

THE SCIOTO HOUSING CONTINUUM'S LONG RANGE PLANNING PROCESS

Vision

By 2019,
Every person in our community will access and maintain decent, safe, affordable housing.

Statement of Values

These values inform and guide us as we move toward achieving our vision.

- We value everyone in our community, recognizing the right of all people to have a safe affordable place in which to live.
- We value diversity, believing that communities are strengthened when people connect across differences.
- We value excellence and are committed to finding creative, bold solutions for both housing needs and support services.
- We value an inclusive process that respects all points of view and a balanced approach to the issues.
- We value education and advocacy and their power to impact public policy in ways that achieve a vision of a community without homelessness.

Background:

In the 1990s, the Homeless Task Force established a Continuum of Care as a community process for seeking solutions to end homelessness in our rural community. This collaborative approach brought dollars to the community for services and programs to manage the growing homeless issue, but brought few dollars or incentives to develop long-term solutions to end homelessness.

From the outset, the Continuum was motivated not only by the growing national movement to develop ten-year plans to end homelessness, but also the skyrocketing housing prices in the region. Affordable housing was scarce, at best. The continuum sought solutions to end homelessness to develop the strategic direction and planning needed to prevent and eradicate homelessness in our community.

Through the summer and fall of 2007, the Continuum studied in depth the current status of homelessness in Scioto County, reviewed plans from other communities around the country, and consulted with experts in the field to learn about best practices and successful model programs.

Community Participation:

The Scioto County Housing Continuum brought together service providers and others engaged in working with homeless persons to brainstorm ideas for new directions and to provide input for strategies. Presentations on the broad scope of the plan were made to the Continuum. These dialogues engaged homeless persons, faith communities, businesses, government and nonprofit organizations in discussions on the prevention of homelessness.

With input from all sectors and jurisdictions in the community, the planning committee focused its efforts on developing the key strategies and objectives for effecting change.

Looking Forward:

Homelessness impacts every person in the community thus giving each person some responsibility in ending it.

This plan is the beginning of the community planning process, establishing a strategic direction for guidance as the community moves forward in their development of an implementation plan as well as an annual performance plan.

Where We Are Now:

Scioto County is an area with abundant resources, claiming a below average median income while, at the same time, having a great deal of expensive housing. The availability of affordable housing which would meet the needs of the low income families and single adults is inadequate. Lack of sufficient income puts most market housing beyond the reach of many families and individuals. Disabling conditions, such as serious mental illness, substance abuse disorders, chronic health problems and physical injuries, limit earning potential while creating a need for ongoing supports to maintain stable housing. Domestic violence disrupts family life to an extent that housing can be lost. With many businesses failing and downsizing, loss of income due to loss of jobs is a huge concern. In our community over the last two years, we have lost the Coke Plant, Steve and Barry's, Goody's, Village Market, and several other employers.

State and Local Demographics

People Quick Facts	Ohio	Scioto County
Population, 2008 estimate	11,485,910	76,587
Population, percent change, April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008	1.2%	-3.3%
Population estimates base (April 1) 2000	11,353,160	79,195
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2007	6.4%	6.3%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2007	24.0%	23.0%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2007	13.5%	15.4%
Female persons, percent, 2007	51.2%	51.4%
White persons, percent, 2007 (a)	84.9%	95.0%
Black persons, percent, 2007 (a)	12.0%	2.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2007 (a)	0.2%	0.7%

Asian persons, percent, 2007 (a)	1.6%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2007 (a)	Z	Z
Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2007	1.3%	1.3%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2007 (b)	2.5%	0.7%
White persons not Hispanic, percent, 2007	82.7%	94.4%
Living in same house in 1995 and 2000, pct 5 yrs old & over	57.5%	62.3%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2000	3.0%	0.6%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2000	6.1%	2.2%
High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2000	83.0%	74.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2000	21.1%	10.1%
Persons with a disability, age 5+, 2000	1,909,489	18,476
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2000	22.9	26
Housing units, 2007	5,064,900	34,729
Homeownership rate, 2000	69.1%	70.1%
Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2000	24.1%	13.3%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2000	\$103,700	\$63,400
Households, 2000	4,445,773	30,871
Persons per household, 2000	2.49	2.45
Median household income, 2007	\$46,645	\$33,044
Per capita money income, 1999	\$21,003	\$15,408
Persons below poverty, percent, 2007	13.1%	20.6%

Z: Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown
 Source: US Census Bureau State & County Quick Facts

It is clear from this data, that Scioto County continues to struggle with higher rates of poverty, lower rates of per capita and median household income than the Ohio average. In addition, the following chart shows a high rate of unemployment for Scioto County adding to reduced income for housing and living expenses.

