Strategic Operating & Continuum of Care Plan
2019 – 2021

The Gulf Coast Partnership's mission is to facilitate community-wide initiatives to understand community needs, identify and implement best practices to meet those needs, and to raise the quality of life for all residents.

Revised: <u>March 6, 2019</u>

Next Revision Due: <u>March 2020</u>

Through capacity building, collaboration, research, and awareness, we bring our community together, while focusing our limited community resources on the most vulnerable populations.

Strategic Priorities:

- Ending Homelessness
- Education - Youth & Families
- Veterans
- Housing
- Employment & Sustainability
- Criminal Justice
- Health & Mental Health Care

Organizational - Operations Goals 2019-2021

1. Continue looking for and engaging in conversations about mergers and regional collaboratives to expand the geographical reach, available services, and resources of the Gulf Coast Partnership (Hendry, Glades, Hardee, Desoto, Highlands, & Okeechobee and Lee Counties).

2. Secure adequate funding to bring a qualified Marketing, Events, & Public Relations staff member to the Gulf Coast Partnership Team.

3. Plan and implement a Southeast US or Florida Non-Profit Leadership "Think Tank" to become a financially sustainable annual event. Not a conference, but an immersion leadership and educational experience for all areas of the non-profit sector.

4. Seek diversified funding to accomplish the strategies of this Continuum of Care Plan.

5. Expand upon the current local training and educational opportunities to increase the program and operational management & fundraising capacity of Partner Agencies.

6. Continue to be the community leader in data-driven decision making.

Guide to Using this Document

At the March 6, 2019 Gulf Coast Partnership Stakeholders Council Meeting, this new Strategic Operating & Continuum of Care Plan was adopted. In the previous document: 10-Year Plan to Prevent & End Homelessness in Charlotte County, we accepted the recommendations of the Federal Strategic Plan, by reference. The new document, uses the federal strategic plan "Home: Together" as the framework and backbone plan and inserts additional State of Florida and Charlotte County specific strategies with additional detail. All of the same information is still included, it is the format which has substantially changed.

Federal Plan Strategy

State Plan Strategy

Local Continuum of Care Strategy

Shared National, State, Local, and CoC Goals

We have one fundamental goal, a goal shared across federal, state, county, city, and local continuums of care: **to end homelessness.** Therefore, the Gulf Coast Partnership has incorporated into this single action plan the FL-602 Continuum of Care Plan, Federal USICH Home Together Plan, and State of Florida Council on Homelessness Action Plan. This allows for our community to stay focused on our shared goals to:

- ✓ **End Homelessness among Veterans** *(2016)*

- **End Chronic Homelessness among People with Disabilities** *(2020)*

- **End Homelessness among Unaccompanied Youth**

- **End Homelessness among Families with Children**

- **End Homelessness among All Other Individuals**

Achieving these shared goals requires strategic focus, effort, and investments from all sectors and across all levels of government.

Defining Success

Achieving these goals is grounded in a shared vision of what it means to end homelessness: that every community must have a systemic response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, it is a **rare, brief, and one-time experience**. That means that every community must have the capacity to:

- Quickly identify and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness.

- Intervene to prevent people from losing their housing and divert people from entering the homelessness services system.

- Provide people with immediate access to shelter and crisis services without barriers to entry if homelessness does occur.

- Quickly connect people experiencing homelessness to housing assistance and services tailored to their unique needs and strengths to help them achieve and maintain stable housing.

Measuring our Progress

To drive and track progress towards these goals, utilizing CIS/HMIS and other tools, the Gulf Coast Partnership will develop and utilize an annual performance management plan with specific target actions, milestones, and deadlines. We will also use multiple performance measures to assess the overall impact of the implementation of our plan.

The Gulf Coast Partnership will focus on changes in the following key measures:

- The number of people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness at a point in time in the annual Point-in-Time count, including Veterans, people experiencing chronic homelessness, families with children, unaccompanied youth, and all other individuals.

- The number of people, including Veterans, people experiencing chronic homelessness, families with children, unaccompanied youth, and all individuals, spending time in emergency shelter and transitional housing annually.

- The number of children and youth, including both students in families and unaccompanied students, identified as experiencing homelessness at some point during the school year.

- Specific achievement in each population-specific goal.

To end homelessness, we must be able to implement a systemic response that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible or, if it can't be prevented, it is a **rare, brief, and one-time experience**. It will require the investment of time, effort, and financial resources by federal, state, and local public and private partners, working together in close collaboration.

The Plan focuses on identifying and describing essential strategies that will help our community build effective, lasting systems that will drive toward the goals and be able to respond quickly and efficiently when housing instability and homelessness occur.

The plan will serve as a road map for partners, providing a detailed framework through which agencies can identify and implement their own strategic activities and align their efforts with the continuum of care.

The Gulf Coast Partnership is focused on strategies that will support the community to make homelessness a **rare, brief, and one-time experience** and that will sustain that success once achieved.

Summary of Our Strategies

1) Ensure Homelessness is a Rare Experience

Objective 1.1: Collaboratively build lasting systems that end homelessness.

Objective 1.2: Increase capacity and strengthen practices to prevent housing crises and homelessness

2) Ensure Homelessness is a Brief Experience

Objective 2.1: Identify and engage all people experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible.

Objective 2.2: Provide immediate access to low-barrier emergency shelter or other temporary accommodations to all who need it.

Objective 2.3: Implement coordinated entry to standardize assessment and prioritization processes and streamline connections to housing and services.

Objective 2.4: Assist people to move swiftly into permanent housing with appropriate and person-centered services.

3) Ensure Homelessness is a One-Time Experience

Objective 3.1: Prevent returns to homelessness through connections to adequate services and opportunities.

4) Sustain an End to Homelessness

Objective 4.1: Sustain practices and systems at a scale necessary to respond to future needs.

1) Ensure Homelessness is a Rare Experience

The objectives and strategies in this section focus on actions that will help to make sure that individuals and families **experience homelessness much less often**. This includes strategies for building strong systems, expanding partnerships with mainstream programs that are not specifically targeted to people experiencing homelessness, putting a greater emphasis on diversion strategies, and strengthening our ability to prevent housing crises and homelessness.

Implementation of these strategies will be grounded in data and analysis and will help our community address the needs of populations that are disproportionately impacted by homelessness.

Objective 1.1: Collaboratively Build Lasting Systems that End Homelessness

To achieve the goal of ending homelessness and to ensure that homelessness is a rare experience, leaders from all sectors must come together to:

Build momentum behind a common vision
The national definition of an end to homelessness provides us with the criteria and benchmarks for achieving the goals. This common vision allows us to coordinate and align activities, policies, and priorities in a way that drives progress.

