



MeckACTs

Cabinet Member Workplan

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Community Support Services



Section 1: Annual Goals

1. A Home for All Strategic Framework

Goal Alignment List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

CSS 1.5 Drive change as a partner in the community goal to reduce and prevent homelessness and increase housing stability

Goal Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Provide leadership as a partner in the community's A Home for All strategic framework while strengthening housing and homeless data infrastructure to inform decision-making and drive funding alignment by 2025

Rationale

Mecklenburg County has a longstanding commitment to reducing and preventing homelessness. Over time, there has been significant investments in prevention, emergency shelter and permanent housing. These efforts have only increased in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that every person has a safe place to isolate or quarantine. And yet housing instability and homelessness continues to grow in the community. On any given night, there are at least 3,000 individuals experiencing literal homelessness, including in sheltered or unsheltered locations.

The work of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing and Homelessness Strategy (or CMHHS) marks the first time that our community has come together to comprehensively take on the full housing continuum from prevention to shelter, affordable housing and cross-sector supports. Led by Atrium Health, Bank of America, Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, and Charlotte Center City Partners, we have had strong representation from both the public and private sectors.

This new effort marks the first time that the public and private sector have come together to address the full housing continuum, from street homelessness to households experiencing cost-burden. The CMHHS team developed the *A Home for All Strategic Framework* which provides recommendations to implement and sustain the systemic change required to both reduce and prevent homelessness.

United Way of Central Carolinas (UWCC) will serve as the Quarterback Entity (also known as the Lead Agency) to implement the recommendations from the *A Home for All Framework*. The main role for the Quarterback Entity is to create an implementation plan to enact the strategic framework in coordination with community stakeholders and organizations.

Action Steps List the actions/events that need to take place.

In partnership with United Way of Central Carolinas:

- Define scope and recruit members for the Advisory Council and Technical Committee to guide the work of the *A Home for All Strategic Framework*.
- Provide leadership to facilitate the implementation of the *A Home for All Strategic Framework*.
 - Offer strategy and vision to shape the development of the comprehensive

implementation plan.

- Provide executive oversight and input on the development of a fundraising plan.
- Ensure the completion of an ongoing evaluation plan to monitor impact.

Evaluation Criteria What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

Effective executive oversight to ensure United Way of Central Carolina's successful accomplishments of Action Steps

Section 1: Annual Goals

2. Expand Access to Housing

Goal Alignment List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

CSS 1.5 Expand affordable, permanent housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness

Goal Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

In partnership with Mecklenburg County Asset and Facility Management (AFM), create and expand access to permanent supportive housing for older adults through the purchase and conversion of an area motel/hotel into permanent housing

Rationale

In January of 2022, 70 individuals age 55+ were newly identified as experiencing homelessness in Mecklenburg County. This trend has been consistent over the past several months. This age group is overrepresented in the homeless population accounts for 33% of the total homeless population in comparison to 23% of general population. The Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Action Plan states that "while the Charlotte/Mecklenburg community is working on improving the social mobility prospects for all its residents, there has not been a focus on older adults. Local challenges to affordable housing for older adults exist, in part, because Charlotte/Mecklenburg has experienced such significant growth within this demographic, and this has created an increase in demand for affordable senior housing."

According to the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), this population is often referred to as the "invisible population" and communities across the country are responding to the needs of their vulnerable seniors in innovative ways using a mixture of resources available to them. Supportive housing is a proven intervention that empowers older adults by pairing affordable housing with wrap-around voluntary supportive services to promote independence and allow people to thrive in their own homes as they age. It is a community-based alternative to assisted living and nursing homes.

The CSH believes that in order to fully address the complex needs of older adults, homelessness/housing instability, substance use disorders, and other co-occurring challenges such as mental illness, chronic medical conditions, and domestic violence, a longer-term comprehensive model (i.e. supportive housing) is needed.

The US Interagency Council on Homelessness indicates that supportive housing combines non-time-limited affordable housing assistance with wrap-around supportive services for people experiencing homelessness, as well as other people with disabilities. Studies have shown that supportive housing not only resolves homelessness and increases housing stability, but also improves health and lowers public costs by reducing the use of publicly funded crisis services, including shelters, hospitals, psychiatric centers, jails, and prisons.

