

A hundred or so things you or your organization might do to end homelessness in Greater Nashua

Whether you are a social service organization, a church congregation, a unit of government, a civic group, a business or a lone citizen, you can help end homelessness in the Greater Nashua area by 2012.

A group of concerned individuals and organizations met at a strategic planning retreat on March 3, 2004 and offered this list of possible specific commitments you could make and include in your Good Neighbor Agreement with the Greater Nashua Continuum of Care.

Organization

- Serve on a Board of Directors
- Rewrite your mission statement around ending homelessness, engage in strategic planning that gets the organization aligned with that mission

Advocacy

- Regularly stay informed about homelessness, trends, and policy impacts
- Report on trends, statistics, provide the data for HMIS, point-in-time
- Use e-mail as a tool
- Become a critical thinker: Do not take reasons for not creating more housing at face value, but strive to understand the arguments that discourage housing development, and be prepared to dispute them
- Do not be willing to accept the status quo of the band aid solutions
- Advocate for flexibility in supports and services so that they may be tailored to a particular household's needs
- Help capture the images of the reality of homelessness, engage the media
- Advocate for streamlining the applications processes of agencies, help reduce the time to assistance

- Network with other agencies to encourage collaboration on projects, and to assure that the homeless can be connected to necessary services
- Inform policy makers, legislators/administration, funders and civic and religious groups regarding homeless issues
- Advocate for laws that lessen, not increase the likelihood of homelessness
- Develop a speakers bureau; do public outreach and education
- Vote in support of candidates and proposals committed to helping end homelessness
- Advocate for universal primary care
- Advocate for a minimum living-, or preferably, a saving-wage
- Clarify and strengthen the role of regional planning commission at the CoC
- Advocate for subsidies and tax advantages to encourage affordable housing development by the private sector
- Run for public office with a platform that includes the homeless
- Participate in the CoC
- Get organizations to sign on to Good Neighbor Agreement
- Give of your time, talent and money
- Streamline housing committees and avoid duplication
- Advocate for a more equitable way to share the burden regionally
- Use existing tools (films, articles, etc.) to create awareness
- Develop an activist attitude
- Become committed to the cause

Sheltering

- Put up homeless in shelter or motel
- “Adopt” a family that does not have a home
- Accept it “in your backyard”
- Pursue funding opportunities and develop shelters that meet crisis needs

Housing

- Security deposit loans

- Convert vacant building to housing
- Help get housing accomplished by serving on boards that govern land use (zoning, planning)
- Create more single room occupancy (SRO) units, efficiency and studio apartments
- Create transitional housing and permanent supportive housing
- Create new units of affordable housing
- Advocate for a balance of rental and home-ownership opportunities
- Provide sweat equity opportunities to the homeless/ develop construction skills
- Accept it “in your backyard”
- Provide housing and services for children aging out of the system
- Provide housing for those re-entering the community from prison
- Provide housing and supports for those living with physical illness such as HIV/AIDS or physical handicap
- Even one house at a time helps

Community Building

- Develop and support a community center for the homeless
- Locate access to services where the homeless are
- Raise your own family to be aware, caring and to think critically
- Provide the homeless with affordable access to community-based organizations that encourage human development (Boys and Girls Club for example)
- Rely on current clients to define needs, and help locate the under-served or at-risk

Supportive Services

- Create a 1-800 hotline for homeless services
- Develop staff capabilities to diagnose individual problems and offer treatment plans
- Provide early interventions

- Provide referrals and connection to mainstream and other services
- Substance abuse treatment
- Mental health care
- Treatment in a home-like setting
- Teach budgeting skills
- Life skills training
- Provide child care, so that the homeless can pursue work and educational opportunities
- Provide training and supports to enhance access to jobs
- Provide public or private transportation for the homeless
- Provide no-cost legal assistance to the homeless
- Promote self-sufficiency
- Provide translation services or outreach for non-English speakers
- Use interns and volunteers more effectively, create awareness in their eyes
- Create for-profit ventures that can hire the homeless
- Voice mail and telephones for the homeless
- Improve internal communication within organization
- Increase detox facility capacity
- Increase mental health crisis bed capacity

Resources

- Buy bus tickets, gas for car, or other necessities to help the homeless get back to their family
- Assist with rent payments and back rent when a household experiences economic crisis (loan or grant)
- Help with utility bills
- Prescription drug assistance