Unemployment Rates & Labor Force (LAUS)

Year	Month	County	Persons	%
2009	Jan	Scioto County	3,900	11.8
2009	Feb	Scioto County	3,900	11.8
2009	Mar	Scioto County	3,800	11.5
2009	Apr	Scioto County	3,800	11.5
2008	Annual	Scioto County	2,700	8.3
2008	Jan	Scioto County	2,600	8.1
2008	Feb	Scioto County	2,500	7.8
2008	Mar	Scioto County	2,400	7.5
2008	Apr	Scioto County	2,200	6.6
2008	May	Scioto County	2,400	7.3
2008	Jun	Scioto County	2,700	8.3
2008	Jul	Scioto County	2,800	8.6
2008	Aug	Scioto County	2,900	9.0
2008	Sep	Scioto County	2,900	8.8
2008	Oct	Scioto County	2,900	8.9
2008	Nov	Scioto County	2,900	8.9
2008	Dec	Scioto County	3,200	9.7
2007	Annual	Scioto County	2,400	7.4
2007	Jan	Scioto County	2,800	8.8
2007	Feb	Scioto County	2,800	8.7

Ohio and United States Unemployment Rates

Ohio's unemployment rate was 10.2 percent in April, up from 9.7 percent in March. The U.S. unemployment rate for April was 8.9 percent, up from 8.5 percent in March. **Data above from, State of Ohio, Department of Job and Family Services, Labor Market Information Website: <http://ohiolmi.com/index.html>**

Data from the chart above indicates the rise in unemployment over the past two years in Scioto County, which mirrors that of the overall rates of unemployment in the state and in the country. With the negative unemployment figures, Scioto County continues to see homelessness as a major concern, but also the potential for an increase of individuals and families who are "at risk" of homelessness is ever growing. Developing a strategy for homeless prevention has never been more important than it is now.

It is clear, the time for a plan to use the resources available to prevent homelessness and to rapidly re-house individuals and families who find themselves with no where to live is now.

All of these factors contribute to homelessness in the community. Homelessness can be hidden from view, with single adults camped in wooded areas and families moving among relatives and friends jeopardizing the housing stability of all tenants, which puts more people at risk for homelessness. Once they enter the homeless shelter system and begin the road back to being housed, a process that may take years, they are counted in the data.

The Homeless Population:

In 2008 and 2009, the annual point-in-time survey's conducted by Scioto County identified 21 persons in emergency shelter, 20 in transitional, and 12 unsheltered clients in 2008; and in 2009 we identified: 38 sheltered persons and zero unsheltered persons due to an ice-storm.

In 2008 Operation Safety Net, The Scioto County Homeless Shelter housed 411 persons consisting of 363 whites, 40 Blacks, 4 Hispanics, 1 American Indian, and 3 others; of that total, 197 were single males, 172 were single females, for a total of 369 singles, plus, 45 single parent families, 7 two parent families, and four adult couples with out children for a total of 56 families served, and additionally served 96 children

The Southern Ohio Task Force on Domestic Violence served 15 households

The Counseling Center served 90 households consisting of 200 persons with transitional housing

Given the resources available in this community and the commitment to use them more effectively to end homelessness, these numbers of homeless persons are, simply, unacceptable.

Homeless Persons are those considered homeless only when he/she resides in one of the three places listed not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, and abandoned buildings; and emergency shelter; or transitional housing for persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelter. If a person is in one of the three categories listed above, but most recently spent less than 30 days in a jail or institution, then he/she qualifies as coming from one of these categories. More than 30 days in a institution and a person would have to be out on the streets before they would be considered homeless.

Chronic homelessness, as defined by HUD, means "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years,

There is an extensive network of nonprofit organizations, faith-based community groups and county agencies that provide many services to families and individuals who are homeless or at risk for homelessness. This array of services reflects the community's commitment in meeting the service needs of homeless individuals. Among the services offered are eviction prevention funds, emergency assistance (food, clothing, and financial aid), health care, counseling, job readiness, skills development, money management, referrals, and mentoring.

