2020 ANNUAL REPORT

# Ending Homelessness In Michigan



## **Dear Friends** and Colleagues,





Garlin Gilchrist II Lieutenant Governor of Michigan

While 2020 brought many challenges to everyone, those experiencing homelessness navigated the COVID-19 pandemic without the sense of home we all need. Having a safe and affordable place to call home is more than having somewhere to rest your head, it's about stability, dignity and opportunity. For the Michiganders who experienced homelessness in 2020, we must and will do better.

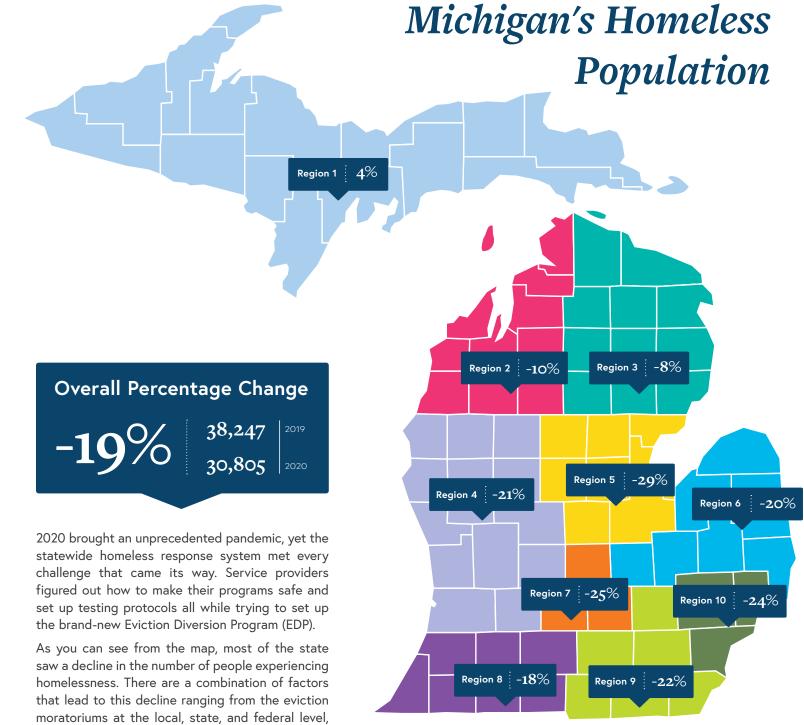
The obstacles we all overcame and continue to overcome as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are intertwined with the work of The Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness (MCTEH). This unprecedented year also brought the start of the MCTEH 3-Year Action Plan to End Homelessness. As MCTEH continues its work, the foundation for ending homelessness includes four main strategies:

- Increasing access to affordable and attainable housing for all Michiganders experiencing homelessness.
- Using cross-sector collaboration to impact the other Social Determinants of Health that lead to housing insecurity.
- Enhancing the homeless service delivery system to better serve those in need.
- Increasing prevention and diversion efforts to mitigate the risk of becoming homeless.

In this report, you'll get a chance to see what homelessness looks like across Michigan and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our population. While challenges were plentiful in 2020, we also saw success in closing the front door to homelessness. Through a combination of factors and legislation, including eviction moratoriums, diversion programs and stay-athome orders, there was a 19% decline in people seeking emergency shelter services.

The COVID-19 pandemic also laid bare stark truths about racial disparities. Not only are Black, Indigenous, and other people of color at higher risk of getting COVID, they also suffered other impacts from the pandemic as well. Throughout 2020, Black and Hispanic populations experienced higher unemployment rates leading to uncertainty about their ability to pay rent. Blacks also disproportionally made up 46% of the homeless population yet accounted for 14% of the overall population in Michigan for 2020. As we continue to work to eradicate homelessness, we must also look at how we address these complex racial disparities. Strategic collaboration with our cross-sector partners to impact communities and populations effectively and equitably is key to having more Michiganders with a place to call home.

Every experience in 2020 was full of feelings of uncertainty and newness. As you explore this report, I encourage you to not only inform yourself but channel those feelings into action to help those in need of a place to live. I extend my sincere gratitude to every service provider, local agency and kind Michigander who navigated uncharted territory and extended the dignity and respect we all deserve to those who needed it most.





the creation of the EDP, and people choosing to stay with friends and family because of the stay at home orders.