Understand and enumerate the size and scope of the problem
Collecting, analyzing, and reporting high-quality, timely data on homelessness is essential for understanding who experiences homelessness in the community at disproportionate rates and why. It also helps us target and scale interventions, track results, plan strategically, and allocate resources. By having comprehensive data at the center of collaborative decision-making processes, we can stretch the resources available further, understand where new resources are needed, target prevention efforts, and get better results.

Reduce fragmentation
Bringing together areas of the system that have typically operated in silos reduces duplicative or contradictory activities and ensures the most effective use of resources.

Drive implementation of cost-effective solutions
Using data, evaluation, performance measurement, and research to guide investments can lead to greater utilization of evidence-based and evidence- informed practices that efficiently solve homelessness and make better use of limited resources. For example, evidence-based Housing First approaches serve more people with better results.

a. **Strive for bold and ambitious goals for ending homelessness through prioritizing and appropriately scaling investments.** The Gulf Coast Partnership will provide technical assistance and modeling tools that can be implemented to project current and future needs and the types and scale of housing and services interventions that will be needed to achieve our goals and sustain those successes.

> **State Strategy 1:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will utilize the US Interagency Council on Homelessness Supportive Housing Opportunities (SHOP) Tool to determine what specific combination of strategies are needed to increase the availability of permanent supportive housing in our community and will submit that information to the Office on Homelessness.

b. **Strengthen the collection, reporting, and utilization of essential data sources**, including Point- in-Time count data, HMIS - Community Information System (CIS) data, State and Local Education Agency Education for Homeless Children and Youth data, Worst Case Housing Needs, and other relevant data, to better understand and enumerate the size and scope of the challenges that must be addressed. This work also includes increasing community capacity to match administrative data sets, such as health care and corrections, to improve interventions, tailor strategies, and improve outcomes for populations that are disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness.

> **State Strategy 2:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with local state agencies to encourage expanded access to all federal resources targeted to homelessness or persons experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. This will include grants, technical assistance, participation in initiatives and learning about and implementing evidence-based best practices.

> **CoC Strategy 1:** Collect and report discharge data for state prisons, including inmate county of adjudication and county of release. Implement best practices in discharge and reentry coordination.

> **CoC Strategy 2:** Evaluate the transportation needs of homeless and extremely low-income individuals and families. Determine the potential barriers to employment, health care, participation in educational, extracurricular activities, and parental engagement with schools. Include data from the transportation latent demand study and collaboration with the public-school system. Include any available research on rural community transportation solutions.

> **CoC Strategy 3:** Conduct study to determine need and feasibility of creating a Youth Shelter for our community to replace the one lost by Hurricane Charley in 2004.

CoC Strategy 4: The Gulf Coast Partnership will maintain a CoC-Wide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), locally named Community Information System (CIS), as the information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. This system will comply with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards.

CoC Strategy 5: Support the goals and strategies in the 20/20 Together Charlotte Housing Report to increase the availability and accessibility of affordable housing.

CoC Strategy 6: Determine the costs to our community of arrests, detainment, defense, and prosecution of cases involving people experiencing homelessness.

CoC Strategy 7: Conduct an extensive study to survey and identify the needs of those experiencing literal homeless and at-risk sub-populations, to include 1) Housing, 2) Health & Mental Health Care, 3) Child Care, and 4) Education.

CoC Strategy 8: Develop a working poor In-Reach Plan to address the UW's ALICE Population, determine necessary support services.

CoC Strategy 9: Identify the need and available resources for homeless and extremely low-income populations, how many homeless and extremely low-income people do not have access to medical care, mental health care, dental and vision care and determine barriers. Use this information to complete a community services gaps analysis.

CoC Strategy 10: Explore partnerships between health care providers and the public-school system to better understand delivery of needed health care to homeless and extremely low-income students.

c. **Engage people with lived experience** through advisory committees and policy and planning processes to ensure meaningful opportunities for providing expert advice and input.

d. **Further engage, support, and educate partners and the public**, regarding the scope, causes, and costs of homelessness; necessary solutions; evidence-based practices and strategies; and risk factors of homelessness, including the disproportionate and persistent impact of homelessness on some populations.

e. **Provide guidance about state and federal programs and resources to support best practices and increase impact within efficient systems** to prevent and end homelessness—including both the programs that are targeted to addressing homelessness and those that are not.

> **State Strategy 3:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will monitor the local use of Florida Housing Finance Corporation's dedicated resources for housing with restrictions for service to special needs and homeless, and chronically homeless households.

> **Objective 1.2: Increase Capacity and Strengthen Practices to Prevent Housing Crises and Homelessness**

Homelessness prevention is not the responsibility of the homelessness crisis response system alone. Rather, it requires a multi-sector approach and an active focus on housing needs, housing stability, and risks of homelessness across many different public systems. To strengthen our understanding of and approach to implementing effective prevention, the Gulf Coast Partnership will support our community in developing partnerships that build a multi-pronged approach to preventing homelessness, focused on actions that:

Reduce the prevalence of risk of housing crises. A complex set of external factors contribute to the risk of housing crises within our community and among different sub-populations. To make inroads in reducing the risk of housing crises, community-wide action is needed to address the wide range of policies contributing to the availability of, and access to, an adequate supply of safe and affordable housing; health and behavioral health resources; education and meaningful and gainful employment; opportunities for economic mobility; affordable child care; and legal assistance.

Reduce the risk of homelessness while households are engaged with or are transitioning from systems. Research and data demonstrate that individuals or families are often engaged with multiple public systems, such as health and behavioral health care, child welfare, and the juvenile and criminal justice systems, prior to their experiences of homelessness. Effective prevention approaches must include enhanced cross-system collaboration, such as increased awareness and attentiveness to housing stability, and effective transition and/or discharge planning that link people to other resources, including employment and other economic mobility supports, to reduce the risk of homelessness upon discharge or following the end of service provision.

The Gulf Coast Partnership can also consider policies that increase access to home-visiting programs, family support networks, school-based supports, and other community- based programs that focus on strong families and positive youth development. Family preservation and reunification can also be explored, whenever safe and appropriate, in order to address the disproportionate impact of homelessness on people of color, single mothers, families experiencing violence, and youth aging out of foster care.

Target assistance to prevent housing crises that do occur from escalating further and resulting in homelessness. Targeted assistance may include a combination of financial assistance, mediation and diversion, housing location, legal assistance, employment services, or other supports. Strong identification efforts through the implementation of housing status assessments are important tools for programs to effectively identify the most at-risk households, to connect them to the supportive services and/or resources that will best respond to their housing crisis, and to prevent homelessness from occurring.

a. **Promote development of an expanded supply of safe and affordable rental homes** through federal, state, and local efforts and investments. This includes assisting our community to adopt policies to expand overall housing supply and to project the scale of affordable housing units, including units that are affordable to people exiting homelessness, and units that are accessible to persons with disabilities needed to meet local demand on an ongoing basis.