The County is under contract for a hotel purchase. Renovations will begin upon finalization with a vendor/s being selected to operate the hotel and to provide supportive services. The hotel purchase

consists of two separate buildings on the same property; referred to as "Building A" and "Building B". "Building A" is the primary building with front office and meeting space, expanded laundry access and will need more extension renovation to accommodate. "Building B" will need less renovation for additional ADA-compliant rooms as well as some offices and cosmetic upfitting. This building will be available soon after purchase with approximately 50 households moving in Q1 of Fiscal Year 2023.

Action Steps List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Design Phase for Renovations Completed (Second Quarter)
- Identified supportive services agency to manage day-to-day operations and provide support to residents (August 2022)
- Supportive Services and Building Operation Contract(s) Executed: (FY23 – Second Quarter)
- Developed and implemented prioritization process with Coordinated Entry Oversight Committee to ensure access for target population: (Y/N) (FY23 – Second Quarter)
- "Building B" Occupancy transition from motel completed first
- "Building A" Occupancy completed second
- Developed, monitored, and maintained partnerships to provide support to housing residents that address social determinants of health

Evaluation Criteria What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

Various performance measures will be used to track progress for this progress. These measures include:

- At least 85 new units created by June 30, 2023
- At least 85 households served during reporting period
- 90% of clients to remain stably housed within program
- 95% of exits are successful as deemed by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Continuum of Care

Section 1: Annual Goals

3. Professional Development Opportunities for Employees

Goal Alignment List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

CSS 2.2 Develop a highly competent, engaged and productive workforce

Goal Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Align employees with the CSS mission and vision while promoting and supporting professional development opportunities

Rationale

Informed and engaged employees, supported with professional growth opportunities, are best equipped to be innovative and effective in service to the community's needs.

CSS leadership will be working to create/develop a job shadowing program and is exploring what that would look for our department. We are anticipating that this program/initiative will help staff develop their skills and abilities to understand the organization and opportunities for growth. This initiative is a result of staff feedback that expressed a desire to learn and get a wide array of experiences to assist with their professional development.

CSS Transformed is an initiative to hear feedback and act on concerns voiced in the Employee Climate Survey. CSS Leadership will provide three listening sessions--two exclusively for frontline staff, the other for managers and supervisors. This will be a safe place for staff to express concerns, offer feedback, and present ideas for improvement. After these listening sessions, CSS leadership team will meet to discuss what changes must be made.

Action Steps List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Leadership team will have three "CSS Transformed Listening Sessions" with staff
- CSS morale committee will provide activities to engage CSS staff
- Leadership team will work with staff to develop Individual Development Plans
- Research and develop a job shadowing program

Evaluation Criteria What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

Success will be measured in terms of increased training and professional opportunities for staff as well as implementation of various programs to increase communication between staff and leadership.

Various performance measures will be used to track progress for professional development. These measures include:

- Increased number of professional development and training opportunities by June 30, 2023
- Increased number of training approvals granted by supervisors by June 30, 2023

- Increased % of staff satisfaction regarding professional development opportunities reported on surveys

Section 1: Annual Goals

4. Domestic Violence Services

Goal Alignment List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

CSS 1.1 SBP FY23-25 Strategic Priorities: Increase the CSS Domestic Violence Unit's capacity to meet community demand for timely, trauma-informed services

Goal Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

CSS Domestic Violence Services

- Reduce waiting times for domestic violence counseling appointments during Fiscal Year 2023 by hiring seven American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-funded licensed clinicians

Rationale

Mecklenburg County has been awarded \$215,673,636 (\$107,836,818 Received) in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds as part of ARPA. This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery. CSS received the funds to help meet community demand for domestic violence-related counseling. During the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence survivors' mental health needs have increased in intensity, compounded by complex trauma as well as the psychological and economic impacts of the pandemic.

Demand for domestic violence counseling services provided by Mecklenburg County Community Support Services (CSS) has remained steady, and clients are remaining in services for longer periods of time due to the intensity of their need and the ongoing disruptions of COVID-19. As a result, a persistent wait list has developed, with 168 children and 67 adults waiting for counseling as of April 13, 2022. At the same time, counselor caseloads have remained full even with both in person and telehealth service delivery methods in play. Pre-pandemic staff capacity is inadequate. CSS will add six full-time Licensed Clinicians and one full-time Clinical Supervisor to help meet the increased demand for services.

Action Steps List the actions/events that need to take place.

