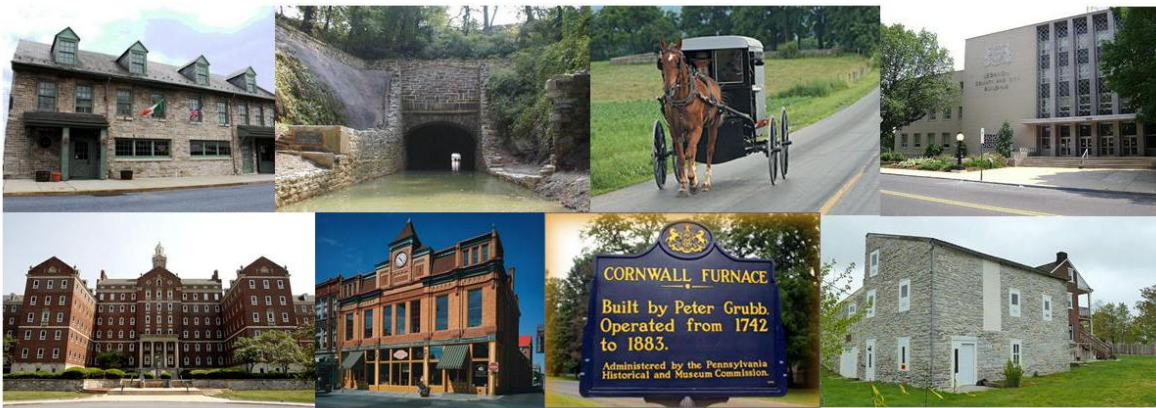


Vision 2020: Strategies to Address Poverty & Homelessness in Lebanon County, PA 2018 - 2020



Plan developed by:



Providing leadership in the prevention and eradication of homelessness
in Lebanon County

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	3
Introduction to the Lebanon County Coalition to End Homelessness (LCCEH).....	4
<i>Who We Are</i>	4
<i>About the Community Health Council of Lebanon County (CHC)</i>	5
The Issue of Homelessness in Lebanon County.....	6
<i>Defining Homelessness</i>	6
<i>Causes of Homelessness</i>	7
The Need to Think Strategically	8
<i>The Insider Perspective</i>	8
<i>Outside the Lines</i>	9
What’s in the Plan?	9
What’s <i>Not</i> in the Plan?	10
Going Forward	10
Appendix A: Stakeholder Survey.....	12
Appendix B: SWOT Analysis	13
Appendix C: Ten Identified Priority Areas with Vote Total for Each.....	14

The Lebanon County Coalition to End Homelessness is a program of:



Foreword

Since its inception, the Lebanon County Coalition to End Homelessness has been an informal group of social and human service agency representatives dedicated to addressing poverty and homelessness in our neighborhoods. I say informal because the Coalition, until very recently when it was absorbed by the Community Health Council of Lebanon County, did not enjoy any kind of official status. Also, all Coalition members are essentially volunteers. Unlike other homeless coalitions in south central Pennsylvania, ours does not employ a staff. And participating is only one part of each member's job description.

With this kind of arrangement, it hardly seems like engaging in a strategic planning process is a good idea. And, in fact, this plan has been about two years in the making. Slow and painstaking as things may have been, I am very proud of the fact that our membership has fully embraced this process.

What follows is only the beginning. As you read through this plan, keep in mind that two major ideas drove our approach. First, we tried to align our tactics with our purpose, which is to *provide leadership*. We do not necessarily see the Coalition being able in-and-of-itself to solve homelessness; but, rather, to be a catalyst for driving community-wide efforts forward. Second, we realized that in order to make meaningful and effective change, we needed information – lots of it! We need quality and comprehensive data, statistics, and maps to help visualize the problem. We need to get all the players – public, private, religious, and non-profit – at the same table at the same time. We cannot effectively proceed without this foundation.

So what you will see are broad strokes. But as I said, this is only the beginning. This plan is intended to be dynamic and fluid. We will revisit our tactics as things unfold and make revisions and additions. Some things we'll have right; others we may have wrong. It may feel at times like we are leaping in the dark. But we must leap. Standing still is not an option.