> **State Strategy 4:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with the State Office on Homelessness to coordinate resources and technical assistance needed to increase local non-profit capacity to develop and operate a range of affordable rental housing.

> **State Strategy 5:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with the State Office on Homelessness to increase the development of permanent supportive housing in our community and to identify barriers to efficiently and effectively linking supports with housing for high utilizers of crisis services.

> **CoC Strategy 11:** Support the further development of the Peace River Housing Partners to produce a non-profit rental housing model for our community.

> **CoC Strategy 12:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will utilize available administrative funding to monitor and report on grant performance, as well as provide necessary training and technical assistance to current and potential Partner Agencies to increase their program and operating capacity.

> **CoC Strategy 13:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will develop a privately funded endowment to be used for providing rental subsidies in perpetuity as well as create a development plan for obtaining funding and/or loans to expand affordable housing options, including private and corporate foundations.

b. **Improve access to state and federally funded housing assistance by eliminating administrative barriers and encouraging targeting and prioritization of affordable housing** to people experiencing homelessness and/or to populations that are especially vulnerable to homelessness.

> **CoC Strategy 14:** Pursue opportunities to expand 202 and 811 Construction for the special needs homeless and extremely low-income populations. Identify and recruit partners who have capacity and experience with these programs.

> **CoC Strategy 15:** Create a plan for future development of housing and services based on the results of the Homeless and Extremely Low-Income Sub-Population Needs Study.

c. **Increase community capacity and local coordination to effectively identify, target, and connect at-risk individuals and families to local resources and opportunities that contribute to and strengthen housing stability,** including job training and apprenticeship programs, primary and behavioral health services, early childhood programs, and elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education. For children and youth at risk of homelessness, this includes strengthening connections to school- and community-based resources that encourage education retention, high school completion, and services that address needs related to these goals, including transportation and additional education services.

> **CoC Strategy 16:** Educate public and private health and mental health providers of the availability of SOAR Services and how to access them.

> **CoC Strategy 17:** Implement a centralized information hub (government, non-profit, private) for the entire community to learn about available resources through One Charlotte, Charlotte County 2-1-1, and Community Point.

> **CoC Strategy 18:** Promote and expand the use of FloridaHousingSearch.Org by connecting with landlord associations and local housing organizations to fulfill housing needs.

d. **Strengthen the evidence base for effective homelessness prevention programming and interventions,** including through rigorous evaluation strategies where possible, disseminate results widely, and use that evidence to encourage resources that are not specifically targeted to ending homelessness to prioritize individuals and families imminently at risk of experiencing homelessness.

e. **Improve efforts to prevent people from entering homelessness as they transition from other systems, such as jail, prison, health care facilities, and child welfare,** support the development of stronger transition planning, discharge practices, and re-entry processes to improve outcomes, and prioritizing connections to housing options, family-focused interventions, education resources, health and behavioral health supports, employment and income supports, health care coverage, and legal services.

State Strategy 6: The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office and the Department of Corrections to promote connecting persons experiencing homelessness who are being discharged from jail or prison with appropriate resources.

State Strategy 7: The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with the Charlotte County and Desoto County Health Departments to:

- Improve access to HIV treatment and other healthcare support for people living with HIV/AIDS through the administration of the Housing Opportunity for Persons with HIV/AIDS.

- Collaborate with hospitals to implement the Florida System of TB Care.

- Provide re-entry programs assistance with access to vital records, such as birth certificates.

CoC Strategy 19: Research diversion programs so that homeless individuals can stay out of jail for minor offenses.

CoC Strategy 20: Establish additional supportive housing programs for homeless clients with mental illness, co-occurring disorders, and tri-morbidity.

CoC Strategy 21: Develop a temporary medical rehabilitation plan for homeless clients who are recovering from a major medical health event, this could include hotel vouchers for the literally homeless and home health for those in shelter and Rapid Re-Housing.

CoC Strategy 22: Establish programming for homeless inmates who will be released into homelessness from prison prior to discharge or their return to county of origin. Ensure that paperwork, housing, employment, federal bonding, mental health, and substance abuse service are coordinated, if necessary.

f. **Strengthen diversion strategies and practices** through guidance and technical assistance with a focus on using identified strengths and existing connections and on assisting people to access safe alternatives to emergency shelter.

g. **Identify and promote implementation of eviction prevention strategies,** including access legal assistance to address obstacles to employment and housing; eviction and foreclosure prevention; and short-term and flexible financial assistance for households experiencing financial crises.

> **CoC Strategy 23:** Utilize TANF funding to provide homeless prevention as emergency financial assistance to families with children facing the loss of their housing due to a financial or other crisis. Provide case management and financial assistance for overdue rent payments and overdue utility bills to enable families to remain stably housed after receiving the assistance.

> **CoC Strategy 24:** Work with the Punta Gorda Housing Authority or another eligible entity to encourage and expand the use of Family Unification Program Vouchers (FUP) in our community. FUP vouchers provide housing assistance to families involved with the child welfare system, to reunify families or keep them together, and youths aged 18-21 who have aged out of the foster care system.

h. **Utilize opportunities in child welfare policy to expand resources for community-based preventive services to support stable housing outcomes** for children and families involved with, or at risk of involvement with, the child welfare system.

i. **Encourage programs that are not specifically dedicated to ending homelessness to fund interventions that promote and support housing stability or to prioritize or serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness.** Encourage further partnerships with sources of public resources to fund housing and related interventions, or to prioritize services those experiencing homelessness, such as Housing Authorities, TANF and Child Welfare Agencies, Head Start, Child Care, and Development Fund providers, to strengthen the community-wide approach.

> **State Strategy 8:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will continue to work with the local Department of Veterans Affairs and Charlotte County Veterans Services to identify gaps and barriers win the continuum of care to ensure that homeless is either prevented, diverted, or immediately ended for every Veteran in our community.

> **State Strategy 9:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will advocate for the Department of Children and Families to amend its Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to increase implementation of a Rapid Rehousing strategy.

2) Ensure Homelessness is a Brief Experience

The Objectives and Strategies in this section focus on actions that will help make sure people experiencing homelessness are quickly linked to permanent housing opportunities with the right level of services to support their stability and success. Strategies focus especially on coordinated and comprehensive outreach, low-barrier emergency shelter, strong coordinated entry processes, and swift connections to different forms of permanent housing with Housing First Practices.

