMON AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

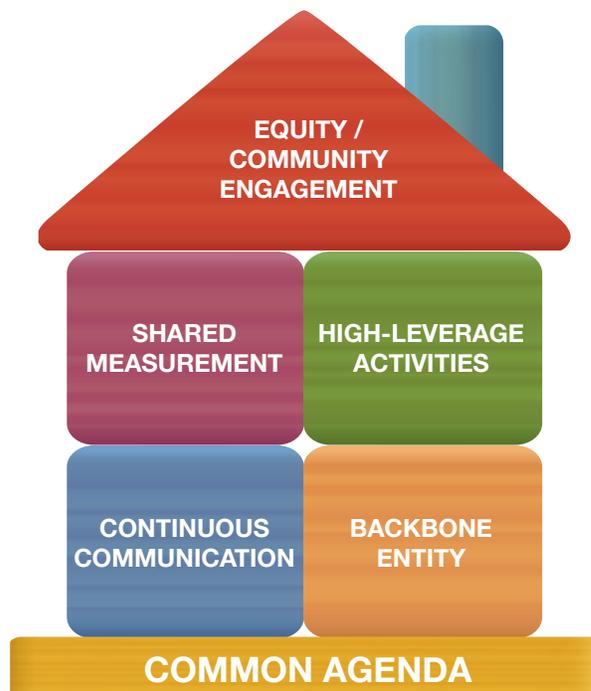
The number of people in the homeless system grew by 37% in Kent County over the last three years,¹ and the increase was driven by families with children. Exacerbating this economic vulnerability are sharp breaks in the data along the lines of race and ethnicity. In 2019, nearly one in six African American children in Kent County accessed the homeless system compared with one in 130 White children.²

If Kent County could trade its homeless system for a comprehensive housing system, and its disparate outcomes for equitable impact, the overall number of children and adults in families accessing the homeless system would be cut by over two-thirds.³ If the proportion of African American children and adults in families accessing the homeless system in a year were equal to the proportion of African American residents in the overall Kent County population, there would be 271 residents who were literally or imminently homeless compared to the 5,084 last year. If that were the case, the overall number of people accessing the entire homeless system in Kent County per year would drop by 41%. Behind these data are real families in our community and the facts underscore one point: *we must act.*



This document is not a standard report and it is not a static plan. It is a vision and the start of a movement in Kent County. This movement, known as the Housing Stability Alliance (Alliance), aims to do something unprecedented - ensure housing stability for all Kent County residents, especially for families of color. Generations of racism and injustice coupled with increasing housing prices and low wages helped get us here. Rewiring existing systems, establishing new relationships, and dismantling policies that produce these adverse outcomes will help lead us out.

Through a proven Collective Impact model, the Alliance seeks to bridge the gaps in current community-based systems so that going forward they function together to serve the full continuum of Kent County residents from those who have no home at all to those who are Housed by Choice.



¹ 2017-2019 Annual Homeless Count data from HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) run by MCAH, provided by CoC. Includes Cat 1 & Cat 2.

² KConnect Analysis (2019). 2018 Annual Homeless Count data, Homeless Management Information System and 2017 American Community Survey data.

³ 2019 Annual Homeless Count data from HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) run by MCAH, provided by CoC. Includes Cat 1 & Cat 2.

VISION

Co-created by nearly 220 individuals and over 130 organizations, the Alliance pulls together cross sector partners with a shared vision of safe and stable housing for all residents in Kent County. Its purpose is to:

- (1) Increase access to quality affordable housing;
- (2) Dissolve homelessness in Kent County;
- (3) Focus on eliminating racial disparities among families, children, and youth, and;
- (4) Address data-driven priorities.

MISSION

The mission of the Alliance is to increase access to affordable housing and decrease homelessness for families, children, and youth, with an intentional focus on eliminating racial disparities in Kent County.

This movement:

- Empowers lived experience at decision-making tables (Equity and Community Engagement Plan).
- Establishes shared, agreed upon community metrics that measure housing stability improvement (Shared Measurement).
- Establishes meaningful activities that aim to dissolve housing instability in Kent County (High-Leverage Activities).
- Identifies an entity to continue this system change work as KConnect concludes its engagement (Backbone Entity).
- Organizes and illuminates the housing system in Kent County and creates common language and definitions. It utilizes those definitions and language to communicate across the network and to the community, stakeholders, and leaders (Continuous Communication).

Together, these components create a new way forward – a “Housing Common Agenda and Roadmap” for the Alliance and anyone who shares our unwavering commitment to create housing capacity, dissolve homelessness, and ensure housing stability for all.

COLLABORATION AND SOCIAL DISTANCE

In March 2020, as the Housing Stability Alliance began the final few months of its work, the COVID-19 crisis took hold in Michigan. The virus rapidly spread, as did a set of unique challenges. This emerging network built on teamwork and collaboration had to adapt to convening in a virtual format. In addition, the demands of the public health emergency weighed on each and every partner as they swiftly shifted their service delivery to respond to emerging needs. Nonetheless, the commitment to this work remained.

Alliance members’ ability to continue their jobs from home only served to emphasize the urgency of the work. For our neighbors that rely on disappearing hourly or tipped wages, their living situations in doubled up, overcrowded, or unsafe conditions were abruptly made even more tenuous. Rather than pause or delay the progress, the Alliance reaffirmed its goal to finalize a Common Agenda and Roadmap by June 2020. A key aspect of this steadfast commitment arose from the racial and ethnic disparities present in our community that were made even more glaring by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, where Black and Latinx individuals have been disproportionately affected. This crisis made it even more clear that an equitable system and infrastructure in housing is absolutely necessary, so that crises do not have the effect of rapidly exacerbating inequality. Despite the extreme challenges the pandemic has brought, the Alliance worked diligently to continue the energy and momentum for this movement and is more committed than ever to advancing housing stability in Kent County.

HISTORY

The beginning of the Housing Stability Alliance marks the end of a two-year engagement from KConnect that started when a group of concerned community leaders wrote to say there was a crisis in the community related to increasing family homelessness, it was adversely affecting Black and Brown families, and that our current systems were not geared towards adequately addressing it. They asked KConnect to come into a space fraught with dysfunctional relationships, organizational turf wars, and little transparency to provide neutral facilitation and move the system in the right direction (see Appendix B for letter and Appendix C for KConnect's response).

KConnect agreed to step into a Backbone role to raise funds, convene community-based teams, illuminate disparities, bring the voice of lived experience to the table, and elevate the conversation of family homelessness to community leaders, the business community, philanthropic partners, and the general public.

A Design Team was convened and supported by those with lived experience (Context Team), experts in housing and homelessness (Content Team), researchers (Scout Team), and communication specialists (Communications Team). Through a 12-month "Phase I" of the work, the Design Team focused on analyzing the current housing system, identifying gaps and needs, and defining critical system infrastructure. A number of valuable findings were gathered through this process and are described further on in the "Current State Analysis."

With a better understanding of the challenges, a "Phase I" was launched in order to create a framework for future system building that helps not only addresses homelessness, but dissolves racial and ethnic inequities with intentionality, while advancing housing stability. It was decided that a housing Common Agenda and Roadmap were needed to achieve this goal, defined by a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem, and a joint approach to solving it.

In December 2019, the movement reorganized as the Housing Stability Alliance. The new organization included members from the first phase of work – the Design, Content, Context, Scout, and Communications Teams – as well as a new cross-sector of stakeholders. **CivicLab**, a national institute dedicated to advancing the practice of civic and community collaboration, was brought into the work to train the Alliance on the critical elements of systems change. KConnect created a public, private, and philanthropic chair leadership team that includes:

- Mayor Rosalynn Bliss, *City of Grand Rapids*
- Mandy Bolter, *Chair, Kent County Commission*
- Lynne Ferrell, *Program Director, Frey Foundation*
- Christina Keller, *President and CEO, Cascade Engineering*



KConnect also brought in the **Urban League of West Michigan** and the **Hispanic Center of Western Michigan** to bridge the gap between system builders and residents, meaningfully integrate the voice of lived experience during the design process, and design an Equity and Community Engagement Plan that would empower those with lived experience in the future system. Lastly, KConnect invited Eureka People from the **Eureka Group** as facilitator for the final six months of the planning phase. *For a complete listing of teams and participants across both phases of the work, see Appendix D.*

In January 2020, the Alliance formed Action Teams around key components of the Common Agenda and Roadmap. The teams developed content outside of the monthly Housing Stability Alliance meetings and brought it back to the larger group every month for affirmation and feedback. The product of this collaborative work is reflected in the plans below to formalize the Housing Stability Alliance with:

- An **Equity & Community Engagement Plan** that will empower lived experience in the future system.
- A **Backbone Entity** that will continue in the support role KConnect has occupied during the two planning phases.
- A **Shared Measurement System** of vetted, agreed upon metrics that will illuminate where different populations in Kent County are situated within the Housing Stability Spectrum and track progress toward greater overall housing stability.
- Significant **High-Leverage Activities** that can be immediately lifted by the Alliance to address the root causes of housing instability, and
- A **Communication Plan** to communicate progress and challenges across the Alliance and out to leaders and the broader community.

These are not separate, siloed plans. They work together to mutually reinforce the work of the Alliance to achieve its vision and purpose. As the house graphic (page 6) shows, each element is needed for a complete structure. Collective Impact depends on coordination and alignment. The next phase of the work calls for a permanent Backbone entity to facilitate the collaboration necessary to achieve this, while operationalizing the components of the Common Agenda and Roadmap and moving the Alliance forward.



CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS

FINDINGS

In Phase I of the work, the Design Team analyzed local data, gathered information from housing providers, listened to the experiences of those in the homeless system, and assessed overarching gaps and challenges. Through structured facilitation that helped members to process and organize the information, **Team members identified nine findings of the current housing system in Kent County:**

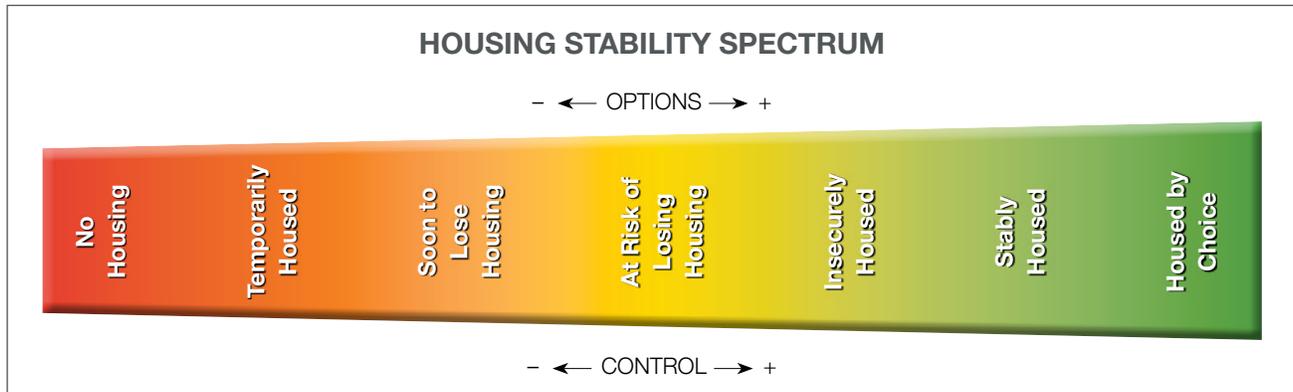
1. The system lacks common purpose, language, and shared perspective of the whole.
2. There are gaps in understanding about system capacity, resources, and community needs.
3. There is system stagnation due to a culture of perfection.
4. System information is not flowing to the community.
5. There is ineffective analysis of system information.
6. While there is an abundance of organizational creativity and innovation, there is a lack of system creativity and innovation.
7. Organizations are not effectively collaborating.
8. The system is not driven by lived experience experts and is instead influenced by a select group of stakeholders with power.
9. The system holds extreme racial disparities.

This led to discussion and exploration of the causes behind these findings. Additional work by the Design Team led to the identification of **nine systemic root causes** that all contribute to the housing instability and inequity currently present in Kent County:

1. Belief that homelessness is an individual problem rather than a systemic problem.
2. The system is based on scarcity, not prevention. Resource constraints lead to crisis mode/triage system management.
3. The model and process are not customer centric.
4. The system lacks a cohesive housing strategy across the spectrum.
5. The system lacks a common goal, philosophy, narrative, language, and alignment among stakeholders.
6. Racist policies and practices combined with cultural racism lead to inequities in the housing and homeless system.
7. Strategies and responses to homelessness are divorced from larger economic forces.
8. Historical and systematic racism and generational poverty are the root causes of the overrepresentation of people of color in crisis.
9. The system is largely disconnected from other systems such as education, foster care, health care, and juvenile justice.