The map is broken into prosperity regions and reflects the change in the annual count of the number of people who were served by Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing, Safe Haven, and Street Outreach programs between 2019-2020. All but one region experienced a decline in the number of people experiencing homelessness between 2019 and 2020. Region 1 saw a 4% increase.

### STUDENTS IN MICHIGAN

The Homeless Education Program at the Michigan Department of Education saw an 18% decrease in the number of students identified as experiencing homelessness from 2019-2020 to the 2020-2021 school year. Eligibility for the program also includes those children or youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing in addition to those identified by the MSHMIS Data.



and should not be used for comparison purposes.

## What Drove The 19% Decrease From 2019-2020?

#### **OVERVIEW**

While we should celebrate the 19% decrease in the number of people who experienced homelessness from 2019-2020, we will likely never know exactly what caused the decrease. What we do know, is that there was a combination of factors at play throughout the year that led to the decrease. We reached out to Continuum of Care and Local Planning Body leadership that experienced decreases greater than 20% and asked them to identify what factors contributed the most to the decrease. Here is what they shared.

### THE EVICTION MORATORIUMS

Throughout 2020, there were various eviction moratoriums in place at the federal, state, and local levels. These moratoriums allowed renters to stay housed while the pandemic and the accompanying uncertainty were at their worst. According to the 2021 Poverty Solutions Eviction report, there was a 65% decrease in eviction cases filed in April through December of 2020 compared to the same timeframe in 2019.

#### **EVICTION DIVERSION PROGRAM**

The Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) was designed to keep Michigan residents who fell behind on their rent during COVID-19 in their homes. The program utilized a special court process to get fast rental assistance for renters who were impacted. Overall, \$60 million was allocated for assistance, \$50 million went directly to rental assistance and \$10 million was used for case management and legal aid. According to the 2021 Poverty Solutions Eviction report, the Eviction Diversion Program was an overwhelming success leading to nearly no evictions in the summer of 2020. And later in the year, when evictions did start to rebound, there was an over 30% decrease from the prior year. Furthermore, nearly 33% of tenants in eviction cases that did proceed had legal representation and, in most cases, tenants were able to avoid eviction.

### **CLIENTS CHOSE TO NOT SEEK SERVICES**

Not surprisingly, the uncertainty of 2020 led some individuals and families choose to not seek out services because of concerns about their safety with staying in a congregate setting. According to Michigan 2-1-1, the most cited reason for an unmet need was the "client refused referral" to a community shelter. Instead of seeking services, people chose to stay with friends, family, or in some cases even sleep outside or in a car. Some communities even saw a rise in the number and size of homeless encampments during 2020, as some people felt this was their safest option.

#### THE STAY-AT-HOME EXECUTIVE ORDER

In March of 2020, Governor Whitmer issued a Stay-at-Home order asking residents of Michigan to shelter in place, except for meeting basic needs. While housing and homeless services were considered critical infrastructure and remained in operation, there was a decrease in demand for services. Correspondingly, service providers immediately implemented necessary changes in service delivery that led to overall decreased capacity. These included sheltering clients in hotels or motels and implementing physical distancing requirements in congregate shelter spaces. Of course, physical distancing requirements resulted in reduced capacity for shelters as well.

## **Racially Disparate Impacts of COVID-19**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Black and Hispanic households have been especially hard hit by the pandemic and its attendant economic downturn. These populations were more likely than White households to contract COVID-19 and develop serious symptoms, along with being more likely to experience loss of income or unemployment. These disparities stem from historic systemic inequities which still need to be addressed. The Michigan Coronavirus Racial Disparities Task Force was organized to develop a deeper understanding of how the pandemic impacted communities of color across the state and create strategies to ameliorate those inequities. We commend the work of the Task Force, recognizing much still needs to be done.

#### JOB INSECURITY

According to the Economic Policy institute's analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data, in the second quarter of 2020 Michigan had an unemployment rate of 20% overall. However, Michigan had the third highest unemployment rate in the country for the White population at 17.5% and the highest unemployment rate for the Black population at 35.5%. By the *fourth quarter* of 2020, the overall unemployment rate had dropped to 6.9%, however, the unemployment rate for the Black population was still 15.6% while for the White population it had declined to 5.3%.