> **Objective 2.1: Identify and Engage all People Experiencing Homelessness as Quickly as Possible**

It is important to quickly identify and engage individuals and families when they do fall into homelessness—including sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in locations such as cars, parks, abandoned buildings, encampments, or on the street—to ensure that experience is brief. Communities can use coordinated, housing-focused outreach to people who are unsheltered, in-reach to people in institutional settings, data from multiple systems, and other methods, to identify and engage individuals and families experiencing homelessness, in conjunction with coordinated entry processes and other systems.

While recognizing that people may move among a variety of settings, communities need the capacity to:

- Identify every individual and family that is unsheltered, in shelter, or in transitional housing settings or other residential programs, and to implement robust efforts to identify at-risk households;

- Coordinate a comprehensive set of strategies that collect information and data from hospitals, jails, prisons, schools, the child welfare system, and 2-1-1, and other community-based programs; and

- Use CIS and other data sources to build and maintain active lists of people experiencing homelessness and to track the homelessness status, engagements, and permanent housing placement for each individual or family.

Many individuals experiencing homelessness are disengaged from—and may be distrustful of—public and private programs, agencies, and systems, and they may be reluctant to seek assistance.

Helping individuals to overcome these barriers often requires significant outreach time and effort and can take months or even years of proactive and creative engagement to build trust. In order to comprehensively identify and engage all people experiencing homelessness, partnerships across multiple systems and sectors are critically important.

Particularly among homelessness service systems and Health and Behavioral Health Care Providers, Schools, Early Child Care Providers and other educators—including Higher Education Institutions—Child Welfare Agencies, TANF Agencies, Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice System Stakeholders, Workforce Systems, Faith-Based Organizations, and other community-based partners.

a. **Support increased capacity of our community's service providers to ensure identification, outreach, and engagement efforts are comprehensive and coordinated,** are focused on creating connections to permanent housing with appropriate services, are maximizing utility of shared data sets and are effectively identifying and engaging people with diverse experiences, needs, and challenges.

> **CoC Strategy 25:** Implement a centralized information hub (government, non-profit, private) for the entire community to learn about available resources through One Charlotte. – 2-1-1 Community Point.

> **CoC Strategy 26:** Provide technical assistance and education that will move organizations away from street outreach focused on brining basic services and supplies to clients and towards active street (woods) engagement.

> **CoC Strategy 27:** Create and support best practice programming to provide homeless outreach directly on the streets, not in-reach - provided at an agency's office. Ensure that all street outreach providers are operating with Housing First and Housing Focused Philosophy that will move people, as quickly as possible out of the experience of homelessness.

b. **Provide targeted guidance and technical assistance to areas with high rates of unsheltered homelessness and high-cost, low-vacancy housing markets** to support innovation, develop stronger practices, and build the evidence base for the most effective practices and strategies for reaching, engaging, and linking people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to options for shelter and to permanent housing opportunities.

c. **Promote targeted outreach, in-reach, and data collection strategies to strengthen local efforts to identify people experiencing chronic homelessness and frequent users of shelter and other systems,** including emergency health services and the criminal justice system, and connect them to the housing and support they need.

d. **Strengthen system capacity to maximize outreach efforts** tailored to the unique challenges posed by geography and population distribution. The Gulf Coast Partnership will develop guidance and tools to support such communities to build partnerships and efficient systems to identify and engage individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

> **CoC Strategy 28:** Develop a multi-agency street outreach team with the City of Punta Gorda Police, Charlotte County Sheriff's Office, mental health, substance abuse, and health care, and housing providers.

e. **Support and develop partnerships with law enforcement that reduce the criminalization of homelessness.** The Gulf Coast Partnership will develop further guidance on best practices in addressing unsheltered homelessness and encampments and strategies that reduce the criminalization of homelessness.

> **CoC Strategy 29:** Create a pro-bono legal services – legal aid strategy for homeless individuals. Create a diversion program so that homeless individuals can stay out of jail for minor offenses

> **CoC Strategy 30:** Continue to support Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for all law enforcement agencies.

> **CoC Strategy 31:** Design a Program Plan to offer modified Crisis Intervention Training to professionals other than police such as First Responders, Crisis Stabilization Units, In-Patient and Out-Patient Mental Health Facilities, Park and Recreation Centers and/or anyone who work with or near the homeless population.

f. **Help local organizations to develop the skills of their staff to implement essential best practices,** such as trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and critical-time intervention, as well as other skills, such as open communication, cultural responsiveness, mental health first aid, staff care, and recognizing patterns of interaction.

> **CoC Strategy 32:** Provide training and technical assistance in: homeless systems, trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and critical-time intervention, cultural responsiveness, mental health first aid, assertive engagement, peer support, intensive case management, housing first, housing stability, recovery-oriented housing, and consumer involvement.

Objective 2.2: Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter or other Temporary Accommodations to all who need it

Emergency shelter, other temporary accommodations, and crisis services are the critical front line of our community's responses to homelessness, helping people meet basic survival needs for shelter, food, clothing, and personal hygiene, while also helping them resolve crises and swiftly secure permanent housing opportunities.

Provide access to low-barrier emergency shelter. An effective crisis response system helps individuals and families experiencing homelessness avoid the need to enter emergency shelter whenever possible.

It is also able to immediately provide high-quality, housing-focused shelter or other temporary accommodations for those living in unsafe situations, including those fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, human, and labor trafficking and those living in unsheltered locations.

The Gulf Coast Partnership will ensure that our community has an effective models of emergency shelter and other temporary accommodations available that:

- Meet the needs of all members of a household and self-defined family and kinship groups, including infants and young children;

- Do not turn people away or make access contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, or lack of a criminal history;

- Do not require family members and partners to separate from one another in order to access shelter;

- Ensure that policies and procedures promote dignity and respect for every person seeking or needing shelter; and

- Provide a safe, decent, welcoming, and appropriate temporary living environment, where daily needs can be met while pathways back to safe living arrangements or directly into housing programs are being pursued.

Provide access to service-enriched, longer-term temporary accommodations when needed and appropriate. Longer-term temporary accommodations with a high level of supportive services, such as transitional housing programs, are typically costlier, but may fill a need for households with more intensive service needs. These households might include youth and young adults who would benefit from a longer-term, more supportive living environment, survivors of domestic violence or other forms of severe trauma who feel unsafe living on their own in the community, or some people in recovery from substance use disorders who are seeking a communal, recovery-focused environment. The Gulf Coast Partnership will build capacity with agencies to provide a meaningful array of housing options to promote choice and to assess both how these interventions are targeted and their outcomes in connecting people to permanent housing.

a. **Partner with the community to identify and define appropriate standards for the provision of emergency shelter and other temporary accommodations,** addressing physical environments, service strategies, operational protocols, and performance expectations.

b. **Enhance the capacity of emergency shelter providers to implement low-barrier approaches,** to provide fair and equitable access, to address the needs of households of all compositions, and to implement Housing First approaches and provide adequate services within communities to strengthen exits to permanent housing.

