

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL & INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS

## REPORT TO THE GASTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### GASTON COUNTY'S TOP HOMELESSNESS CHALLENGES

**Affordable housing is a growing need.** Gaston County will likely see a continued population growth. The County needs to be prepared to meet the rising demand.

**Prevent and respond.** There is a need for a systemic approach that coordinates the resources of service providers throughout the County.

**Unmet needs.** There are still many unmet needs for the homeless and people in poverty who face housing insecurity in Gaston County.

**Breaking the stigma.** There is an increasing need for more education for the public, so people know where to go for help.

**Prior evictions and felonies** have a long-term impact on people's ability to find housing and employment.

**There is no single story of homelessness.** The causes of homelessness are complex. Too often, harmful stereotypes of homelessness pull attention away from the true issues.

### SIX FOCUS AREAS OF EFFORTS, INITIATIVES, AND SERVICES IN GASTON COUNTY



HOUSING



PERSONAL  
NEEDS



EDUCATION  
& JOBS



HEALTHCARE



COORDINATION



DATA &  
EVALUATION

### NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO HOMELESSNESS

The **housing first** approach proposes that people need to be placed in permanent housing before they can begin to heal from mental illness or substance abuse disorders.

**Rapid re-housing** is a program model that identifies housing, offers limited financial and move-in assistance, and provides case management and other services over a longer timeframe.

**Discharge protocols** to prevent homelessness are focused on the long-term stability of people exiting hospitals, jails, foster care, or other similar institutions.

Coordinated, intergovernmental and interagency **street outreach** is another best practice that connects people with the services they need.

Building **affordable and workforce housing** infrastructure is essential, and addresses a widespread community need.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION



Provide short-term emergency housing assistance for Gaston County residents facing housing insecurity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Task the County Manager to establish a County-wide Homelessness Prevention Committee.



Pursue long-term public-private partnerships to fund affordable housing development.