

Homeless Services

Angus Chaney, Executive Director, Homeless Prevention Center (HPC)

My name is Angus Chaney. I'm the Executive Director of the Homeless Prevention Center.

HPC is a community-based non-profit, providing housing, services, financial assistance and case management to clients in Rutland County. Last year we assisted over **500** Vermonters who were homeless or at-risk of homelessness and marked **20** years of service to our community.

We are rather busy at the moment as we conduct housing assessments - and ultimately work to re-house - the record number of people in motels as a result of public health guidance around COVID-19.

Fortunately, HPC has a number of case management programs to offer; including a supportive housing program for families, a housing first program for individuals with more complex needs, and lighter-touch prevention and rehousing programs for people whose crisis can be resolved through help with move-in costs, technical assistance or a short-term rental subsidy. We also have a Landlord Liaison, a small housing navigation program for young adults, a transitional housing program for offenders and a few emergency apartment units we use for short-term shelter.

When a client needs services beyond what we offer, we have partnerships and systems in place to make those connections. We're encouraged to see that many of the people we reached through our motel outreach push do not appear to require long-term case management, but more likely technical assistance with their housing search combined with move-in costs and/or a short-term subsidy. Perhaps most critically, they need a rental unit.

Homeless Services is a vast area, so I'll try to summarize how we view this at HPC. First, I want to differentiate between Assessments and Case Management.

Assessments

- Establish eligibility and prioritize people for various housing programs (financial assistance, subsidy, services)
- Provide a more complete understanding of the whole family's short and long term needs
- Help us learn from history what about our collective approach may need to be modified to improve results.

Since July 2019 a total of **262** assessments have been completed in Rutland.
85 households moved off the master list into permanent destinations
109 households are currently on the master list

Case Management

- Identifies goals and barriers – develop strategies customized to those goals and barriers
- Provides technical assistance and support to help client achieve goals:
 - Assisting with applications
 - Finding housing
 - Accessing subsidy
 - Securing move-in costs

- Provide technical assistance and support with other domains, as appropriate:
 - Accessing benefits,
 - completing education,
 - securing employment,
 - increasing income or savings and improving credit,
 - accessing mental health or substance abuse treatment,

Within Case Management, we think about 3 main areas:

1. Homeless Prevention

This is just what it sounds like – financial assistance and case management with the goal of preventing homelessness for a household at imminent risk.

2. Housing Navigation and Re-Housing

Identifying new housing for people who cannot stay where they are or are already homeless.

This may include accessing subsidy, getting move-in costs together and getting a client through the lease-up process. HPC is currently providing housing navigation to **59** households; **over 110** persons.

3. Housing Retention

Follow up case management for people who are now housed – as a result of successful prevention or re-housing work. This is where we often find a lot of work needs to be done in domains beyond housing. HPC is currently providing retention services to **64** households; **over 130** persons

Specialization and Services Provided

Our organization is specialized to assist around housing. Most of our staff are able to provide housing case management and we look for candidates with additional skill sets and interests working with a given program population, such as families, people with a history of mental illness or substance abuse, etc.

The intensity and duration of services varies widely within programs and even at the individual level. When a new client is in crisis, they may need daily support from a case manager, particularly with issues involving a co-occurring diagnoses or hoarding, etc. Later, if that client becomes more stable in housing and other domains they may only need a monthly check-in.

We do not directly provide health services, assistance with activities of daily living, or clinical treatment, but work to connect our clients with the providers who do. This includes groups and services such as SASH, the AAA, and dozens of others.

Our administrative work can include items such as:

- Administration of short and medium term rental subsidy (this year we've directly provided over \$180,000 in client financial assistance. This does not include all the outside subsidies and financial assistance we leverage and access for clients.)
- Client case notes
- Re-certifications
- Attending team meetings
- Data Entry – lots of it!!!