> **CoC Strategy 33:** Support the efforts to create a youth shelter for runaway and unaccompanied homeless youth in Charlotte County.

> **CoC Strategy 34:** Ensure access and availability of low-barrier Emergency Shelter. The types of things NOT allowed in a low-barrier shelter include: Criminal Background Checks, Credit Checks, Limiting Shelter to Those with Income, Making People Pledge their Motivation to Change, Sobriety Checks, Having People Produce ID, Residency Requirements, Mandatory (Life Skills/Budgeting) Classes, and Forced Labor.

> **CoC Strategy 35:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with local GPD providers to innovate and strengthen their internal systems to meet the shifts happening at the federal level within the GPD program. The concepts surrounding bridge housing and rapid re-housing, faster connections to permanent housing, are central to:
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> - Increase Entry Rate of Veterans who require Service Intensive Housing (mental health and substance abuse)
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> - Increase Veteran Exits from GPD to Permanent Housing
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> - Reduce average Length of Stay in GPD through Bridge Housing and Rapid Re-Housing
>
> - Full Implementation of Coordinated Entry within GPD Provider Organizations

c. **Improve access to emergency assistance, housing, and supports for historically underserved and overrepresented groups,** such as youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems; people who have been sexually exploited or labor-trafficked; people who identify as LGBTQ; people who are gender-non-conforming; people living with HIV/AIDS; youth that are pregnant or parenting; people with mental health needs; and racial and ethnic minorities.

> **State Strategy 10:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with the Department of Health to implement initiatives which reduce the risk of homelessness amongst people living with HIV/AIDS and their families and high-risk tuberculosis patients.

> **CoC Strategy 36:** Provide training and technical assistance, in conjunction with Center for Abuse & Rape Emergencies (CARE), for all Coordinated Entry Access Points to identify and immediately refer those in need of domestic violence, sexual assault, human, and labor trafficking to shelter and services at CARE - using best practice – trauma informed care.

> **CoC Strategy 37:** Provide training and technical assistance for all Coordinated Entry Access Points to properly identify and immediately refer those in need of specific housing or services including LGBTQ, HOPWA and people living with HIV/AIDS, pregnant and parenting youth, and other subpopulations and racial or ethnic minorities with best practice – culturally competent, trauma informed care.

d. **Increase the availability of medical respite programs** in our community to allow hospitals to discharge people experiencing homelessness with complex health needs to medical respite programs that can help stabilize their medical conditions and assist them to access or return to safe and stable housing.

> **CoC Strategy 38:** Develop a temporary medical rehabilitation program for people experiencing homeless who are recovering from major medical health events, this could include hotel vouchers, and/or home health care for those in Rapid Re-Housing.

e. **Align services to ensure that people with behavioral health care needs have adequate and appropriate access to emergency shelter or other temporary accommodations** that can address their service and housing needs.

f. **Continue to assess and retool transitional housing programs such as GPD to best address local needs.** The Gulf Coast Partnership will support the community's reduction of barriers to entry and consider conversion or reallocation of resources where appropriate to cost-effective alternatives, such as permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, crisis or interim housing, or transition- in-place models, and to maximize the effectiveness of transitional housing programs where necessary and appropriate.

Objective 2.3: Implement Coordinated Entry to Standardize Assessment and Prioritization Processes and Streamline Connections to Housing Services

Coordinated entry processes make it possible for people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness to have their strengths and needs quickly assessed, and to be swiftly connected to appropriate, tailored housing and services.

Standardized assessment tools, prioritization policies, and practices used within the local coordinated entry processes take into account the unique needs of different populations, including parents, infants and young children, youth, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of domestic violence, and populations that are disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness.

These processes make it possible for households to gain access to the best options available to address their needs—incorporating participants' choice—rather than being evaluated for a single program. The most intensive interventions should be prioritized for those with the highest needs, as identified by the community. To implement effective coordinated entry systems, our community will need the capacity to train staff consistently, to implement trauma-informed approaches, and to protect the confidentiality and safety concerns of people experiencing homelessness, including people living with HIV/AIDS and individuals or families fleeing domestic violence.

Coordinated entry systems also create the opportunity to bring non-traditional partners and resources to the table as part of a broad and collaborative community effort that engages other public programs and community- and faith-based organizations in preventing and ending homelessness. While these programs are often not targeted to individuals and families experiencing homelessness, they may have resources that are critical for ensuring that any experience of homelessness in a community is brief and for meeting the longer-term service needs of people experiencing homelessness.

a. **Support the implementation of strong coordinated entry processes that provide effective, low-barrier, comprehensive, and coordinated access to housing and services programs.** The Gulf Coast Partnership will continue to improve access to programs, standardized assessment, prioritization, and referral processes between systems. This work will include developing guidance and technical assistance to navigate emerging challenges. The Gulf Coast Partnership will provide technical assistance and tools to support community partners to address data-sharing concerns, particularly in navigating confidentiality and safety concerns for survivors of domestic violence, individuals living with HIV/AIDS, and minors, including children identified by schools as experiencing homelessness.

b. **Encourage a wide range of programs to develop or strengthen partnerships with coordinated entry processes and to implement effective practices for referrals between systems.** The Gulf Coast Partnership will encourage schools, early childhood programs, child welfare agencies, health and behavioral health care providers, HIV/AIDS housing and service organizations, affordable housing programs, benefits programs such as Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI), and other programs to implement processes to identify individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness to connect them to local coordinated entry systems and to connect people identified by the coordinated entry systems to other necessary programs.

> **CoC Strategy 39:** Continue to retool the One Charlotte Coordinated Entry System to safely and rapidly re-house individuals, families, and children including: those experiencing chronic homelessness, Veterans experiencing homelessness, those fleeing domestic violence, human and labor trafficking, unaccompanied youth, those living with HIV/AIDS, and other special populations.

> **CoC Strategy 40** Coordinate with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Charlotte County Veterans Services, and other Veteran Service Providers to ensure adequate coverage and to expand services available to Veterans at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness.

> **CoC Strategy 41:** Continue the implementation of and improvements to the One Charlotte Coordinated Entry System, based on a community-wide master case management model for delivery of coordinated services to all extremely low-income and homeless populations.

