

MARION MAYOR'S CITIZEN TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS WORK PLAN



Prepared by Foothills Regional Commission

2026

HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE

WORK PLAN

for Marion, North Carolina - June 2026

Prepared in collaboration with the Marion
Mayor's Citizen Task Force on Homelessness.

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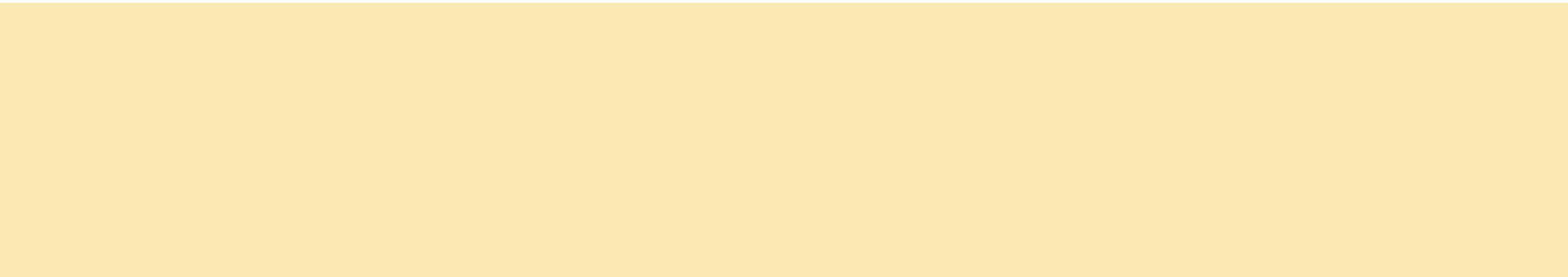


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SHORT TERM

PROJECTS



INCREASED POLICE PRESENCE ON MAIN ST.

TIMELINE

- YEAR 1-** Assess needs, write DOJ COPS grant application.
Coordinate with Foothills Regional Commission to assist with grant preparation.
- YEAR 2-** Advertise position and hire officers
- YEAR 3-** First year of funding under COPS program
- YEAR 4-** Second year of funding under COPS program
- YEAR 5-** Third year of funding under COPS Program
- YEAR 6-** Fourth year, required to maintain positions under local funding.
- YEAR 7+-** Continuation of program under regular budget.

STEPS

STEP 1: SECURING FUNDING

- 1. Prepare Department of Justice COPS grant application
- 2. Plan for long term sustainability of the new positions.

STEP 2: HIRE OFFICERS/IMPLEMENT

- 1. Receive note of grant award.
- 2. Prepare and adopt any policies and procedures required by DOJ
- 3. Advertise position and hire officers.

INCREASED POLICE PRESENCE ON MAIN ST.

PARTNERSHIPS

Foothills Regional Commission

US Department of Justice COPS Office

FUNDING

US Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Grants

Local Funds (25% Local Match, Retention of Positions After Award)

OPEN A YEAR-ROUND, LOW-BARRIER SHELTER

TIMELINE

YEAR 1- Coordinate partners, site search, begin grant writing.

YEAR 2- Grant Award, fulfill compliance requirements, begin construction.

YEAR 3- Complete Construction, begin operations.

STEPS

STEP 1: PREPARATION

1. Identify project partners, which agency will own and operate the shelter.
2. Identify sites for the shelter.
3. Scope project, develop cost estimates for construction of facilities or renovation of existing structures.

STEP 2: SECURE FUNDING

1. Identify potential funders: philanthropic organizations, state and federal agencies.
2. Prepare and submit an application.

STEP 3: CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION

1. Upon receiving notice of grant award, complete environmental review if funded by a federal or state agency.
- 2.If grant is awarded to the City of Marion, prepare and publish bid documents.
- 3.Open bids, select contractor, award construction contract.
- 4.Complete construction, begin operations.

OPEN A YEAR-ROUND, LOW-BARRIER SHELTER

PARTNERSHIPS

City of Marion

McDowell County Government

Nonprofit agencies

FUNDING

CDBG-NR

HUD HOME Program

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

TIMELINE

Year 1- Coordinate with partners to plan outreach opportunities, schedule and hold information sessions, designate liaison to downtown business community.

