

Executive Summary

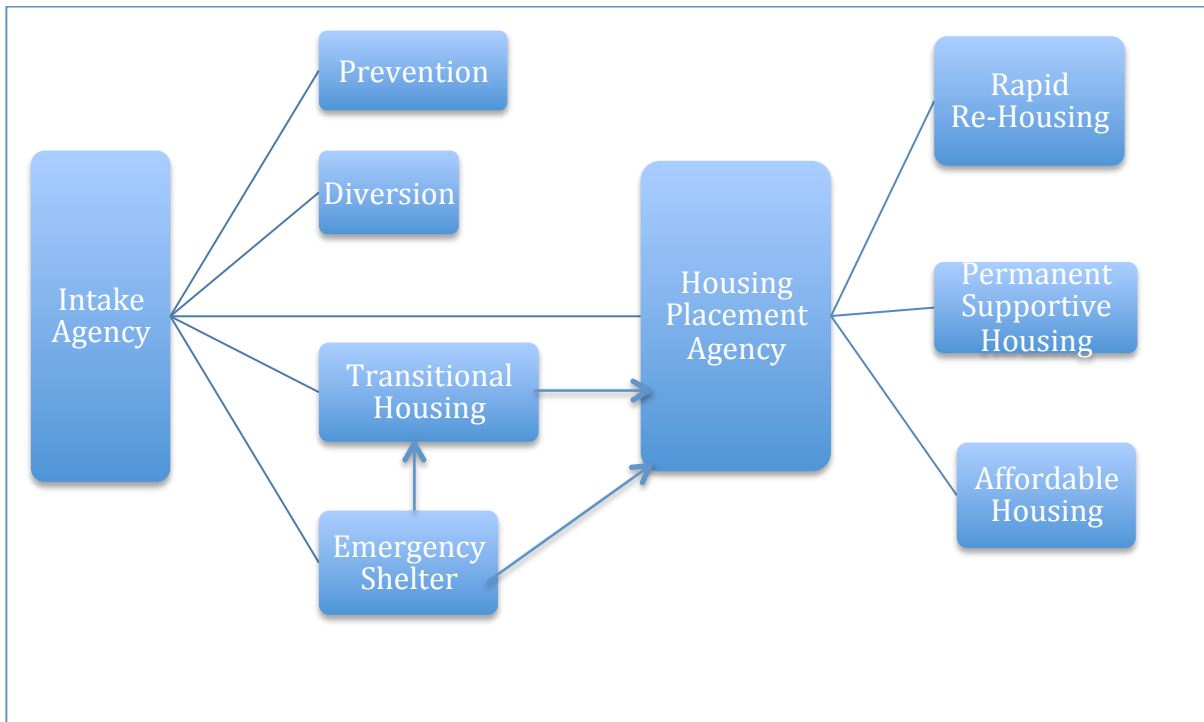
Monmouth County is a community that embodies “Jersey Strong”. The gateway to the Jersey Shore, Monmouth County is an integral part of the New Jersey experience and represents a cross section of the geographic, cultural, and economic diversity present throughout the state. Monmouth County has proven itself a resilient community focused not just on surviving but on prospering and securing the prosperity of its residents.

The Monmouth County community efforts to develop a plan to end homelessness started in 2009 and included participation and support from a broad array of community organizations and advocates. In an effort to develop a strong plan that would effectively work to end homelessness, the planning timeline has remained dynamic enabling the community to respond to a changing landscape such as the release of the Federal Strategic Plan to Address and End Homelessness, the release of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) program regulations and most recently the devastating impact of Superstorm Sandy.

The purpose of the planning process to end homelessness is to ensure that every resident of Monmouth County has access to permanent, affordable and safe housing and to improve the quality of life of all our residents by preventing and striving to end homelessness within ten years through strategies and coordinated action which engages the strengths of all sectors.

The losses suffered as a result of Superstorm Sandy have had a tremendous impact on the level of effort necessary to effectively end homelessness within the county. In a time of shrinking resources and great need, the community of Monmouth County understands that the solution is in using the available resources in a more strategically targeted fashion to increase effectiveness and efficiency. To that end, the planning group has defined what an effective system looks like and developed appropriate strategies to strengthen the homeless service system within Monmouth County.

Monmouth County Homeless Service System



Key components of the strategy to strengthen the system and end homelessness include:

1. **Centralized Intake** – the community will implement a centralized intake system, with multiple access points, in which all individuals and families seeking assistance must go through a single agency intake and assessment process in order to receive financial assistance, housing assistance or services. A specialized process will be put into place for victims of domestic violence
2. **System Coordination** – Service providers in Monmouth County will utilize a streamlined referral process along with a shared data management system (HMIS) (with a specialized process for Domestic Violence agencies) in order to facilitate access to services, avoid duplication and ensure the provision of the highest quality services
3. **Diversion** – Through the Centralized Intake Agency the Monmouth County community will employ a formalized system for diverting people from shelter ensuring that only those critically in need enter into the homeless sheltering system
4. **Centralized access to permanent housing** – the community of Monmouth County will create a centralized exit process focused on rapidly moving homeless households to stable housing options in the community
5. **Permanent housing models** – Recognizing the varying needs of homeless individuals and families, the community will create a variety of housing models

geared towards homeless youth, veterans, and high flyers in the emergency rooms, among others, increasing success in placement and stability in permanent housing for all those experiencing homelessness

6. **Discharge planning** – A deliberate discharge planning protocol creating a formalized communication process will be used by institutions in Monmouth County to ensure individuals are safely transitioned to appropriate settings.
7. **Education and advocacy** – Community members in Monmouth County will continue to engage a variety of stakeholders in the conversation about the needs of homeless households in the community.

Plan implementation and oversight

The community will create the Monmouth County Homeless System Collaborative for the purpose of management and oversight of homeless planning activities in Monmouth County. This committee will oversee the implementation of this plan along with the management of the Monmouth County Continuum of Care and funding of homeless programs in the community. The Monmouth County Homeless System Collaborative will be composed of key stakeholders in the community and will remain a flexible board capable of responding to changing needs in the community. The Monmouth County Homeless System Collaborative will have standing membership from Monmouth County government and the United Way of Monmouth County as key partners in the local planning process.

The Monmouth County Homeless System Collaborative will work closely with community agencies to develop a structure for the implementation of the strategic plan. The Homeless System Collaborative will convene community committees as necessary and facilitate stakeholder discussions in the implementation of identified strategies. Annual progress reports will be issued to keep the community informed of progress in meeting plan goals.

Through these targeted strategies the Monmouth County community will effectively end homelessness for those currently experiencing housing instability and develop a clear path to housing for those that experience homelessness in the future.