### HEALTH: CASE RATES AND MORTALITY

According to the Interim Report from the Coronavirus Task Force, throughout the pandemic, the Black population has been much more likely to contract COVID-19 and much more likely to die from COVID-19 than the White population. The cumulative COVID-19 case rate for the Black population has been over 40% higher than the rate for the White population. Furthermore, the cumulative COVID-19 death rate in Black populations has been over three times the rate in White populations. This observed higher ratio of cases to deaths in Black persons is due to a variety of factors. Among them, differences in exposure led to higher case rates among Black persons early in the pandemic, when testing capacity was lower and more cases were likely not captured. In addition, differences in the prevalence of underlying comorbidities have likely put Black individuals at higher risk of severe outcomes.

COVID-19 also had a disproportionate effect on the Hispanic population. The cumulative COVID-19 case rate for the Hispanic population in Michigan has been over 70% higher than the rate in the White population. However, the death rate among Hispanic persons has been lower than other groups likely due to the fact that the majority of Hispanic people who contracted COVID-19 were between the ages of 20-59.



Even with the eviction moratorium and the EDP in place Black and Hispanic renters felt more insecure about their housing situation. According to the Household Pulse Survey conducted by the US Census Bureau, at the end of April 2020 in Michigan 19% of Hispanic renters and 40% of Black renters had little or no confidence in their ability to pay next month's rent on time (or had deferred payment), compared to 19% of White renters. By the end of 2020, these percentages were still alarmingly high. Thirty-eight percent of Hispanic renters and 30% of Black renters had little or no confidence in their ability to pay their rent compared to 25% of White renters.





## An Overview Of The Response To The Pandemic

#### **OVERVIEW**

As with the rest of the world, 2020 was a year like no other for housing and homeless service providers across the state of Michigan. With very little notice service providers had to establish guarantine protocols, reconfigure their programs to allow for physical distancing of staff and clients, and set up virtual case management. While navigating new territory, service providers rose to the challenge and created safe ways to provide services to those in need.

#### INCREASED DEMAND FOR SERVICES ACROSS THE STATE

2-1-1 provides a pivotal service when it comes to ensuring that Michigan citizens have access to housing and related services. During 2020, 2-1-1 provided connections to services through phone calls, text, and chat.

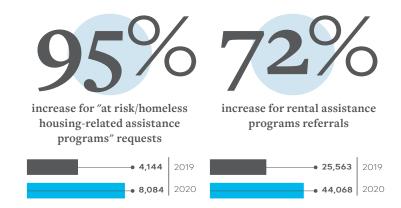
In 2020, housing-related inquiries continued to be the number one need for individuals contacting 2-1-1. Between 2019 and 2020, requests for "at risk/homeless housingrelated assistance programs" increased by 95% and the number of referrals for rental assistance programs increased by 72%.

When a 2-1-1 specialist is unable to provide an individual with an appropriate referral to a community program or service, the specialist identifies these as unmet needs. In 2020, rental payment assistance saw a decrease of 22% in unmet needs from the previous year. Additionally, there was a 53% decrease in the unmet need for rental deposit assistance (i.e., first month's rent, security deposit).

This data suggests that while the need for services increased substantially, programs put in place as a result of the pandemic (e.g., eviction moratoriums, rent repayment programs) assisted many households in meeting their needs and helped people to stay in their current housing rather than needing to enter the emergency shelter system or be rehoused.

Additionally, individuals contacting 2-1-1 with a housingrelated need could also request assistance with their utilities. For instance, individuals requesting payment assistance for gas, electric, and water in addition to a housing-related need, increased by 73%, 71%, and 67%, respectively between 2019 and 2020. Similar to utility assistance, food assistance experienced a 21% increase for requests related to food pantries.

These increases in need reflect that in many cases, a loss of income does not just affect paying rent or a mortgage, it also affects keeping homes safe and habitable, and household members fed.





decrease in unmet rental payment assistance needs

decrease in unmet rental deposit assistance needs (first month's rent, security deposit)

Food

Assistance



Requests for help with basic needs increased in 2020



Water Assistance **DECLINE IN EVICTIONS** 

During the course of 2020, there were eviction moratoriums in place at the local, state, and federal levels at different points in time. The city of Detroit implemented an eviction moratorium from March 13-August 15, while at the state level there was an eviction moratorium in place from March 20-July 16. Finally, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) implemented a federal eviction moratorium from September 4-December 31. The impact of these various moratoriums was significant. There was a 65% decrease in eviction cases filed from April through December of 2020 compared to the same timeframe in 2019. For the cases that did go to court, there was a vast drop in the number of cases that resulted in eviction orders: from April through December 2019, 29% of court cases resulted in eviction orders, while during the same period in 2020 only 10% of court cases resulted in eviction orders an 87%drop. Lastly, we know that evictions disproportionately impact Black and Hispanic renters. Nationally, Black renters face eviction at higher rates than other racial groups and Black and Hispanic female renters face higher eviction rates than men.

