Notes from Community Conversations: Limited and Coordinate Housing Stability Services

What resonated with participants from the data presentation and panel discussion

- Government leadership and funding are huge influences on stability services.
- Landlord education is needed.
- There is stagnation and/or stigmatization along multiple axis.
- Prevention makes a difference.
- Keeping residents housed is much easier and cheaper than finding them housing after they become unhoused.
- Agencies are facing increases in the number of people in need, reductions in funding, and a shortage of affordable and attainable units.
- HomesteadCS owns land and buildings. They have also completed development projects.
- There are only 4 Habitat builds per year.
- The Point-in-Time is an undercount, meaning not everyone experiencing homelessness is counted, and that restricts federal Continuum of Care funding. PIT does not count households in hotels/motels, couch-surfing, or McKinney Vento households. However, dedicated outreach efforts, centralized access points, and community-based services aim to provide support and pathways to housing for uncounted populations.
- Serving undocumented households can be challenging but some sort of assistance can be offered.

Who needs to be at the table or engaged

- Hospitals (IU and Franciscan), health care providers, and health insurance agencies
- Purdue University
- Small and large businesses (Subaru, Caterpillar…)
- Landlords
- Realtors
- Federal, state, and local legislators
- City/county/state officials
- Those with lived experience
- People who see homelessness as a choice
- Salvation Army, Bower, and other agencies
- Private and public funders (foundations, individuals, employers, city/state agencies)
- Faith community
- Police and sherif offices
- Neighborhood associations
- Cities making progress or achieving good outcomes through housing stability services (SLC, Grand Rapids)
- Schools

Resources available or needed

- Current vacant buildings
- Coordinated messaging
- Data on the cost of not addressing homelessness
- Some progress at the Statehouse, advocacy is needed
- Supportive Care
- Transparency between programs
- FAN (financial assistance network)
- Need more vouchers and available units
- More landlords willing to accept vouchers

Realistic and achievable solutions

- Create and expand messaging strategies for housing stability services customized to specific audiences.
    - "It is cheaper to house individuals than pay for hospitalizations."
    - Housing instability's impact on businesses' bottom line and workforce.
    - Purdue student housing stability needs.
    - How Purdue student housing impacts low-income households
    - Messages for legislators: If we have a rainy-day fund, it is pouring!

- Connect health & housing through partnerships and housing navigation services.

- Policy Solutions
    - Create an advocacy group specifically for housing stability service providers.
    - Seal eviction records as a default.
    - Debt management and forgiveness – starting with medical debt.
    - Tax abatements tied to housing options/solutions
    - Play offense and defense for proposed bills (Criminalization of Homeless, HB1, increasing funding for services)

- Develop a Community Land Trust and Land Bank to preserve housing affordability and provide land for additional permanent supportive housing and affordable housing developments.

- Offer homelessness simulations for community leaders, employers, health providers, elected officials, city/county government staff, Purdue students, nonprofit providers, renters, those needing financial stability services, new community members.
    - This would be an opportunity for people to develop exposure/experience/empathy for those experiencing housing stability and generate ideas for coordinated services and messages.

- Recruit legislators, county and city elected officials to do the poverty simulation and tie the experience to Tippecanoe County data.

- Create a family stability initiative with coordinated programming, family housing shelter, transportation resources (bus ticket, gas money, food, car repair), financial empowerment programs, healthcare, childcare, and the ability to assist or relocate people who have supports tied to other states/areas,
  - Coordination that is streamlined and more about compassion and less about compliance, common applications.
  - Ensuring clients are taken care of while moving and just dropped off and left alone.

- We must keep lights on amid funding challenges and go after underutilized funding!
  - Creative and diverse funding streams/solutions.
  - Apply to private funders as a community or with collaborative applications.
  - Use property taxes as a funding source.

- Create tools or navigators that can assist case managers
  - A liaison between landlords, tenants, and agencies to prevent evictions.
  - A liaison between borrowers and lenders to prevent foreclosures.
  - Central support website for landlords and those experiencing housing instability.
  - Staff turnover at agencies is high and solutions need to be found to address turnover and provide service continuity.

- Create better relationships with landlords
  - See issues through landlord perspectives

- Advocate for employer-based rental assistance, transportation, financial management, or housing navigation services. Also advocate for employer-based housing development.

- Increase emergency rental assistance programs.

- Develop a human Relations Community.

- Conduct and annual Summit or State of Housing updates for employers
  - Provide action items for housing