SHARED DEFINITIONS

Based on these findings and root causes, the teams created common language that was designed to be accessible to all as a first step in achieving a cohesive strategy. One of the most significant deliverables from this work is the development of the “Housing Stability Spectrum” to describe housing situations experienced by all residents of Kent County.



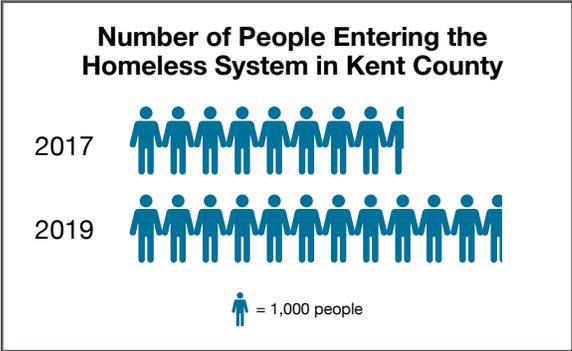
The Housing Stability Spectrum importantly illustrates the continuum from “No Housing” to “Housed by Choice” where options and control increase as one moves to the right and decrease as one moves to the left. This spectrum anchors systems across each component, helping to ensure that planning efforts and strategy development is inclusive of the entire continuum, as each housing situation is interrelated to the others and therefore best served by a holistic approach. Perhaps as vital as the meaningful illustration of the interdependence inherent in the Housing Stability Spectrum is the collective awareness that no existing community-based organization is designed to work across the entirety of the continuum on behalf of all Kent County residents.

Definitions for each situation include:

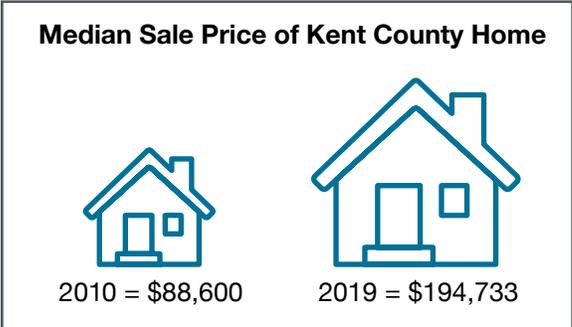
- **No Housing:** Families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- **Temporarily Housed:** Families who are forced into double occupancy, or living in motels/hotels, campsites, and other shelters.
- **Soon to Lose Housing:** Families who will lose their housing in the next 14 days.
- **At-Risk of Losing Housing:** Families who have identified risks, such as late bills, rent, and family illness and are therefore at risk of losing housing in the next six months.
- **Insecurely Housed:** Families whose housing costs exceed 30% of their household income and/or are one crisis away from not being able to pay for housing.
- **Stably Housed:** Families whose housing costs do not exceed 30% of household income and are not living paycheck to paycheck but would move if they could.
- **Housed by Choice:** Families or individuals who have affordable, safe, and long-term housing of their choosing.

KENT COUNTY HOUSING DATA

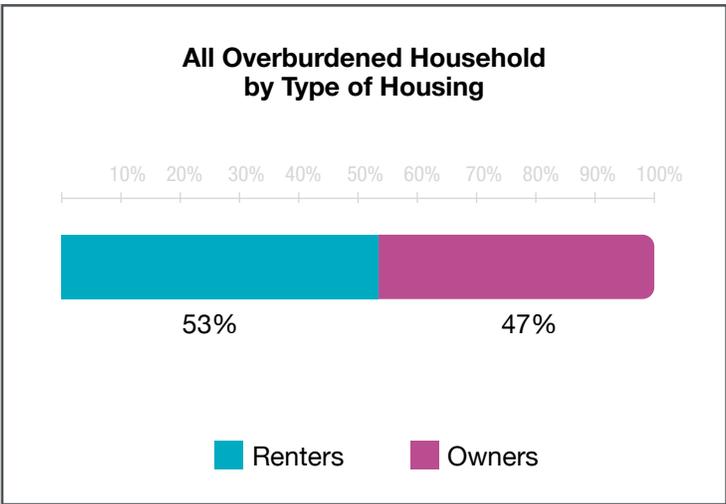
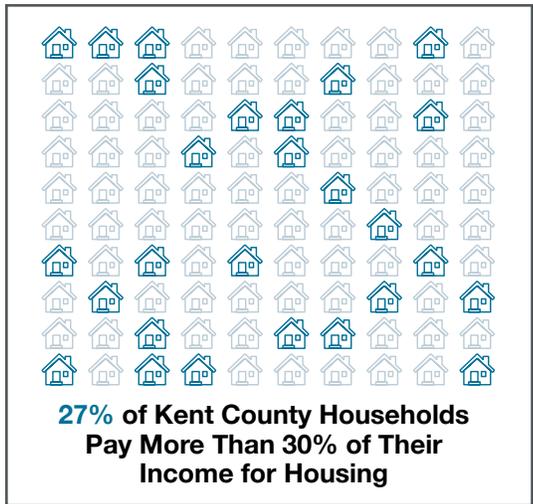
The tight housing market, increasing prices, and the lack of affordable housing options in Kent County may be playing a significant role in the increased demand for the homeless system. In 2019, 11,760 people entered the system, were screened and assessed, and found to be Literally Homeless (77%) or Imminently Homeless (23%). This is 3,190 more people than in 2017 and 1,222 more people than in 2018.



There are very few units available at both the rental and ownership levels. **Over the last ten years, the median sale price of homes in Kent County have increased by 120%.⁴** The increased demand for housing in Kent County combined with a lack of units has caused prices to rise, putting additional pressure on ALICE households (Asset-Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). There are tens of thousands of households that are paying too much of their monthly income to housing costs.

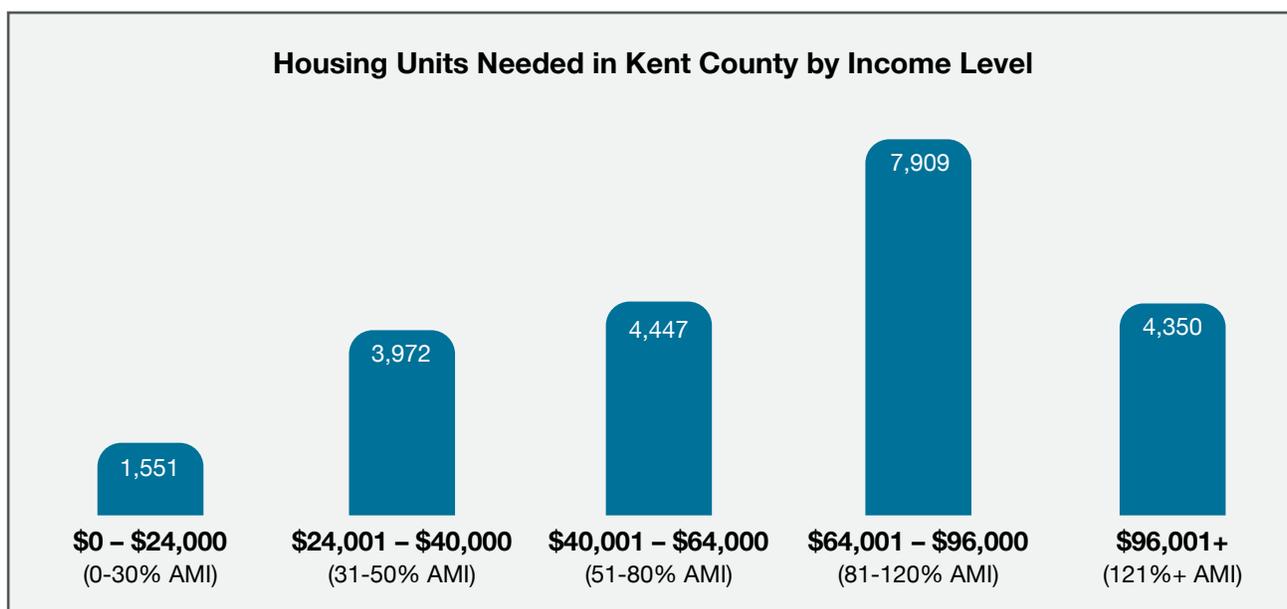


A new study on housing need in Grand Rapids and Kent County by Bowen National Research⁵ found that of the county's approximately 237,000 households, about 63,000 (or 27%) households are cost overburdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of their income to housing costs.⁶ The Bowen Study also found that about 40% of the cost overburdened homes are in the City of Grand Rapids, while the remaining 60% of the households in the rest of Kent County. Additionally, it found that just over half of total cost overburdened households are renters (53%) and just under half (47%) are homeowners.



⁴ Median Sale Price of Home, Kent County, Zillow Analytics, 2010 - 2019, Median monthly price of each year displayed.
⁵ Please note that the Bowen study is currently draft and final data could change during the finalization process.
⁶ Draft: Grand Rapids/Kent County, Michigan Housing Needs Assessment, Bowen National Research, May 29, 2020.

The Bowen study estimates that Kent County needs over 22,000 units of housing over the next five years to start to relieve some of the pressure on the housing market and provide more housing options at different price points.⁷ Of those units, about 10,000 need to come online for residents at 0-80% area median income or between household income levels of \$0 to \$64,000 annually.⁸ Even in this case it would mean that 24,000 households would still be at-risk of being displaced over the next 5 years, and it would leave another 17,000 households cost overburdened. Additionally, it is theorized by Housing Next, a local initiative assessing housing affordability in the region, that if Kent County had more housing options for higher income residents (market levels) it would alleviate pressure and demand on existing housing stock at lower price points.⁹ Bowen’s analysis did identify the need for more than 12,000 units of new, market rate housing for households at 80% area median income (AMI) and above (\$64,000+).¹⁰



Children and adults in families are the majority of people accessing the existing homeless system, and they fueled the majority of the increase in demand from 2017 to 2019. In fact, there were 7,055 children and adults in families who accessed the homeless system in 2019, comprising 60% of the total. Sixty-five percent of that increase came from 2,066 more children and adults in families coming into the system in 2019 than in 2017.

⁷ Please note that Bowen’s estimates do not alleviate all of the cost-overburdened households in the county. If 22,000 new units of housing were brought online in Kent County over the next 5 years, there would still be tens of thousands of units of Kent County residents still in cost overburdened households.

⁸ Grand Rapids/Kent County, Michigan Housing Needs Assessment, Bowen National Research, May 29, 2020.

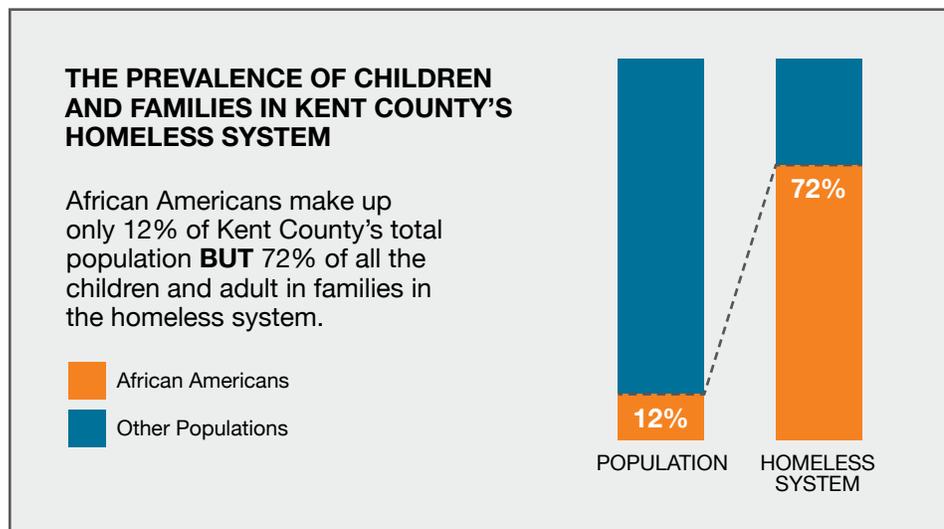
⁹ Conversation with Ryan Kilpatrick, Housing Next 6.15.2020.

¹⁰ Grand Rapids/Kent County, Michigan Housing Needs Assessment, Bowen National Research, May 29, 2020.

