

Special City Council Workshop
Tuesday, January 6
Council Chambers, City Hall, 73 Harlow St.
5:15 p.m.

- 1. Discussion with Former City Councilor RE Homelessness**
- 2. Applicable City of Bangor Ordinances**
- 3. Proposal for Advisory Committee on Homelessness** *(Staff Recommendation)*
- 4. Next Meeting: Public Health Overview on Existing Service Network & Services and Strategic Plan Examples**

Note: This workshop will end promptly at 6:30 p.m. and any remaining topics will be continued to a Special City Council Workshop scheduled for Tuesday January 13th at 5:15 p.m.

Homelessness and Suggested Strategies

Setting the Stage

It is a great understatement to say that homelessness in Bangor is a significant and complex issue. It is complicated by having several variations of homelessness and inconsistent definitions.

Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant comes to mind

A group of blind men heard that a strange animal, called an elephant, had been brought to the town, but none of them were aware of its shape and form. Out of curiosity, they said: "We must inspect and know it by touch, of which we are capable". So, they sought it out, and when they found it, they groped about it. The first person, whose hand landed on the trunk, said, "This being is like a thick snake". For another one whose hand reached its ear, it seemed like a kind of fan. As for another person, whose hand was upon its leg, said, the elephant is a pillar like a tree-trunk. The blind man who placed his hand upon its side said the elephant, "is a wall". Another who felt its tail, described it as a rope. The last felt its tusk, stating the elephant is that which is hard, smooth and like a spear.

The rest of the parable is that they did not believe each other; thought the others were lying; and violence ensued, until a wise person stepped in, calmed them down, and got them to talk with each other.

These are not technical or “official” definitions, but I think in terms of **Homeless** (anyone lacking safe reliable housing); **Homeless but Sheltered** (which includes those who are homeless but sheltered in temporary settings, which can include designated “shelters,” and **Homeless but Unsheltered**.

Some Causes of Homelessness

The root causes of homelessness are manifold. *It is rare that homelessness is caused by one variable*; it is almost always multifactorial including several variables, such as: a lack of affordable housing, poverty, mental health challenges—including PTSD, substance use, the economy and losses of jobs, extreme medical bills, young people being forced out of their homes, racism and other forms of discrimination, educational levels, transitions out of incarceration, a lack of community support services, and individual choices.

Homelessness

Categories to Consider

While each homeless person has individual circumstances it is helpful to consider a few broad groupings: (These are not mutually exclusive, e.g., the ability to find suitable affordable housing cuts across all.)

- Individuals and families who would be able to independently maintain an apartment or house—if they could find one at an affordable price (There is a whole separate interrelated set of housing issues for all these categories that this paper does not address.)
- Temporarily homeless individuals and families, who, with some targeted help, can work through their rough spots in a short time
- Individuals who may be able to maintain an independent apartment (but only if they have support, such as housing vouchers and in many cases other supplemental services, including counseling services) but who cannot find a local rental, even with a voucher
- Individuals who have difficulty staying in independent apartments even with assistance, but who could live in managed/structured settings with others to reduce isolation risks and to receive support (formal transitional living or a living setting such as Fresh Start)

- Those who might be willing to be and could live in a shelter, but no shelter exists that meets their needs (wide range of individual perceptions of “needs,” including couples wanting to stay together—but no family shelters available and people with pets)
- Those who do not want to be in any shelters and resist help; many of whom have significant substance use and mental health problems, some of whom have trouble staying in shelters or have complexities for the care they need that exceed what shelters provide
- Some who want the freedom to use drugs without scrutiny or intervention
- Some who just do not want to be told what to do and want to live independently
- Those with other concerns such as, “What do I do with my stuff? My pets? It is all I have.”
- Those who are so problematic that being in a shelter with others is not realistic in most cases (e.g., due to violence and/or other disruptive behaviors)
- Those who once they get a shelter/roof over their head (like a hotel room), are unwilling to further work their way to a better, more stable situation