Michael C. Ritter, MPA
Chair, Lebanon County Coalition to End Homelessness

Introduction to the Lebanon County Coalition to End Homelessness (LCCEH)

The LCCEH was established in 1990 in response to the Second Century Initiative Committee of the United Way of Lebanon County. It was a research project to determine how the United Way could best address the need for action in the realm of local homelessness. Specifically, the task was to “investigate housing difficulties in Lebanon County as it relates to temporary homelessness and the possible solutions involving the United Way.”

Eventually the Coalition continued as an independent, albeit informal, collaboration between various agencies. Members established a leadership committee and wrote bylaws. The purpose of LCCEH became to “provide leadership in the prevention and eradication of homelessness in Lebanon County” – a purpose to which it continues to be committed.

Who We Are

Current members for FY 2017-2018 include:

2017 – 2018 Leadership Team & Members	
Chair Mike Ritter <i>Domestic Violence Intervention</i>	Co-Chair Kristen Hoffa <i>Berks IU - ECEYEH</i>
Treasurer Jocelyn Grassley <i>Lebanon MH/ID/EI</i>	Secretary Alise Bachert <i>LutherCare</i>
Community members	Jubilee Ministries
Lebanon County Area Agency on Aging	Lebanon County CASSP
Lebanon County Christian Ministries	Lebanon County Housing Authority
Lebanon Lutheran Cooperative Ministry	Lebanon Rescue Mission
Lebanon Valley Youth for Christ	MidPenn Legal Services
Pennsylvania Counseling Services Warrior Project	Pennsylvania Link to Aging and Disability Resources
Salvation Army	Sexual Assault Resource & Counseling Center
United Way of Lebanon County	Volunteers of America Pennsylvania

WellSpan Good Samaritan Family Medicine	WellSpan Good Samaritan Hospital
WellSpan Philhaven	Welsh Mountain Health Centers

Current members of the strategic planning sub-committee include:

- Chair**, Mike Ritter, Domestic Violence Intervention of Lebanon County
- Dave Hartman, Community resident
- Lorita Valente, Luthercare
- Marilyn Vizcaino, Luthercare

About the Community Health Council of Lebanon County (CHC)

The CHC is a coalition of individuals and organizations working together to encourage and support a safe, healthy, and substance-free community for every individual with a focus on youth. The structure of the CHC is:

2017 – 2018 Executive Board	
<p>President Jim Holtry <i>Lebanon County Children & Youth Services</i></p>	
<p>1st Vice President Kevin Schrum <i>Lebanon County MH/ID/EI</i></p>	<p>2nd Vice President Connie Dowhower <i>Lebanon County Juvenile Probation</i></p>
<p>Treasurer Kim Kreider Umble <i>Lebanon Family Health Services</i></p>	<p>Secretary Vicki DeLoatch <i>Lebanon Family Health Services</i></p>
Community Wellness Committee	Youth Committee
<p>50+ Festival Age Wave Cultural Diversity Healthy Lifestyles Heroin Task Force LCCEH Suicide Prevention Task Force Tobacco Coalition</p>	<p>Communities that Care Developmental Asset Building Healthy Kids Day Lebanon Collaborative Network SAFE Kids YAP-Gardening Program Mentor A Mother Sustainability Committee</p>

The Issue of Homelessness in Lebanon County

It can be hard to “see” homeless people in Lebanon County. This is because local citizens struggling with homelessness are not often living on the streets and sleeping on park benches, as is typically more common in urban centers like Philadelphia, New York, and D.C.

This is not to say that none of our citizens are living outdoors. A few wander the streets. Some find refuge in abandoned properties. Still others create makeshift shelters that are hidden from plain view or live in their cars. In fact, during the homeless persons point-in-time counts in 2009¹ and 2011,² nine and twenty-one individuals, respectively, were found to be living “unsheltered” – living in a place not meant for human habitation. For the years 2013 through 2015, a total of six people were found to be living unsheltered.³

But overwhelmingly, our citizens struggling with homelessness are found doubled-up with other family members, “couch surfing” from one friend’s home to another, or in an emergency shelter of some kind. In fact, in 2016, 733 individuals accessed at least one local shelter program. Additionally, 253 school-aged children across all six public school districts in the county accessed homelessness intervention services during the 2015-2016 school year.

