HEADING HOME OF SOUTH CENTRAL INDIANA

HEADING HOME

Overview

01	*BACKGROUND ON HEADING HOME*
02	*RESULTS OF THE STUDY*
03	*DISCUSSION*

How We Began

Working group convened in 2020 by United Way, Community Foundation, South Central Housing Network, Monroe County, City of Bloomington & other stakeholders

Heading Home Plan developed, giving strategic guidance to make homelessness rare, brief & non-repeating

Monroe County & City of Bloomington funded Heading Home with federal ARPA dollars

Director hired in Dec. 2021

Staff of Heading Home

Mary Morgan & Tatiana Wheeler were hired to implement the Heading Home Plan.

We work to drive long-term, systemic change that will increase housing security for those who call our communities home.

We envision a region where housing is accessible and affordable for all and homelessness is rare, brief, and non-repeating.

Background

In 2022, Heading Home & UWSCI convened a group of stakeholders to discuss housing needs in Lawrence County.

During that conversation, there seemed to be a disconnect between what service providers were seeing, compared to the perception of others in the community.

To help clarify conditions, Heading Home commissioned a study to assess homelessness and housing insecurity in Lawrence County.

Homelessness in Lawrence County

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Agenda

01	*INTRODUCTION*
02	*LITERATURE REVIEW*
03	*SECONDARY DATA*
04	*RESULTS OF SURVEY*
05	*SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS*
06	*RECOMMENDATIONS*

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Homelessness in Lawrence County, Indiana

O'NEILL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Introduction

Research Author
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Research Sponsors
Heading Home of South Central Indiana and IU Center for Rural Engagement

Literature review, surveys at Becky's Place and the Warming Center, stakeholder interviews and secondary data

Literature Review

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How the Pandemic Impacted Rural Homelessness

- With COVID-19 pandemic came eviction moratoriums, but evictions ***spiked*** after they were lifted.

- From June 1, 2022, through June 1, 2023, ***4%*** of the rental market (173) received eviction filings in Lawrence County

Rural Homelessness

Definitions of homelessness

- The relative burden of homelessness that rural communities face is ***higher*** than that faced in metropolitan areas
- People in rural areas typically experience homelessness for ***shorter and fewer*** episodes of homelessness during their lifetime
- People in rural areas are ***less likely*** to stay on the streets but are more likely to sleep in their vehicles, in state or federal campground areas, or in substandard housing

Secondary Data

Secondary Data on Homelessness

- HUD Point-in-time count found **37** people experiencing homelessness (including 4 children) in 2022

- Department of Education McKinney Vento data found **57** students experiencing homelessness. Most students have at least one parent, so that gives an estimate of at least 120 people

Secondary Data on Housing Assistance

- Calls to 211- ***452*** housing related calls, mostly utilities but ***108*** rent and ***34*** shelter
- ***Over 50%*** of townships in Lawrence County did not provide any housing assistance and if they did, it was minimal
- Median rental prices for 1- and 3-bedroom apartments ***increased around 10%*** from 2022-2023 and now exceed state average
- Lawrence County has vacancy rate of ***13%*** in “Other Vacant” structures, likely vacant due to poor maintenance or lack of utilites

Results of the Survey

Participants included 13 individuals at Becky's Place and 20 individuals at the Warming Center

General Demographics

Age

Ages at Becky's Place skewed younger with ***39%*** under 30.

At the Warming Center over ***50%*** of the people were over 50 with one 80-year-old.

Employment

Only one person at Becky's Place was unemployed.

About ***50%*** at the Warming Center were unemployed, and ***15%*** employed, ***10%*** retired and ***25%*** on disability.

Residency

Becky's Place were more likely to be newer to the community with half living in the area more than two years and ***30%*** less than a month

At the Warming Center, ***45%*** had lived there their whole life and ***25%*** have lived there more than 5 years.

15% of the people had been Lawrence County residents for less than a year, with only one person less than one month.

General Demographics

Domestic Violence

70% of women in either place has been a victim of domestic violence

Veterans

10% of those at the Warming Center were veterans

Criminal Background

40% reported having a felony record at the Warming Center

31% reported having a felony record at Becky's Place

Substance Abuse Disorders and Mental Illness

Mental Illness

35% at the Warming Center had been diagnosed with a mental illness.

77% at Becky's Place had been diagnosed with a mental illness.

Substance Abuse Disorders

54% at Becky's Place said they had been told they have a substance abuse disorder.