According to the May 2021 report from Poverty Solutions, the combined effects of the state and federal eviction moratoriums and the availability of financial and legal assistance through Michigan's statewide Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) led to a precipitous drop in eviction cases – over 14,000 per month before the pandemic to nearly zero cases in the summer of 2020. Cases rebounded in late 2020 but only to about two-thirds of their pre-pandemic levels. The EDP dramatically increased the number of tenants receiving legal assistance and representation in eviction cases. During the program's operation (July to December 2020), tenants in 32% of all eviction cases filed received some level of legal assistance. In cases where legal aid provided extensive services, 97% of tenants avoided eviction.

#### INCREASES IN INCIDENTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In times of disaster, the rates and severity of domestic violence tend to increase. There are many reasons for this increase such as heightened uncertainty, isolation, forced togetherness in households, and an inability to leave the home. Being in the same space 24 hours a day increases opportunities for an abuser to control and monitor their victim and offers more chances for physical and psychological violence. Volatile situations may escalate because of fewer interactions in businesses, workplaces, and other public spaces with people who could intervene or report abuses.

In Michigan, 36% of women experience intimate partner physical violence, rape, or stalking in their lifetime. During COVID-19, many counties across Michigan have seen an increase in the number of domestic violence occurrences. This corresponds with a recent national study that found there was an 8% increase in the number of domestic violence incidents during 2020. The Michigan Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence expresses concerns that further increases in rates are still to come.

Understanding that this year's increase in numbers most likely reflects the tip of the iceberg, this has significant impact for preparing to assist homeless families within Michigan. Domestic violence was the most common reason women gave for their homelessness in 2017. A comprehensive 2005 study found that one in four homeless women became homeless after experiencing violence. In 2012, 28 percent of cities cited domestic violence as a leading cause of homelessness among families with children. Half of all homeless women and children reported experiencing physical violence, and 92% of homeless mothers reported experiencing physical or sexual assault.

decrease in court cases resulting in eviction orders



decrease in eviction cases filed in April through December of 2020 compared to the same timeframe in 2019



of women experience physical violence, rape, or stalking in their lifetime



of homeless mothers reported experiencing physical or sexual assault



### **Innovative Responses To The Pandemic**

Shelter operations were profoundly impacted by COVID-19 and frequently had to innovate quickly. Many programs continued to operate during the pandemic with additional concerns and responsibilities including:



reduced capacity to support social distancing



spread out staff across new space



(AUG 31-DEC 31ST)

MDHHS, in partnership with their state contractor, began offering on-site COVID testing to shelters in late August 2020. Between August and the end of the year, over 8,600 COVID-19 tests were administered to clients and staff throughout Michigan at shelter facilities.



screened clients daily for symptoms



instituted mask rules for clients



created isolation and quarantine spaces for clients who were COVID-19 positive, exposed, or at risk



implemented new and intensive cleaning protocols



Street outreach teams continued operating in their communities reaching out to and advocating for the unsheltered. Providers distributed information on COVID-19, testing sites, and shelter, as well as handwashing kits and PPE. They developed communication strategies that encouraged social distancing while maintaining client engagement to keep people connected and receiving upto-date information. In communities that developed curfews, outreach teams advocated with local government to ensure that any homeless person found on the street was brought to a shelter instead of taken to jail. In communities where many unsheltered individuals were hesitant to enter congregate settings due to fear of the virus, outreach teams continued their case management and service coordination to try to help people stay safe.





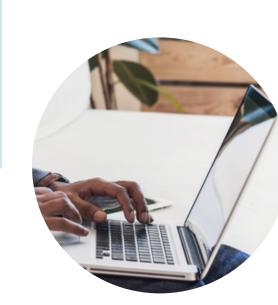


experienced staff shortages



dealt with a loss of volunteers

New community and regional partnerships were formed and existing partnerships were strengthened through their collective COVID response. Shelters, health departments, and community partners pooled physical, financial and human resources to provide safe environments for both clients and staff. Health department representatives distributed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to programs, visited shelters and off-site locations to offer technical guidance for set-ups, and provided the response system with recommendations for virus mitigation and cleaning strategies. Prioritizing testing for people experiencing homelessness was encouraged and regular communication between the health department and the homeless response system became the status quo in many areas of the state and new relationships were forged to help respond to local needs.