THE OVERREPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES IN KENT COUNTY'S HOMELESS SYSTEM

African Americans in Kent County are overrepresented in the Kent County homeless system. In 2019, 7,472 African Americans accessed the homeless system, meaning that 64% of all people coming into the homeless system were Black.¹¹ According to the American Community Survey, there are an estimated 78,912 African Americans in Kent County who identify as Black alone or in combination with one or more races or about 12% of the county's 653,786 total population.¹² **This means that one in every 11 African American residents in Kent County accessed the homeless system at some point during 2019.**¹³

The majority of African Americans accessing the homeless system are children and adults in families. Of the 7,472 African Americans in the homeless system in 2019, 68% (5,084) were children and adults in families.¹⁴ Further, of the 7,055 children and adults in families in the homeless system, 72% (5,084) were African American children and adults in families.¹⁵ This means that **while African American residents of Kent County comprise about 12% of the total population, African American children and adults in families represent 72% of the children and adults in families in the homeless system.** Specifically, African American children and adults in families disproportionately comprised nearly half of the increase in people accessing the system. Between 2017 and 2019 the number of people accessing the system grew by 3,190, and 49% of that increase came from the 1,548 more African American children and adults in families that were in the system than in 2017.



If Kent County had a housing system with equitable outcomes where the proportion of African American children and adults in families accessing the homeless system in a year was equal to the proportion of African American residents in the overall Kent County population, there would only be 271 residents compared to the 5,084 last year. If that were the case, the overall number of children and adults in families accessing the system would be cut by over two-thirds. Furthermore, the overall number of people accessing the entire homeless system in Kent County per year would drop by 41%.

¹¹ Grand Rapids/Kent County, Michigan Housing Needs Assessment, Bowen National Research, May 29, 2020.

¹² Black or African American Alone or in combination with one or more races, American Community Survey, 2018, 1 Year Estimates, Table B02009.

¹³ Please note that last year this was estimated to be 1 in 9 African Americans in Kent County. The 2019 statistics did not improve because there was a reduction in the number of African Americans accessing the homeless system. In fact, between 2018 and 2019 there was an increase of 641 African Americans accessing the homeless system. It was because the census bureau released better information on race/ethnicity that for the first time includes Black or African American *alone or in combination with one or more other races*. Previously it was only Black Alone.

¹⁴ 2019 Annual Homeless Count data from HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) run by MCAH, provided by CoC. Includes Cat 1 and Cat 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid*

CURRENT STATE MAP: FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN KENT COUNTY



In 2019, 5,084 African American children and adults in families accessed the homeless system in Kent County. If there was an equitable housing system in the county and the homeless system demographics mirrored the county's, there would be only 271.

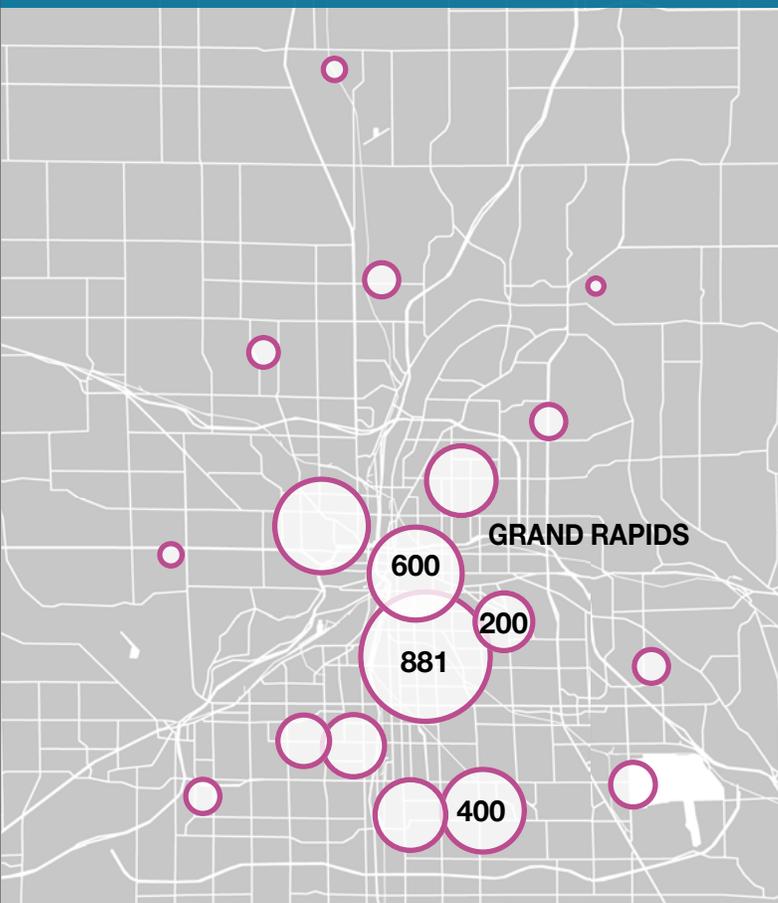
If that were the case, the overall number of children and families accessing the system would be cut by over two-thirds. **Kent County's family homeless system is over-represented by 4,813 African American children and adults in families.**

1 IN 6

African American children in Kent County were in the homeless system in 2019, compared to 1 in 130 White children



LOCATION OF CHILDREN COMING INTO THE HOMELESS SYSTEM, 2019



For more information on the data methodology, please visit bit.ly/HousingDataKConnect

37% increase in people in the homeless system since 2017



Nearly two-thirds of that increase are children and adults in families

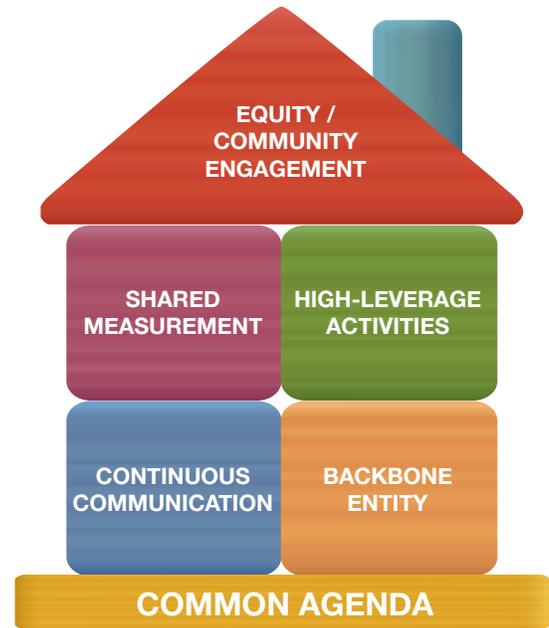


Nearly half of the overall increase are African American children and adults in families



THE ROADMAP

Based on the data, findings, and shared vision and mission (Common Agenda), the Alliance developed a Roadmap of strategies and actions that will be operationalized in the next phase of work to promote housing stability in Kent County. **The Roadmap includes plans around Equity and Community Engagement, a Shared Measurement System, High-Leverage Activities, Continuous Communication, and a Backbone entity.**



EQUITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Although **Equity and Community Engagement** is displayed at the peak of the Common Agenda graphic, **it is important to note that the goal and intent of this work is that it is embedded throughout.** It is not an afterthought or a side project – it is the work. An outcry against inequitable and racialized outcomes, with the leadership of the Urban League of West Michigan (ULWM) and other housing organizations, began this initiative two years ago. It must remain the focus of this work. *(See Appendix B for original letter.)*

In order to center this work in Equity and Community Engagement, the Alliance partnered with ULWM and the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan (HCWM) to create a plan to empower lived experience in the future system. These organizations are trusted, community-based entities that can serve as intermediaries between the system and the community in order to lift up the voice of residents and bring them to the decision-making tables. ULWM and HCWM have years of collective knowledge and experience with community and sought to learn more about housing through a series of listening sessions with residents, as well as reviewing research-based best practices. **The result is an Equity and Community Engagement Plan designed to build a framework for how to move those most affected by housing instability into decision-making power within the system.** The plan builds off KConnect’s Community Engagement Spectrum that was created by the Community Engagement Workgroup in 2016. In it empowerment is defined as “giving community members sole decision-making authority over new programs or services and allowing professionals to serve only in consultative and supportive roles.” *More information on the KConnect Community Engagement Spectrum and compensation structure that was used can be found in Appendix E.*

SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

INFORMING	CONSULTING	INVOLVING	COLLABORATING	EMPOWERING
Providing balanced and objective information about new programs or services, and about the reasons for choosing them.	Inviting feedback on alternatives, analyses, and decisions related to new programs or services. Letting people know how their feedback has influenced program decisions.	Working with community members to ensure their aspirations and concerns are considered at every stage of planning and decision making. Letting people know how their involvement has influenced program decisions.	Enabling community members to participate in every aspect of planning and decision making for new programs or services.	Giving community members sole decision-making authority over new programs or services and allowing professionals to serve only in consultative and supportive roles.

To move this work forward, the Equity and Community Engagement Action Team has identified five areas that should be targeted in order to promote a more equitable housing system.

- 1. In the near-term, direct Kent County CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act funding to on-the-ground organizations working with residents on housing issues.** In the long-term, concentrate efforts on policy advocacy to secure greater funding for community-based organizations that can empower resident voice.
- 2. Hire community coordinators, who are members of the directly impacted communities, to be situated in every housing organization.** Community coordinators should have separate focuses that correspond to each housing situation on the spectrum so that the full spectrum of housing issues in Kent County are addressed. Community coordinators will work directly with residents to address housing issues. These positions should make a living wage (\$37,000 - \$40,000/year) and have real decision-making power within their organization.
- 3. Utilize the Appreciative Inquiry Model to create a training structure for community coordinators to build capacity to authentically and effectively engage with residents.** The Appreciative Inquiry Model has a strong research base for promoting positive organizational change. The training model should also be used within housing organizations so that staff members build capacity for stronger, more asset-focused communications amongst themselves. *More information on the Appreciative Inquiry model can be found in Appendix F.*
- 4. Ensure ongoing, meaningful implicit bias training for all stakeholders within the housing ecosystem.** Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Because we live in a society with pervasive prejudice and systemic racism, we all carry implicit bias in regard to race. Implicit bias training is meant to expose people to their unconscious biases, provide tools to adjust automatic patterns of thinking, and ultimately eliminate discriminatory behaviors.
- 5. Create a better and more thorough understanding of an individual's housing situation by using a common intake form that includes detailed questions related to housing and homelessness.** The intake form also includes several other items to gather a comprehensive profile of a resident's needs, in order to more effectively connect them to resources. A common intake form will lead to a more streamlined process in supporting and referring children and families experiencing housing instability.

These focus areas are meant to address many of the current pitfalls of the housing system. We need more staff members in housing organizations dedicated to community engagement. We need meaningful training on how to interact with one another in a way that promotes understanding and empathy. We need to unlearn our implicit biases that work to advance racial inequities. We need to center the experience of those living with housing instability to create more efficient and effective processes, not only to achieve the outcomes we want, but to make sure we honor the value and dignity of every individual seeking assistance from a system that is supposed to help them. In short, we need to do better, and this framework offers a starting point from which to build a more equitable system, and ultimately, community. This plan sets the needed foundation for future work, but equity and community engagement require constant and continuous improvement.

Digging into equity work via Collective Impact is messy and imperfect, while the goal of system change is bold and brave. We need to acknowledge the wins and mistakes along the way. The Housing Stability Alliance must acknowledge that it is still learning how to operate in ways that center the voice of those with lived experience, and the design of the Common Agenda and Roadmap should be viewed with an eye to see where this can be better reflected.

HIGH-LEVERAGE ACTIVITIES

The purpose of High-Leverage Activities is to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the resources, funding, relationships, and time available in order to produce the greatest results. The Alliance identified a set of four core High-Leverage Activities for the future. Each high-level activity is grounded in the nine root causes identified by the Housing Stability Alliance, listed on page 10 of this report. The activities were designed with the intention of addressing the root causes in order to achieve meaningful, long-lasting system change.

The Alliance intends to implement a plan that includes core activities across the housing spectrum, with several supporting activities nested under each one. The four core High-Leverage Activities address: (1) Anti-racism education and training to support leadership development, talent management and retention, and equitable service delivery within the housing system; (2) Public policy change that supports housing accessibility, affordability, and choice; (3) The integration of People of Color with lived experience into all levels of decision making and leadership in the housing system; and (4) Public scorecards to track progress and promote accountability.

In detail, the core activities and sub-activities are as follows:

<p>1 Educate service providers, those with elected, positional, and economic power, those served by providers, lenders, and the community at large, on systemic problems related to housing to embody anti-racism and negate the “bootstrap mentality.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate anti-racism education, training, and supports at the personal, interpersonal, organizational, and systemic levels as well as equitable and inclusive leadership development, talent management, and retention.• Redesign the Coordinated Entry System/ central intake process to increase access to timely and effective support upon intake and throughout.
<p>2 Change public policy (economic, housing, health, etc.) that has resulted in harmful racialized and inequitable outcomes to create a link between the responsibility of state and local political leaders’ policy work to the current result.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our focus values of prosperity, equity, and growth for the most marginalized will lead to community thriving.• Develop policy that specifically addresses the lack of fair and equitable access to housing and homelessness services.• Address land-use policies (and others) to allow for increased development of affordable housing (i.e. zoning, etc.).• Convene stakeholders to drive action to increase affordable housing.
<p>3 Embed into the core of the system People of Color with lived experience to make decisions, lead, and influence leadership and systems that have historically oppressed them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hire and intentionally place People of Color and those with lived experience in positions of power to ensure relevant input is incorporated into system redesign.• Empower and include People of Color with lived experience in the decision-making and leadership within the housing system.• Utilize individuals’ stories as a primary tool to change mindsets so the system and inequitable outcomes change.• Succession plan for those in positions of power/influence to ensure the commitment to anti-racism and equitable outcomes continues.

