



FAITH-BASED GROUP
TOOLKIT



FAITH-BASED PARTNERSHIP TO END HOMELESSNESS

Together, we pledge to bring faith-based responses to restore the physical, economic and spiritual health of individuals experiencing homelessness in our City. This partnership of faith-based communities and organizations will work collaboratively with the Continuum of Care to make our community a place where all people have a secure place to call home by:

1. Advocating for an increased supply of safe, decent, affordable housing
2. Collaborating to create more safe, decent, affordable housing
3. Educating about and advocating for best practices and improved policy
4. Coordinating services, sharing data, and identifying and filling gaps and eliminating overlaps in services

HOMELESSNESS IN CENTRAL ALABAMA



From 2009 to 2019, we have seen a 56% decrease in homelessness in Central Alabama.

Definition of Homeless

According to HUD, individuals or families who are **literally homeless** include people who are in one of the following:

- o Places not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
- o A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotels and motels paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for homeless persons);
- o A hospital or other institution, if the person was sleeping in an emergency shelter or other place not meant for human habitation (cars, parks, streets, etc.) immediately prior to entry into the hospital or institution

Myths and Facts about Homelessness

- **MYTH:** Homelessness is a permanent problem. We will never solve it.
- **FACT:** Permanent housing has been proven to reduce homelessness and save taxpayer dollars otherwise spent on costly shelters and hospitalizations.

- **MYTH:** It is their fault they are homeless.
- **FACT:** The real increase in homelessness comes from the lack of real affordable housing and few resources for people to move out of shelters and into permanent housing.

- **MYTH:** People would not be homeless if they had a job.
- **FACT:** A full-time minimum wage worker could not afford a one- or two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent in any state. Many people experiencing homelessness either have a job or suffer from disabilities and other barriers to employment.

- **MYTH:** It is solely the responsibility of the city/government to address homelessness.
- **FACT:** Homelessness is a community issue and it will take the community to help solve it. One Roof is the lead agency for the homeless Continuum of Care. There are over 40 partner agencies which include shelters, the faith community, landlords and city/state organizations working together to help end homelessness.

PRACTICAL STEPS OF ENGAGEMENT



1. One simple thing we can change is the words we use when speaking to or about a person experiencing homelessness. Instead of saying “homeless person”, say “person experiencing homelessness”. It focuses on the person first then frames homelessness as a circumstance, not a characteristic or a condition.
2. It is important to treat a person experiencing homelessness with the dignity and respect that you would treat anyone. Use the same safety measures you would with any new person you do not know. You can be kind and still be wise.
3. When engaging someone, respect the individual’s space. You should treat this space as their home that you should be invited into by them.
4. Do not get too close before you say hello. Introduce yourself and create an opportunity to extend a branch like giving a bottle of water.
5. Be aware of your facial expressions and your tone of voice. A soft voice will go a long way.
6. Give the person a chance to interact. Listen, be accepting. Allow them to experience a positive social interaction.
7. Be understanding if the person rejects any type of conversation or assistance.
8. Remain at arm’s length and do not physically reach out to a person, such as for a hug, unless it is a mutual response initiated by them.
9. Keep your hands by your side and not in your pockets as a person may not understand your intentions.
10. If you are ever in a situation where you have to call the police, please ask that a Community Service Officer be sent to the situation. These officers are certified social workers that are equipped to provide services in challenging situations.

ONE ROOF PARTNERSHIP



One Roof's mission is to equip and empower our community to prevent and end homelessness through advocacy, education, and coordination of services. Our goal is to connect individuals and families to appropriate resources related to their housing and service needs. We serve Jefferson, St.

Clair, and Shelby counties. One Roof is the lead agency for the homeless Continuum of Care. One Roof coordinates housing, services, and funding for homeless families and individuals in Central Alabama. One Roof is one of 400+ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded continuums of care that plan for and provide, as necessary, a full range of resources to address the various needs of homeless persons. One Roof secures HUD funding for agencies who are a part of our Continuum and provide housing needs.

START HERE TO HELP END HOMELESSNESS

One Roof

www.oneroofonline.org

1515 6th Avenue South

205-254-8833

Birmingham, AL 35233

M – F 9am – 4pm

(5th Floor Cooper Green Mercy Health Services)

COORDINATED ASSESSMENT

Coordinated Assessment refers to the practice of conducting in-depth assessments of needs and barriers of homeless people and people at imminent risk of homelessness at the earliest point possible. The goals are to divert people from homelessness whenever possible, provide prevention services when indicated, objectively prioritize and match people with the type, level, and duration of services that best meet their needs and to house the most vulnerable people. The One Roof Continuum of Care has prioritized the following populations: chronically homeless, families with children, youth age 18-24, and Veterans. By using a Coordinated Assessment system, this helps move people through the system, reduce duplication of efforts, serve clients effectively, assist with ending chronic homelessness, make a better match of services to client's needs, and reduce returns to homelessness.

Clients may access Coordinated Assessment via phone or in person at the One Roof office.

Clients may also access Coordinated Assessment through street outreach and shelter outreach efforts.



OUR APPROACH TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS

To enact the vision of ending homelessness in Birmingham and surrounding areas, faith-based communities are strongly encouraged to align their ministries and programs to support these evidence-based best practices that the federal government has acknowledged as effective in ending homelessness.