> **CoC Strategy 42:** Increase awareness of community resources through One Charlotte, Charlotte County 2-1-1, and Community Point.

c. **Strengthen the focus on income and employment within coordinated entry systems to effectively target and connect individuals and families to opportunities** and services needed to attain and sustain income and employment, including job training and apprenticeship programs that create access to career pathways, primary and behavioral health services, early childhood education and child care programs, and resources for young children and youth available through schools and post-secondary institutions.

d. **Develop and strengthen best practices in population-specific coordinated entry strategies and processes** to ensure that practices effectively engage people with varied experiences of homelessness, diverse service needs, and differing eligibility for programs and services.

e. **Support implementation of an effective, county-wide, coordinated entry processes.** Recognizing the unique challenges posed by geography and population distribution in these areas, the Gulf Coast Partnership will offer technical assistance and tools to support the community in strengthening our coordinated entry processes and ensuring that we are fully accessible.

Objective 2.4: Assist People to Move Swiftly into Permanent Housing with Appropriate and Person-Centered Services

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To end homelessness as quickly and efficiently as possible, we must focus on streamlining connections to permanent housing and providing people with the appropriate level of services to support their long-term housing stability. Communities across the country have been embracing Housing First approaches across their systems, removing as many obstacles and unnecessary requirements as possible in order to expedite people's access to stable housing. Effective Housing First approaches, developed in response to strong evidence, include: expanding access to new and existing affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness; providing rapid re-housing to families and individuals; and providing supportive housing to people with the most intense needs.

Expand access to new and existing affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness. To provide adequate housing opportunities, and for Housing First approaches to be taken to scale, it will be necessary to expand access to housing affordable to people who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness.

Strategies to expand the supply can be implemented by all levels of government and across the public and private sectors, and can also include:

- Examining and removing local policy barriers that limit housing development in the private market and have adverse impacts on housing affordability;

- Prioritizing people experiencing homelessness for affordable housing resources; and

- Expanding affordable housing opportunities through actions across all levels of government.

Connect people to rapid re-housing. Effective implementation of rapid re-housing requires providing each of the essential components of this intervention:

- Housing Identification (Including housing safety, habitability, and lead-based pain inspections,
- Rent and Move-in Assistance, and
- Case Management.

Rapid re-housing assistance should be offered without preconditions to entry—like income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety requirements—and the resources and services provided should be tailored to the unique needs of the household.

Preliminary evidence shows that rapid re-housing, when combined with connections to appropriate resources, such as employment supports and other income, can successfully end homelessness for many families and individuals who do not need intensive and ongoing supports. For these households, rapid re-housing may also be a less expensive housing intervention when compared to other interventions, such as transitional housing.

Further evidence regarding the most effective rapid re-housing practices for different populations, and within different types of housing markets, needs to continue to be developed.

Connect people with the most intense needs to permanent supportive housing. Supportive housing combines non-time-limited affordable housing assistance with wrap-around supportive services for individuals and families with the longest histories of homelessness and disabilities. When operated with Housing First practices, there are few or no preconditions for entry, such as sobriety, absence of a criminal record, or medication adherence. While participation in services is encouraged, it is not a condition of housing. There is no single model for supportive housing design—it may involve the renovation or construction of new housing, set-asides of apartments within privately owned buildings, or the leasing of individual apartments dispersed throughout an area.

When implemented effectively, permanent supportive housing can result in fewer expenses for shelters, jails, ambulances, and emergency departments. Households in supportive housing programs receive support to get connected to SSI/SSDI benefits when eligible, health and behavioral health care, social supports, employment and supported employment opportunities and workforce programs, and other supportive services that promote health and long-term housing stability.

> **State Strategy 11:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will support the State's Goal by ensuring that the CoC Lead and all Partner Agencies have adopted Housing First Philosophies in all programs and projects implemented.

> **State Strategy 12**: In support of the State's goal, the Gulf Coast partnership will establish a permanent supportive housing production goal to achieve an end to chronic homelessness. This goal will take into account units funded, or reasonably projected to be funded, as well as units made available through the turnover of existing units; this goal will include recommendations for targeting resources to create new units and ensure residents have appropriate supportive housing services.

Link people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to housing and services solutions. The Gulf Coast Partnership must consider strategies to address the immediate safety and health concerns of people who are unsheltered, but they must also work to develop more low-barrier pathways into permanent housing.

To drive greater progress, we will support strengthening our community's capacity to identify and engage people who are unsheltered and to assist them to access permanent housing solutions, including strengthening the outcomes achieved for people who enter emergency shelter.

a. **Support expanding the supply and increased access to rental housing subsidies and other affordable housing options** for individuals and families experiencing or most at risk of homelessness. These efforts will include:

- Encouraging collaboration between public housing agencies, multi-family housing owners, and homelessness services systems, and promoting guidance on adopting admissions preferences and successfully house people exiting homelessness; and

- Supporting the local government to better target and align rental assistance and capital financing sources to support new construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing units that can be effectively accessed by people exiting homelessness.

b. **Increase the system's capacity to implement Housing First and Harm Reduction practices** in all programs, to further explore and refine alternative housing interventions, such as shared housing, and to evaluate effectiveness.

c. **Encourage increased use of health, behavioral health, TANF, workforce, early childhood education, K-12 and higher education supports, and child welfare programs** to provide supportive services in conjunction with housing programs and interventions in order to expand capacity to create stable housing outcomes.

> **State Strategy 13:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with CareerSource to gather baseline data on workforce development programs, including:
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> - Local Workforce Development Board's efforts to serve homeless clients through outreach, networking with other local agencies, special projects.
>
> - Review Local Workforce Development Board's policies, procedures and regulations to identify existing barriers that hinder access to program services by jobseekers experiencing homelessness.

d. **Provide guidance and technical assistance to assist in implementing and improving outcomes for rapid re-housing for families, youth, and individual adults,** drawing upon knowledge gained from implementation of the SSVF program, and other state and federally funded programs, and research studies on effective models.

> **CoC Strategy 43:** Expand and increase the availability of rapid re-housing for all individuals, families, and children including: those experiencing chronic homelessness, Veterans experiencing homelessness, those fleeing domestic violence, human and labor trafficking, unaccompanied youth, those living with HIV/AIDS, and other special populations.

e. **Increase access to permanent housing models for people with substance use disorders, including opioid use disorders,** by aligning housing and services and scaling evidence-based approaches, like medication assisted treatment.

f. **Support implementation and/or expansion of "move-on" strategies to assist people who have achieved stability in permanent supportive housing**—and who no longer need and desire to live there—to move into other housing options they can afford and create access to those permanent supportive housing units for other prioritized households currently experiencing homelessness.

g. **Help to set specific, ambitious short-term goals to swiftly connect people experiencing homelessness** to housing and services appropriate to their needs and support their efforts in achieving and tracking performance against those goals.

h. **Continue to improve targeting of permanent supportive housing for people with disabilities experiencing chronic homelessness** and for other individuals and families that are particularly vulnerable in order to improve cost savings and outcomes.

i. **Improve access to state and federally funded housing assistance by eliminating administrative barriers and encouraging prioritization** of people experiencing or most at risk of homelessness, including implementing the housing anti-discrimination and eviction protection provisions covered in the Violence Against Women Act. The Gulf Coast Partnership will review state and federal program policies, procedures, and regulations to identify administrative or regulatory mechanisms that could be used to remove barriers and improve access to stable health care, housing, and housing supports.

j. **Encourage partnerships between housing providers and health and behavioral health care providers, such as health centers,** to co-locate, coordinate, or integrate health, behavioral health, safety, and wellness services with housing and create better resources for providers to connect patients to housing resources.