40% said they had a substance abuse disorder at the Warming Center.

Physical Disability

31% at Becky's Place indicated they had a physical disability

Barriers to Shelter

- Lack of options for couples and people with pets, which forces them to stay in cars and tents.

Barriers to Permanent Housing

- Eviction history
- Lack of affordable housing options
- Long waitlists for Section 8 housing

Stakeholder Interviews

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Stakeholder Interview Takeaways

- Lack of affordable housing, quality of available housing, waiting list for vouchers of six months to multiple years, depending on the number of bedrooms
- Case management would be helpful in keeping people housed, particularly for those with mental health and/or substance use issues
- Not much coordination among agencies, except informally
- Community overall supportive, but there needs to be a “champion” to help lead collective efforts

Questions?

Recommendations

Create a taskforce of key partners who could consider these suggested actions

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Engage Landlords

Develop a landlord outreach program that incentivizes more landlords to accept tenants with housing vouchers.

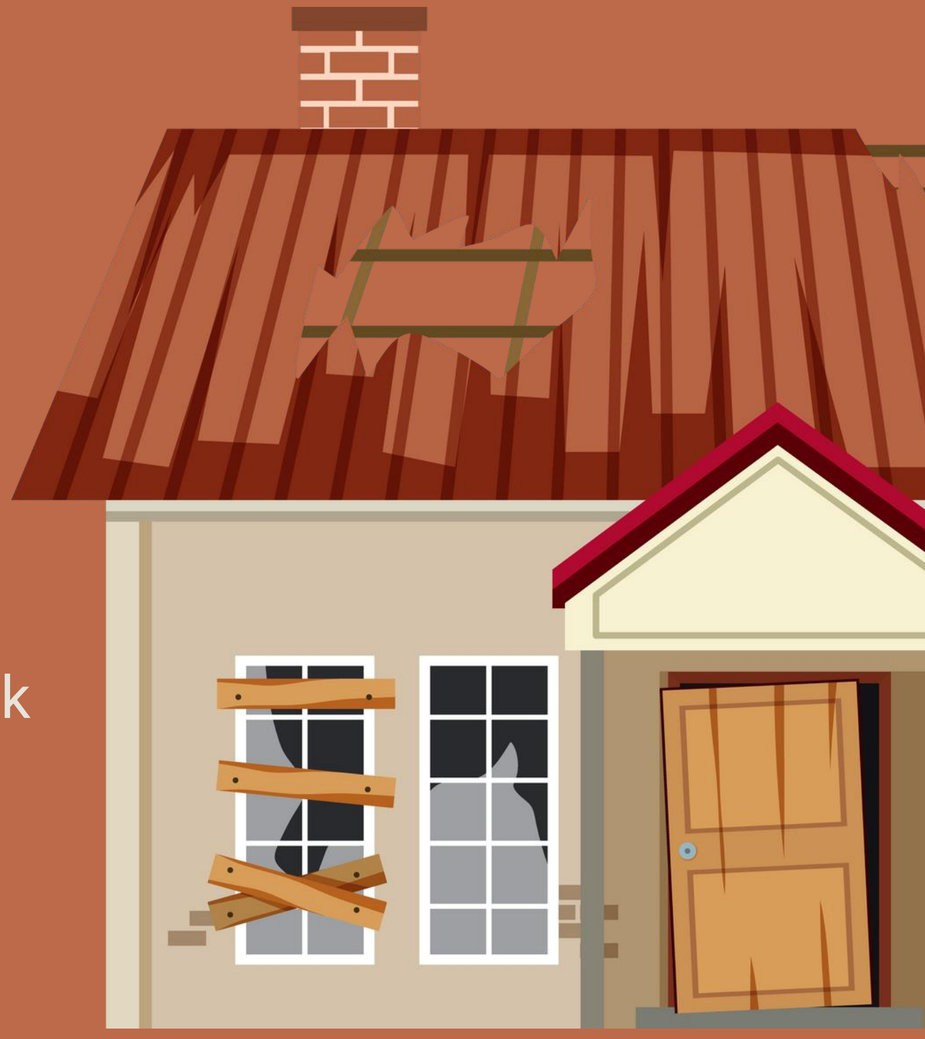
Explore the creation of a landlord risk mitigation program similar to the one launched this year by the Bloomington Housing Authority.

Leverage Volunteers for Home Repairs

Create/coordinate a preventative volunteer program to provide repairs to make homes habitable or prevent them from becoming uninhabitable.