YEAR 2+- Continue education and training events, periodically reassess needs to address information gaps.

STEPS

STEP 1: PREPARATION

1. Meet with nonprofit partners and relevant County agencies
2. Establish plan of action

STEP 2: AWARENESS

1. Hold informational meetings with:
 - a. Public
 - b. Downtown association
 - c. Elected and appointed boards

STEP 3: SUSTAINABILITY AND EVALUATION

1. Continue to coordinate efforts
2. Respond to public perception

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

PARTNERSHIPS

City of Marion

County agencies

Nonprofit organizations

FUNDING

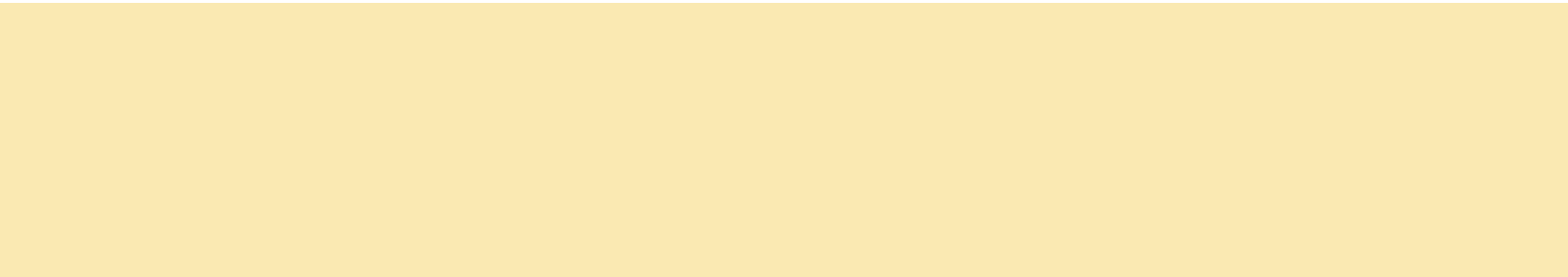
Regular operational budgets for Nonprofits, Human Services Agencies

Dogwood Health Trust



MEDIUM TERM

PROJECTS



ADULT RECOVERY COURT

TIMELINE

YEAR 1- BUILDING THE FOUNDATION + PARTNERSHIPS

Get community buy-in, establish structure (form advisory council, planning team), assess existing community resources, identify important partnerships

YEAR 2- PROGRAM DESIGN

Create program structure (mission, goals, target population, court model, etc.)
Develop intake process, program operations, treatment + supervision systems

YEAR 3- INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION

Launch ARC
Early evaluation, community awareness, staff development

YEAR 4- EVALUATION

Expand participant targets, expand wraparound services, diversify funding

YEARS 5- SUSTAINABILITY

Long term evaluation, institutionalize ARC, community integration

STEPS

STEP 1: LAY FOUNDATION

1. Create community buy-in. Educate elected officials and community members about ARC and purpose.
2. Identify Drug Court Advisory Council: Chief Judge, Elected Prosecutor, Chief Public Defender, Chief Court Administrator/Court Clerk, Chief of Police, Elected Sherriff, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Treatment Services, City Commissioner(s), City Council Member(s)
3. Identify Drug Court Planning Team Members: Judicial (judge, magistrate), District Attorney, Defense (public defender, private defense attorney, local bar association), coordination (court administrator, clerk), community supervision (pre-trial, probation, parole, community corrections, police, sheriff, highway patrol), treatment (private provider, county/state provider, health department, mental health), evaluator (local college professor, research company)
4. Secure team commitment
 - a. Agreement from all department heads, inter-agency agreements, identify resistance to the program
 - b. Identify impacts on agencies (political, time, cost)
 - c. Create collaboration (on-going planning meetings)
5. Identify other key stakeholders: media/community groups, substance abuse treatment providers/agencies, mental health treatment providers/agencies, other state agencies, vocational & educational communities. Job skills, chamber of commerce, welfare to work programs, anti crime and anti-drug coalitions, ex-offender and ex-addict groups, police or sheriffs association, dept of corrections
6. Identify the problems: data collection, interview stakeholders
 - a. Jail overcrowding, crowded criminal court dockets, type of cases, sentencing practices, crime and drug trends

