

Guilford County Homelessness Taskforce Planning Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2025

**City of Greensboro's Water Resources Building
2602 South Elm Eugene St., Greensboro, NC
Hybrid Meeting Option**

The Guilford County Homelessness Taskforce met in a duly noticed meeting on April 2, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. in the City of Greensboro's Water Resources Building, located at 2602 South Elm Eugene Street, Greensboro, NC.

Guilford County Board of Commissioners

Present: Taskforce Tri-Chair Melvin "Skip" Alston (Commissioner Chairman), Commissioners J. Carlvena Foster, Kay Cashion, Brandon Gray-Hill.

Absent: None.

Greensboro City Council

Present: Taskforce Tri-Chair Nancy Vaughan (Mayor), presiding; Councilwoman Sharon Hightower.

Absent: Councilman Zack Matheny.

High Point City Council

Present: Taskforce Tri-Chair Cyril Jefferson (Mayor), Mayor Pro-Tem Michael Holmes, Councilwoman Amanda Cook.

Absent: None.

Guilford County Continuum of Care (CoC)

Present: Cheri Neal, Guilford County CoC Program Manager; Bernita Sims, Past CoC Chair; Dr. Pamela Palmer, Past CoC Chair.

Absent: County Manager Michael Halford.

Also Present: County Attorney Andrea Leslie-Fite; Robin Keller, Clerk to Board; Ariane Webb, Deputy Clerk to Board; T'ebony Rosa, Deputy Clerk to Board; Victor Isler, Assistant County Manager; Nena Wilson, City of High Point Director of Community Development & Housing; Trey Davis, City of Greensboro City

Manager; Hugh Holston, City of Greensboro Councilman; Andrea Harrell, City of Greensboro Assistant City Manager of Public Safety; Charlesy Nance, CSH Senior Program Manager, Southeast Team; Liam Hudson, Senior Program Manager, Mid-Atlantic Region; Latoya Smith, Consultant, Greensboro, NC; Walker Sanders, Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro President & CEO; Brandon Zeigler, CFGG Chief Impact Officer; D. Renee Norris, J.D., UNCG Eviction Medication Program Coordinator; and Tara Tillman, Landlord Outreach Specialist.

Participating via virtual communication: J. Carlvena Foster, Vice Chairwoman; Greg Ferguson, City of High Point Deputy Manager; Erin Stratford-Owens, CoC Board Chair; CSH consultants – Dierdre Bolden, Southeast Team Director; Nhaomie Douyon, Associate Program Manager, Data and Analytics; Jennifer Garcia, Consultant, High Point, NC; Maya Saxena, Senior Program Manager, National Consulting; and additional staff for county and cities, community partners, the public and media. Virtual and in-person participation was made available to the public, staff, and media partners.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Tri-Chair Melvin “Skip” Alston called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. and welcomed those present.

II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The taskforce reviewed the minutes of the February 26, 2025 regular meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Kay Cashion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Michael Holmes, to adopt the February 26, 2025 meeting minutes of the taskforce.

The meeting minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

III. STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

A. 120-Day Action Item Update

Victor Isler, Assistant County Manager, provided an update on the 120-day action plan since the last task force meeting. He highlighted completed items and those in progress. He noted that the March 1st session was an information-sharing opportunity. He spoke to CoC alignment and to the identification of strategic interests during a share-out session and data gathering. He described the lead agency status and the collaborative applicant role.

Isler noted that effective June 30, 2025, the role has been clerical and fiduciary, and there is a need for managerial support along with a GAPS and SWOT analysis. He shared that if the County accepts the position of Lead Role for the CoC, they will need an additional seven (7) full-time employees (FTEs), two (2) additional CoC Specialists, and a Homelessness Services Director added to the existing staff. He shared that NC 504 presented Guilford County staff with a draft of the lead agency position and noted tomorrow's work session. He shared the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between interlocal partners and noted benchmarks.

Isler spoke to the current state as the collaborative applicant, to the ARPA funding remaining, to net county expenditures, and to the \$372K to be considered by the Board. He highlighted proposed FTEs with federal funds.

Bernita Sims, Past CoC Chair, questioned the CoC lead and incorporating Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding. She clarified that the county would be the CoC lead and not the collaborative applicant. She questioned whether the current funding dollars are in the existing budget. She noted \$838K in total dollars, and \$177K has been factored into that budget.

Isler confirmed the actual totals that include the HUD funding.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Nancy Vaughn and City Manager Trey Davis entered the meeting at 4:18 p.m.

B. The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro, Inc.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Vaughan recognized Walker Sanders, CFGG President & CEO.