4

Create four public scorecards – nonprofit, philanthropic, corporate, government – to elevate transparency, accountability, and feedback to leaders in the system to eradicate racialized outcomes across organizations, including concrete, inclusive, and equitable goals and measurements.

- Regularly convene providers and supporters to ensure an effective process for referrals and case coordination.
- Include components of the entire housing spectrum from Homeless to Housed by Choice to ensure equitable outcomes across the spectrum.

Additionally, the Housing Stability Alliance is also recommending a number of other High-Leverage Activities. *Other High-Leverage Activities and best/promising practices can be found in Appendix G.*

SHARED MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

A Shared Measurement System is largely defined by a community’s ability to collect data and measure results using a common set of community and program-level Indicators. Shared Measurement Systems encourage organizations to align their efforts on shared outcomes, enable them to collectively track and evaluate their collective progress, and offer them opportunities to benchmark their results. The Housing Stability Alliance designed a Shared Measurement System around the full Housing Stability Spectrum, with universal goals, design principles that promote equity and accessibility across all measurements, and Success Measures (big community goals) for each housing situation. It is the hope of the Housing Stability Alliance that the Shared Measurement System will be based on an interactive platform that is readily available to the public.

Universal Goals

The Housing Stability Alliance adopted three **universal goals** related to the housing system, including that the work focuses on:

1. Ensuring Kent County residents, especially children and Families of Color, achieve stable housing or are Housed by Choice.
2. Eliminating the statistical difference between the racial/ethnic demographics of the county and housing system outcomes (eliminating racial disparities).
3. Dissolving homelessness in Kent County.

Design Principles

The design of the Shared Measurement System was created using four **design principles** including:

1. Data should be disaggregated by race and ethnicity and other populations (such as youth), as well as different geographies within the county.
2. There should be continuous improvement regarding the data sources to improve accuracy.
3. This information should be accessible to both the community and Alliance members.
4. The voice of lived experience should balance the quantitative data.

Universal Success Measure

The Alliance adopted a **Universal Success Measure** that measures the percent of families in Kent County who are Stably Housed and less than Stably Housed. This measure will help the community understand if housing stability is improving or worsening overall. It is based on the percentage of income that a family spends on housing. Those spending less than 30% of household income on housing are considered Stably Housed, while those spending more than 30% are considered less than Stably Housed. The Shared Measurement System currently utilizes American Community Survey data to estimate what percentage of families are less than Stably Housed and what percentage are Stably Housed or greater. This is the preliminary population of that data. Future data work for this metric will be to disaggregate by race and ethnicity. Preliminary baseline data suggests that about 30% of Kent County residents are living in less than stable housing.

Below is the proposed Shared Measurement chart for Success Measures and Indicators across the Housing Stability Spectrum. *A larger version of the Shared Measurement System can be found in Appendix H.*

UNIVERSAL GOALS	1. Kent County Residents – Especially Children and Families of Color – Achieve Stable Housing or are Housed by Choice 2. Eliminate Statistical Difference Between Racial/Ethnic Demographics & Housing System Outcomes 3. Dissolve Homelessness from Kent County						
DESIGN PRINCIPLES	(1) Disaggregate by race/ethnicity, children & families & other populations, Geography; (2) Continuous improvement of data sources; (3) Accessible to community & partners; (4) Lived experience to balance quantitative data						
UNIVERSAL SUCCESS MEASURE	~ 30% of Kent County Families are LESS than Safely Housed				~ 70% of Kent County Families are Safely Housed		
HOUSING SITUATION	No Housing	Temporarily Housed	Soon to Lose Housing	At Risk of Losing Housing	Insecurely Housed	Stably Housed	Housed by Choice
DEFINITION	Families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence	Families who are forced into double occupancy, or living in motels/hotels, camp sites, or shelters	Families who will lose their housing in the next 14 days	Families who have identified risks such as late on bills, rent, & family illness and are at risk of losing housing in the next six months	Families whose housing costs exceed 30% of household income and/or are one crisis away from not being able to pay for housing	Families whose housing costs do not exceed 30% of household income & are not living paycheck to paycheck but would move if they could	Families who have affordable, safe, and long-term housing of their choosing
COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY	Immediate safe place to stay	Ensure permanent housing	Save housing or obtain new housing	Stabilize at-risk households	Address health, safety, & finances of occupants to further stabilize housing	Ensure residents can live in quality housing they can afford. <i>Minimum goal</i>	Facilitate ability of residents to live where they want to live. <i>Aspirational goal</i>
BASELINE DATA	2,038 Families (~ 3%)	1,449 Families (~ 2%)	870 Families (~ 1%)	8,900 Families (~ 12%)	9,000 Families (~ 12%)	11,000 Families (~ 15%)	40,000 Families (~ 55%)
SUCCESS MEASURE NAME	Crisis Response	Housing Solution	Homelessness Prevention	Early Intervention	Household Engagement	Affordably Housed	Wealth & Social Capital Creation
SUCCESS MEASURE METRIC	# of families & length of time unsheltered	# of families & length of time in temporary housing	# of families facing imminent homelessness	Proxy: # of families late on electric payments	% of KC households paying more than 30% for housing costs (rent & own) subtracted from At Risk of Losing Housing and Soon to Lose Housing	# of KC households who rent and pay less than 30% of monthly income on rent	# of KC residents who own their own their home and pay less than 30% of monthly income on housing costs
EQUITY DATA VIEW	Racial/Ethnic gap in No Housing population compared to Kent County demographics	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are temporarily housed	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are soon to lose housing	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are at risk of losing housing	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are insecurely housed	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are stably housed	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are housed by choice
DATA SOURCES & NOTES	Homeless system front door measurement (coordinated entry): Literally Homeless + Kent ISD Unsheltered	HMS Data: # of unique families in transitional & shelter housing in a year (system performance map) + doubled up/moteled Kent ISD data divided by average of 2 students per family	Based on HMS 2019 Annual Count Data. Category 2. Based on # of Households with Adults and Children in Families	Based on ENTFF data and dashboard with Consumers Energy data. FY2018. 30,619 late payments / 3.43 households per family ratio	Based on ACS Data. # of renters & owners that pay more than 30% on their income	Based on ACS Data. # of renters that pay less than 30% of their income on rent	Based on ACS Data. # of owners that pay less than 30% on housing costs

The Alliance adopted a system that includes one overall Universal Success Measure and seven Success Measures specific to each category of the Housing Stability Spectrum. **These metrics will be used to understand if housing stability is improving in the county and for whom, as well as to coordinate action and strategy.** It will help to inform Alliance members, as well as the community, through a publicly facing dashboard similar to the interactive KConnect Prenatal to Career dashboard (<http://www.k-connect.org/data>). Please note that the chart on page 20 is not intended for the visualization of the data but was created to organize and communicate the components of the Shared Measurement system to Alliance members.

The Success Measures and foundation for the Shared Measurement System are detailed on the next page.

Housing Situation

The housing situation is based on the Housing Stability Spectrum that was created in the first phase of work; it is the foundation for the Shared Measurement System.

Definition

The definition for each housing situation was added to the Shared Measurement system based on feedback from Alliance members. The definitions are on page 11 of this document and are also listed in the Glossary of Terms (*Appendix A*).

Community Responsibility

The community responsibility section of the Shared Measurement system identifies the collective responsibility of the community related to residents who are situated in the different categories along the Housing Stability Spectrum.

The identified community responsibility for each category of the housing spectrum is as follows:

- **No Housing** – An immediate safe place to stay
- **Temporarily Housed** – Ensure permanent housing
- **Soon to Lose Housing** – Save housing or obtain new housing
- **At Risk of Losing Housing** – Stabilize at-risk households
- **Insecurely Housed** – Address health, safety, and finances of occupants to further stabilize housing
- **Stably Housed** – Ensure residents can live in quality housing they can afford
- **Housed by Choice** – Facilitate the ability of residents to live where they choose

Success Measure Metrics

The Success Measure metrics represent the best measure for where residents are situated along the Housing Stability Spectrum. The metrics are proxy measures and the data sources should be continuously improved to become more precise overtime.

Key metrics include:



NO HOUSING – The No Housing Success Measure metric is the number of families and length of time unsheltered as measured by a combination of those identified by the front door of the homeless system (Coordinated Entry System) to be Literally Homeless, as well as families identified by Kent Intermediate School District (ISD) as unsheltered.

TEMPORARILY HOUSED – The Temporarily Housed Success Measure metric is the number of families and length of time in temporary housing as measured by the Housing Management Information System (HMIS) data on the number of unique families in shelter and transitional housing in a given year plus the doubled up/motel population in Kent ISD homeless student data.

SOON TO LOSE HOUSING – The Soon to Lose Housing Success Measure metric is the number of families facing imminent homelessness as measured by HMIS data of those determined to be Category 2 (Imminent Risk of Homeless).

AT-RISK OF LOSING HOUSING – The At-Risk of Losing Housing Success Measure metric is a proxy measure that utilizes electric bill late payments as a leading metric that determines that a household is at-risk of losing housing due to their inability to afford the electric payments. Most households pay their own electric bill regardless if they rent or own. This would be measured by data from Consumers Energy, which the Essential Needs Task Force of Kent County and Calvin University’s Center for Social Research have modeled in the past.

INSECURELY HOUSED – The Insecurely Housed Success Measure metric is the number of families who are paying more than 30% of their monthly household income towards housing costs, including both renters and owners and is subtracted by the number of households to the left on the spectrum. It utilizes American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census.

STABLY HOUSED – The Stably Housed Success Measure metric is the number of families who are paying less than 30% of their monthly expenses towards rent as measured by the American Community Survey from the U.S. Census.

HOUSED BY CHOICE – The Housed by Choice Success Measure metric is the number of families who are paying less than 30% of their monthly expenses towards homeownership as measured by the American Community Survey from the U.S. Census.

Equity Data View

The Shared Measurement system should adopt an “equity data view.” This would keep the Alliance laser-focused on the racial and ethnic gaps that exist within Kent County related to housing outcomes. This would be a specific view that displays the Success Measures in terms of the percentage by race/ethnicity by housing situation and the percentage represented by each race/ethnicity based on county demographics. The goal of this is to ensure the Alliance and the community as a whole are working to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in housing in Kent County (see Universal Goals on page 19).

Data

The Housing Stability Alliance has begun populating baseline information for the Universal Success Measure and seven Success Measures using available data sources. This data should be viewed as estimates that should be refined over time with the Alliance and future Backbone entity.

Indicators

The Indicators are the levers of change under each Success Measure that the Alliance and future Backbone entity will strategize and coordinate action around, much like KConnect's Success Measures and Indicators in the Prenatal to Career space. The goal of this section is to give the future Backbone entity and the Alliance a good draft of possible Indicators. These Indicators will not be finalized during this phase of work but will need to be vetted and finalized in the next phase of work under the future Backbone. The starter Indicators (three per Success Measure for a total of 21) will be handed over to the next Backbone to be vetted and eventually populated.

CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION PLAN

Continuous Communication is essential to keep internal and external stakeholders informed and excited about the work of the Housing Stability Alliance. In order to achieve those goals, a communications plan was developed to help build capacity for the Alliance around communication as they move into the next phase of work. It was created to help the Housing Stability Alliance achieve its strategic goals for communicating the success of what has been accomplished and the work yet to come. It will be implemented in the next phase of work. Additionally, it will be the responsibility of the future Backbone entity to convene a Communications Committee to develop core messaging and work with media and community partners to disseminate information.

Communication strategies are intended to be ongoing and maintain a steady drumbeat of communication in the coming year around the High-Leverage Activities, Equity and Community Engagement, the Backbone entity and partners, and Shared Measurement. Through strategic communications, the Alliance can explain how housing stability is improving, describe challenges, show how its work aligns to the Common Agenda, highlight the new partnerships and resources available to address new aspects of the work, and inform the community of the Alliance and its importance for the future of our cities, county, and West Michigan. We anticipate there will be multiple implementers of the plan, but it will be the primary responsibility of the Communications Committee and then the Backbone entity to maintain the plan.