ADULT RECOVERY COURT

STEP 2: DESIGNING AN ADULT DRUG COURT PROGRAM

1. Develop the mission statement
 - a. Purpose of drug court, goals, motivation
2. Define the goals and objectives
 - a. Goals: public safety, personal responsibility, improved utilization of community resources, cost effect on criminal justice system, high rates of retention and completion, improved functioning of individuals, address access issues
3. Identify target population (review problem data)
4. Design eligibility and disqualification criteria
 - a. Level of crime, type of crime, drug use and abuse history, criminal background, residency, mental health and health issues, current legal status, probation/parole status/revocation
5. Determine court model (ex: pre-plea diversion, post plea, deferred sentencing, probation, probation revocation, reentry)
6. Design entry process
 - a. Risk and need assessment (determine who is most suited for ARC, tools to be used, who will administer assessment)
 - b. Identify who will conduct legal screening
 - c. Determine points of entry
 - d. Clinical screening (select tool, determine who will conduct screening)
 - e. Purpose of screening
 - f. Clinical assessment (identify and select tool)
 - g. Purpose of assessment (examine scope and nature of substance abuse problem)
7. Establish drug court phase system
 - a. Length of program, number and length of phases, define specific court-imposed rules
8. Develop treatment protocol
 - a. Assess treatment resources and “levels of care” in the community, assess other resources available in the community, choose the treatment program (s) to serve the drug court (duration, goals, frequency, individualized treatment plans)
9. Develop community supervision protocol
10. Develop drug testing protocol
 - a. Determine which agency administers drug tests
 - b. Determine types of drug test methodology
 - c. Determine frequency of testing in each phase
 - d. Develop process for randomization
 - e. Develop process for collection
 - f. Choose drugs to be tested
11. Develop court responses protocol
12. Develop communication protocol
13. Develop monitoring and evaluation protocol
14. Identify and develop waivers
15. Develop operational practices (staffing meeting practices, progress reports practices)

ADULT RECOVERY COURT

STEPS

STEP 3: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM

1. Identify program costs
 - a. Screening and assessment tools, treatment services, drug testing, personnel, training, technology, administration, data collection, research
2. Identify available resources
 - a. Existing employees, existing community resources, grants and donations, fundraising strategies
3. Manage public relations
 - a. Educate agency partners, educate the public, develop a media plan, engage the media, educate locals, state, and national leaders

PARTNERSHIPS

Sustainability: federal + state grant agencies, local government, donors

Public relations: local media, local champions, community advocacy groups, state leaders

Ongoing partners: justice system, treatment providers, community organizations, data management

FUNDING

NORTH CAROLINA OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

SAMPSA GRANTS

MINIMUM HOUSING STANDARDS

TIMELINE

YEAR 1- ASSESSMENT

Review existing housing standards ordinance and identify updates, analyze local housing condition data, design framework

YEAR 2- ORDINANCE UPDATES AND DEVELOP PROGRAM

Adopt updated housing standards ordinance, create rental property registry, develop inspection standards

Establish graduated enforcement process, develop anti-retaliation protections

YEAR 3- PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

Launch complaint reporting system, begin proactive rental inspections in priority areas, launch landlord education, establish partnerships for legal aid, relocation support, and social services

YEAR 4- EXPANSION AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Expand proactive inspections, launch landlord financial assistance, expand crisis assistance programs, prioritize repair over displacement strategies

YEAR 5- EVALUATION

Evaluate inspection outcomes, revise ordinances, expand support for small landlords, establish annual ordinance review process

STEPS

STEP 1: UPDATE MINIMUM HOUSING STANDARDS ORDINANCE

1. Look at data outlining existing problem areas
2. Assess existing ordinance, look at data on local conditions, identify goals for update, conduct review, draft proposed revisions

STEP 2: PROACTIVE RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM

1. Purpose and scope of program
2. Create a rental property registry
3. Decide on inspection frequency and inspection type
4. Develop inspection standards
5. Establish a compliance process

STEP 3: COMPLAINT REPORTING SYSTEM

1. Determine administrative structure
2. Determine reporting model (online, phone, email, in-person)
3. Complaint categories (high, medium, low)
4. Develop workflow and response timeline
5. Protect against any kind of retaliation

MINIMUM HOUSING STANDARDS

STEP 4: GRADUATED ENFORCEMENT

Step 1: informal warning

Step 2: formal notice

Step 3: administrative enforcement (fines, hearings, citations, etc.)