Sanders spoke to the charitable funds that they manage. He noted some of their funds are designated to the purpose of housing. He spoke to housing and to CFGG's involvement regarding funding a day center in 2005 through the Urban Ministry. He provided an overview of how this initiated the creation of the Interactive Resource Center (IRC) following a pilot program at a local church. He described a series of communications regarding a budget. He acknowledged the work of the Homelessness Taskforce and an alignment of roles for public-private partnerships to include the faith and business communities. He recognized Chief Impact Officer Brandon Zeigler.

Zeigler spoke to the ten (10) priorities presented. He spoke to transitioning the IRC Day Center, to a 24/7 center and to the winter shelter program. He noted emergency services for the unhoused, faith community involvement, and leveraging the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data collection process. He shared challenges of limited data sharing.

Zeigler highlighted prevention methods, mental health services, and long-term housing transitions that coincided with the housing committee. He spoke to eviction prevention, to intermediary funding support, and to having learning opportunities in different ecosystems. He shared that thirty-five (35) entities are moving forward with this work and not duplicating effort. He noted that they are focused on prevention, such as how do we support children and those with

mental health needs and support long-term housing. He shared that they have a housing committee that is different than the unhoused working group. He shared that they are continuing the work on prevention and eviction prevention services.

Sims questioned the number of organizations duplicating effort and voiced concern in having no contact with the CFGG. She voiced concern regarding funding allocations and identifying unhoused needs. She highlighted bringing the effort into alignment. She spoke to instances of duplication which creates a disconnect in the community. She shared that she hoped that the outcome would be to have a better connection with existing providers.

Zeigler confirmed that the CFGG was an emergency response to the IRC situations. He acknowledged that conversations took place.

Sanders noted that Greensboro was consulted.

Sims voiced concern that the effort is countywide and not just Greensboro. She reiterated that the CoC already works with prevention and emergency services.

Zeigler noted there was no funding allotted and that a lot of learning needs to take place. He noted a University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) project and connecting with other agencies in the ecosystem over 24-36 months.

Sims noted the Welfare Liaison Reform organization and voiced concern that the process constantly starts over. She shared that we need to move forward from where we are now. She shared that we should build on what we have already done.

Zeigler confirmed that the group wants to understand what processes are already in development and create long-term strategies.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Alston iterated the reason why this taskforce needs to meet monthly. He stated that this is an opportunity to hear what the groups are doing towards the work of the unhoused and mental health. He stated that there are groups that we do not know about that are doing great things. He noted that we are searching for these agencies to present to the taskforce. He shared a mutual interest in eviction-prevention measures.

City of Greensboro Councilwoman Sharon Hightower entered the meeting at 4:34 p.m.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Jefferson entered the meeting at 4:36 p.m.

Zeigler spoke to Q1 goals, to understanding resources and assets, and to meeting with other stakeholders.

Isler noted the staff perspective regarding engagement with private partners, along with project management, NC 504 support as a lead agency, and ending the reset cycle of this process. He noted facilitating the multiple partners that are coming to the table so that we can move forward strategically.

City of High Point Councilwoman Cook questioned the cities involved regarding modeling.

Zeigler opined a list of areas to include Charlotte, Asheville, Louisville, Houston, and Atlanta to start, based on personal connections.

C. Rent Reasonableness & Community Land Trust

Charlesy Nance, Cooperation for Supportive Housing recognized Maya Saxena, Nhaomie Douyon, Jennifer Garcia, Liam Hudson, and Latoya Smith.

Nance spoke to rent reasonableness, to community land trusts, and to the CoC SWOT-O share out.

Saxena shared a rent reasonableness definition according to HUD and a comprehensive study. She explained the definition to ensure that a unit that is supported by grant funds is not more expensive than a similar unit that is not supported by grant funds. When leading and rental sentence funds are used to pay rent for individual housing units, the rent paid must be reasonable in relation to rents being charged for comparable units, taking into account the locations, size, type, and age of the unit as well as any amenities.

Nance noted the different types of housing that fit the definition, and survey results regarding maximum monthly rent that is not cost-prohibitive. She noted that rent should be no more than 30% of an individual's income.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Vaughan questioned the areas where the data was gathered.

Nance referenced a national data study conducted by Data USA, along with NC Housing Coalition statistics.

Saxena noted that the data being presented today is specific to Guilford County.

Nance noted that the 2023 median household income in Guilford County is \$66,027, and the maximum monthly rent should not be greater than \$1,650. She provided local context that 32% of households are currently cost-burdened. She noted that over 40K households are having difficulty affording their homes, and 20% of homeowners have difficulty affording their homes.

Hudson noted HUD strategies to deploy multiple mechanisms to ensure units and programs adhere to rent reasonableness standards. He noted the benefits to property owners. He shared an understanding of area median income (AMI), rent ratios, and rental property data. He shared that there is a HUD prepared rent reasonableness checklist. He noted the requirements of written policies/procedures on how HUD awards must be accessed.