Primary goals of the continuous communications plan include:

- Educate and inform the community, internal and external stakeholders, and strategic partners about the disparities, inconsistencies, and inequalities in the housing system and the importance of increasing access to affordable housing and decreasing homelessness for families, children and youth.
- Build, maintain, and grow relationships with key decision-makers, partners, other sectors, and end-users.
- Build excitement and a shared passion for creating an equitable housing system and what that would mean for our community.

Secondary goals of the continuous communications plan include:

- Position the Backbone entity as a go-to resource for questions about housing stability in Kent County.
- Enhance the positive profile of lead partners and collaboration in West Michigan.
- Educate the public about activities, projects, and services available through the network.
- Find opportunities to share stories, frame, and inform housing issues using an asset-based perspective while calling attention to the deficiencies of the system and structures.

In order to effectively share the core messages, the Communications Committee will need to focus on the following target audiences:

Partners

The priority target for the Continuous Communications plan is community and strategic partners. All communications efforts should be made with the community and partners in mind. Regular updates should clearly and concisely demonstrate that deliverables are being met and progress is being made toward shared goals.

Decision Makers

An additional target of the Continuous Communications plan is policymakers, including elected officials, appointees, and local thought leaders. In order to build relationships with decision makers and build Housing Stability Alliance's positive profile, local decision-makers must be made aware of the Alliance's work.

Broader Community

Ongoing support for the work of the Housing Stability Alliance is essential and will require the general public to understand, and then engage, in solutions. To reach the general public, messages must be clear, engage the heart, and be based on research. The Housing Stability Alliance and lead partners must communicate the everyday impact of the issues they are working on to reach people and mobilize grassroots support.

Media

While media is not a direct target of the communications effort, it is a vehicle to deliver the message to the intended audience.

The Housing Stability Alliance and the future Backbone entity face many challenges when concisely communicating its message in today's cluttered media environment. This challenge is magnified by the complexity of the issue and focuses on intentionally addressing racial disparities. There are countless ways for the message to be misunderstood or misconstrued. It is critical for the Communications Committee to craft a consistent and compelling message that keeps stakeholders aware and engaged. It is crucial to include the community, specifically those with lived experience, in the process of creating and delivering the message.

The success of the communications plan hinges on its ability to tell a compelling story, driven by relevant, clear, and powerful messages. With the right Communications Committee, this plan can be immediately implemented, and Continuous Communications can become a cornerstone of the movement.

BACKBONE ENTITY & GOVERNANCE

The Backbone Entity & Governance Action Team explored national research regarding core functions of Backbone entities, types of structures, and advantages and disadvantages of each. The Action Team discussed design principles that would be important in supporting the Alliance’s ongoing work and prioritized a set of critical activities for the future Backbone entity. It was determined that the five most significant core competencies the Backbone entity should have are an equity focus, perceived neutrality, credibility and ownership, ability to bring others to the table, and a strong understanding of the issue.

The Backbone entity must also fulfill the several critical functions that are essential to facilitating collaborative, long-lasting system change. This includes guiding vision and strategy for the network, supporting aligned activities for maximum impact, cultivating community engagement, and mobilizing resources. Given the importance of this role, while still respecting the urgency of the issue, the Housing Stability Alliance recommended a short-term solution (anticipated 3-month time frame) for a Backbone entity that would include a Steering Committee composed of, at minimum, 40 percent People of Color and/or those with lived experience with a desired goal of 60 percent, and a “start-up consultant” to begin to lift the Shared Measurement System, communicate with the Alliance and community, and resource the future Backbone entity. The main goal of the Steering Committee is to design, identify, and launch a permanent Backbone entity for the Housing Stability Alliance. The vision is that the Backbone entity will sit within the larger network structure of a governance committee and workgroups formed around each housing situation in the Housing Stability Spectrum. A “Lead Convening Partner” in each housing situation workgroup will convene its network of partners and stakeholders to work together toward achieving their particular Success Measures and Indicators, as identified in the Shared Measurement System.

This short-term solution provides a structure to begin operationalizing the Common Agenda and Roadmap, while also ensuring there is sufficient time and capacity to develop a strong, sustainable Backbone entity for this important work. *For information on the finalization of this portion of the Common Agenda and Roadmap, please refer to Appendix I.*

NETWORK AFFIRMATION AND FEEDBACK

As a Collective Impact initiative, KConnect implements a structured decision-making process with its entire network when a new strategy or initiative is proposed for the community. This involves an explanation of the proposal, group-based discussion of strengths and weaknesses, and sharing of feedback. Finally, each group puts forth a recommendation as to whether the proposal should move forward as is; move forward with refinement; or pause and rework based on feedback. This process was used for each plan in the Common Agenda and Roadmap. The Housing Stability Alliance first affirmed the proposals, with some feedback for refinement. They were then brought to the entire KConnect Accountability Partners Council with the full network. The proposals were again affirmed as able to move forward. *Feedback for refinement should be considered by the next Backbone entity and can be found in Appendix J.*

The significance of this process is authentic integration of community feedback and affirmation, which creates widespread buy-in to the proposed strategies. It gives community members and stakeholders across the spectrum a voice and power with decision making. The frameworks for Equity and Community Engagement, High-Leverage Activities, Shared Measurement System, Continuous Communication, and Backbone and Governance put forth in this Common Agenda and Roadmap have been affirmed by the community and are ready to be operationalized and put into action.

CONCLUSION

Housing stability is a complex, and for Kent County, long-standing issue. This is a collective attempt to dissolve, and more equitably rebuild, a community-based system that spans the continuum from No Housing to Housed by Choice. The Collective Impact model, with its Common Agenda and Roadmap, is meant to put forth a shared vision for this new system. This system has aligned strategies around Equity and Community Engagement, High-Leverage Activities, Shared Measurement System, Continuous Communication, and Backbone and Governance. Together, this work will move families in Kent County along the Housing Stability Spectrum toward “Housed by Choice” and reduce the staggering racial and ethnic disparities that currently exist. The work accomplished through the two phases of work over an almost two-year period is remarkable and has led to a tangible, cross-sector movement in our community for real change. This document lays the foundation for that — it is the framework from which the Alliance can build, innovate, and continuously improve. **The current system is no longer acceptable; it is time to “Redefine the Path Home” and build a new system that centers equity and the voices of those with lived experience.**

APPENDIX A: Glossary of Terms

Action Team – Sub-groups of ~8-15 people who lead implementation on strategic areas that have been prioritized by the Alliance. Their role includes Indicator selection and strategy setting.

Backbone Support – An independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative that provides ongoing support by guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources.

Category 1 - Literally Homeless

Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- (i) Has a primary nighttime residence that is not meant for human habitation; or
- (ii) Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (i.e. congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs).

Category 2 - Imminently Homeless

Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:

- (i) Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
- (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and
- (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Collective Impact – The outcome of a group of important actors from different sectors committed to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem at scale.

Common Agenda – One of the principles of Collective Impact. It is a vision for change, shared by all participants, that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions.

Continuous Improvement – An ongoing process of making the community a better place to live, recognizing that we will never “arrive” but will continually strive.

Data – Quantitative or qualitative information, especially from people with lived experience, used to measure Indicators and track changes over time.

Guiding Principles – Agreed-upon values that guide the group in laying out the rest of the Common Agenda, making decisions, and how the group is going to work together overall.

Housing Stability Alliance – A collaborative group of community stakeholders representing persons with lived experience, advocates, service providers, local government, funders, businesses, and other human service systems.

Problem Dissolution – The practice of eliminating problems created by systems. The first step is to understand the system that created the problem. Next, is to understand how we all work together to create and maintain the system. The last step is to create a new collaboration of all participants to work together to uplift the community.

Problem Statement – A common understanding of the problem the group is trying to solve. Often this involves establishing boundaries for what issues, players, and systems the group will engage with and which are outside its scope.

Steering Committee – A group of ~15-20 cross-sector leaders who provide overall vision, leadership, and decision-making for the effort.

System – A group of interacting or interrelated entities that form a unified whole. A system is delineated by its spatial and temporal boundaries, surrounded and influenced by its environment, described by its structure and purpose, and expressed in its functioning.

Systems Building – The act of building representative coalitions for the purpose of better serving all people in addressing structural problems.

APPENDIX B: Letter to KConnect

Tuesday May 22, 2018

Dear Pam Parriott and KConnect Board Members,

Kent County is experiencing a crisis of homelessness. This crisis is not only fueled by a lack of affordable housing and wages that do not support basic needs, but it is fed by broader community issues as well. This is an equity crisis, where People of Color in our community are disproportionately affected, with children and families being left out in the cold. Our community has a history of taking on the tough problems and it is time to tackle the issue of homelessness with a renewed and fierce determination. To do this, we need to put aside differences, ask the difficult questions, and take bold steps towards making our community a place where everyone feels as if they belong.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

It is important to understand that while we have a history of developing and implementing plans related to homelessness, the environment is changing rapidly. In 2008, we designed a system that was reflective of the times. It was the beginning of a recession and we had more affordable housing but high unemployment. Ten years later we are now living in a world of housing shortages and exorbitant housing costs, but we have not evaluated our system design or done quality improvement on the system to see what changes are needed. High performing systems strive to do continuous quality improvement and modifications to better target system goals.

SYSTEMS DO WHAT THEY ARE DESIGNED TO DO

Kent County is experiencing a crisis of homelessness – mothers are sleeping in their cars, on porches, and in parks with their children. Since 2015, we have seen the number of homeless individuals seeking emergency shelter rise significantly between 2012 and 2017, and the shelter waitlist for families with children has included over 200 families at different times during the past 2 years. Even more concerning is that the homelessness and housing crisis affects our children and African American and Latino neighbors at much higher rates than our White neighbors. Seventy-four (74%) percent of people experiencing homelessness in 2015 identified themselves as Latinx/Latino or African American, while this population only represents 20.9% of the general population in Kent County. Structurally we are not designed to achieve our community's desired outcomes. In assessing the Kent County Continuum of Care (CoC) system, there are several areas that contribute to the current problem.

1. Our CoC is primarily driven by US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements and has been designed in a model of scarcity around only HUD funding priorities. The \$5.4 million of HUD funding appears to dictate the way we engage the rest of our community's resources (over \$20 million) invested into solving homelessness. We have it backwards. We have a robust landscape of abundance here and we believe that our community is capable of designing a system driven by our collective needs, not simply based on HUD's apparent need for targeting their limited resources. Solutions should be community-driven and constructed with consideration of our abundant resources. If we are to make progress on this homelessness crisis, we need to be using all resources at our disposal.
2. Many of our community's neighbors are not thriving; this includes special populations, but is not limited to LGBTQ+, Youth, Special Needs and Disabled, Chronically Homeless, Veterans, Domestic Abuse survivors, and families with children. Our lack of progress in ending homelessness is evident in our data; there are more homeless children in our schools than in Detroit (with half

the number of students). We lack a comprehensive community-wide plan to address this issue. We have an opportunity in front of us to look broadly at the needs and resources of our community. We can take action by creating a trusted and safe space to think big and foster innovation. This letter comes as a request to seize this opportunity.

3. Our system is focused on the technical components of system design and does not give enough attention to the relational aspect needed to make the effort fully successful. In a high functioning system, relational and cultural goals influence the technical design of the structure, patterns and processes. Our system continues to govern and manage relationships and resources in a competitive environment instead of one of innovation and collaboration. Additionally, this system has continued to neglect the reality that many of our neighbors face housing disparities and racialized outcomes with little being done to focus our efforts in this way.

This combination of factors has resulted in what appears to many as a concentration of power within the CoC rather than an empowerment of aligned efforts. This lack of distributive power has led to a focus on practices and processes that have halted collaboration and innovative thinking. We lack accountability to our stated goals of collaboration and collective impact and have lost touch with the needs of those we serve. We are now unable to effectively realize a vision of preventing and ending the cycle of homelessness.

WE CAN DO BETTER AS A COMMUNITY AND WE NEED TO DO IT TOGETHER

We envision a future where safe and affordable housing is available for all and where racialized housing outcomes rooted in systemic injustice are eliminated. To achieve different outcomes, we have to work differently. We desire to change the power dynamic, redesign to value collective responsibility, accountability, transparency and trauma-informed practices. We believe that by expanding our CoC's focus beyond HUD requirements to a focus of abundance, our community will be able to intentionally design a healthy and effective system where children are prioritized and all people and organizations, irrespective of their size, budget or funding sources, contribute as full partners in ending homelessness.

Our community is at a tipping point. Our agencies, funders and community members can no longer be content with the unacceptable outcomes we have, resulting in the racialized disparities in housing and increased trauma to children.

TAKING BOLD STEPS TO CREATE THE FUTURE WE WANT TODAY

We are committed to convening community leaders to create a more comprehensive system, a true Coalition, driven by broad community data, one that prioritizes children, and promotes equity in housing access. We must work in a cross-sector, collaborative way that includes diverse thinking, a lens of abundance, multiple funding streams, innovative thinking, collaborative engagement, collective impact, a focus on our neighbors, trauma-informed practices and ultimately results in equitable belonging.