Step 4: legal action

Step 5: emergency condemnation + evacuation

STEP 5: LANDLORD ASSISTANCE

1. Education and training
 2. Technical assistance (understanding how to fix violations and navigate regulations)
 3. Financial assistance (rehab grants, low-interest loans, deferred payment loans, forgivable loans)
 4. Extend timelines for small landlords
 5. Incentive programs
 6. Crisis assistance
 7. Small and beginning landlord support
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STEP 6: PROTECT TENANTS DURING ENFORCEMENT

1. Anti-retaliation
 2. Confidentiality measures
 3. Repair over displacement
 4. Relocation assistance
 5. Permanent + temporary
 6. Coordinate with social service providers
 7. Legal resources + tenant advocacy
-

MINIMUM HOUSING STANDARDS

PARTNERSHIPS

Planning and inspections

Public health

Fire department

Social services

Housing nonprofits

Substance use/homelessness nonprofits

FUNDING

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG)

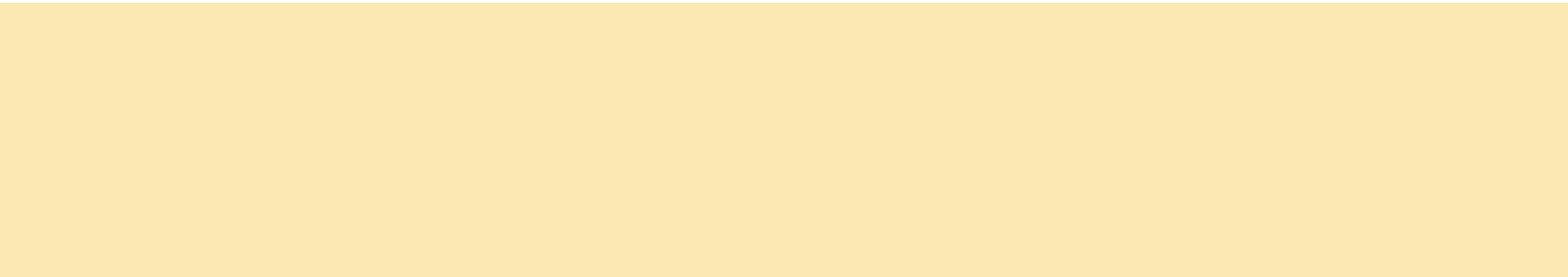
HOME Program

HUD Healthy Homes Program



LONG TERM

PROJECTS



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

TIMELINE

YEAR 1- ASSESSMENT

Site Assessment, Partnership Development, Regulatory Reform, and the creation of a dedicated housing non-profit in McDowell County.

Review potential sites for affordable housing projects, continue to work to develop relationships and partners, while reviewing development regulations and reforming regulations that are impediments to housing development. Work with Habitat for Humanity to expand back into McDowell or work to create a standalone non-profit to address housing needs solely in McDowell County.

YEAR 2- IDENTIFY PROJECTS

Identify projects, project partners, and funding sources. Ensure the creation of the dedicated housing non-profit or Habitat expansion.

Identify sites, funding sources, and ultimately projects with the designated project partners for each project.

YEAR 3- SCOPE

Fully scope projects and apply for funding for top priority projects.

Finalize and rank each identified project and apply for funding for the most likely, feasible, and impactful projects.

YEAR 4- FUNDING

Receive funding and meet all compliance requirements.

Receive grant awards and meet all grant releases of funding requirements.

YEAR 5 – 8- Design and construct projects

Procure an engineer to design and provide construction oversight on all funded projects. Construct projects over the proposed timeline for each project.