Hudson shared that rent reasonableness documentation is on an individual basis. He explained that it depends on the AMI, rental property data, evaluation of comparable rentals, and a willingness to adjust for differences. He spoke to general rent reasonableness, and that property owners must comply with housing programs to ensure a steady stream of rental income. He

shared that it attracts and retains tenants, along with helping to ensure the financial viability and profitability if the units are being inspected frequently.

Hudson continued the presentation by introducing community land trusts (CLT) and described their ownership, organization, and operation. He explained that a CLT is a nonprofit corporation that holds land on behalf of a place-based community, while serving as the long-term steward for affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces, and other community assets on behalf of the community. He noted that leases are typically 99 years with the goal to keep costs low for as long as possible.

Saxena provided more explanation regarding CLT operation, structure, and income-qualified owners. She noted that the CLT owns the land, but the home is owned by an individual. She shared that this ensures permanent affordability when the homeowners change over time. She noted equity and wealth building in a continuous cycle.

Saxena explained that the CLT acquires property in focused areas from various sources, facilitates rehab or new construction, sets the sales price, finds qualified buyers, and provides supportive services. She noted that they sell the structure to the owners, but the land permanently belongs to the CLT. She explained that if a homeowner wishes to sell the home, the CLT sets the new sales price to ensure affordability, the previous owners recoup their original investment and gain some equity based on appreciated value, and new income-qualified owners can afford the property.

Nance described several CLT outcomes to include increasing housing stability, wealth accumulation, increasing property values, encouraging neighborhood improvements, and low foreclosure rates.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Vaughan questioned the challenges of obtaining a standard mortgage given that it is CLT-owned land.

Nance confirmed providing follow-up information.

City of Greensboro Councilman Hugh Holston questioned the ownership sale determination and equity accumulation.

Saxena confirmed that the answer depends on CLT-established policies.

Nena Wilson, City of High Point Director of Community Development & Housing, confirmed there is normally an equity formula, and it is established for mortgages similar to owning a condo.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the property sale and percentage value.

Wilson confirmed that the formula is established on the front end.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Jefferson confirmed that the CLT valuation determines appraisal value based on a formula.

Councilman Holston questioned the process when the market fluctuates downward. He noted guarantees while there is an increase, and questioned the 32% of cost-burdened households in Guilford County.

Nance confirmed reviewing the approximately 65K households in the survey.

Hudson highlighted CLT project milestones, and noted that the Greensboro Community Land Trust has been in the works for about twenty (20) years. He shared that the Greensboro City Council first directed a formal housing effort in 2008.

Saxena spoke to strategies to invest in CLT growth that were geography-specific examples to include right-of-first refusal policies, providing land, and creating citywide CLTs. She urged that every level of government must commit to providing housing for all.

D. CoC SWOT-O Share Out

Nance spoke to a CoC discussion and a survey to understand CoC members and alignment with taskforce priorities. She spoke to the energy to move this work forward.

Isler shared that an official report will be shared.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Unhoused Services Update

Andrea Harrell, City of Greensboro Assistant City Manager of Public Safety, provided a report to include the Doorway Project, Pallet Homes transition for cleaning and relocating, IRC collaboration, and the Regency site utilization for one year prior to renovation.

Harrell explained that the Pallet Home project has served over 108 individuals and seventeen (17) have been placed in permanent supportive housing. She noted the Greensboro Police Department's Community Safety Department is working with the IRC and the Doorway project to support long-term housing. She stated that the Pallet Homes are currently closed and being cleaned to be relocated. She shared that current Doorway participants will automatically be enrolled when the Pallet Home shelters are moved.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Vaughan shared the challenges of moving the Pallet Homes and spoke to significant investments due to individual utility hook-ups. She noted that moving the shelters is a complex project that requires electricity and sidewalks.

Harrell spoke to next year's emergency sheltering. She noted the construction of new units and funding streams. She shared that they have been working for six (6) weeks preparing the new

site. She shared that it is very helpful to have them all at the same location due to upfit costs. She explained that they will be moved back to Pomona Park for the winter. She shared that Greensboro had four (4) winter sheltering sites during the colder months.

Sims questioned tax credits for these units and AMI, and whether we are initially using CoC name lists to decrease the unhoused population. She noted that as a provider who is funding the IRC, it would be helpful for information sharing.

Harrell confirmed providing follow-up information.

City of Greensboro Councilwoman Sharon Hightower noted that the Vandalia property changed leadership and another dialogue must take place.

Greensboro City Manager Trey Davis noted referrals and will provide an update.

Cheri Neal, Guilford County CoC Program Manager, questioned vouchers.

Harrell confirmed Greensboro Housing Authority and using dedicated CoC vouchers.

Councilman Holston questioned the two (2) trailers, the Doorway Project, and the need for family sheltering.

Harrell confirmed limited trailer movement due to the warm temperatures in the summer months.