Compounding Complexity—complexity is compounded by several variations of how or where homeless people are living. Most settings are particularly precarious shelters. They include, but are not limited to:

- Temporary stays with family or friends—for some, defined as couch surfing—which creates a substantial, but undetermined number of “invisible” homeless people (Sometimes these options are only available seasonally, e.g., in the winter.)
- Stays in shelters, such as the Bangor Homeless Shelter or Hope House, sometimes moving around between shelters
- Short-term subsidized rentals of hotel rooms, often through the Maine State Housing Authority (to the extent that funds are available, and hotels are willing to accept homeless people)
- Subsidized apartments or other housing rentals using housing vouchers
- Supportive housing (e.g., Fresh Start) or transitional housing with more support services
- Tents and other encampments, which may be clustered or just found in random locations
 - At one point, last fall, in Bangor, there were eleven encampments and over two hundred individuals. There have been substantial issues related to food, water, clothing, healthcare, sanitation, and crime.
 - *Unfortunately, this is what many people think of as the homeless population. This is the in-our-face, awful, the most visible aspect of the problem, but it is just the tip of the iceberg.*
- Some people, including some children, living in cars
- Some, who are homeless and outside and unsheltered for most of the time, shelter in various buildings, such as the library and Bangor’s daytime shelters some of the time. When it is cold, they may use warming centers offered by several organizations, some of which may provide limited additional support such as food and clothing. Bangor Homeless Shelter, Hope House, and the Mansion Church are examples.

Just imagine the permutations of two or more of the above variables. There is clearly no single definition of homeless. **Those who are homeless must be viewed as individuals and not lumped together.** This greatly complicates the challenge of framing a cohesive approach.

Some Exacerbating Factors...Just To Add More Complexity

Inadequate Data

No local organization, the State, or the City has accurate data on the number and types of homeless individuals or families in Bangor. We do not know how many fit in which of the above categories. Thus, we do not have an adequate needs assessment and are trying to define solutions without clear targets. This is a major constraint in addressing our challenges. Solving the encampment “problem,” as important as this may be, does not address the needs of our homeless population.

Insufficient Health Services and Services for those who are disabled

There are insufficient health services for most homeless people with multiple barriers to accessing care (e.g., too few providers, financial barriers, transportation). This is especially a challenge for providing mental health and substance use related services. The lack of services prevents addressing some core issues and it has a collateral effect on local emergency rooms, the Police Department, and EMS providers. There are further gaps in care for those who have disabilities.

People From Other Places—The complexity is further amplified by the fact that many of those who are homeless are not from Bangor. The data is not clear, but this may be greater than 30-40%. Many are here because surrounding towns have not developed the capacity to meet their needs and Bangor is a “service center.” In some instances, individuals, from other areas in Maine, migrate here on their own and sometimes they are sent or even transported here. Some individuals and families also arrive from more distant locations because they have heard that Bangor is a city with services. Sometimes they learn about Bangor through word of mouth, or even the internet. Sometimes they are sent here from out-of-state, after even being provided with free bus tickets).

Affordable Housing/Rents

Housing and Homelessness are intertwined. *In Bangor, there is limited, available, affordable housing/apartments, particularly for low income individuals and families.* This is frequently cited as the major cause of homelessness, although the factors related to mental health and substance use are a significant overlay. *Just having more housing units is not the solution.*

There are multiple housing development initiatives in the city by private developers, Bangor Housing and Penquis. More than between 350 and 500 units have recently been built or are in the pipeline. Some of these units have had City support (e.g., Penquis projects). This development may slow down due to increasing interest rates. The housing market is expected to ease, and our population is not projected to increase substantially; but this will not erase needs.

COVID, Substance Use, and Needles

We face growth of an unprecedented mix of substance use disorder issues, mental health issues, and effects of economic conditions that have caused or heightened the challenges faced by those needing shelter. ***This has been compounded by COVID-19 related issues,*** which are easing. At times there have been issues related to housing the homeless with adequate physical distancing and the ability to quarantine. There have been further overlays of mental stress and substance use exacerbated by isolation and loneliness.