STEPS

STEP 1: SITE ASSESSMENT, PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, REGULATORY REFORM, THE CREATION OF A DEDICATED HOUSING NON-PROFIT IN MCDOWELL COUNTY

1. Assess sites appropriate for affordable housing and scoring with key funding sources such as LIHTC. Identify individual homeowners who could benefit from programs such as CDBG-NR.
2. Develop partnerships with funders such as Commerce, HUD, and developers to ensure funding and project partner relationships are created.
3. City of Marion should review all development regulations and reform regulations that prohibit or slow down housing permitting and construction of all types of housing. The City of Marion should implement the Strong Towns Housing Growth Toolkit.
4. Partner with Habitat to determine the feasibility of expanding to McDowell County and if not begin creating a non-profit to focus exclusively on housing in McDowell County.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

STEP 2: IDENTIFY SITES, FUNDING SOURCES, AND ULTIMATELY PROJECTS WITH THE DESIGNATED PROJECT PARTNERS FOR EACH PROJECT

1. Create a scoring rubric and identify sites that perform the best for affordable housing projects.
2. Clearly identify projects and locations with identified and committed partners for each project.
3. Identify and rank funding sources for each project from best to worst fit.

STEP 3: FINALIZE AND RANK EACH IDENTIFIED PROJECT AND APPLY FOR FUNDING FOR THE MOST LIKELY, FEASIBLE, AND IMPACTFUL PROJECTS

1. Create a scoring rubric and rank identified projects from best to worst.
2. Apply for funding starting with best scoring projects to worst scoring projects
3. Create a continuous pipeline of affordable housing projects

STEP 4: RECEIVE GRANT AWARDS AND MEET ALL GRANT RELEASES OF FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

1. Sign agreements with grant funders.
2. Meet all release of funding requirements and begin procurement of engineering or architectural firms.

STEP 5: PROCURE AN ENGINEER TO DESIGN AND PROVIDE CONSTRUCTION OVERSIGHT ON ALL FUNDED PROJECTS. CONSTRUCT PROJECTS OVER THE PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR EACH PROJECT.

1. Enter into agreements with engineers or architects to design, bid, and provide construction oversight on projects.
2. Big contractors to construct projects
3. Closeout projects and grant awards.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

PARTNERSHIPS

- Gateway Foundation**
- Dogwood Health Trust**
- Foothills Regional Commission**
- NC Department of Commerce**
- McDowell County**
- City of Marion**
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**
- Private Developers**
- Golden Leaf**

FUNDING

- NC Department of Commerce**
- Community Development Block Grant – Neighborhood Revitalization (CDBG-NR)**
- Community Development Block Grant – Infrastructure (CDBG-I)**
- HUD HOME**
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)**
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)**
- Dogwood Health Trust (DHT)**
- Gateway Foundation**

CRISIS STABILIZATION UNIT

TIMELINE

YEAR 1-2- Determine the feasibility of expanding the current RHA Health Services Crisis Stabilization Unit or the demand for a second unit.

YEAR 2- Determine the costs of a 24-hour crisis stabilization unit in McDowell County.

YEAR 3- Determine partnership with an organization to operate the unit.

YEAR 4 & 5- Determine funding for the expansion or creation of the unit & secure funding for the expansion or creation of the unit

STEPS

STEP 1: DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF EXPANDING THE CURRENT RHA HEALTH SERVICES CRISIS STABILIZATION UNIT OR THE DEMAND FOR A SECOND UNIT

1. Work with RHA Health Services Crisis Stabilization Unit to determine demand and viability of a second unit or expand to serve 24/7.
2. Work with RHA Health Services on estimating the total costs of expanding the unit to serve 24/7.
3. Work with non-profits or other Healthcare agencies to determine the costs of a second 24/7 unit.

STEP 2: DETERMINE PARTNERSHIPS WITH AN ORGANIZATION TO OPERATE THE UNIT

1. With with RHA or other healthcare providers on staffing and operating the unit on a 24/7 basis.

STEP 3: DETERMINE FUNDING FOR THE EXPANSION OR CREATION OF THE UNIT & SECURE FUNDING FOR THE EXPANSION OR CREATION OF THE UNIT

1. Determine what funding sources would pay for construction and staffing for the 24/7 operations.
2. Apply for and secure funding for the necessary staffing and construction if necessary.

CRISIS STABILIZATION UNIT

PARTNERSHIPS

RHA Health

Blue Ridge Health

McDowell County Social Services

McDowell County Public Health

City of Marion Police

McDowell County Sheriff's Office

Mission Ministries

FUNDING

NCDHHS

HHS

ARC

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