1. We ask you as community leaders to participate in and support this effort.
2. We ask KConnect to take the lead in ensuring a convening of interested parties take place with effective facilitation.
3. The work to follow will need to be facilitated by an impartial, transparent, experienced collective impact expert such as the backbone staff of KConnect. The long term facilitation for developing a

comprehensive community plan will need to be done by a person or entity experienced in systems work, with a track record of innovation and trust, and experienced in working with both public and private sectors. This facilitator should not be a funder of the system, nor a recipient of funds from the system. Most importantly, this facilitator should understand the priority of designing from the user's perspective, ensuring that no additional trauma is caused to our community members.

4. We pledge to work with any and all who want to make a better system to address the homelessness crisis our community is facing. We will do this using best practices, data-informed approaches, and trauma-informed efforts.

We are committed to working to broadly invite community leaders to decide upon convening logistics and facilitation by July 2018, so that we can move forward this summer to begin the conversation about system transformation, putting neighbors first to create an equitable and highly effective system.

Internationally recognized civil rights and civil liberties expert Dr. John Powell said it best, "Belonging is not just how we treat each other, belonging is how do we actually organize our economy, our structures, our schools, where everyone belongs, and recognizing we still have differences." We believe that everybody belongs, even in the midst of our differences. Everybody.

Joseph Jones
President/CEO
Grand Rapids Urban League

Cheryl Schuch
Executive Director
Family Promise of Grand Rapids

Dennis Van Kampen
President/CEO
Mel Trotter Ministries

Nancy Oliver
Executive Director of Social
Services and Residential
Treatment
The Salvation Army

Pam Spaeth
Director
Covenant House Michigan
Grand Rapids

Lauren Van Keulen
Co-Executive Director
3:122 Youth Housing

Marge Palmerlee
Executive Director
Degage Ministries

Shandra Steininger
Co-Founder & Executive Director
HQ: Youth Drop-In Center

Ryan VerWys
CEO
Inner City Christian Federation

APPENDIX C: KConnect Response Letter

Dear Rev. Mr. Jones et al.,

Thank you for your recent communication regarding our community's homelessness needs and the systems currently in place to respond to those needs. After careful review of your request, the Backbone and Trustees accept this partnership opportunity to facilitate a process to create a more comprehensive housing system that adequately addresses the distinct needs of children and families, is driven by community data, and promotes equity in housing access.

As you know, home and family stability is a core element of KConnect's work. As a cradle to career network, KConnect strives to ensure that all children and families have access to safe and stable housing as a fundamental building block of success. To that end, we believe that a countywide housing system that adequately addresses the spectrum of housing issues within our community is imperative. This includes those who experience housing instability, are precariously housed, as well as those who are literally homeless. We believe that it is also important that our housing system be nimble and responsive enough to address the evolving needs of children and families related to maintaining stable housing over time.

KConnect's expertise lies within a process framework and stands on four standards which include: cross sector engagement, data, equity, and community voice. This proven process will be combined with stakeholder and community content expertise as well as data provided by stakeholder organizations. We will contact you within in a few days to discuss next steps that at a minimum include a plan for additional stakeholder input, shared funding, and community accountability.

We are mindful of the enormity and complexity of this initiative, and stand ready to walk at your side as you seek to design a better way forward on behalf of children and families.

Lynne Ferrell
Co-Chair
KConnect Board of Trustees

Virginia Vander Hart
Co-Chair
KConnect Board of Trustees

Pamela Parriott
President
KConnect

APPENDIX D: Housing Stability Alliance Team Members

Thank you to all the individuals and organizations who worked together to co-create this Common Agenda and Roadmap. For a full list of the nearly 220 individuals and over 130 organizations that participated, please visit <https://bit.ly/HSAPartners>.

APPENDIX E: KConnect Community Engagement and Compensation Structure

KConnect defines community engagement as developing a platform that engages those impacted to co-create and implement for shared community concerns.

SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

INFORMING	<p>Providing balanced and objective information about new programs or services, and about the reasons for choosing them.</p> <p>Providing updates during implementation.</p>
CONSULTING	<p>Inviting feedback on alternatives, analyses, and decisions related to new programs or services.</p> <p>Letting people know how their feedback has influenced program decisions.</p>
INVOLVING	<p>Working with community members to ensure that their aspirations and concerns are considered at every stage of planning and decision making.</p> <p>Letting people know how their involvement has influenced program decisions.</p>
COLLABORATING	<p>Enabling community members to participate in every aspect of planning and decision making for new programs or services.</p>
EMPOWERING	<p>Giving community members sole decision-making authority over new programs or services and allowing professionals to serve only in consultative and supportive roles.</p>

SOURCE

Stanford Social Innovation Review – http://ssir.org/articles/entry/community_engagement_matters_now_more_than_ever
 Adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, developed by the International Association for Public Participation

KConnect recognizes the value of lived experience. In order to appropriately honor that context expertise, KConnect follows a compensation structure for community residents who participate in certain engagement activities. The following criteria must be met in order for a community resident to be compensated for participation in KConnect:

1. Community resident lives or works in Kent County
2. Participation is outside the scope of the community resident’s paid employment
3. A KConnect community engagement contract has been completed by the community resident
4. Parental/Guardian permission for participation has been given for community residents under 18 years of age

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMPENSATION STRUCTURE

ENGAGEMENT TYPE	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	COMPENSATION RATE
EMPOWERING	Grassroots support	KConnect recognizes that many community residents may be engaged in grassroots efforts and strategy development outside of KConnect workgroups. KConnect seeks to offer support to these efforts by making data and process tools available publicly.	Compensation is not provided for grassroots support. Within the empowering category, KConnect seeks to serve as a catalyst and inspiration to grassroots efforts, but community residents would have sole decision-making authority within these efforts.
	Indicator Strategy Team Member	Indicator Strategy Team members are assigned to a particular indicator that has been identified by the workgroups. As Indicator Strategy Team members, participants will be part of a team working to identify and design strategies related to their assigned indicator.	\$20 per hour up to 8 hours per day
COLLABORATING	Workgroup Member	Workgroup members are assigned to one of three workgroups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prenatal to 3rd Grade • 4th - 12th Grade • High School to Career As workgroup members, participants will be part of a team working to identify key indicators that are related to challenges faced by children and families in Kent County.	
	INVOLVING	Guest Meeting Participant	Guest meeting participants are invited to attend meetings to share information based on their experience or area of expertise.
CONSULTING	Focus Group	Focus groups are utilized to gather feedback and ideas related to particular topics. Focus groups typically run for 1.5 hours with 10 participants or less.	\$25 gift card <i>Refreshments and childcare are also provided</i>
	Survey	Surveys are utilized to gather feedback and ideas related to a particular topic. Surveys may be conducted verbally, on paper or electronically.	Entry into a drawing for a \$25 gift card
INFORMING	Community Conversations (K-Conversations)	KConnect will periodically host community conversations with an open invitation for anyone to attend in order to learn about the current status of the work and provide feedback.	Compensation is not provided for community conversation attendance. Refreshments and childcare are provided.

APPENDIX F: Appreciative Inquiry Model

Topics for the training sessions will include: High-Leverage Activities

Appreciative Inquiry Model

1. Housing Stability Alliance review and partners
 2. The power of stories (Qualitative data)
 3. Language, common definitions, and navigation (*borrow from Cultural Navigator language of Dr. Terrell Strayhorn*)
 4. Systems analysis (Manage/Solve/Dissolve) – How are some left out of the system?
 5. Community needs and action
-

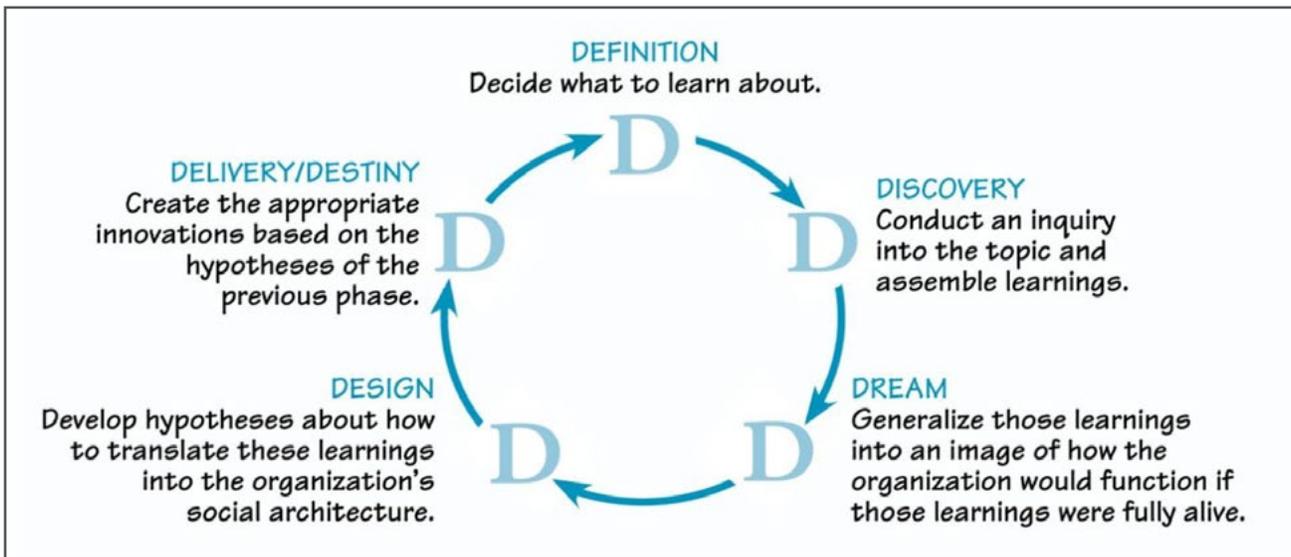
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY MODEL OVERVIEW

<https://thesystemsthinker.com/appreciative-inquiry-igniting-transformative-action/>

“At its heart, AI is about the search for the best in people, their organizations, and the strengths-filled, opportunity-rich world around them. AI is not so much a shift in the methods and models of organizational change, but AI is a fundamental shift in the overall perspective taken throughout the entire change process to ‘see’ the wholeness of the human system and to “inquire” into that system’s strengths, possibilities, and successes. ”

– Excerpt from: Stavros, Jacqueline, Godwin, Lindsey, & Cooperrider, David. (2015). Appreciative Inquiry: Organization Development and the Strengths Revolution. In *Practicing Organization Development: A guide to leading change and transformation* (4th Edition), William Rothwell, Roland Sullivan, and Jacqueline Stavros (Eds). Wiley

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzW22wwh1J4&feature=youtu.be>



DEFINE – What is the topic of inquiry?

It is important to define the overall focus of the inquiry (what the system wants more of). Definition is used to clarify the area of work to be considered. In spite of being the starting point of the cycle, it's a recent addition – the 5Ds were originally the 4Ds, including discover, dream, design and destiny. Definition defines the project's purpose, content, and what needs to be achieved. In this phase, the guiding question is, "What generative topic do we want to focus on together?"

DISCOVER – Appreciating the best of 'what is'

Discovery is based on a dialogue, as a way of finding 'what works'. It rediscovers and remembers the organization or community's successes, strengths and periods of excellence.

DREAM – Imagining 'what could be'

Imagining uses past achievements and successes identified in the discovery phase to imagine new possibilities and envisage a preferred future. It allows people to identify their dreams for a community or organization; having discovered 'what is best'. They have the chance to project it into their wishes, hopes and aspirations for the future

DESIGN – Determining 'what should be'

Design brings together the stories from discovery with the imagination and creativity from dream. We call it bringing the 'best of what is' together with 'what might be', to create 'what should be – the ideal'.

DELIVER/DESTINY – Creating 'what will be'

The fifth stage in the 5Ds process identifies how the design is delivered, and how it's embedded into groups, communities and organizations. In early appreciative inquiry development, it was called 'delivery', based on more traditional organizational development practice. The term 'destiny' is more prevalent now.

1: Housing Stability Alliance

HISTORY: THE FIRST 12 MONTHS

In May 2018 concerned community stakeholders asked KConnect to bring people together to examine how the housing system is working, establish shared goals, and develop collaborative strategies to reach those goals with a focus on children, families, youth, and people of color. KConnect initiated its work in Fall 2018, KConnect began a yearlong process to convene organizations, funders, and other stakeholders within the housing and homeless system. Together we will develop a comprehensive community plan specifically calling for equitable outcomes for children and families.