Covid conditions and expanding use of opioids, coupled with the efforts of various organizations and the State to promote harm reduction, have led to increasing issues related to needles used by the homeless that are not disposed of properly. This is one, bad, unintended consequence of efforts to provide greater access to clean needles.

Enforcing Trespassing

Tents or encampments along the waterfront or in any small tent cities are inhumane, unsightly, unhealthy, and unsafe for the homeless and for others in the community. This is simply wrong, and it should be ended, but there have been limited good strategies locally (and nationally) to prevent this. In addition, there are court cases that limit options. (Unfortunately, this is a problem in hundreds of cities.)

The Police Department has professionals working with them on addressing the needs of individuals they encounter, including mental health professionals and a homeless coordinator. The City is also implementing a new *Bangor Community Action Teams (BCAT)* system of non-police officers being available to address many non-emergent service needs and requests. This includes not only encampments but the challenges resulting from individuals or small groups of homeless people who occupy public or private property.

Addressing homeless encampments and other situations through legally enforcing laws against trespassing on City or private property is a last resort option, after other options are pursued. No one I have talked to wants to criminalize homelessness, particularly in the case of mental illness or substance use.

Recently, progress has been made in addressing Bangor's to largest encampments—eliminating one—with the cooperation of several local organizations and technical assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This cooperation may result in a sustainable model for addressing encampments. The City must continue to address options for limiting the use of City property. Private landowners and businesses have the right not to have their businesses compromised by homeless individuals.

Professional Staff Burnout and Associated Workforce Shortages

Working with homeless individuals in multiple settings, particularly individuals and families who are unsheltered is an on- going stress for the Police Department, the Fire Department (and its Emergency Medical Services providers), and for other professionals such as the Public Health Department staff and the staff of other organizations. There are many factors that can lead to burnout as well as being deterrents to hiring (For example, hiring police officers who may spend 50% of the time on calls related to homelessness is an increasing challenge.)

Multi-agency Collaboration, Program alignment/consolidation and merging /or Braiding of Funding

Bangor does not have a multi-organization/agency plan that defines shared responsibilities for serving the homeless and how entities will collaborate optimally with each other. In 2022, the Bangor City Council invited over twenty organizations to its Government Operations Committee to address programs for the homeless. This did not even address the work of many local churches. It was clear that there are many, dedicated, caring people and good programs, as well as and examples of some cross-organizational collaboration...but there too much “siloiing”, much too much room for fragmentation, non-aligned funding, miscommunication, and failure to gain sufficient leverage on our problems. There is substantial detrimental competition among programs for influence and available funding. The City has made some recent progress pulling groups together working with a HUD technical assistance team. The lasting effects on the future of expanded collaboration are uncertain.

The fragmentation and lack of adequate coordination of programs and assets is staggering. No one has an accounting of all the funds that are flowing into Bangor or being generated by local organizations to support housing and the homeless. It is likely to be tens of millions of dollars. I am confident that local taxpayers would be astounded by the scope of activity and shocked the funding is not better applied.

We need a fresh look at how various strategies can be woven together with input from ALL agencies, who have programs for the homeless, regional communities, the State. There is a substantial need for reduced fragmentation. There is also a great need for more shared accountability.

What is the City Doing?

Limitations

Bangor’s City government (and certainly not the City Council) cannot solve the challenges we face through Council or administrative actions alone. Addressing many of the issues is not solely a Government responsibility, it is a Community Responsibility. The City may provide incentives, but it cannot compel other community organizations to work more closely together. Bangor taxpayers cannot provide an open checkbook to increasingly shoulder responsibility for humanely addressing the needs.