Through shelters, transitional housing programs and support services, the community manages homelessness effectively; however, without affordable adequate housing resources, the community cannot effectively end homelessness.

Housing Challenges:

The availability of affordable housing has long been recognized as a significant problem for low-income families, the working poor and the homeless population. Indeed, ending homelessness cannot be accomplished without frank acknowledgement of this fact and a willingness to combine the forces of government, business, nonprofit entities, faith-based communities and the general population to support, and bring about, an increase in the number of affordable housing units in the next 10 years.

The housing market in the Scioto County community is driven by slow job growth.. This force contributes to escalating home prices for new construction in housing of all types, reduced rental unit production and higher rents.

The demand for housing, however, exceeds the supply available to applicants. This disparity creates long term waiting lists sometimes lasting as long as two to three years. Legislative restrictions on those with drug convictions and felonies on their record, exclude large numbers of those in need of services.

The term “affordable” generally means that a family or individual pays no more than 30 percent of their, monthly, gross income for housing costs. Affordability of housing is impacted by the slow growth of wages as correlated to the increases in housing costs.

RESOURCE AND CAPACITY REPORT

Section 1: Public Housing

A total of **886 public housing units** are owned by the Portsmouth Metropolitan Housing Authority. The following tables are based on information provided in the January 1999 Scioto County Improvement Strategy (CHIS) report. The 1999 Scioto County CHIS report also indicated a total of 953 other assisted housing units. The following tables break this information down by family housing units and senior housing units. Further breakdown is provided by financing programs.

Based on the following information, Scioto County has **a total of 1711 assisted housing units.**

Family Housing Units

Table 1. Public Housing: Family Housing

Portsmouth Metropolitan Housing Authority owned units					
Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Farley Square	19	60	44		123
Lett Terrace Apts	-	60	12	3	75
Lett Terrace Homes	-	-	15	-	15
Miller Manor Apts	-	60	12	3	75
Miller Manor Homes	-	-	14	-	14
Portsmouth Homes	-	-	19	5	24

Portsmouth Townhouses I	4	28	16	2	50
Portsmouth Townhouse II	-	-	16	5	21
Wayne Hills	34	132	69	8	243
Totals	57	340	216	26	640

Table 2. Public Housing: 202 Family Housing

Other Assisted Housing Units					
Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Findley Manor	25	-	-	-	25
Shawnee Apts	-	-	-	-	20
B. T. Washington Apts	20	-	-	-	20
Totals					65

Table 3. Public Housing: FmHA 515 Family Housing

Other Assisted Housing Units					
Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Briarcliff					32
Dogwood Ridge					40
Pleasant Valley	28	20			48
Scioto co Rental Housing					1
Stoneycreek	16	53			59
Totals					180

Table 4. Public Housing: LIHTC Housing

Assisted Housing Units					
Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Scioto Apts	4	18	6 Other	-	49

Senior Housing Units

Table 5. Public Housing: Senior Housing

Portsmouth Metropolitan Housing Authority owned units					
Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Alexandria House	84	2	-	-	86
Cliffside House	42	16	1	-	59
Hudson House	100	1	-	-	101
Totals	226	19	1	0	246

Table 6. Public Housing: 202 Senior Housing

Other Assisted Housing Units					
Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Riverview Retirement	110	-	-	-	110

Table 7. Public Housing: FmHA 515 Senior Housing

Other Assisted Housing Units					
Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Minford Apts	40	-	-	-	40
Sr. Wheelersburg	42	-	-	-	42
Totals	82	-	-	-	82

Table 8. Public Housing: 23Conv Senior Housing

Other Assisted Housing Units					
Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Buckeye Towers	120	-	-	-	120

Table 9. Public Housing: HFDA Senior Housing

Other Assisted Housing Units					
Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Riverton Apts	43	-	-	-	43
Sinclair Apts	42	8	-	-	50
Totals	85	8			93

Section 2: Other Public Housing

The Scioto County Board of MR/DD supported living **Choice Housing** program currently serves **17 persons in 11 units.**

Table 10. Public Housing: HUD Housing

Other Assisted Housing Units					
Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Hurth Apts					
Washington & Biggs House					
Totals					No information

Section 3: Section 8 Vouchers

The Portsmouth Metropolitan Housing Authority administers 525 Section 8 Vouchers, 462 of which are in Scioto County and the remainder in Lawrence County. New Boston Manor (Kiwanis), which previously was Section 221 (d) (3) Family Housing, has 128 units. The 1999 Scioto County CHIS report indicated another 151 units between Boston Commons and Scioto Valley Gardens.