3) Ensure Homelessness is a One-Time Experience

The Objective and Strategies in this section focus on ensuring that people exit to permanent housing stably and successfully, using that housing as a platform for accessing essential services and connecting to the opportunities they need to pursue their goals and dreams for themselves and their families. Strategies emphasize strengthening the quality of housing and services interventions and providing connections to other services and opportunities, such as education and employment, that can help people find lasting success.

Objective 3.1: Prevent Returns to Homelessness through Connections to Adequate Services and Opportunities

To ensure that individuals and families don't fall back into homelessness, it will be necessary to strengthen partnerships with, and connections to, a larger array of federal, state, local, and private programs that serve low-income households, including programs that: advance education and employment opportunities and support upward economic mobility; provide connections to health and behavioral health care services; and link people to a range of other programs and systems that support strong and thriving communities, such as quality child care, schools, family support networks, and other resources.

a. **Strengthen effective implementation of the core components of rapid re-housing— housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, case management**—by helping communities to assess outcomes being achieved and tailor their financial subsidy and services practices in order to reduce returns to homelessness among individuals and families, including households residing in high-cost, low-vacancy markets.

State Strategy 14: The Gulf Coast Partnership will support the State's Goal by increasing our utilization of Emergency Solutions and Challenge Grant funds to scale-up implementation of Rapid Re-Housing Strategies.

State Strategy 15: The Gulf Coast Partnership will support the State's Goal by coordinating with the Office on Homelessness to identify gaps across our Continuum of Care (CoC) in implementing Rapid Rehousing, including:

- Identifying capacity development and technical assistance needs;
- Implementing Rapid Rehousing and integrating it with the One Charlotte Coordinated Entry System;
- Considering incentives for transitional housing providers to convert to permanent housing; and
- Determining funding needs to increase Rapid Rehousing capacity throughout the CoC.

CoC Strategy 44: Increase awareness of community resources through One Charlotte, Charlotte County 2-1-1, and Community Point.

CoC Strategy 45: Support efforts by Partner Agencies to recruit and train highly qualified Rapid Re-Housing and Housing and Resource Navigation Specialists.

b. **Support the community to increase on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities, supported employment, and other strategies that offer access to employment and career pathways** for people with histories of homelessness and other significant barriers to employment, including people with disabilities.

CoC Strategy 46: Identify local opportunities, seek funding for local training programs and develop partnership with construction, maintenance, manufacturing, and customer service programs as well as local farms to employ our homeless and extremely low-income.

CoC Strategy 47: Continue the annual "*Community Leader Award Breakfast*" in conjunction with Economic Development and the Chamber of Commerce, to employers who enrich the lives of homeless and extremely low-income people through employment, education, supported employment, and internship opportunities.

CoC Strategy 48: Establish a marketing plan for the benefits of tax incentive programs to local businesses for hiring Veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and extremely low-income persons.

CoC Strategy 49: Research current job skill training programs, including cost and capacity. Assess current skill level of homeless and extremely low-income population and survey the current needs of our community employers for a skilled workforce.

CoC Strategy 50: Build partnerships with local businesses, organizations and educational institutions to provide the training through a certificate program that will allow people experiencing homelessness and extremely low-income residents to gain the skills necessary to work for these or/and other businesses in the future.

CoC Strategy 51: Research national and international best practices in supportive employment for homeless and extremely low-income. Based on these findings, create effective supportive employment programs in our community.

CoC Strategy 52: Expand and encourage local businesses to get involved with local internships and apprenticeships.

CoC Strategy 53: Develop an agricultural job training / housing/life skills program to provide entry level opportunities to unskilled laborers. Supported employment possible for clients with disabilities.

CoC Strategy 54: Work in collaboration with CareerSource Southwest Florida and towards developing or expanding access to existing certificate programs for basic skill programs such as: computer, medical assistant, dental hygienist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, CNC, CNA, and CDL training programs as well as engaging people experiencing homelessness and extremely low-income populations to participate in training for in demand careers in our community.

CoC Strategy 55: Develop an avenue for subsidized housing alternatives, to support college students with housing stability while they obtain and education and/or career training.

c. **Review state and federal program policies, procedures, regulations, and administrative barriers to improve access to employment opportunities and income supports.** The Gulf Coast Partnership will identify and promote ways in which the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), early care and education, SSI/SSDI, and TANF programs can help people who are experiencing or most at risk of homelessness—including people with multiple barriers to employment—access and maintain jobs.

State Strategy 16: The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with the local Workforce Development Board and CareerSource of Southwest Florida to:

- Identify and disseminate best practices from workforce research and literature, the local Work Force Development Board and other local partners.
- Provide training and technical assistance to the local Work Force Development Board and local partners on best practices and employer incentives to hire individuals with barriers, such as jobseekers experiencing homelessness.
- Monitor funding opportunities and apply directly, or assist local partners to apply, for grants to serve homeless clients.
- Consult with the local Work Force Development Board and workforce partners to identify future actions and/or recommendations to increase economic security for those experiencing homeless.

State Strategy 17: The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with CareerSource Florida to identify ways Rapid Rehousing programs can be integrated with employment and workforce development services; and assist and advise in the creation of partnerships between philanthropy, community services and local and state funded programs.

> **CoC Strategy 56:** Implement an adult protective services model, similar to the Guardian Ad Litem model, to protect at-risk homeless and extremely low-income adults more efficiently. This project will primarily serve those with limited functioning capacity, traumatic brain injuries, autism, and developmental disabilities who are at high risk for being exploited if homeless without supports.

> **CoC Strategy 57:** Increase accessibility to public transportation for homeless and extremely low-income human service provider locations throughout the county.

> **CoC Strategy 58:** Implement model for providing vision and dental care to homeless and extremely low-income populations.