Comments on 2021 Homeless Cost Summary

In 2021, City staff pulled together an estimate of the funding that was being provided through the City for services to the homeless and for housing. This is a substantial, unrecognized City investment. (It does not include the millions of dollars of funding flowing through community organizations.) Consideration was given to:

Housing/ General Assistance	Nursing services
Community Funding Support (Community Development Block Grant—CDBG) and Cares Act	Shelter + Care
Public Health and Community Services	Parks and Recreation (Clean-up)
Homelessness Outreach Program	Police and EMS (For a third of all Police Calls)
Overdose Response Team	Mental health liaisons
Narcan distribution	Community Relations Officer
	Overdose response team
	Built for Zero

The following expenses were identified:

\$2,575,062	City Funded (<u>Not including</u> the value of administrative time or the time of Councilors)
<u>\$4,593,289</u>	Grants administered through the City from various entities
\$7,169,351	Sub-total
<u>\$2,883,386</u>	State of Maine General Assistance
\$10,052,737	Total

The current fiscal year budget continues to include similar funding. In addition, the City has recently allocated almost fifteen million dollars to address various aspects of homelessness, housing, mental health, substance use disorder, and childcare.

Short-term Action Package for Addressing Homelessness

The City of Bangor should have a clearly stated, readily and publicly available, 12-18 month Homelessness Plan that embodies the following elements and provides a bold statement reflecting commitment to action. Most of the following actions are currently in progress (IP) and a tremendous amount of work is being done; *despite what some public critics think is far too little*. Nonetheless, actions steps have not been integrated into a cohesive framework and, thus, it is hard to identify and to communicate the City’s commitments or vision.

- I) Assure sufficient warming center capacity daily and overnight shelter beds during extreme temperatures (Complete for the past winter/spring season, but needs will reoccur later this year)
- II) With other community organizations, consider and implement the recent Department of Housing and Urban Development’s, technical assistance recommendations for reducing the number of homeless individuals in encampments (IP)
 - A) Find alternative options for the residents of encampments (IP)
 - B) Clean up the encampments (IP)

- C) Evaluate effects of Portland’s ban on homeless encampments on public property (IP)
 - D) Develop a strategy to mitigate repopulation of encampments (IP)
 - E) Promote continuing adaptation and use of HUD “best practices” (On-going)
 - F) Evaluate Results (Upcoming)
- III) Consider the needs and options for short-term diversion strategies (such as short-term, emergency, rent or heating assistance) to prevent slippage into homelessness (Partially funded and to be considered further) Continue to develop a rapid response assistance mechanism for those who are in danger of becoming homeless integrated with the State’s 211 number.
- IV) Continue and as appropriate expand Community and Public Health Department programs and look for additional grant funds, e.g., Shelter Plus Care Program, Homeless Outreach Caseworkers, plus programs such as Narcan distribution (IP)
- V) Continue implementation and then evaluate the Bangor Community Action Teams (BCAT) (IP)
- VI) Continue to evolve policies, consistent with state law, for police officers to direct unhoused people accused of committing low-level crimes to help rather than charging them
- VII) Continue to promote expanded community collaboration (On-going)
- A) Develop a City-wide, multi-organization, homelessness work group and planning process like the 2019 Bangor Housing Study (This has been suggested by not yet agreed to.)
- VIII) Where possible reduce barriers to individuals and families finding and keeping housing
- A) Tenants’ Rights Ordinance that has recently been adopted (IP)
 - B) Continue to develop the Landlord Liaison Program (IP)
 - C) Continue to identify and promote available funding options, including Community Development Block Grant funding and voucher programs
- IX) Identify options for supporting community organizations in their efforts to expand mental health and substance use disorder services (IP), including:
- A) Clarifying and updating status of strategies to mitigate opioid use and align with recently received grant funds, the opioid settlement funds, and State plans (IP)
 - B) Supporting organizations providing housing and treatment options (e.g., detox beds) for individuals with substance use or mental health disorders (On-going)
 - C) Supporting workforce development for mental health and SUD treatment professionals (City actions steps have not been clearly identified.)
- X) Work with organizations such as the Health Equity Alliance, Needlepoint Sanctuary, and the State to develop strategies to mitigate needle waste (IP with a recent agreement for a program with HEAL)
- XI) Adopt a goal that every child in Bangor will be adequately sheltered and nourished; and have timely access to appropriate mental health or substance use-related services (This must be done in conjunction with the Bangor School Department, while recognizing that there are children in need who are not in Bangor’s schools. (This includes a school-based health program at the High School and funding for other programs at the middle schools.) The overall goal has been suggested by not adopted.
- XII) Continue to collaborate with the State, Community Health and Counseling Services (as HUB 7 leader for the State), and other partners in the Built for Zero initiative (a coordinated entry to care system) to improve our ability to identify and stay connected with those in need, build a data base, including appropriate metrics, and sharpen integration of BFZ initiatives with other Bangor strategies (IP)