CSS Domestic Violence Clinical Services

- Recruit, hire, train and supervise 7 new ARPA-funded positions (1 Clinical Supervisor, 2 Adult Licensed Clinicians, 2 Children's Licensed Clinicians, 1 Adult Bilingual Licensed Clinician, 1 Children's Bilingual Licensed Clinician).
- Use Case Assignment List to document and monitor adults and children who are waiting to start domestic violence counseling services. Report wait-list volume quarterly
- Assign adults and children from Case Assignment List to Licensed Clinicians. Report number of clients starting services each quarter
- Monitor risk and identify mitigation strategies for recruitment and hiring barriers

Evaluation Criteria What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

CSS Domestic Violence Clinical Services

- Reduced wait times for counseling from current 4-month average wait to no-more-than-30-day average wait by June 2023

- Achieve at least 25% of clients waiting 1 week or less for counseling by June 2023

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5. Ensure Veteran Representation in Appeals Hearings

Goal Alignment List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

CSS 1.3 Strengthen prevention services to meet the needs of veterans

Goal Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Lead effort to align CSS Veteran Services to ensure veteran representation in Appeals Hearings

Rationale

Currently, 45% of veteran appeals hearings nationwide are cancelled or rescheduled due to veteran no-shows greatly impacting the resolution of pending claims and Veteran's Board of Appeals (VBA) case capacity. This results in a continued backlog on the VBA docket significantly delaying decisions on our veteran's claims often directly impacting veteran outcomes.

The Appeals Modernization Act (AMA) and the movement to virtual hearing by the Veteran's Board of Appeals (VBA) driven by the COVID-19 pandemic presented CSS Veterans Services with a unique opportunity to better serve Mecklenburg County Veterans. Conducting appeals hearings locally affords veterans the opportunity to appear in their hearing without travel to Winston Salem or Washington D.C. Having a veteran present at their hearing improves outcomes.

Mecklenburg County has the second highest concentration of veterans in the State of North Carolina with an estimated veteran population of over 51,000. Veterans brought over \$535 million in Veteran Affairs expenditures to Mecklenburg County in Fiscal Year 2020.

With a backlog of appeals hearings currently on the docket, an expected 40,000 caregiver appeals pending due to *Beaudette v. McDonough*, and an increase of appeals expected due to additions from legislation demand for these services is expected to grow.

Action Steps List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Develop strategy and policy to ensure local VBA representation for Mecklenburg County veterans consistent with Federal and State policies that improves veteran hearing attendance.
- Develop highly trained Veteran Service Officers through a comprehensive training program that includes Advanced Appeals training to improve claim outcomes.
- Ensure physical space and IT capabilities are provided to support virtual appeals hearings.

Evaluation Criteria What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

- Implementation of policy and training program by June 30, 2023: (Y/N)
- Veteran hearing attendance rate greater than 75% by June 30, 2023: (Y/N)

Section 1: Annual Goals

6. HHS Integration

Goal Alignment List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

Develop a system-wide approach to integrated service delivery to improve the health and well-being of Mecklenburg County residents

Goal Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Improve economic, health, and food security outcomes by opening additional Community Resource Centers and integrating service coordination for Mecklenburg County residents

Rationale

In 2015, Mecklenburg County kicked-off an HHS Integration Initiative under the Bringing Mecklenburg County to You (BMC2U) project. The primary objective of this Initiative is to develop, implement and refine a comprehensive, integrated Health & Human Services business model that encompasses programs currently administered by Community Support Services (CSS), Department of Community Resources (DCR), Department of Social Services (DSS), Public Health (PH), and targeted community partners.

The initiative proposed a system of "Community Resource Centers" that provide a continuum of County and community partner services at a single location, expanding access to services across the County and meeting customers where they are. The prototype Community Resource Center opened at 3205 Freedom Drive in June 2018. Based upon the success of the prototype, Mecklenburg County is preparing for the expansion of the Community Resource Center (CRC) model to additional locations.

Along with the CRC model, Mecklenburg County will implement an integrated HHS Service Connection process for select staff/teams serving pregnant and post-partum women. The process involves the following three steps:

- Assessing customers using a Social Determinants of Health Screening Tool to determine household needs.
- Reviewing the resources/benefits a customer may be receiving or eligible for using Single View of the Customer technology which connects data software systems across HHS.
- Referring customers to needed services/resources using NCCARE360, a statewide online coordinated care network, that allows for referrals to resources and services throughout the community.

Action Steps List the actions/events that need to take place.

