

## **Intergovernmental and Interagency Task Force on Homelessness in Gaston County**

Homelessness is a concern in Gaston County just as it is nationwide.

There is not a single definition of homelessness. The Social Security Administration identifies an individual as homeless if “he or she does not have a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence”, or if “they expect to lose current accommodations within 14 days, and will not have a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”

Other governmental agencies, such as the US Department of Housing & Urban Development, have more complicated definitions that name and describe categories of homelessness, including “chronic,” “episodic”, and “transitional”.

Homelessness is inextricably linked with, and complicated by challenges of poverty, underlying health issues or disability, domestic violence, mental illness, drug abuse and addiction.

### **Establishment of the Task Force**

In order to better understand the extent and challenges of homelessness in Gaston County, to coordinate with ongoing efforts, and to develop or reinforce action steps to reduce homelessness, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners is creating the Intergovernmental and Interagency Task Force on Homelessness (the Task Force).

### **Task Force Charge**

The Task Force will address concerns about homelessness in the county and produce a written report, which will include:

- An assessment of homelessness in Gaston County, including demographics of the homeless population, and descriptions of associated challenges impacting those individuals;
- A compilation of efforts, initiatives, and services, addressing homelessness in Gaston County at the current time, including quantitative and/or qualitative descriptions of their progress
- A summary of best practices from other communities and organizations, including successful strategies and tactics for addressing homelessness in Gaston County.

- Recommendations for action steps (or reinforcement of action steps already laid out through current efforts) to reduce homelessness in Gaston County, including actual or potential responsible parties and milestones.

The report will be complete and presented to the Board of Commissioners and the Board or Council of each city and town within the county by November 30, 2021.

### **Task Force Membership**

Task Force members\* will include, at a minimum:

- (1) representative of the Gaston County Board of Commissioners, who will Chair the Task Force
- (1) representative of the elected Board or Council of each of the cities and towns in the county as they choose to participate. Their representative may be an elected official or senior staff member.
- (3) local Faith Community representatives that geographically represent the County 1 County Health Department representative (appointed by County Manager)
- (1) County Department of Social Services representative (appointed by County Manager)
- (1) Gaston County Police Department representative (appointed by County Manager)
- (1) United Way of Gaston County representative (to be invited)
- (1) Gaston County Salvation Army representative (to be invited)
- (1) Gaston-Lincoln-Cleveland Continuum of Care Planning Committee representative (to be invited)
- (1) Catherine's House/Sisters of Mercy representative (to be invited)

\* The Task Force may decide to add/invite additional members.

### **Task Force Meeting Schedule and Locations**

The Task Force will determine its meeting schedule and meeting locations/approaches. Meetings will be held in-person and a professional facilitator will be provided.

**Gaston County Staff Support:** Name & contact information for staff to be provided.