- XIII) Support Bangor's Public Health and Community Services Department in obtaining accreditation, developing a community needs assessment and a strategic plan, and updating homelessness and housing related strategies (IP)
- XIV) Explore the depth of involvement by area faith communities and options to encourage expanded support for the homeless (particularly as collaborators in multi-party shared strategies) (Not yet IP)
- XI) Remain open to the development of small temporary shelters pilot projects, if groups can develop well-thought-out proposals, *supported by multiple organizations* that show reasonable likelihood of success (Has been mentioned but not IP)
- XII) With other community organizations and the State clarify the need for shelter beds and develop better strategies to address the needs of the short-term homeless and the chronic homeless (Discussed, but no definitive needs assessment or action steps)
- XIII) Initiate discussion with the State about operating shelter beds and expanded mental health and substance use disorder treatment facilities and programs at the Dorothea Dix site (IP)
- XIV) Develop services, a clear protocol, and a phone number, in addition to access through the City's website, for rapid response assistance for residents and businesses experiencing homeless encampments, trespassing, or needle waste on their private property (IP)
- XV) Address the use of the Bangor Public Library for homeless individuals seeking daytime shelter
 - A) Develop a plan to reduce reliance on the library as a daytime sheltering space (IP)
- XVI) Develop (with the Downtown Partnership) and fund a more complete plan for addressing hospitality, cleanliness, and security for downtown Bangor and the waterfront (IP)
 - A) Consider constructing additional downtown bathrooms (IP)
- XVII) Continue development and expand promotion of the Homelessness Response section the City's website's (On-going)
- XVIII) Hold other communities to greater accountability for caring for their homeless; and continue to pressure the State to assume greater responsibilities. (IP)
- XIX) Hire a Homelessness Strategist/Specialist to coordinate all City strategies (IP)
- XX) Develop a 12-18 month housing development plan that integrates with homelessness strategies, including the hiring of a housing specialist to coordinate all housing programs (IP)
- XXI) Improve identification of strategies targeted to the root causes of homelessness, not only to addressing the symptoms) (IP and on-going)
- XXII) Consistently and rigorously evaluate results of all action steps
- XXIII) Seek input from the Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights
- XXIV) Listen to the homeless (On-going)
- XXV) Judiciously apply some of the City's American Rescue Plan Funds (ARPA) to the identified strategies (IP)

Limitations

Bangor's City government cannot solve the challenges through Council or administrative actions alone. Addressing the issues is not solely a Government responsibility, it is a Community Responsibility. The City may provide incentives, but it cannot compel other organizations to work more closely. While Bangor has some resources that it can use wisely, taxpayers cannot provide an open checkbook to increasingly shoulder responsibility for humanely addressing all needs.

A Critical Point and a Dilemma

In addition to the above points, there is a great dilemma. If we develop a solid community plan to care for those in need in humane ways, and we execute it well, we will become an increasingly attractive community for more unsheltered people. Although Bangor is a service center for many things, it is highly unlikely that a majority of Bangor residents and businesses want this City to become a magnet for more homeless people, even if supportive resources were to be available. Many also want to see a "tough love" approach with compassion coupled with enforcement of limitations and better defined expectations.