> **CoC Strategy 59:** Create a model for and implementation plan to open a SOAR Volunteer Center, utilizing the abundance of highly educated and capable retirees in our community to provide the backbone support.

d. **Encourage state and local efforts to implement a flexible array of behavioral health services that impact housing stability,** including quality case management and care coordination, peer supports and navigation services, intensive in-home services, mobile crisis and stabilization services, and other home- and community-based services.

> **State Strategy 18:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with Hospitals, the Community Health Improvement Partnership, Medicaid Plan Providers, and the Health Department to:
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> - Promote partnerships between Medicaid plans and housing resources.
> - Monitor adherence with appropriate discharge policies from health care facilities.
> - Analyze current Medicaid resources and identify cost effective solutions for providing services in permanent supportive housing.

> **State Strategy 19:** The Gulf Coast Partnership will work with Central Florida Behavioral Health Network to:
>
> - Promote the Managing Entities knowing their clients that are experiencing homelessness.
> - Promote connecting persons experiencing homelessness that are discharged from healthcare facilities with appropriate resources.
> - Analyze current resources and identify cost effective solutions for providing services in permanent supportive housing.
> - Apply for all relevant state and federal technical assistance and grants that can be used to reduce and end homelessness.

CoC Strategy 60: Support the efforts to increase funding and increased access for medical/ mental health services for those who are homeless and extremely low-income.

CoC Strategy 61: Support community initiatives that educate the public on how to access available mental health and substance abuse services and increase awareness of mental illness.

CoC Strategy 62: Create a program to partner with mental health care providers and the public-school system to address the need of homeless and extremely low-income students with mental health issues and/or substance use disorders.

e. **Support the community to increase access to and retention within high-quality education programs,** including quality child care and early childhood education through elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education.

f. **Share examples and best practices that support and build capacity to provide resources that promote the long-term stability of people who have entered permanent housing,** including employment supports, case management and peer support, emergency financial assistance, transportation, legal services, early care and education, connection to programs, and other necessary services and supports.

CoC Strategy 63: Make a toolkit with available community resources for people experiencing homelessness and extremely low-income consumers and educate hospitals' staff members and discharge planners on the use of the toolkit.

CoC Strategy 64: Create a standardized financial literacy program targeted at homeless and extremely low-income people to be shared with all service and case management agencies in our community.

CoC Strategy 65: Partner with local organizations to provide child care, afterschool, and summer services to youth experiencing homelessness and extremely low-income school aged youth.

g. **Strengthen coordination between early childhood, education, housing, employment, and homelessness services providers as part of a whole-family approach** to improve both child and family outcomes through meaningful connections to community-based programs and resources that target and prioritize the assessed needs of the entire household, including infants and young children, for sustained housing stability and economic mobility.

CoC Strategy 66: Implement best practices for school, student, and parent engagement with extremely low-income and homeless families.

CoC Strategy 67: Develop or expand one on one mentoring programs for homeless and extremely low-income students and youth in foster care to increase academic success.

CoC Strategy 68: Support the Charlotte County Public Schools efforts to hire a district Volunteer Coordinator or AmeriCorps VISTA to implement and coordinate services through support of local businesses and retirees.

CoC Strategy 69: Support the efforts to provide mentors for students in elementary and middle schools who are extremely low income or experiencing homeless to increase academic success.

CoC Strategy 70: Support the efforts of Charlotte County Public Schools to introduce youth in grade and middle schools to higher education and career possibilities.

CoC Strategy 71: Research and identify any viable state or federal options for early childhood education expansion - Title I-Funding for Tutors at Homeless Facilities and Foster Care Settings, Early Head Start, Head Start, Pre-K, Even Start, migrant education and any other potential ongoing sources of funding to support expanded quality early child education services to homeless and extremely low-income children 0-5 and/or parenting literacy.

CoC Strategy 72: Implement plan to bring computers and internet access to extremely low-income and homeless families registered at Charlotte County Public Schools.

CoC Strategy 73: Increase coordination between non-profits and Charlotte County Public Schools to bring additional resources for students and apply for grant opportunities outside the normal scope of the school system.

CoC Strategy 74: Explore potential opportunities for collaboration with the Charlotte Local Education Foundation to increase the academic success of homeless and extremely low-income students and youth in foster care.

CoC Strategy 75: Expand professional development opportunities for Charlotte County Public School Staff working with children from poverty. Ongoing training for teachers to differentiate instructions for students with different needs.

CoC Strategy 76: Help develop a program that will serve middle and high school students that are experiencing homelessness and extremely low-income students with their application and acceptance to college.

CoC Strategy 77: Work with programs to provide mentors working with parents and youths who have dropped out of school. Encourage youth to connect to GED, vocational, job corps, and other appropriate programs.

CoC Strategy 78: Create a homeless and extremely low-income fund to provide financial assistance to youths ages 12-18 to subsidize afterschool and summer activities.

CoC Strategy 79: Establish a Community Response Team that meets monthly to provide coordinated case management services to homeless youth that are with parents/guardians as well as unaccompanied youths. Possible partners: Charlotte County Public Schools, Charlotte County Sheriff's Department, Homeless Coalition, Lutheran Services, DCF, Guardian Ad-Litem, Crossroads Hope Academy, CareerSource Southwest Florida.

4) Sustain an End To Homelessness

The Objective and Strategies in this section focus on supporting our community once we have succeeded at making homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time experience—either for a specific population (such as Veterans) or for all populations —as they respond to housing instability and homelessness quickly and efficiently into the future. Strategies emphasize the importance of tracking and measuring key data points routinely, projecting and responding to future needs, and implementing continuous quality improvement efforts.

Objective 4.1: Sustain Practices and Systems at a Scale Necessary to Respond to Future Needs

Communities across the country are demonstrating that ending homelessness is not just a worthy ambition, but a measurable, achievable goal. In order to sustain those successes, communities will need to monitor outcomes and returns to homelessness, to ensure that adequate investments into the crisis response system and into permanent housing interventions are sustained to address future needs, and to continue to refine projections to address changing needs and ensure the maximum impact of investments over time.

a. **Support the community to track and measure their progress** on a routine basis by looking at key metrics, such as inflow, permanent housing rates, average length of time homeless, and housing retention rates – through CIS/HMIS. The Gulf Coast Partnership partners will provide technical assistance and tools to help communities develop and refine by-name or master lists of people experiencing homelessness to track and report essential data and to inform projections.

b. **Identify and promote the strategies of Charlotte County's CoC implemented to effectively ended homelessness among Veterans** towards the goal of ending Chronic, Youth, and Family homelessness and successfully sustaining those achievements.

c. **Support implementation of continuous quality improvements to housing and services interventions** in order to sustain our successes and to be able to respond to changes in needs and conditions into the future.