In partnership with the HHS Leadership Team and CRC Project Team:

- Develop baseline measures to determine the impact of CRC services on the social determinants of health for each CRC service area.

- Implement and operationalize revised CRC Governance Charter and performance metrics.
- Facilitate the opening of the Northeast CRC.
- Lead development of a phased opening plan for CRC 3, 4 and 5.
- Design, develop and implement an integrated HHS service connection process to serve pregnant and post-partum women.

Evaluation Criteria What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

Successful completion of all Action Steps.

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7. Assess the Supportive Services Delivery Model

Goal Alignment List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

CSS 1.4 Strengthen the delivery of homeless services

Goal Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Assess the supportive services delivery model for formerly homeless households currently enrolled in supportive housing to ensure maximization of resources

Rationale

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness defines supportive housing as an intervention that combines non-time limited affordable housing assistance with wrap around supportive for people experiencing homelessness. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) considers this evidence-based practice as a key intervention intended to assist the household in housing stabilization and reducing their return to homelessness.

Mecklenburg County currently funds over 80 supportive service staff positions – both internally and through contracted partnerships – serving approximately 1400 households annually in permanent supportive housing (PSH) and rapid rehousing (RRH). The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Continuum of Care allocates nearly \$1M in funding through US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for 15 additional positions serving 200 individuals and families.

Local data reflect a 20% increase in homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg since the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020. In addition, service provider staff report an increase in compound trauma and severity of mental health and substance use of households experiencing homelessness.

An assessment of supportive service delivery model helps to ensure that caseload size meets household needs and leverages resources appropriately across systems. Ensuring that resources through Alliance Health are being maximized and that household acuity is considered in caseload distribution focuses needs. Mecklenburg County's partnership with Alliance Health provides opportunities to incorporate enhanced clinical supports and treatment to address complex needs of households served.

This assessment also includes a greater understanding of training needs to ensure support services staff have the skills and resources to implement evidence-based practices that will encourage client engagement and stabilization.

Action Steps List the actions/events that need to take place.

- In collaboration with Alliance Health, develop a strategy that encompasses the full scope of mental health care, crisis treatment, Intellectual and Development Disability services and substance use treatment options for households experiencing homelessness

- Assess Mecklenburg County Community Support Services supportive services contracts to ensure maximization and 'right sizing' on caseloads and services
- Develop and implement processes that match acuity with program and caseload ratio.
- Explore alternative solutions for supportive services for households transitioning from homelessness to housed
- Development and implementation of training strategy for support services staff across system that increases skills and knowledge of evidence-based practices

Evaluation Criteria What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

- A strategy to address unmet mental health, substance use, and development and intellectual needs of households is developed by June 30, 2023. (Y/N)
- An assessment of Mecklenburg County supportive service contracts is completed and recommendations are provided for caseload ratios and service delivery by June 30, 2023. (Y/N)
- Training curriculum is developed by June 30, 2023. (Y/N)

Section 1: Annual Goals

8. Department Equity Action Plan

Goal Alignment List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

CSS.3 - Advance Racial Equity by Implementing the County's Racial Equity Action Plan

Goal Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Create a Department Specific Equity Action Plan

Rationale

An essential component to our County Equity Action Plan is alignment among our departments. Alignment is the bridge between strategy and execution. The criteria for implementing our Equity Action Plan requires that our systems, leadership, staff, and culture all align with the ideals of our plan and requires the specificity of our department's functions. The development of our Department Equity Action Plans will help us; identify our individual department and enterprise responsibilities, create structure, process, and operational strategy at the department level, get clear on our departmental equity roles and responsibilities, and, understand the experiences, skills, and competencies needed to execute on our equity plan.

Action Steps List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Complete FY20-22 County Equity Action Plan
 - Document progress on Existing County EAP
 - Participate in OEI Listening Session and complete the Equity Needs Assessment
- Meet with Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer to Review and Develop Department Equity Action Plan
- Create or Re-Establish Department-Specific Equity Action Team in alignment with OEI Sequencing
- In partnership with the Office of Equity & Inclusion, create department-specific equity vision, align department goals and objectives to the Equity Action Plan and identify equity-centered outcome measures

Evaluation Criteria What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

- FY20-22 County Equity Action Plan Completed and Progress Documented
- Department Equity Action Plan Completed
- Department re-establishment or creation of Department Equity Action Team in alignment with OEI Sequencing