How the City can best balance its humanity, its resources, its caring capacity, and its goals is a great challenge and still a great unknown.



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

CITY OF BANGOR

Carollynn J. Lear
City Manager

To: City Council
From: Carollynn Lear, City Manager
Date: January 6, 2026
RE: City of Bangor Ordinances Relevant to Camping on City Property

During the Council Workshop on December 22, 2025, Councilor Walker requested information regarding the City's ordinances applicable to camping on City-owned property. As I explained during that meeting, there are several Code provisions that apply depending on type of property in question.

I. City Parks

Within Bangor Parks, Code §231-6(C) provides that no person shall “[s]et up tents, shacks or any other temporary shelter for the purpose of overnight camping, nor shall any person leave in a park after closing hours any movable structures or special vehicle that could be used for such purposes...” Code §231-9(A) provides that park hours are generally 6 am to 10 pm. The Code defines the City's Parks by both name and map/lot number and the list includes all of the traditional parks as well as the Golf Course, Bass Park, Cascade Park, Kenduskeag Stream Park, Brown Woods, and the City Forest Preserve (not an all-inclusive list).

II. Non-Residential Property

City of Bangor Code of Ordinances §281-3(B)(2) generally provides that occupancy of temporary shelters or temporary camping vehicles on non-residential property is prohibited. There is a short list of exceptions generally not applicable to the encampments Council has been discussing. A tent is included in the definition of a temporary shelter (§281-2).

III. Residential Property

Code §281-3(B)(1) allows occupancy of a temporary camping vehicle or a temporary shelter **under very limited circumstances**. The most relevant limitations are that (1) the property owner must provide access to their dwelling's toilet and washing facilities; (2) no more than one temporary camping vehicle or temporary shelter may be occupied at one time on the property; and (3) the duration cannot exceed 30 days in any 12-month period.

Under this framework, camping on City-owned property is a violation of the Code of Ordinances, although the governing provision will vary depending on the type of property in question.

Additionally, the City's zoning regulations and the State's building code applies to any authorized camping location (campgrounds and/or authorized encampments). That regulatory framework is too extensive and situationally specific to enumerate here.

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CITY OF BANGOR

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Phone: 207-992-4550
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To: City Council Workshop

From: Jennifer Gunderman, Director Public Health and Community Services

Date: January 6, 2026

RE: *Revised* Advisory Committee on Homelessness Models & Staff Recommendation

As Council has coalesced around the idea of creating an Advisory Committee to help advise Council on the City's strategy for homelessness response, staff have drafted the following recommended Committee structure.

An Advisory Committee on the topic of homelessness response is a strategy used nation-wide and as a result, there are numerous models for Bangor to pull from. City staff have review several models, some of which we highlight below, and have identified common themes that inform the following recommendation:

Staff Recommendation

- **Advisory Committee Composition** – The Advisory Committee should include local partners, leading experts, and a robust cross-section of the impacted community. Representatives of the City, local service providers, the expert community with experience both inside and outside of Bangor, individuals with current or recent lived experience, businesses, schools, property owners, and families should all have a role so that the needs of the entire Community are reflected in the Committee's work. Staff recommend the following:
 - The City of Bangor's Director of Public Health, who shall serve as Chair
 - The City of Bangor's Homeless Response Coordinator
 - An individual currently living with housing instability
 - An individual that is a landlord or represents the interests of landlords in the City
 - A Bangor business-owner impacted by the City's homelessness crisis
 - A resident of Bangor with school-aged children attending Bangor Schools
 - An at-large Bangor property owner
 - The Bangor Police Chief, or designee
 - The Bangor Fire Chief, or designee
 - A local service provider with experience managing a shelter for the unhoused population in Bangor
 - A local service provider that provides direct service outreach to the unhoused population in Bangor
 - A local service provider with experience providing mental health treatment or support to the unhoused population in Bangor
 - A local service provider with experience providing treatment or support to individuals that are unhoused and with substance use disorders
 - An individual with nationally or regionally recognized expertise in addressing homelessness outside of Penobscot County (we would recommend that Council consider authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract to compensate an expert)
 - The Chief Executive (or designee) of Northern Light EMMC, St. Joseph Healthcare, or Penobscot Community Health Center