Defining Homelessness

All of the above situations are considered “homelessness” under federal law. Though the LCCEH has not yet decided on a local definition for homelessness, below are the most commonly referenced and used definitions:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)⁴

On January 4, 2012, final regulations went into effect to implement changes to HUD’s definition of homelessness contained in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act:

- People who are living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided if they were in shelter or a place not meant for human habitation before entering the institution.

¹ <http://www.ldnews.com/story/archives/2010/12/31/volunteers-needed-for-homeless-count/75304958/>

² <http://www.ldnews.com/story/archives/2011/01/27/searching-for-the-homeless-/75305060/>

³ <http://www.dma-housing.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Eastern-PA-CoC-PITS-Data-2013-2015.pdf>

⁴ <http://endhomelessness.org/resource/changes-in-the-hud-definition-of-homeless/>

- People who are losing their primary nighttime residence, which may include a motel or hotel or a doubled up situation, within 14 days and lack resources or support networks to remain in housing.
- Families with children or unaccompanied youth who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state. This category applies to families with children or unaccompanied youth (up to age 24) who have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 60 or more days, have had two or more moves in the last 60 days, and who are likely to continue to be unstably housed because of disability or multiple barriers to employment.
- People who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening situations related to violence; have no other residence; and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

McKinney-Vento Act⁵

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." The act provides examples of children who would fall under this definition:

- Children and youth sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Children and youth living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations.
- Children and youth living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Children and youth abandoned in hospitals.
- Children and youth whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.).
- Children and youth living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations.
- Migratory children and youth living in any of the above situations.

Causes of Homelessness

Locally it is currently difficult for us to clearly determine contributing factors involved in an individual's or family's struggle with homelessness due to lack of sufficient data collection. However, during the strategic planning committee's research phase, the following indicators were given:

- Unemployment, under-employment, or job loss
- Sudden death or serious illness of family member
- Struggles with mental illness and/or substance abuse
- Criminal convictions
- "Broken families"

Nationally, the primary causes include:⁶

⁵ <http://www.k12.wa.us/HomelessEd/AssistanceAct.aspx>

- Foreclosure
- Poverty
- Eroding work opportunities
- Decline in public assistance
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of affordable health care
- Domestic violence
- Mental illness and addiction disorders

The Need to Think Strategically

For many years, the Coalition dedicated itself to one primary objective – the opening of a homeless shelter for *families* in Lebanon County. On October 1, 2012 that goal was accomplished when the Lebanon HOPES (Helping Others by Providing Emergency Shelter) program opened as a joint project of Lebanon County Christian Ministries (LCCM) and Jubilee Ministries. LCCM operated the overnight shelter program in partnership with several churches, which opened their doors to guests. Jubilee operated the HOPES Resource Center, located at 9th and Cumberland Streets in downtown Lebanon, providing access to case management, and facilities for laundry, bathing, and storage.⁷

In the initial stages of HOPES⁸, the Coalition played a sort of advisory role. But knowing there was more to be done in efforts to prevent and eradicate local homelessness, Coalition members began to consider what the next move should be.

As such, the leadership team in place in 2015 decided the Coalition needed to engage in a strategic planning process to enlighten the path forward. A four-member ad hoc strategic planning committee was formed in the fall of 2015.

The Insider Perspective

The first major task the strategic planning committee set out to accomplish was an internal SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis by the Coalition membership (Appendix A). As a standard tool often used in the non-profit sector, this seemed an appropriate starting point. Two significant findings were discovered (Appendix B). First, member agency representatives felt that the Coalition was still needed. Dissolving LCCEH was not an option. And second, though the Coalition enjoyed a fair diversity of member stakeholders, it was clear more human resources were desired because as one representative put it “not all of the right people are at the table.”

⁶ <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/why.html>

⁷ In July 2017, LCCM assumed full ownership of the HOPES program.

⁸ As of December 2017, the HOPES program has moved solely under the umbrella of LCCM and now operates as FRESH Start.

Outside the Lines

After completion of the internal SWOT analysis, attention was turned to the surrounding environment. The strategic planning committee created a brief open-ended questionnaire with input from the full Coalition membership. The questions posed included:

- In your experience, what does poverty or homelessness look like in Lebanon County?
- If a person struggling with poverty or homelessness contacted your office, what would your process be to assist them?
- Imagine you were part of a coalition to end homelessness in Lebanon County. What would it look like? What would it do?