The mission, purpose of the first twelve months of work were defined as:

Mission Statement: The mission is to increase access to affordable housing and decrease homelessness for families, children, and youth, with an intentional focus on eliminating racial disparities in Kent County.

Purpose Statement: The purpose of our work is to align and connect system-level interventions that address homelessness and increase access to housing. Strategies must be intentionally designed with the end user in mind and targeted to people of color.

This work was originally anticipated to be completed in December 2019. However, in October 2019, after careful consideration and reflection, the Board of Trustees approved a request from the Design Team for a six-month extension in order to create a more comprehensive community plan. During the final months, the teams will move into a collaborative designing phase.

CURRENT WORK: THE WORK MOVING FORWARD

We have promised to deliver a common agenda and roadmap to create and sustain a movement that builds systems between sectors and empowers lived experience to dissolve housing instability and homelessness for children and families from the landscape of Kent County. That work is to be completed by June 30, 2020. It is our goal to build the movement that is already underway, and to center lived experience around this system-change strategy.

The scope and agreed-upon purpose of the last six months of work is:

Scope: Recognizing the disparate overrepresentation of families of color among homeless populations, our work through June 2020 will be focused on creating a community framework that will reduce the disparity in our housing efforts over the next five years.

Purpose Statement: Increase access to quality affordable housing and dissolve homelessness in Kent County with an intentional focus on eliminating racial disparities among families, children, and youth and other data-driven priorities.

Creating an equitable housing system will not happen overnight. It will decades of hard work and dedication from the entire community. However, if 2019 was any indication that the Kent County communities share a passion for this issue; we are well poised to create change.

HOUSING STABILITY ALLIANCE PROCESS

During the first twelve months of work, the Housing Stability Alliance group was split into five teams:

- A Design Team was responsible for moving the work to completion and that served as the primary synthesizer of information that was gathered and discussed,
- Context Experts ensured that those with lived experience with homelessness are represented in the process and plan,
- Content Experts represented the community expertise in the housing and homeless systems,
- Scout/Research Team researched best (and failed) practices around the country,
- Communications Team ensured consistent communication between the teams and with the broader community.

The work was introduced for feedback in June at the Housing Accountability Partners Council. (For more information on what each group accomplished, please refer to the Housing Stability Alliance Updates at www.k-connect.org/housing.)

While these teams worked independently and interdependently, by September we heard a consistent call for readiness for less “teaming” and more collective work. In an effort to address this very positive development, the way in which we organize ourselves – our work structure – will change to a System Building Team which will help eliminate delays in communication and strengthen our overall alignment.

INCORPORATING LIVED EXPERIENCE

Ensuring lived experience informs system change work has been our commitment from the beginning. Over the past twelve months, we engaged lived experience, grew in our empathy, and learned about both the sensitivities of engaging and ensuring that it informs change. While we recognize the work we did in the first twelve months was valued and important, we believe that there is a better way to build on community assets. We are partnering with the Grand Rapids Urban League of West Michigan and the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan to assist in leveraging the voice of lived experience in a way that will inform a sustainable structure and move the voice of those with lived experience to a place of empowerment.

2: The Power of Stories

Story telling is an art form that is as old as language. Stories have the ability to connect ideas to emotions. Our stories can be the bridges that connect two different people, communities and systems.

What is our Story? And how can we begin to tell it? Sometimes a template can help us organize our stories for us.

1. History of Oral Tradition in Latinx culture: open share
 - a. Transfer of culture, traditions, recipes, values, songs, and family history....
2. Strong traditions: Magical Realism (somethings are hard to explain with just facts, evoke emotion)

PIXAR FILMS MODEL: (FINDING NEMO)

Pixar is the end-all-be-all of reliable storytelling. Their films don't flop — they just have varying degrees of success.

The talented writers and animators at Pixar have narrowed down a simple outline for writing stories that succeed.

Once upon a time, there was...

1. Every day...
2. But one day...
3. Because of that...
4. Because of that...
5. Until finally...

These six steps may not look like much — but they contain simple story elements that you can use to captivate your customers.

Every Pixar film is calculated and refined to be a hit. The one exception is *The Good Dinosaur*, which came out November 2015 and didn't even recoup its production cost.

Still, that means Pixar has produced 16/17 hit feature films.

Not every formula is perfect, but a 94% success rate is pretty great.

Example: Finding Nemo

Once upon a time, there was a widower clownfish named Marlin and his son, Nemo.

1. Every day, Marlin would spend time with Nemo and try to keep his son nearby.
2. But one day, Nemo went missing — even with Marlin's precautions.
3. Because of that, Marlin embarked on a life-changing journey to find his son.
4. Because of that, Marlin met unlikely friends along the way, including Dory, and learned the value of trust.
5. Until finally, Marlin found Nemo and swam home with him — and Dory — to live happily ever after.

This same pattern applies to *Wall-E*, *The Incredibles*, and pretty much every other feature-length Pixar movie.

Take some time to check out each film and break it down into these six parts. Once you can identify the pattern, you can start using it for your own business's content marketing.

HOW YOU CAN USE THE PIXAR STORY OUTLINE

Out of all three storytelling strategies in this post, the Pixar outline is probably the easiest to apply to your company. It's the perfect formula for writing engaging case studies.

"Once upon a time" is the classic opening line to millions of stories. But you probably shouldn't include it in your customer-oriented story since it sounds fairy tale-ish.

"Every day" establishes a regular routine. That lets you show your character's daily life before they encounter a problem.

"But one day" introduces the problem. For this, you just have to ask yourself, "What problem do my customers solve by coming to my business?"

"Because of that" shows the initial results of using your business. That could be increasing leads, hiring better-qualified employees, setting up an IT infrastructure, or replacing plumbing in an old building.

"Because of that" shows the actual value of doing that work. So if someone has more leads, their business is doing better. If they have a strong IT infrastructure, they can communicate rapidly through IM and email. And so on.

"Until finally" lets you show customers the end results of your business's use. A customer came all this way with your business to solve a problem — what's the final result of their interaction with your business?

Once you have the outline done, you just have to fill in the blanks. Or, if you don't want to do a super-long story, you could make a six-panel comic strip that shows only these points.

It may not be as effective as a full story, but it'll still show how you help your customers.

<https://www.webfx.com/blog/marketing/3-amazing-storytelling-templates-perfect-for-content-marketing/>

Now the Pixar model is just that, a model, it does help provide structure if you have never told your story. While it may be formulaic, it can be adjusted. The more you tell your story, the easier it will become and the more comfortable you will be in making adjustments.

Now take some time to begin to write out your story.

1. What feedback do you have for each other?
2. What obstacles do you see in sharing?
3. What strengths do you see emerging in your story?

3: Language, and common definitions

GLOSSARY OF TERMS (5/16/2020)

INTRODUCTION

In response to concerned community stakeholders, KConnect, brought together organizations, funders, and other stakeholders within the housing and homeless system to develop a comprehensive community plan specifically calling for equitable outcomes for children, families, and people of color.

The mission, purpose of the first twelve months of work were defined as:

Mission Statement: The mission is to increase access to affordable housing and decrease homelessness for families, children, and youth, with an intentional focus on eliminating racial disparities in Kent County.

Initial Purpose for First 12 Months of Work: The purpose of our work is to align and connect system-level interventions that address homelessness and increase access to housing. Strategies must be intentionally designed with the end-user in mind and targeted to people of color.

Today the group has promised to deliver a Common Agenda and Roadmap to create and sustain a movement to dissolve housing instability and homelessness for children and families from the landscape of Kent County. This movement will build systems between sectors and amplify the voice of lived experience.

The scope and agreed-upon purpose of the last six months of work is:

Scope: Recognizing the disparate overrepresentation of families of color among homeless populations, our work through June 2020 will be focused on creating a community framework that will reduce the disparity in our housing efforts over the next five years.

Purpose Statement: Increase access to quality affordable housing and dissolve homelessness in Kent County with an intentional focus on eliminating racial disparities among families, children, and youth and other data-driven priorities.

DEFINITIONS

Backbone Support – An independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative that provides ongoing support by guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources.

Collective Impact – Collective Impact is the outcome of a group of important actors from different sectors committed to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem at scale.

Common Agenda – One of the principles of collective impact. It is a vision for change, shared

by all participants, that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions.

Continuous improvement – An ongoing process of making the community a better place to live, recognizing that we will never “arrive” but will continually strive.

Data – Quantitative or qualitative information, especially from people with lived experience, used to measure indicators and track changes over time.

Guiding Principles – Agreed-upon values that guide the group in laying out the rest of the common agenda, making decisions, and how the group is going to work together overall.

Housing Stability Alliance – A collaborative group of community stakeholders representing persons with lived experience, advocates, service providers, local government, funders, businesses, and other human service systems.

Problem Dissolution - The practice of eliminating problems created by systems. The first step is to understand the system that created the problem. Next, is to understand how we all work together to create and maintain the system. The last step is to create a new collaboration of all participants to work together to uplift the community.

Problem Statement – A common understanding of the problem the group is trying to solve. Often this involves establishing boundaries for what issues, players, and systems the group will engage with and which are outside its scope.

Steering Committee – A group of ~15-20 cross-sector leaders who provide overall vision, leadership, and decision-making for the effort.

System - A system is a group of interacting or interrelated entities that form a unified whole. A system is delineated by its spatial and temporal boundaries, surrounded and influenced by its environment, described by its structure and purpose and expressed in its functioning.

Systems Building - The act of building representative coalitions for the purpose of better serving all people in addressing structural problems.

Working Group – Sub-groups of ~8-15 people who lead implementation on strategic areas that have been prioritized by the Steering Committee. Their role includes indicator selection and strategy setting.

HOUSING STABILITY SPECTRUM DEFINITIONS –

Originate from Content Expert Meeting on March 13, 2019 and presented to the group on April 10, 2019 for review.

No Housing: Families or individuals lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Temporarily Housed: Families or individuals who are forced into double occupancy, camp sites, shelters, or have to rely on vouchers for housing due to lack of income or other barriers.

Soon to Lose Housing: Families or individuals who are at imminent risk of losing housing due to being behind on monthly payments, property sale, pending eviction, limited social supports, or relying on double occupancy residency.

At-Risk of Losing Housing: Families or individuals who are at risk of losing housing in the next six months due to a loss of income, short-term crisis, unemployment, underemployment, limited assets, or relying on double occupancy residency.

Insecurely Housed: Families or individuals whose housing costs exceed 30% of their household income, are on a month-to-month lease, have limited income and/or assets, rely on some social supports, or are one crisis away from not being able to pay for housing. They could be in double occupancy housing.

Stably Housed: Families or individuals whose housing costs do not exceed 30% of household income and are not living paycheck to paycheck but would move if they could.

Housed by Choice: Families or individuals who have affordable, safe, and long-term housing of their choosing.

CULTURAL NAVIGATION (borrow from [Cultural Navigator language of Dr. Terrell Strayhorn](#) – from “Reframing Academic Advising for Student Success: From Advisor to Cultural Navigator”)

Cultural Navigator Definition: To apprehend this culture, one must be part of it, socialized to it, or (aided by a member who acts as a cultural navigator) learn the implicit and explicit aspects of it. Individuals who strive to help students move successfully through education and life... Cultural navigators are those who know something about the new culture. They know the codes of conduct, customs, dominant values, language, requirements, rules, and traditions. Their knowledge is born of experience, mostly firsthand, which gives them the acumen and understanding to help others.”

1. How does this idea compare to Allies/Advocates/Accomplices?
 - a. Cultural navigators walk alongside those, and not behind. They prepare and amplify the voice of those with the lived experience.

Cultural Navigators – Belonging and Mattering

“You see, cultural navigators also act as translators, coaches, and guides. Cultural navigators know something about the culture—how it operates, how to get things done, how to be part of it and feel a sense of belonging. They share that information with students, help them adjust to college life, and make themselves available as trusted go-to resources whenever possible.

“...Latino student sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2008b). Sense of belonging is Cultural navigators fundamentally felt by individuals who believe they are cared about, respected, and part of a campus community. It is about social relations, connections, and supportive interactions. Everyone wants to belong—it is a fundamental need of all people and offers a compelling motive sufficient to drive human behavior.”

1. How does the sense of belonging impact the want and need to becoming involved in the work?
2. Have there been times that you did not feel a sense of belonging?

Cultural Navigating – Sharing the knowledge

We must first admit that there exists a housing system with its own culture “... and we know something about this culture. There are things we know about the journey that we’re asking students to take, things that we know from experience, from others’ experiences, from our training, from research.”

1. What do we know that others would benefit from knowing?
2. What do we know that the system would benefit from knowing?
3. What hard lessons did you learn along the way in your story?