For larger repairs as well as for weatherization, there are funds available from Rural Development, HUD, and community action agencies.

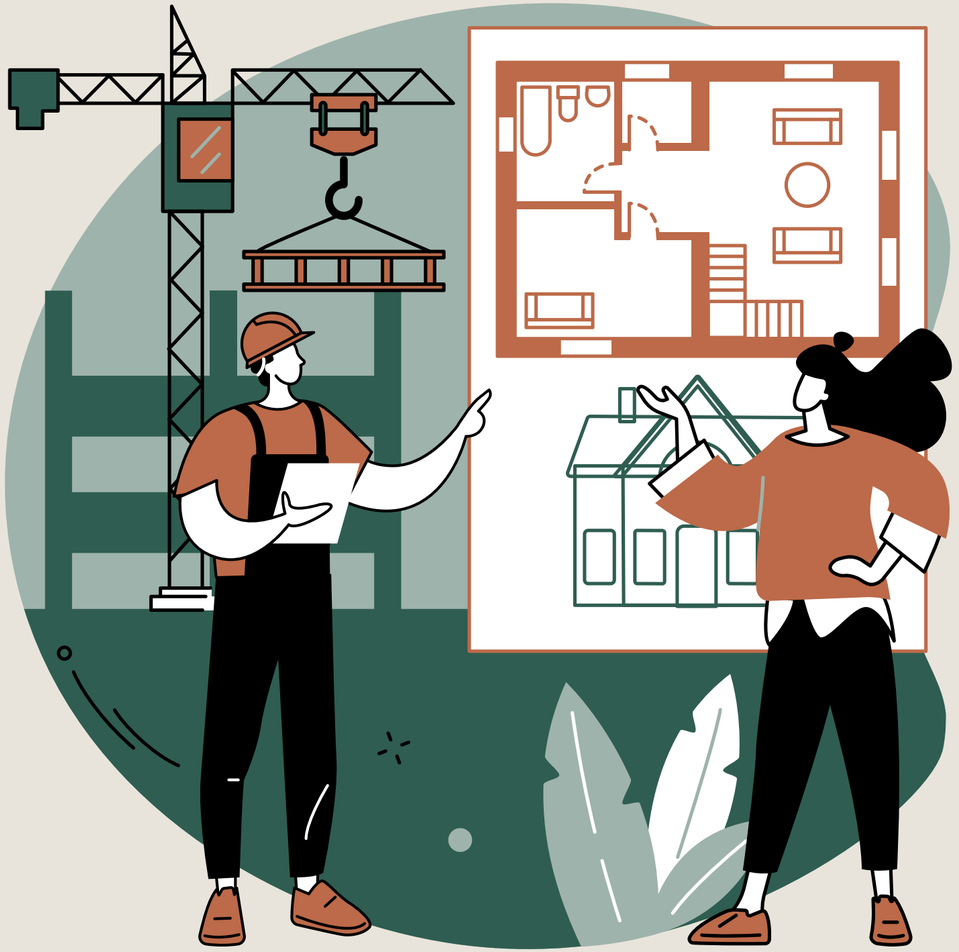
This could assist in bringing “other vacant structures” back into the housing market and prevent others from slipping into that category and improve the overall quality of housing.



Leveraging Low-Income Housing Tax Credit

Coordinate and increase the utilization of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)

This credit provides a tax incentive to construct or rehabilitate affordable rental housing for low-income households.



Support Service Providers

Identify and/or develop resources for case management, particularly for those with substance use and mental health issues.

Strong social support systems are just as important as affordable housing.

Discussion

Discussion Questions

- From your perspective, what are the priority housing needs in Lawrence County?
- What assets can the city, county, townships and others deploy?
- What are the next steps to start addressing these needs?

Communications

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Communications

Monthly Newsletters

Subscribe to our newsletters

General News: Week 1
People of Housing Security: Week 2
Volunteer/Advocacy: Week 3

News Site

Learn more on our news site

Weekly articles are published on our news site regarding housing security. Check out HeadingHomeIndiana.org

Social Media

Follow us on social media

Instagram: headinghome_sci
Facebook: Heading Home of South Central Indiana

Presentations

Let's chat

We meet with any community group to discuss housing security issues in depth. Contact us to schedule a meeting.

Thank you for helping strengthen housing security together!

To see more of our work, visit our socials:

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