Questionnaires – or interviews in some cases – were completed by elected officials, landlords, faith leaders, and service providers not represented on the Coalition. The committee also conducted in-person interviews with a sample of HOPES program participants. These interviews were far more participant-driven, focusing on their stories, hopes, successes, and barriers, rather than pre-determined questions. Weeding through many diverse pieces of feedback, the committee was able to illuminate ten possible “priority areas” on which the Coalition could choose to focus (Appendix C).

At the January 2017 regular meeting of the Coalition, in an effort to narrow down which areas to tackle first, all members were asked to vote for their top three priority areas. The result was a four-way tie for first place.

What’s in the Plan?

We’ve tried to be as specific in our actions as possible. However, since this is the first ever strategic plan for the Coalition, the path leading from where we are today to where we want to be in the future is not entirely clear. That’s because, as noted elsewhere, we have a lack of quality information on our local struggle with homelessness. So, much of our initial actions will involve researching and compiling information into a functional format. As a result, what you will tend to see are broad strokes. This will provide us with the flexibility to make changes and additions to the plan as things unfold. What follows is by no means a finished project. There are many steps to be taken well into the future. We will review this plan and address these issues at regular intervals.

To bring definition to this strategic plan, the Coalition utilized a logic model. Logic models visually demonstrate a roadmap connecting goals and objectives with outcomes, commonly referred to as a “theory of change.” The strategic planning committee began in earnest to develop goals within each priority area, along with measurable objectives and specific tactics to achieve these goals. These elements were connected to outputs (direct evidence of having performed

activities⁹) and outcomes (impact of having taken action¹⁰). The committee also considered what inputs (resources) would be needed to accomplish each goal, as well as external factors that may influence how the process unfolds in reality. The logic model diagram is included as a separate document.

What's Not in the Plan?

The Coalition leadership team installed in the summer of 2016 instituted some structural changes not reflected directly in the current plan. These changes were necessary, however, to strengthen the Coalition's capacity to effectively carry out its strategic plan. Three new standing committees were created, each with its own chairperson. The Community Connections committee is responsible for exploring, planning, and facilitating projects related to community outreach and marketing. The Membership committee is responsible for the recruitment, retention, and recognition of Coalition members. And the Youth committee is responsible for spearheading initiatives targeted at homeless and at-risk youth both within shelter programs and the community at-large.

Each of these committees has been institutionalized in the organization's bylaws, along with a new clause stating that the bylaws are to be reviewed regularly or in accordance with a strategic plan. This ensures the Coalition will continue to internally assess its own capacities and procedures.

Additionally, seeing a need to significantly increase financial resources through fundraising and grant writing, it became necessary to formalize the Coalition as an organization. After exploring available options, in June 2017, the Coalition officially became a sub-committee of the Community Health Council of Lebanon County (CHC). This new partnership brings the benefits of 501(c)(3) status and a web-based presence for the Coalition. You may learn more about the CHC by visiting www.communityhealthcouncil.com.

Going Forward

The strategic planning sub-committee, in tandem with the Coalition leadership team, will continue to monitor the activities included within the logic model, though members of the sub-committee will not be solely responsible for their implementation. All Coalition members will be expected to participate actively.

Beyond that, LCCEH cannot achieve its purpose of providing leadership in preventing and eradicating homelessness in Lebanon County alone. First, involvement of the community is simply just vital. Second, the Coalition members must be humble and admit that some things may be wrong or missing. Therefore, the Coalition is seeking feedback from agency

⁹ <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/overview/models-for-community-health-and-development/logic-model-development/main>

¹⁰ Ibid.

stakeholders and community residents on the contents of the strategic plan. Opportunities will be presented through various outlets. Two on-going outlets include:

- 1) Email the Coalition directly at lccteh1@gmail.com
- 2) Fill out this anonymous survey: <https://s.surveymonkey.com/SkpEmJpT-x>

Appendix A: Stakeholder Survey

We at the Lebanon County Coalition to End Homelessness (LCCEH) are currently engaged in our strategic planning process. This is an opportunity for us to step back and reflect on what has gone well and look for ways to enhance our value to the community and our partners. As we co-create our future, we want to invite insights and opinions from lots of different people who know our work. Your voice is important!

