Augusta Task Force on Homelessness
Executive Summary
March 27, 2025

A Community Response to a Human Crisis On any given night in Augusta, dozens of residents—including seniors, children, and veterans—have no safe place to sleep. In July 2024, the City of Augusta established the Task Force on Homelessness to coordinate services for individuals without housing and build lasting, local solutions. Comprised of a diverse group of appointed individuals, agency leaders, and key stakeholders, the Task Force has developed a clear roadmap to address this crisis head-on.

While fragmented systems, underfunding and overlapping jurisdictions have historically hindered progress, Augusta's resilience presents a powerful opportunity. Recent funding reductions to local hospitals underscore the urgency of coordinated action to reduce system strain. The path forward requires strong municipal leadership, broad collaboration, and a housing-first approach.

Our Approach Becoming unhoused is a result of systemic failures, not personal shortcomings. Solutions must be comprehensive, flexible, and person-centered. The Task Force recommends a blend of short-term (within one year), medium-term (1–2 years), and long-term (beyond 2 years) strategies. Each recommendation is grounded in feasibility and impact, with identified funding pathways and complementary initiatives.

Top Priorities & Actionable Strategies
1. **Housing is the Solution** The most critical cause of people being without housing is lack of housing. A safe, stable place to live is the foundation from which all other support becomes possible.
- Set Housing Production Targets: Expand housing options with a goal of 200 new units by 2027.
- Appoint a **City Housing Coordinator**: Ensure continuous advancement of these strategies.
2. **Policy Change Through Strong Leadership** Municipal action can remove structural barriers and accelerate progress.
- Modernize Zoning and Land Use Codes: Enable housing and shelter development in more areas.
- Adopt a Core Belief Statement: Have the City Council formally recognize minimum service needs and create housing production goals through a Proclamation.

3. **Build a Smarter System with Better Data** Real-time data drives better outcomes.
- Collect and Integrate Data: Include Augusta Police, Fire/Rescue, local shelters and service providers.
- Incentivize Participation in Coordinated Entry: Standardize intake and tracking across providers.
4. **Synchronize Services and Improve Communication** Strong networks close gaps and avoid duplication.
- Create a Cross-Agency Working Group: Meet regularly to align services and share insights.
- Launch a City Resource Hub: Provide residents with clear access to services through a central website.
5. **Make Shelters and Transportation Pathways to Stability** Shelters and transit are more than stopgaps—they are gateways to recovery.
- Expand Year-Round Emergency Shelter: Maximize use of existing City infrastructure.
- Support Daytime Resource Centers: Provide space for rest, hygiene, mail access, storage and case management.
- Improve Transportation Access: Broaden transit options specifically for those experiencing homelessness. This must be an "all of the above" strategy including bus routes, on demand, as needed, ride services with possible access to bikes and affordable car repairs.

Conclusion: A Call to Action This plan is not just about policy... it's about real people being unhoused in Augusta. We must lead with urgency, compassion, and coordination. The Task Force also recommends creating a permanent city staff position to coordinate services and to chair a smaller successor group to maintain momentum. Together, we can build a city where no one is left outside.

Now is the time to act.

The experience of homelessness is caused by a housing shortage. A safe, stable place to live is the foundation from which all other support becomes possible."