THE STATE

Everyone who has worked in the homeless response system during 2020 became quick studies of how to use technology to do their jobs safely. Practically overnight, non-essential workers were sent home and providers were forced to adopt new ways to meet with clients, peers, landlords, community partners and funders. Meetings and training shifted to online platforms and communication styles changed quickly to adapt to these new tools.

Some technologies were highly beneficial to clients, including those that allowed clients to sign documents electronically without needing to come into an office, or those that allowed for video housing reviews, reducing the number of people who need to be present to assess the habitability of potential housing. On the systems level, more people were able to attend state and national conferences that might have been previously impossible due to time and financial constraints, and more people were able to have their voices heard in meetings that they didn't have to drive to attend.

### SHELTER RESPONSE WITH TESTING STAFF AND CLIENTS

#### STREET OUTREACH INNOVATIONS

#### USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO WORK WITH CLIENTS, AND PEERS ACROSS



## Challenges

#### **OVERVIEW**

Housing and homeless service providers were confronted with several challenges they had to navigate, especially early in the pandemic. Across the state, service providers collaborated with local health departments and emergency response systems to craft a coordinated response and ensure that services were being provided safely.

### ACCESS TO PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

At the beginning of the pandemic, many housing and homeless service providers did not have access to the PPE they needed to provide services safely and efficiently. For the programs that did have access to PPE, they needed to be trained on how to use it properly.



#### FINDING AND MAINTAINING STAFF

Like many industries during the pandemic, housing and homeless service providers were confronted with the huge challenge of finding and maintaining staff during the height of the pandemic. Many programs had to onboard staff virtually which they had never done before.

### **IDENTIFYING LOCATIONS TO QUARANTINE**

One of the unique challenges the pandemic presented service providers with was finding safe places for clients to safely quarantine if they were ill or had been exposed to somebody who was ill. Many service providers created relationships with local hotels or motels to use for guarantine. However, in many cases, there was not enough supply to meet demand.

#### A LACK OF ACCESS TO RENTAL UNITS

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Michigan needs over 200,000 rental units for extremely low-income renters<sup>1</sup> and the pandemic intensified that need. Agencies saw rental offices close, and then slowly reopen throughout the year. While the eviction moratoriums provided stability for people currently housed, ironically, some communities rely on evictions to free up units. This posed an issue for people seeking housing in certain communities.

#### LACK OF CAPACITY AMONG SHELTER PROVIDERS

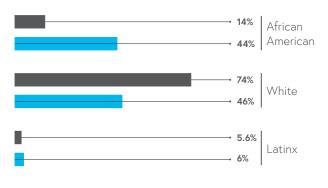


Lastly, shifting to non-congregate settings such as hotels or motels and physical distancing in congregate shelters led to reduced capacity to meet the need. According to Michigan 2-1-1 data, roughly half of those requesting vouchers to stay in a hotel or motel could not be provided a referral because there was no service available. Simply put, some communities around the state were at a disadvantage because the option for allowing people to stay in a hotel or motel was not available at all. Rural communities faced the same challenge but for a different reason. Many hotels shut down during the height of the pandemic, however, when they did start to reopen they were unavailable for quarantine purposes due to high demand.

## **People Who Experienced Homelessness** For The First Time In 2020

### OVERVIEW

Uncertainty is the overwhelming condition of people experiencing homelessness. In 2020 16,050 people\* who found themselves homeless for the first time in their lives, endured the added anxiety that comes with a global pandemic. For many, a lost job or a decrease in hours led to homelessness with little prospect of finding new employment. Families had to navigate change to the way children attended classes. Twenty-two percent of people experiencing homelessness for the first time in 2020 were children under age 18.







children under the age 18



were victims of domestic violence

#### **RACIAL DISPARITIES**

People of color have historically experienced homelessness at a disproportionate rate and racial disparities were evident again in 2020. Black people represent 14% of the total Michigan population. However, 44% of those experiencing first time homelessness were Black. White people account for 74% of the total population, but only 46% of first time homeless identified as White. According to the 2020 census, Michigan Hispanic residents have increased from 4.4% in 2010 to 5.6% in 2020. Slightly more than 6% of the people who experienced homelessness for the first time in 2020 were Hispanic.

### CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18

Twenty-two percent of people experiencing homelessness for the first time in 2020 were children under age 18. Emergency shelters were pushed to the limit while following protocols for social distancing and keeping already vulnerable people safe and healthy.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence shelters provided shelter throughout the pandemic at a rate like prior years. Evidence points to an increase in domestic violence during the pandemic. In 2020, 20% of people experiencing homelessness for the first time in Michigan were victims of domestic violence.



## System Performance Measures

### Homeless Demographics Summary

PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS (CY 2020)

Homeless Client Characteristics (HMIS Data Only)	Literally Homeless	1st Time Homeless	Veterans	Adult Only	Adults with Children	Youth 18-24	Adults 25-54	Seniors 55+
Unique Number of Clients for 2019*	38,247	20,213	2,228	23,988	13,586	3,991	18,549	6,210
Unique Number of Clients for 2020*	30,805	16,050	1,827	20,046	9,930	3,229	14,958	5,289
Change from Prior Year	-19%	-21%	-18%	-16%	-27%	-19%	-19%	-15%
Number of Adults	23,404	12,296	1,827	20,046	3,618	3,229	14,958	5,289
Number of Children	7,172	3,620	N/A	N/A	6,312	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Households	22,704	12,094	1,772	19,124	3,004	2,943	13,934	5,079
Gender								
Female	42%	41%	7%	33%	60%	55%	41%	25%
Male	57%	58%	93%	67%	39%	44%	58%	75%
Trans Female (MTF or Male to Female)	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%
Trans Male (FTM or Female to Male)	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Gender non-conforming (i.e. not exclusively male or female)	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Race								
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Asian	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%
Black or African American	46%	44%	44%	43%	52%	51%	41%	47%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
White	44%	46%	49%	49%	36%	38%	51%	47%
Multi-racial	7%	7%	5%	6%	10%	8%	6%	4%
Ethnicity								
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	92%	93%	97%	94%	92%	90%	94%	95%
Hispanic/Latino	6%	6%	3%	5%	7%	8%	6%	4%
Indefinite and Impairing Disa	abilities							
Physical disability	8%	8%	25%	11%	2%	2%	8%	20%
Developmental disability	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%
Chronic health condition	5%	4%	13%	6%	2%	1%	5%	11%
HIV/AIDS	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Mental health problem	12%	10%	22%	17%	4%	12%	15%	18%
Substance abuse	4%	3%	15%	6%	<1%	2%	5%	8%

\* The number of unique clients in each category is only from clients that were assisted in emergency shelter, safe haven, street outreach, and transitional housing projects. Other projects types were not included so that the State of Michigan's homeless numbers align better to federal reporting standards.

The data in these tables comes from the MSHMIS Data Warehouse Project which pulls data from Michigan's Homeless Management Information System. This data represents people who received services in Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, Transitional Housing and Street Outreach during 2020.

#### **OVERVIEW**

The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) established a series of system performance measures in the reauthorization of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2009 to help communities gauge their progress in preventing and ending homelessness. Michigan has determined that four core measures will form the basis for how it evaluates statewide progress. Regular evaluation of the core measures is a central part of the action plan for Michigan's Campaign to End Homelessness.

For Measure 1 please see the previous page.

#### **MEASURE 2**

Total length of time within a homeless experience considering time spent in shelters and not on the streets or in unfit places.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

**MEASURE 3** 

**OBJECTIVE** 

permanent housing.\*

Decrease the average length of time people experience homelessness

Percentage of clients exiting to stable housing or retaining

Increase the percentage of persons successfully exiting to stable housing or retaining permanent housing

2019

Average length of time homeless (days)



Street Outreach



Permanent housing (excludes rapid re-housing)

#### **MEASURE 4**

Number of persons who have a new homeless episode within a two-year period after exiting to stable housing.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

Decrease the percentage of persons who are returning to homelessness after exiting to stable housing

Shelters



Street Outreach





2%

Total Returns

2020

Average length of

time homeless (days)

Shelters, transitional

and rapid re-housing



12



\* Street outreach, shelters, transitional housing and rapid re-housing percentages of clients exiting to stable housing. Permanent housing percentage of clients exiting or retaining permanent housing.



### 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

# **State Partners**

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