Based on the above information, Scioto County has a **total of 742 Section 8 Vouchers.** This number does not include Buckeye Tower.

Table 11. Public Housing: Section 8 Vouchers

Portsmouth Metropolitan Housing Authority					
Unit Size	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Number of Units	108	212	126	17	463 in 1999

Table 12. Public Housing: Section 8 Vouchers II

Other Assisted Housing Units

Project Name	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	Total
Boston Commons	-	25	17	8	50
New Boston Manor/Kiwanis	24	69	29	6	128
Scioto Valley Gardens	47	42	12	-	101
Totals	71	136	58	14	279

Where Are We Going

During the planning committee’s deliberations, it became dramatically clear that all service providers were unanimous in their view that limited, affordable, housing options have resulted in longer and longer stays in shelters, little movement of the homeless population from transitional housing to permanent housing and fewer, permanent, alternatives for high-risk individuals. The overall problem can be described in terms of a lack of resources that are “downstream” from the shelter system. This phenomenon has been labeled as a prime factor in the increasing lengths of stay in shelter and transitional housing program. Our goal is to immediately implement diversion and rapid re-housing initiatives in 2009, and thereafter for as long as funding can be secured.

There is an urgent need for additional, affordable housing dedicated to assisting the homeless, or “At risk of homelessness” population – those who are earning less than 35 percent of the area median income. To do otherwise means that the current conditions creating homelessness in the community will remain, fundamentally, unchanged. Therefore, as the process begins to make additional, affordable housing resources available, either through development and/or subsidy programs, existing resources must be directed to prevention, housing first, and rapid re-housing to prevent and end homelessness. Prevention, rapid re-housing, and “housing first” have proven to be a cost-effective means of ending homelessness in other communities across the country.

Homeless persons lack the stability that permanent housing provides. Many of these individuals use public services and emergency systems in an inefficient and expensive way. Lack of medical coverage, for example, causes many homeless families and single adults to use emergency room visits as their primary healthcare. Those with disabilities and serious illnesses often have more frequent and longer inpatient hospital stays because they have waited to seek treatment until their illness has progressed. Those who are chronically homeless use these services at a disproportionate rate.

Housing first is a practical and cost effective solution. “Housing first” places people in stable housing as rapidly as possible; housing becomes the first step in moving out of homelessness, not the last. Acquiring housing is based on adherence to lease requirements such as payment of rent, upkeep of unit and orderly conduct, not compliance with a “service plan.”

Once in housing, this approach works to link tenants with services and supports to address other needs by developing trusting relationships. For some, transitional services for a limited time are all that is needed; for others, long-term support is necessary. However, “Housing first” can only work if there is an adequate, appropriate supply of affordable housing available. This is not only the right thing to do from a moral stance, but it is the smart thing to do from a cost-effectiveness perspective.

How We Will Get There?

- There must be a change in focus, direction and service priorities around homelessness in Scioto County that centers on ending it, not managing it.
- Housing is the essential resource for homeless families and individuals. The lack of affordable housing

in Scioto County has been studied, researched and lamented for decades. Ending homelessness will require a number of approaches including increasing the supply of affordable housing of all types.

- Directing resources to prevention, rapid re-housing, and “housing first” works. These approaches have proven to be cost-effective means to ending homelessness in other communities, nationally.
- To successfully implement the ten-year plan, there must be sustained political endorsement and strong support from all sectors of the community.

Strategies:

These areas will be addressed through the implementation of two strategies that will prevent and end homelessness in the community. For each of these strategies, the planning committee outlined the key objectives that will be necessary for implementation and provided clear milestones to mark the success along the way.

While the Continuum expects to start seeing progress soon, it recognizes that the development of this plan is the beginning of this process and not the end. This is to be a living document and will be open to adjustments as the Continuum meets new challenges along the path toward preventing and ending homelessness. All community stakeholders must continue to engage in a collaborative effort toward constant improvement.