PERMANENT HOUSING

We believe that the solution to homelessness is simple: permanent housing. Stable housing is the foundation upon which people build their lives – absent a safe, decent, affordable place to live, it is next to impossible to achieve good health, positive educational outcomes, or reach one’s economic potential. Providing immediate access to permanent housing, without preconditions, along with optional supportive services as needed (also called Housing First) can ensure that homeless individuals remain housed, even those with severe substance use and mental health conditions. Under the Housing First service model, emergency shelters and basic services are a pathway to permanent housing, providing temporary shelter and assessment for permanent housing.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Permanent Supportive housing is an intervention prioritized for people who are chronically homeless. These individuals need long-term support to live stably in their communities. Permanent Supportive Housing is a non-time limited program that provides supportive services throughout the program.

RAPID REHOUSING

Rapid Re-Housing is a strategy informed by housing first that quickly re-houses people experiencing homelessness through time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services. The goal is to minimize the negative outcomes of homelessness by helping persons return to housing as soon as possible.

TARGETED HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Homelessness Prevention programs help to support those who are at-risk of homelessness and ensure they do not become homeless. By targeting assistance to those who are most at-risk of homelessness, programs are able to maximize the limited available resources for homelessness prevention.

PARTICIPATE IN THE PARTNERSHIP



JOIN THE FAITH-BASED PARTNERSHIP

The Faith-Based Partnership, composed of faith-based organizations, gathers quarterly. Join us to discuss current projects, future service opportunities, and to stay up to date on evidence-based best practices.



TAKE PART IN ONGOING PROJECTS

Unite with other faith-based organizations by working together on projects that support the Faith-Based Partnership's vision and mission. The Partnership works to advocate, collaborate, educate and coordinate to serve people experiencing homelessness in the community.



SUPPORT FAMILIES IN HOUSING

Connect with local service providers to learn ways the Partnership can support individuals and families experiencing homelessness and transitioning out of homelessness. Faith-based communities can be connected to local partners of the Continuum of Care for additional volunteer opportunities.



REFER TO EMERGENCY SERVICES

When engaging with a person experiencing homelessness, the Faith-Based Partnership can refer individuals and families to emergency shelters by using the resource list on page 8. The Partnership encourages people to connect to services for additional resources and case management.



PARTICIPATE IN POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

Each year in January, One Roof conducts a Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. PIT is an annual mini-census of the homeless community that provides important information to help our community better understand the needs of people experiencing homelessness. For more information on the annual PIT count, please visit www.oneroofonline.org/point-in-time.



PARTNER IN PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT

Project Homeless Connect is a community wide event that provides a variety of free services to people experiencing homelessness in the Birmingham metro area. Volunteers sign up as a Smiling Face Client Guide and are paired with a client to ensure they are connected to the services they need at PHC. For more information about Project Homeless Connect, please visit www.oneroofonline.org/project-homeless-connect.



HELP CONNECT PEOPLE TO HOUSING

Coordinated Assessment streamlines the process of finding housing for those who are homeless by referring individuals and families to the most appropriate resources and prioritizes the most vulnerable clients to be matched with permanent housing. The Faith-Based Partnership encourages the importance of connecting with Coordinated Assessment when working directly with people experiencing homelessness.

EMERGENCY SHELTER RESOURCES



Faith-Based Communities can refer individuals and families to the appropriate emergency shelter. It is encouraged to call the shelter directly on behalf of a person experiencing homelessness to see if this is an available resource. Faith-Based Communities can also refer a person directly to One Roof to discuss resources in the community.

First Light www.firstlightshelter.org	205-323-4277	Women and children
Firehouse Shelter www.firehouseshelter.com	205-252-9571	Men
Salvation Army www.salvationarmyalm.org/birmingham	205-328-2420	Men Women and children
Interfaith Hospitality House www.ywcabham.org/housing-families-experiencing-homelessness	205-591-4302	Two parent family with children Single father with a child/children Single mother with son over the age of 10
Family Promise www.familypromisebham.org	205-918-0246	Two parent family with children Single father with a child/children Single mother with son over the age of 10
Pathways www.pathwayshome.org	205-322-6854	Day Center for women and children Shelter program for women and children
Faith Care Center www.faithchapel.net/carecenter	205-785-9673	Day Center opened on Tues / Thurs / Sat
Church of the Reconciler www.churchofthereconciler.com	205-324-6402	Day Program for the Homeless
Confidential Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence www.ywcabham.org/domestic-violence-services-and-programs	205-322-4878 or 1-800-650-6522	24 hour Crisis Line

Warming Station

Boutwell Auditorium

The Warming Station is typically weather activated at a forecast of 32 degrees or below. Call One Roof (205-254-8833) for details and to confirm if the warming station is open.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Faith-Based Partnership Committee Chair

Rev. Terry Hamilton-Poore
First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham
FaithPartnersBham@gmail.com

One Roof

Continuum of Care
www.oneroofonline.org
205-254-8833

2-1-1 Information & Referral

United Way of Central Alabama, Inc.
www.uwca.org/2-1-1
Call 2-1-1 (or 1-888-421-1266)

CAP

City Action Partnership
www.capisdowntown.com
205-251-0111