- **Discrete Tasks with Time Limitation** – Rather than create an Advisory Committee with an ongoing role and an indeterminate length, we recommend that the Advisory Committee start with a discrete task and a firm deadline. Starting with a discrete and deadline driven task will serve to focus the Committee's work on the area that Council wishes the Committee to prioritize. Having a stated Committee expiration date will provide Council



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with the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the Committee and thoughtfully consider whether to request additional specific work from the Committee when and if the Committee is extended.

- **Initial Task** – We recommend that the initial task for the Committee be the creation of a strategic plan for the City’s response to homelessness that is data driven, evidence informed, and that considers regional and structural coordination. Critical components will include specific strategies for homelessness prevention, encampment response, and other necessary City policies.
- **Plan Operationalization** – After the Advisory Committee establishes an initial strategic plan, it will be the role City staff (Homeless Response Coordinator) to ensure the action plan is operationalized.
- **Future Committee Tasks** - If Council determines that the Advisory Committee is effective, their existence could be extended with added tasks such as monitoring plan implementation, providing support and guidance on emerging issues, federal/state policy advocacy, completing gap analyses to inform City budget and grant funding decisions, and ongoing City policy review.



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Background Information

City of Atlanta: The Atlanta City Council authorized the formation of a 90-Day Homelessness Task Force to critically examine the City's existing policies and procedures related to homelessness, with a key focus on creating standardized protocols for encampment decommissioning. The legislation designated 33 organizations and key City departments to serve on the Task Force, which includes nonprofit, faith based, advocacy, and government stakeholders.

The Task Force was facilitated by APD-Urban and structured into four topical subcommittees: (1) Standard Operating Procedures and Policies, (2) Medical and Mental Health, (3) Prevention and Diversion, and (4) Alternative and Emerging Solutions.

<https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/mayor-s-office/the-mayor-s-cabinet/city-of-atlanta-90-day-homelessness-task-force>

City of Dallas: Dallas created The Hope Taskforce. One of the leading organizations that led this effort, Housing Forward, is one of the most innovative and effective models for managing encampments and supporting folks who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Their Crisis Systems Senior Director, Hannah Sims (hannah.sims@housingforwardntx.org), has been a thought partner for Jena Jones, particularly during the Camp Hope closure. The group was tasked to be data-informed and to try to build consensus around a series of solutions to a complex problem.

About task force: <https://dhantx.com/city-of-dallas-task-force/>

Report: <https://dallascityhall.com/government/Council%20Meeting%20Documents/hopetaskforcereport.pdf>

City of Denver Task Force: Created a strategic plan for a collaborative approach to addressing homelessness.

Strategic Plan: <https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/v/1/housing-stability/documents/denver-housing-stability-action-plan-2025-eng-final.pdf>

City of Lexington: This task force is charged with conducting a focused review of the city's emergency shelter system and programming and providing formal recommendations to the Mayor regarding strategic next steps. Their work should be grounded in the data and findings of the 2025 Emergency Shelter Study and informed by national best practices, local context and community input.

About the task force: [Task Force on Homelessness | City of Lexington, Kentucky](#)

City of Lowell: In Winter 2019 the City Manager formed a Task Force comprised of various community leaders to change how the City at large responds to growing homelessness, housing, and other associated issues. Under the guidance of a nationally renowned consultant, the Task Force determined a shift towards a "housing first" model would make the biggest impact on these collective problems.

About Task Force and Report: <https://www.lowellma.gov/1354/Task-Force-on-Homelessness-and-Sustainab>