

Greater Seacoast Coalition to End Homelessness

Who we are:

The Greater Seacoast Coalition to End Homelessness (GSCH) was convened by United Way of the Greater Seacoast in 2009 as the “Ending Homelessness Work Group”.

The GSCH is led by a Steering Committee, comprised of leaders in the homeless, housing and supportive services fields.

The coalition serves all of Strafford County and Eastern Rockingham County, NH, as well as Kittery and Eliot, ME.

The purpose of the GSCH is to mobilize resources (human, financial, community), assist with the ongoing assessment of needs and opportunities, and develop/implement collaborative, coordinated and proven strategies for reducing, and ultimately eliminating, the issue of homelessness in the greater seacoast area.

What we've accomplished:

With nearly \$300,000 in funding from United Way of the Greater Seacoast since 2009, some highlights of the coalition's successes include:

2010-The GSCH commissioned a comprehensive needs and resources assessment around homelessness in the Seacoast.

2011-Members of the coalition attended the National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference to learn about promising practices for preventing and ending homelessness.

2012-The coalition developed, implemented and provided financial support for two years via an investment by United Way of the Greater Seacoast for a Coordinated Entry system for the service area, which includes a single point of access for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The single point of access includes an assessment of the individual/family circumstance and need, and assists with the coordination of housing/shelter. The Coordinated Entry system remains in place today and is operated by Community Action Partnership of Strafford County.

2014-The GSCH organized and hosted the Community Summit on Homelessness and Housing. The Summit brought together dozens of stakeholders, consumers and community leaders to further identify and prioritize opportunities to address homelessness in the seacoast. One emerging theme/opportunity was the need to further coordinate care and services for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

2015-With leadership and support provided by the GSCH, two Community Care Teams (CCTs) were developed and implemented in the region. CCTs are comprised of clinical and non-clinical service providers from 48 area agencies. The CCT serves frequent Emergency Department visitors and other vulnerable populations with complex medical and behavioral health needs (over half are homeless or unstably housed). The CCT seeks to remove barriers to care and improve the coordination of existing services.

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What's next:

With the successful implementation of both Coordinated Entry and two Community Care Teams, the GSCH has identified three priorities moving forward, and as assembled work groups in each area.

Public Education and Advocacy-Develop a coordinated public education and awareness campaign that engages the community to work together toward eradicating homelessness in the seacoast, and wherever possible and appropriate, advocate on behalf of policies that help drive the mission of ending homelessness on the Seacoast.

Supportive Services-Identify and implement the improvement and expansion of comprehensive and wide ranging supportive housing services for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Housing Opportunities-Identify and implement strategies to increase housing opportunities for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, with a first year focus on engaging landlords to provide affordable housing or to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

For more information, please contact:

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Greater Seacoast Coalition to End Homelessness Steering Committee

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Emily Flinkstrom, Fair Tide
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Lauren Wool, United Way of the Greater Seacoast
Molly Zirillo, St. Vincent de Paul in Exeter
Jay Couture, Seacoast Mental Health Center
Julian Long, City of Rochester
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Lena Nichols, City of Dover
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