Please take 5 – 10 minutes to complete this brief questionnaire and share your ideas with us. Send your completed form back to us in the postage paid return envelope. Or complete it online at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/QGD9KVV. All questionnaires are anonymous and treated with complete confidentiality. Our strategic plan will be richer having heard from you. Thank you!!

As I see it, the LCCEH's current strength(s) is/are:

(Strengths are advantages, assets, resources, capabilities, things we do well, etc.)

As I see it, the LCCEH's current weakness(es) is/are:

(Weaknesses are disadvantages, limitations, vulnerabilities, areas to be improved, etc.)

As I see it, the LCCEH will have the *opportunity*, in the next three years (3 years), to:

(Opportunities are external factors that may contribute or build upon strengths; add more value)

As I see it, the LCCEH will face the following challenges or threats:

(Threats are external factors that may cause potential problems or risks)

In your own words, what is the mission of the LCCEH?

What's one thing that you would like to see changed about the LCCEH?

What's one thing you really like/appreciate about the LCCEH?

Please share any remaining thoughts you have:

Appendix B: SWOT Analysis

Lebanon County Coalition to End Homelessness

SWOT Analysis Summary of Responses

	Positive	Negative
Internal	<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>1) Current <i>agency</i> membership is broad, diverse, dedicated, consistent, and knowledgeable.</p>	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>1) Current membership too narrow. Should include landlords, business reps, elected officials, currently or formerly homeless individuals, other agencies, and community members.</p> <p>2) Less than full participation from current members.</p>
External	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>1) Growth and expansion.</p> <p>2) Capacity to collaborate.</p> <p>3) Year-round education and awareness.</p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p>1) Limited funding and resources.</p> <p>2) Member burnout and attrition.</p> <p>3) Perception that homelessness does not exist in Lebanon County.</p>

Appendix C: Ten Identified Priority Areas with Vote Total for Each

Collect and maintain quality local data on hunger and homelessness (10)

The strategic planning process illuminated the fact that data collection is highly disjunctured and insufficient. It is difficult to determine things like: Unduplicated counts; specific contributing factors; effectiveness of service provision; etc. specifically for Lebanon County.

Address the lack of quality, affordable housing (10)

Some landlords were cited as being “terrible,” renting units with bed bugs, roaches, and other problems that make it difficult for families to thrive. Also, rent is typically too high relative to income. Is there a way to do something like micro-housing, utilize abandoned properties, or just give people housing?

Participate in education, awareness, and advocacy activities (10)

May include things like addressing stereotypes and stigma around poverty and homelessness, addressing housing discrimination, performing public education, advocating for folks in regard to child care or employment, etc. This was a significant area of feedback.

Address gaps in transportation (10)

Many homeless individuals can and do want to work, but lack the physical means to get to employers, particularly those located outside the City of Lebanon.

Address unemployment and under-employment (6)

Issues with job loss and low-paying jobs were cited as major contributing factors to local poverty and homelessness. Lack of full-time employment may also suggest a lack of health insurance, which means folks may be unable to receive services for things like mental illness and substance abuse – two additional contributing factors.

Break down “silos” between agencies (5)

Both agency reps and clients expressed a need for agencies to work better together, citing a “communication problem.” Staff and clients are not getting the information they need; or are otherwise misinformed about available services, eligibility criteria, etc.

Address language barriers (4)

Spanish speakers and ESL speakers find it difficult to access services because they are unable to effectively communicate with agency workers. Obtaining ESL instruction is not seen as a primary priority for these individuals, however, as bigger issues take precedent. We also have a growing Arabic-speaking population.

Address gaps in child care (4)

Lack of access to affordable child care was consistently cited as a problem by our client interviewees. It is often cited as being too expensive. Additionally, individuals get caught in a Catch-22 because in order to receive child care subsidies, they must first be working, but they can’t work unless they have child care.

Serve as a means of emergency or temporary financial assistance (1)

How to help “after hours” cases and folks showing up to the ER. Also, providing assistance to “in-between” families to prevent them from becoming homeless. Some school staff, pastors, and other personnel cited utilizing personal/discretionary funds to help people out in a pinch.

Expand coalition membership to include other stakeholders not historically represented (0)

Both internal and external feedback expressed that while the Coalition maintains some diversity, it still needs additional players seated at the table.