Homelessness impacts every person in this community and each individual will have a continuing role in ending it. This plan belongs to every citizen of the community.

Strategy 1

Homeless Prevention and Diversion (Financial assistance and housing stabilization services designed to prevent or divert individuals and families at imminent risk of homelessness that without intervention would become homeless in less than 30 days.)

Prevention is easier and a more cost effective approach because it is more cost effective to help households to maintain occupancy rather than to try and re-house them after an eviction. People can become homeless for a number of reasons, from being burned out to eviction, from being discharged from rehabilitative services to the demolition of substandard housing units, the gentrification of neighborhoods, the loss of a job, an increase in rent, illness and loss of hours, the absence of family support...any one of these can thrust a family or individual into homelessness. Although there are many individual reasons for homelessness, be it divorce or domestic violence, disability, mental health issues or substance abuse, the root cause is poverty and an inadequate supply of decent affordable housing.

Objective

We will take a transformative approach so that our process of moving a system of care towards a better methodology of preventing or eliminating homelessness has more potential of being sustainable into the future.

We will transform our community systems from a focus on crisis and emergency to one where housing stability is the hallmark.

Clients who enter our system via our single point of entry (the homeless shelter, the most likely entity) must verify a documented threat to their housing stability.

Action Steps:

1. We will verify that presenting individuals or households would indeed be homeless but for this assistance
2. We will provide short-term rent and utility assistance to 100 households per year
3. We will provide no more than \$1,000.00 towards each household
4. We will provide case management and coordination
5. We will arrange legal service assistance if necessary (determined by case manager)
6. We will enter households into HMIS
7. We will provide just enough assistance to achieve housing stability for participants
8. We will provide on-going case management intervention over a period of at least 6 months to successfully transition "would be" homeless families and individuals to permanent housing stability
9. We will verify the household income to ensure that sustainability can still be achieved after the intervention has ceased

Responsible parties: Scioto County Housing Continuum, Homeless Shelter, The Counseling Center, Portsmouth Metropolitan Housing Authority, Community Action, Area Churches

Monitor: Scioto County Housing Continuum

Strategy 2

Rapid-Re-housing (Financial assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services designed for currently homeless individuals and families where short-or medium term rental assistance and services are provided to stabilize the housing situation.)

Objective

We will take a transformative approach so that our process of moving a system of care towards a better methodology of preventing or eliminating homelessness has more potential of being sustainable into the future.

We will transform our community systems from a focus on crisis and emergency to one where housing stability and rapid re-housing is the hallmark.

Clients who enter our system via our single point of entry (the homeless shelter, the most likely entity) must verify that they are indeed homeless via court ordered eviction papers, self-declaration form, discharge papers from an institution, or declaration form from last housing accommodations (I.e. letter from mother who put them out)

Action Steps:

1. We will verify that presenting individuals or households are in fact homeless
2. We will provide short-term deposit and rental assistance to 69 households per year
3. We will provide no more than \$1,000.00 towards each household
4. We will provide case management and coordination
5. We will utilize a housing locator
6. We will maintain a current list of safe, decent, affordable housing
7. We will subcontract with a housing inspector in the event that housing needs to be secured for a household with a child who is 6 years of age or under
8. We will arrange legal service assistance if necessary (determined by case manager)
9. We will enter households into HMIS
10. We will provide just enough assistance to achieve housing stability for participants
11. We will provide on-going case management intervention over a period of at least 6 months to

successfully transition homeless families and individuals to permanent housing stability

12. We will verify the household income to ensure that sustainability can still be achieved after the intervention has ceased

Responsible parties: Scioto County Housing Continuum, Homeless Shelter, The Counseling Center, Portsmouth Metropolitan Housing Authority, Community Action, Area Churches

Monitor: Scioto County Housing Continuum

We will coordinate all community resources to streamline prevention efforts and provide flexible and longer-term financial assistance to keep persons housed.

We will coordinate across the faith-communities, community-based organizations, non-profit agencies, and the county to streamline prevention efforts.

When possible, we will create new jobs, but first we will utilize people that we already have in a billable way.

We will target and reach households via PSA' s, radio, newspapers, and church bulletins in area churches.

We will coordinate services in order to prevent duplication of services.