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**HEADING HOME COALITION IN MONROE COUNTY & SURROUNDING REGION  
BECOMES FIRST INDIANA COMMUNITY TO JOIN NATIONAL BUILT FOR ZERO  
MOVEMENT TO DECREASE HOMELESSNESS**

**Bloomington, Ind.** – Heading Home of South Central Indiana has joined Built for Zero, a national network of more than 100 communities working to measurably and equitably end homelessness. With a focus on Monroe and five surrounding counties, this region is the first in Indiana to join Built for Zero.

The partnership with Built for Zero will help improve the regional homelessness response system to achieve measurable reductions in how many people are experiencing, and coming into, homelessness. Many communities look at program-specific outcomes, generally counting the number of people served. The Built for Zero model, instead, looks at the whole system with the goal of coordinating different programs and activities to ensure that the efforts add up to fewer people facing homelessness.

The alliance with Built for Zero will support Heading Home and its partners to strengthen the homelessness response system to reach functional zero, a dynamic, measurable end state to homelessness for a population. The goal to reduce homelessness for all populations will begin by reaching functional zero for veterans. From there, the coalition will



***Built For Zero South Central Indiana core team: Danielle Sorden, Emily Pike, Mary Morgan, Tatiana Wheeler, Bob Goodrum, and Forrest Gilmore***



continue to expand improvement efforts to other populations. An advisory group of veteran service providers is being formed to assist in this effort.

“South Central Indiana is making great early progress building a strong team comprising many organizations. This coalition-building work will help them obtain real-time, population-level data on homelessness, and then streamline their work to improve their system further down the line,” said Garen Nigon, Built for Zero system improvement advisor.

The local Built for Zero core team includes representatives from organizations across several counties, including Heading Home, the South Central Housing Network, [Beacon Inc.](#), [New Hope for Families](#) and [WellSpring](#).

“Housing security in our community has reached a critical level, and we know that more individuals and families will face homelessness as a result,” said Emily Pike, chair of the South Central Housing Network and executive director of New Hope for Families. “I am excited to be a part of a collaborative community strategy to improve housing security for all our neighbors.”

Heading Home, formed in 2021, is a coalition of United Way of Monroe County, the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County, the South Central Housing Network, the City of Bloomington, Monroe County Government, and other community leaders to implement the Heading Home plan, a regional effort for making homelessness rare, brief, and non-repeating. The plan serves as a local guide to support long-term initiatives in reducing and eliminating regional housing insecurity and homelessness.

The Heading Home plan addresses the many contributing factors to housing insecurity, ranging from financial and legal issues to emotional, physical, and mental health-related matters. It also speaks to system-level issues related to access to a variety of housing types. Additionally, it looks at regionally-relevant process issues that can be improved upon to eliminate barriers to housing or to expedite access.

The plan is grounded in the concept of Housing First, an approach to quickly and successfully connect families and individuals to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers. It’s a significant advancement to previous approaches that required individuals to demonstrate readiness and stability prior to being eligible for housing assistance. To read the Heading Home 2021 plan, visit [HeadingHomeIndiana.org](#).

Heading Home’s staff are based at United Way of Monroe County, which provides in-kind logistical support for the initiative. “Partnering with Built for Zero is a great way to leverage our local investments in housing security,” said Efrat Feferman, executive director of United Way of



Monroe County. "And access to their national network will help us learn about what's working in other communities."

The Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County has awarded a \$50,000 proactive grant to United Way to support Heading Home's Built for Zero initiative and to advance strategies aligned to the Heading Home plan. The Foundation also recently announced it awarded \$200,000 to six nonprofits this summer for projects and programs aligned with solutions outlined in the Heading Home Plan. Read more about each of these grants at: <https://cfbmc.org/community-foundation-awards-200000-in-heading-home-grants/>

"Two years ago, our public, private, and nonprofit sectors came together to reimagine a more effective homelessness response system in our community," said Community Foundation President and CEO Tina Peterson. "We know investment, collaboration, and measurement are all critical components to fulfill the complex goals identified in the Heading Home plan. The Housing First and Built for Zero models show incredible promise in reducing chronic and veteran homelessness in communities across the U.S. and we are encouraged by the potential that these tools provide to our coalition, community, and region."

The Heading Home initiative has also received funding from the City of Bloomington and Monroe County Government to enable community partners to launch and sustain long-term solutions for the region. The City of Bloomington provided \$1.2 million in funding to support the Heading Home Plan, plus an additional \$1.5 million coming in 2023. The Monroe County Government has contributed \$1.2 million, plus a commitment for an additional \$1.2 million to sustain the work for the long term. Bloomington Township also contributed \$15,000 to Heading Home.

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**About Heading Home of South Central Indiana:** Heading Home, based at United Way of Monroe County, is a community-wide collaboration working to strengthen housing security and decrease homelessness in this region, including Monroe, Morgan, Lawrence, Owen, Greene and Martin counties. The work is guided by the 2021 Heading Home Plan, which identifies system-level issues that can be improved to eliminate barriers to housing or to expedite access. More info at [headinghomeindiana.org](http://headinghomeindiana.org).

**About Built for Zero:** Built for Zero is an initiative of [Community Solutions](http://CommunitySolutions.org), a New York-based nonprofit working to end homelessness. Community Solutions was recently awarded the MacArthur Foundation's \$100 million grant through the 100&Change competition to accelerate an end to homelessness for communities participating in Built for Zero. More than 100 communities in Built for Zero are working to measurably and equitably end homelessness.



Learn more at [www.community.solutions](http://www.community.solutions) or follow us at @CmtySolutions. Media Contact: Lauren Barnes, [lbarnes@community.solutions](mailto:lbarnes@community.solutions)

**About United Way of Monroe County:** United Way of Monroe County is a nonprofit organization that improves the lives and futures of all people in the community. We bring together expertise, funding and volunteer support to positively impact the resilience of our community, and those who live within it. In partnership with others, we work to eliminate inequities experienced by low-income and diverse populations so that all people have a safe, healthy home environment, achieve their educational potential, and increase their financial stability. We commit to building bridges across cultural, racial, religious, and economic boundaries. More info at [www.monroeunitedway.org](http://www.monroeunitedway.org).

**About the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County:** Created by individuals, families, and businesses who share a passion for Monroe County and a vision for its future, the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County has granted more than \$28.9 million since its incorporation in 1990. With a growing \$44 million endowment, the Foundation makes a difference by connecting caring people, important causes, and community resources. Learn more at [www.cfbmc.org](http://www.cfbmc.org).