



COMMUNITY  
SHELTER

Of Union County

EMERGENCY SHELTER ■ FOOD ■ REHOUSING

# Annual Report 2022 - 2023



## Why is homelessness a chronic problem?

Many paths lead to homelessness, but there's one ever-increasing factor that impacts almost everyone in need — housing costs.

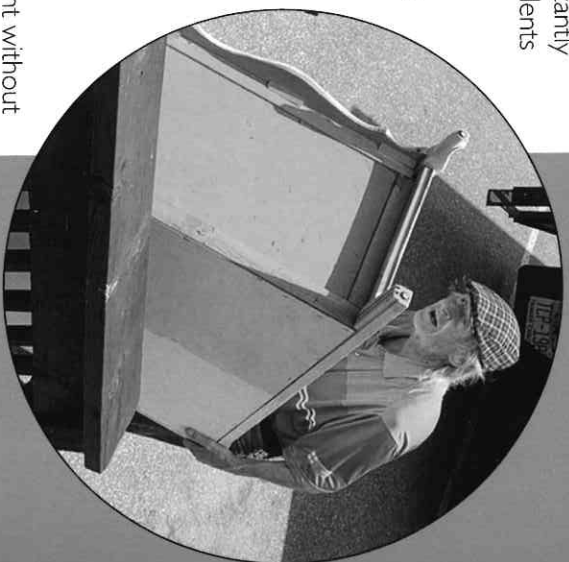
Statistics tell a bleak story of the local housing crisis, which significantly impacts homelessness and food insecurity, not just for single residents but for families with children.

This year, 22 percent of Union County households are cost-burdened by housing expense — spending more than 30 percent of their before-tax income on housing — including 12,033 homeowners and 4,931 renter households. (N.C. Housing Coalition)

That's more than one of five households whose income is inadequate to provide housing. Overburdening by housing costs in Union County is not surprising because:

- Fair market rent is \$1,333 month, requiring an income of \$53,320 a year. In Union County: The average annual salary of a healthcare worker is \$29,690; childcare worker - \$23,490; farm laborer - \$29,850 and police officer - \$60,040.
- The hourly wage needed to afford a fair market rent apartment without being cost-burdened is \$25.63 an hour:
- Minimum wage is just \$7.25 an hour:

In essence, a worker earning minimum wage would have to work 123 hours a week.



## Coping with no good choices

What do you do when the choice is between eating or paying rent? Or making a car payment, paying the power or medical bills, etc.

At first, residents may pay a portion of each bill or pay the power bill one month and the car payment the next, hoping for sympathy from the providers. But those desperate actions don't change the circumstances; instead, the situation becomes even more dire as months pass and debt grows.

Once this snowball starts, it only takes a few months before an eviction is filed and an episode of homelessness begins.

As a last resort, they move into the Community Shelter's emergency shelter facility where they can receive safe housing and nutritious meals, plus assistance with obtaining a better paying job, affordable housing, budgeting, medical care and more.

Family homelessness in Union County is increasing faster than with singles. Last year, requests for shelter assistance jumped 28 percent to 1,748 from the previous year – 26 percent increase for individuals, 42 percent increase for families.

That's a sharp contrast from 2019-2020, when requests for emergency shelter totaled 980, including members of 124 families.

## Food insecurity

1 in 9 residents doesn't know where their next meal will come from

- 11 percent of Union County's population is food insecure, meaning they do not always have reliable access to affordable and nutritious food.
- 22,300 county residents are food insecure.
- 18 percent of children are living in food insecure homes.
- 11,130 children are eligible for free or reduced price school meals

(Southeastern University Consortium for Food Security and Health)

*We believe that safe, affordable housing and access to food are basic human rights.*



## What We Do

Our approach to ending homelessness prioritizes partnering with emergency shelter participants to obtain swift, affordable and permanent housing, thus ending their temporary homelessness and providing a stable platform to further improve their quality of life.

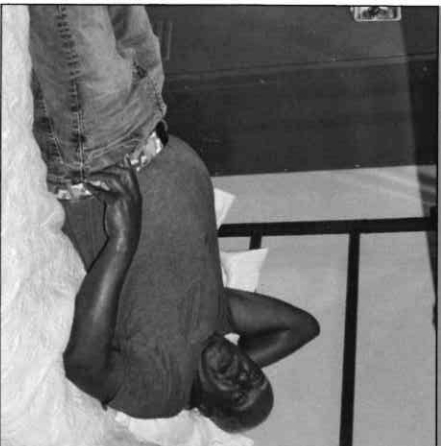
This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities, such as food and housing, before addressing secondary needs, such as getting a job or better-paying job, budgeting properly or addressing substance use issues.