4: System Analysis (Manage/Solve/Dissolve)

1. Who Manages?
 - a. Map Out
2. Who Solves?
 - a. Map Out
3. Who Dissolves?
 - a. Map Out
4. Conversation: Is it bad for organization to Manage/Solve/Dissolve?
 - a. Goal is to Dissolve
5. How are some left out of the system?
 - a. Where are the gaps? Who are the most vulnerable?
 - b. How can we ensure that they are kept in the “System”
6. Where are the strengths?
7. Who are the Accomplices/Cultural Navigators?

5: Community Needs and Action

This is the culmination of the trainings and conversations. The time is to build a common base, to carry forward into meetings, committees, and gatherings.

Create a shared agenda to take forward:

1. What are our stories? Who we are, what are experiences (data) have been...
2. What are our needs? Must haves
3. What actions do we want to see continued? Ended? Pros/Cons
4. What are the gaps to be addressed? Where does the system “break”, How does the system exclude people...
5. What are the strengths to be kept? People, agencies...
6. What voices need to be at the table? Lived experience, system navigation...
7. Other issues that are non-negotiable

Similar documents are “Points of Unity” or principles

[Liberation Road/El Camino para la Liberacion](#)

[Movimiento Cosecha](#)

CIVICLAB

AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

A social system is transformed not by a single solution, but by an ecosystem of interrelated approaches, each designed to address a different problem in a contextually appropriate way

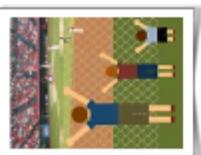
WORKING WITHIN THE SYSTEM



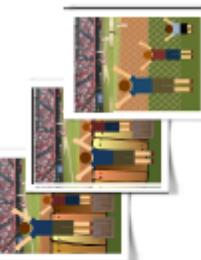
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WORKING ON THE SYSTEM

THE APPROACH

What is the goal?

What is being addressed?

What assumptions are made?

What is the work?

How is the work evaluated?

How is collective action organized and structured?

What is the relationship between cause and effect?

How is the work measured?

What capital is leveraged?

What is philanthropy's role?

MANAGE IT

Providing the most things to the most people to do the most good

Equality: Sameness (egalitarian, utilitarian, fair-opportunity)

Standardization: Assumes that all people will benefit from the same supports

Program-Management: Manage the problem by efficiently bringing the best population level programs to scale

Asking: Are we doing things right?

Hierarchies: Scale
Centralizing authority, instituting standards, imposing uniformity, and improving and measuring efficiency

Simple: Knowable, obvious, and can be observed directly. Responds to best practices, policies, procedures, protocol, process, standards, routine, recipes, and checklists

Efficiency: A measure of how well resources are used to achieve ends

Physical: Resources

Philanthropy as relief: operates on principle of compassion. It alleviates human suffering. Doing things to or for people.

SOLVE IT

Providing the right things to the right people to achieve the right ends

Equity: Fairness
(distributive, fair-share)

Customization: Assumes that people need to be given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access. We must ensure equity before we can enjoy equality.

Problem-Solving: Solve the problem by effectively targeting distinct-populations and allocating resources using new practices

Asking: Are we doing the right things?

Cross-Functional Teams: Complexity
Distributing decision-making and authority, setting system-level goals, measuring effectiveness

Complicated: Knowable, but not everyone can see it. Responds to teams of complementary specialists and experts: the right people, the right process, and sufficient time

Effectiveness: A measure of efficiency weighted by the value of the ends achieved

Human: Skills

Philanthropy as improvement: operates on principle of progress. It maximizes human potential and solves social problems. Doing things for people.

DISSOLVE IT

Re-designing the context, shaping the conditions causing the problem in the first place

Process: Means
(procedural, fair-play)

Dissolution: Assumes that people do not require any supports if the causes of the inequities are addressed

Systems-Building: Dissolve the problem by redesigning the system—improving how people relate to one another and work together. The task is to go to the problem and redesign the system.

Asking: Is the system designed to achieve the right ends?

Systems: Coordination
Balancing efficient, large-scale, repetitive tasks with effective, individualized, complex tasks

Complex: Unknowable, intertwined, and can only be perceived in retrospect. Responds to experiments, pilots, probes, processes, and pattern recognition, learning, and adaptation

Efficacy: A measure of the ends achieved compared to the desired outcomes

Social: Relationships

Philanthropy as civic engagement: operates on principle of participation. It builds community. Doing things with people.

LEAD IT

Co-creating a just system serving all people in a better way

Justice: Values
(social, fairness between the individual and society: wealth, opportunities, and privileges)

Principles: Assumes that, as a human institution, a social system must be led. Values and relationships are considered to be the cause of scarcity, not the lack of resources

Systems-Leadership: Ensure that justice is realized in both the means and the ends within the system, as well as in the relations between the individual and society

Asking: How do we decide what's right?

Society: Purpose
Deriving the purpose of a social system from the larger containing system or environment of which it is a part

Contributory: Unknowable, reflexive relationships. Each part of a system can affect the behavior of the whole, but no part has an independent effect on the whole. Responds to purpose, guiding principles, and values.

Outcomes: A judgment about the outcomes compared to the values and standards

Social: Culture (a shared sense of identity, a shared understanding, shared norms, shared values, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity)

Philanthropy as co-creation: operates on the principle of true partnership. It connects different systems together. Doing things with systems.

APPENDIX G: High-Leverage Activities

The purpose of High-Leverage Activities is to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the resources, funding, relationships, and time available, in order to produce the greatest results. The network has identified a set of four core High-Leverage Activities for the future. Each High-Leverage Activity is grounded in the 9 Root Causes identified by the Housing Stability Alliance which include:

Root Causes (RC):

1. The belief that homelessness is an individual problem rather than a systemic problem.
2. The system is based on scarcity, not prevention. Resource constraints lead to crisis mode/triage style management.
3. The model and process are not customer-centric.
4. The system lacks a cohesive housing strategy across the spectrum.
5. The system lacks a common goal, philosophy, narrative, language, and alignment among providers.
6. Racist policies and practices combined with cultural racism lead to inequities in housing and homelessness services.
7. Strategies and responses to homelessness are divorced from larger economic forces.
8. Historical and systematic racism and generational poverty are root causes of the overrepresentation of people of color in crisis.
9. The system is largely disconnected from other systems such as education, foster care, health care, juvenile justice, etc...

We recommend an implementation plan that includes core activities across the housing spectrum, with several supporting activities nested under each one. The four core High-Leverage Activities address: (1) Anti-racism education and training to support leadership development, talent management and retention, and equitable service delivery within the housing system; (2) Public policy change that supports housing accessibility, affordability, and choice; (3) The integration of People of Color with lived experience into all levels of decision making and leadership in the housing system; and (4) Public scorecards to track progress and promote accountability.

In detail, the core activities and sub-activities are as follows:

1 Educate service providers, those with elected, positional, and economic power, those served by providers, lenders, and the community at large, on systemic problems related to housing to embody anti-racism and negate the “bootstrap mentality.” (Root Cause #1 - RC1)

- Facilitate anti-racism education, training, and supports at the personal, interpersonal, organizational, and systemic levels as well as equitable and inclusive leadership development, talent management, and retention. (RC8)
- Redesign the Coordinated Entry System/ central intake process to increase access to timely and effective support upon intake and throughout. (RC2)

2 Change public policy (economic, housing, health, etc.) that has resulted in harmful racialized and inequitable outcomes to create a link between the responsibility of state and local political leaders' policy work to the current result.

- Our focus values of prosperity, equity, and growth for the most marginalized will lead to community thriving.
- Develop policy that specifically addresses the lack of fair and equitable access to housing and homelessness services. (RC6)
- Address land-use policies (and others) to allow for increased development of affordable housing (i.e. zoning, etc.). (RC4)
- Convene stakeholders to drive action to increase affordable housing. (RC6)

3 Embed into the core of the system People of Color with lived experience to make decisions, lead, and influence leadership and systems that have historically oppressed them. (RC3)

- Hire and intentionally place People of Color and those with lived experience in positions of power to ensure relevant input is incorporated into system redesign. (RC3)
- Empower and include People of Color with lived experience in the decision-making and leadership within the housing system. (RC6)
- Utilize individuals' stories as a primary tool to change mindsets so the system and inequitable outcomes change. (RC1)
- Succession plan for those in positions of power/influence to ensure the commitment to anti-racism and equitable outcomes continues. (RC8)

4 Create four public scorecards – nonprofit, philanthropic, corporate, government – to elevate transparency, accountability, and feedback to leaders in the system to eradicate racialized outcomes across organizations, including concrete, inclusive, and equitable goals and measurements.

- Regularly convene providers and supporters to ensure an effective process for referrals and case coordination. (RC2)
- Include components of the entire housing spectrum from Homeless to Housed by Choice to ensure equitable outcomes across the spectrum.

Additionally, the Housing Stability Alliance is also recommending a number of other High Leverage Activities which can be found [here](#). A link to the other high leverage activities and best/promising practices can be found [here](#).

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the High Leverage Activities Action Team for helping to shape this section. The members include:

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APPENDIX H: Shared Measurement System

UNIVERSAL GOALS	1. Kent County Residents – Especially Children and Families of Color – Achieve Stable Housing or are Housed by Choice 2. Eliminate Statistical Difference Between Racial/Ethnic Demographics & Housing System Outcomes 3. Dissolve Homelessness from Kent County						
DESIGN PRINCIPLES	(1) Disaggregate by race/ethnicity, children & families & other populations, Geography; (2) Continuous improvement of data sources; (3) Accessible to community & partners; (4) Lived experience to balance quantitative data						
UNIVERSAL SUCCESS MEASURE	~ 30% of Kent County Families are LESS than Safely Housed				~ 70% of Kent County Families are Safely Housed		
HOUSING SITUATION	No Housing	Temporarily Housed	Soon to Lose Housing	At Risk of Losing Housing	Insecurely Housed	Stably Housed	Housed by Choice
DEFINITION	Families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence	Families who are forced into double occupancy, or living in motels/hotels, camp sites, or shelters	Families who will lose their housing in the next 14 days	Families who have identified risks such as late on bills, rent, & family illness and are at risk of losing housing in the next six months	Families whose housing costs exceed 30% of household income and/or are one crisis away from not being able to pay for housing	Families whose housing costs do not exceed 30% of household income & are not living paycheck to paycheck but would move if they could	Families who have affordable, safe, and long-term housing of their choosing
COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY	Immediate safe place to stay	Ensure permanent housing	Save housing or obtain new housing	Stabilize at-risk households	Address health, safety, & finances of occupants to further stabilize housing	Ensure residents can live in quality housing they can afford. <i>Minimum goal</i>	Facilitate ability of residents to live where they want to live. <i>Aspirational goal</i>
BASELINE DATA	2,038 Families (~ 3%)	1,449 Families (~ 2%)	870 Families (~ 1%)	8,900 Families (~ 12%)	9,000 Families (~ 12%)	11,000 Families (~ 15%)	40,000 Families (~ 55%)
SUCCESS MEASURE NAME	Crisis Response	Housing Solution	Homelessness Prevention	Early Intervention	Household Engagement	Affordably Housed	Wealth & Social Capital Creation
SUCCESS MEASURE METRIC	# of families & length of time unsheltered	# of families & length of time in temporary housing	# of families facing imminent homelessness	Proxy: # of families late on electric payments	% of KC households paying more than 30% for housing costs (rent & own) subtracted from At Risk of Losing Housing and Soon to Lose Housing	# of KC households who rent and pay less than 30% of monthly income on rent	# of KC residents who own their own their home and pay less than 30% of monthly income on housing costs
EQUITY DATA VIEW	Racial/Ethnic gap in No Housing population compared to Kent County demographics	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are temporarily housed	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are soon to lose housing	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are at risk of losing housing	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are insecurely housed	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are stably housed	Racial/Ethnic gap in families who are housed by choice
DATA SOURCES & NOTES	Homeless system front door measurement (coordinated entry): Literally Homeless + Kent ISD Unsheltered	HMIS Data: # of unique families in transitional & shelter housing in a year (system performance map) + doubled up/moteled Kent ISD data divided by average of 2 students per family	Based on HMIS 2019 Annual Count Data. Category 2. Based on # of Households with Adults and Children in Families	Based on ENTF data and dashboard with Consumers Energy data. FY2018. 30,619 late payments / 3.43 households per family ratio	Based on ACS Data. # of renters & owners that pay more than 30% on their income	Based on ACS Data. # of renters that pay less than 30% of their income on rent	Based on ACS Data. # of owners that pay less than 30% on housing costs

APPENDIX I: Backbone Entity Identification

More information on the identification of a Backbone Entity coming soon.

APPENDIX J: Housing Stability Alliance Feedback

To view the feedback collected at the June 17, 2020 Accountability Partners Council, please visit <https://bit.ly/CARMFeedback>