Isler expressed appreciation for Pallet Houses use during the summer season.

B. Tenant, Education, Advocacy & Mediation Program (TEAM), Center of Housing & Community Studies at UNCG

D. Renee Norris, J.D., UNCG Eviction Medication Program Coordinator, spoke to referrals and wait lists, to landlord communications, and program education. She shared that they work to inform tenants of their legal rights. She shared that they work to help anyone countywide. She shared that they work weekly with landlords to educate them on the various voucher programs and to gain their buy-in for the need for affordable housing. She shared that in regards to mediation, a lot of the work happens outside of the courthouse. She shared that since they started in September of 2021, they have helped 3,300 clients. She noted that at the UNCG center as of December, they had 2,985 individuals who had reached out for support.

Tara Tillman, Landlord Outreach Specialist, noted that she worked to understand the view of landlords and their thoughts on voucher programs. She noted that they have been able to add property to the voucher program site list and offer mediation support services.

Councilman Holston questioned landlord hesitancy to accept rental assistance.

Tillman confirmed outdated ideas, disillusionment, and misinformation regarding case management. She shared that through feedback, the landlords expected caseworkers to be

assigned to each tenant or support for payments and eviction, when in reality, there were no caseworker services. She explained that landlords were educated that voucher tenants were the same as traditional tenants, requiring the landlord to follow the same processes.

Isler noted the three-prong approach, along with \$2.5M dedicated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to cover legal needs, financial needs, and social support. He noted that this program has seen a rise in families with children for placement and retention of housing.

Tillman highlighted relationship building.

Sims questioned how to communicate better to the public as individuals are being evicted for minimum amounts. She noted a disconnect between rent prices and hotel fees. She shared opportunities to mitigate these issues. She shared that she would like to see more information sharing with the public on what resources and services are available to help message options to help and assist prior to eviction.

Tillman shared that landlords appreciate tenant education and creating partnerships.

Councilman Holston questioned the three-prong approach and available vouchers.

Dr. Norris confirmed that no money transfers through UNCG. She shared that many of their calls are simply educating individuals on the system and program requirements to help those applying connect to the correct services.

Janet McAuley Blue, Legal Aid of North Carolina, Greensboro Office Managing Attorney, and Nicole Mueller, Greensboro Housing Program Manager and Supervising Attorney, expressed appreciation for the collaboration.

Attorney Blue explained the voucher dichotomy and financial support from local partners. She highlighted statistics, Legal Aid services, demographics, eviction impact data, and eviction diversion programs. She noted that we receive support from Guilford County and the City of Greensboro as well as the Greensboro United Way. She spoke briefly to the historical national problems with the high eviction rates and the lack of affordable housing. She shared that the mission of Legal Aid is to address instances of injustice for those without access to funds. She noted housing case demographics in Guilford County. She noted their demographic data for those served, with the majority of individuals being women or persons of color.

Attorney Blue noted that housing consists of 45 % of the Legal Aid caseload. She noted that the model for eviction mediation is to help support legal needs, connect to financial needs through Guilford County and the City of Greensboro, and address human needs such as social work, supportive services, and education.

Attorney Mueller spoke to the Tenant, Education, Advocacy, and Mediation (TEAMS) Project, to in-court tenant services, to service navigation, and to success stories. She shared that they work closely with their UNCG Partners. She noted that tenants can access the program along any state

of the eviction timeline, as they offer referrals for community resources, legal advice, and rental assistance. She shared that they represent clients in court every day and offer appeal assistance. She noted that they work with tenant rights and remedies for uninhabitable conditions and courtroom facilitation.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Jefferson and High Point Mayor Pro Tem Michael Holmes left the meeting at 5:59 p.m.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Vaughan noted the time constraints. She acknowledged and invited these stakeholders to present at the next taskforce meeting.

C. Sanctuary House

Jodi Lorenzo, CEO/Executive Director, provided brief remarks. She shared that they would be happy to return and introduced some of their partners present, including Lomax Construction, Cone Health, and members of Sanctuary House.

D. CoC Funding Update

Cheri Neal, Guilford County CoC Program Manager, introduced herself.

Taskforce Tri-Chair Vaughan tabled the Sanctuary House and CoC Funding presentations. She announced that the next taskforce meeting will be held on May 7th and hosted by Guilford County, location to be announced.

V. ADJOURN

Motion made by Councilman Hugh Holston, seconded by Taskforce Tri-Chair Melvin “Skip” Alston, to adjourn the taskforce meeting.

There being no further business, the Homelessness Taskforce meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Commissioner Melvin “Skip” Alston
Taskforce Tri-Chair

Mayor Nancy Vaughan
Taskforce Tri-Chair

Mayor Cyril Jefferson
Taskforce Tri-Chair

Robin Keller
Guilford County Clerk to Board