## Emergency Shelter

Our shelter is the front door for those experiencing hunger and homelessness in Union County.

Our goal is to move participants to affordable, permanent housing quickly.

Last year, the average emergency shelter stay was just 57 days.



## Food

Our myriad of food programs help those in our emergency shelter and those living independently, whose income doesn't stretch to cover housing AND meals.

We serve three meals a day in our soup kitchen and provide monthly food pantries plus senior supplemental food boxes.



## Rapid Rehousing

We work with local landlords, property managers and owners to secure affordable housing options for emergency shelter residents.

We financially assist with deposits, moving expenses and short- to medium-term rental assistance, plus donated furniture.





## Economic Mobility

Our program addresses income and education disparities for shelter residents by helping them secure or improve income to facilitate a swift move from economic and housing crisis.

We partner with nearly 30 local businesses to help our participants obtain living wage employment.

## Supportive Services

Case managers work with residents before, during and after their move to housing.

They assist with transportation, obtaining identifying documents, childcare, financial literacy and parenting priorities and other activities to help stabilize households.



## Street Outreach

The Community Shelter also serves those living unsheltered in our community.

We provide food, hygiene supplies, showers, tents, sleeping bags, tarps and other supplies to residents who, for various personal reasons, live in local tent communities.

# 2022-2033 At A Glance

## SHELTER

Overnight stays in emergency shelter	25,993
Individuals given shelter	631
Family members given shelter	155

## RAPID REHOUSING

People housed via Rapid Rehousing	108
Households housed via Rapid Rehousing	85
Home furnished through Home Again	64

## STREET OUTREACH

Individuals identified	75
Average monthly hours of services	240

## ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Individuals enrolled	79
Individuals employed	82



## FOOD SERVICES

Prepared meals served in soup kitchen	55,619
Meals served with pantry services	278,192
Individuals receiving food services	2,215
Total soup kitchen and pantry meals	333,811

## RECIDIVISM

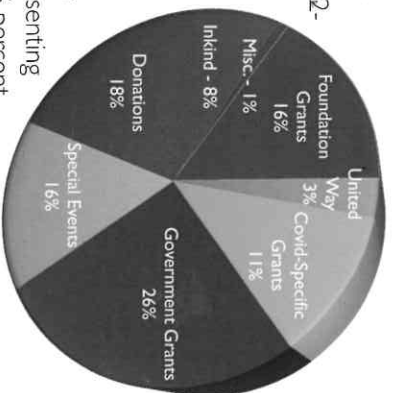
Maintained independent housing in year one	90%
Maintained independent housing in year three	94%

Total service units	360,383
Total individuals served	3,361

## Our income

Financials for fiscal year 22-23 show a return to pre-Covid funding, with Covid-specific grants dropping from 39% to 11% of the budget.

Our revenue totaled \$2,246,995 last year, with government grants representing the largest segment at 26 percent.



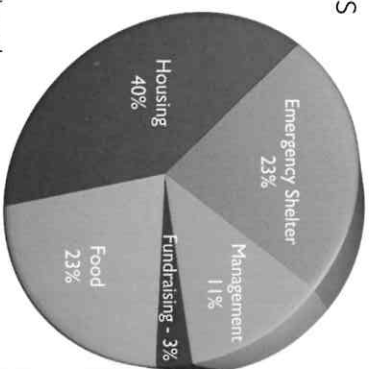
The public continued to support Shelter clients in three very significant ways: cash donations of 18 percent, inkind donations of 8 percent and special event income of 16 percent, totalling \$970,560 or 43 percent of the budget.

*We say it frequently, but it's true – we couldn't do it without you!*

## Our expenses

We strive to be good stewards of the donations invested in our mission.

We continue to spend the vast majority of our income on our three core missions – emergency shelter, food and rehousing. Those three areas accounted for \$1,292,400 or 86 percent of our expenses.



Housing continues to be the largest expense. These funds provide financial support to ensure homelessness is rare, brief and one time only.



*The Community Shelter of Union County provides emergency shelter, food and rehousing. Our low-barrier services support equitable opportunities because safe, affordable housing and access to food are basic human rights.*

For volunteer or donor opportunities, visit [UnionShelter.org/GetInvolved](http://UnionShelter.org/GetInvolved).

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