

The H.O.M.E Project: Housing is Our Mission for Everyone
UAB Grand Challenge: Addressing Homelessness
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Homelessness has become a global crisis due to in part by stagnated wages, rising housing costs, and inadequate social safety nets that have left millions of people homeless or at-risk of homelessness (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2016). In America alone, it is reported that 11 million low-income households pay at least half of their income toward housing, meaning that we are currently facing one of the worst housing crises in history (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2017; The National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2017). Each year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) releases an annual Point in Time (PIT) count of the homeless population. This report is used throughout the country to measure progress on homelessness, to assess the efficacy of different policies, and to allocate federal funds for new or existing programs. According to the 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress—using the PIT data, on a single night in 2017, 553,742 people were identified as experiencing homelessness, representing an increase of less than one percent over last year (Henry, Watt, Rosenthal, & Shivj, 2017). For Alabama, the 2017 snapshot estimates that 3,793 people experience homelessness on a single night. In Birmingham, the central Alabama agency on homelessness, One Roof (2017), counts 1,092 homeless individuals. And, while this information seems relatively small in comparison to the larger population, the data on homelessness is actually a misleading picture. Specifically, studies using administrative data collected from homeless service providers estimated that the actual annual number of homeless individuals is estimated to be 2.5 to 10.2 times greater than what could be obtained using a Point in Time count (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2017).

Assessing the Impact of Addressing Homelessness

Beyond the moral imperative of social responsibility, curing homelessness can greatly benefit our communities by freeing up financial resources to address other societal stressors. For instance, studies estimate that the high costs of health care, behavioral/ mental health, criminal justice, and other services for persons experiencing chronic homelessness incurs upwards to \$40,000 per capita (McLaughlin, 2010; Poulin, Maguire, Metraux, & Culhane, 2010). In the United States, the cost to maintain a person on the streets or in shelters, which often involves being processed through health and law enforcement agencies, range annually from \$35,000 to \$150,000 per person (Henwood, et al., 2015). Comparatively, data from research on housing interventions found that the average program cost for rapid re-housing was \$6,578, compared with \$16,829 for emergency shelter, \$18,821 for a permanent subsidy, and \$32,557 for transitional housing (Gubits, et al., 2016). Lately, more innovative approaches have been taken such as the construction of 3D printed homes at a cost of \$4,000 and these can be built in little as 24 hours (Caldwell & Gmoser, 2018). Also, by providing homes, health outcomes are improved for individuals and the overall cost for taxpayers is reduced. Specifically, healthcare costs are reduced by 59%, emergency department costs are decreased by 61%, and the number of general inpatient hospitalizations is decreased by 77% (Garrett, 2012). Such research suggests that economically, it would be more beneficial for society to take action. Moreover, due to recent technological improvements, a house can be built for less than the cost of emergency services that will ensue by managing the status quo.

Proposed Solution: Leverage UAB to Enhance Promising Practices

Curing homelessness does not mean homelessness will ever cease to exist. We are aware of systemic problems, which continue to proliferate inequities across our cities, states, and nations. Currently, there is a coordinated system approach (CSA) already in place throughout Birmingham, Jefferson, St. Clair, and Shelby Counties that are provided by One Roof. However, their services are limited in scope due to the federal funding provided by HUD. Therefore, this proposal presents an opportunity to leverage UAB’s resources in order to expand upon a working model by infusing additional professional expertise through our institutional support or professional and educational services, research, and technology. Together, we can ensure that within ten years, homelessness is prevented whenever possible or is otherwise a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience. Also, we can use the research gathered to upscale this project to improve systems in other cities and countries. This infused coordinated systems approach will be known as *The H.O.M.E. Project*. The H.O.M.E. Project structure is three-fold: (1) identify key partners throughout the UAB and surrounding communities to develop a comprehensive system of communication, data, assessment sharing and tracking to coordinate interventions and foster greater research toward addressing homelessness (responsive and preventive measures); (2) explore the use of technology to build and develop low cost and energy efficient alternative housing options; and (3) utilize shared partnerships to develop and improve existing services/interventions through research, training, policy, and overall human capacity building.

Figure 1. Existing CSA with The HOME Project additions (see highlighted text)

<p>Coordinated Entry: Quickly identify, assess, refer and connect people to resources</p>	<p>Actions: Use UAB community engagement surveys, departments, non-profits, and City of Birmingham databases to identify available resources, services, agencies, stakeholders and entry prerequisites. Categorize data to facilitate the ease of information dissemination and services to those seeking housing as part of the crisis response system.</p>	<p>Planning: Bring service providers, government officials, and stakeholders together to address topics around needs assessment, structure, prevention, resource allocation, determine preliminary needs, employ screening tools, and illustrate a mapping out of existing assessment and intake processes</p>	<p>Actions: Develop an advisory board composed of representation from all agencies, businesses, and government entities that will meet 4 times a year and as needed. Create several subcommittees who will meet monthly to assess resources and address city-wide (1) placement; (2) improving education intervention, job skills training, and institutional connectivity opportunities and services, (2) creating economic independence/ financial inclusion, (3) facilitating timely health interventions and preventive health measures, (4) exploring policies and making recommendations; (5) continue ongoing research and impact measurement to insure and improve overall community health and sustainability outcomes; and (6) program sustainability and growth through identifying and pursuing funding opportunities (e.g. grants, charitable giving, government funding).</p>
<p>Collecting and Examining Local Data: Gather and analyze existing information (including ongoing research) from various stakeholders to explore information gaps to better capture, track, and make informed decisions relating to ALL types of homelessness</p>	<p>Actions: Use the HUD homeless definition to identify existing and invisible populations (those not covered by the HUD definition). Centralize all existing homeless and vulnerable population research, demographic data, and promising practices as marked by program evaluation—relating to intervention methods. Host town hall meetings to provide context for existing homelessness data. Use subcommittees to discuss gathered data and employ strategies for centralized storage and interface system for researchers and practitioners, to better facilitate service delivery, assessment, benchmarking, reporting, grant writing opportunities, and policy recommendations.</p>		
<p>Bridge Interventions: Connect individuals to educational, health-related, and job training opportunities to improve autonomy as productive citizens.</p>	<p>Actions: Use existing programs to cover basic needs. Facilitate rapid re-housing model. Partner with non-profits, local community colleges, and local companies to develop an adult learning community to provide vocational, craft and skills training to prepare and recruit individuals into the workforce. Partnering employees are incentivized with tax credits for education and hiring. Grow a social entrepreneurship enterprise within the area to create sustainable development, respond to social needs within the community, empower individuals, and ultimately expand the social capital for individuals, communities, and organizations. Offer financial inclusion workshops provided by local banks and Collat School of Business. On-site screening clinics, follow-up care through mobile medical services, and preventive medicine classes/workshops. Create youth education learning communities alongside school systems to maintain school connectivity through cohort modeling. Use educational programs to provide engagement opportunities and strengthen the educational pipeline for participants (i.e. Gear Up Alabama, CORD, Camp CSI, ArtPlay). Partner with City of Birmingham to create affordable, cost-saving, and energy efficient homes with school of engineering and construction companies on underutilized city lots. Develop community gardens to combat food deserts and teach healthy eating options. Partner with local churches and non-profits to develop social support groups and advocate mental wellness while providing training. Use technology to geographically map out service locations, track homelessness interventions throughout the city (GIS), and ensure a time-sensitive crisis response system through cross community communication networks. Use collected data to explore research implications to raise awareness, facilitate promising practices for replication, address systemic causes for homelessness, and guide future intervention and prevention strategies. Explore the opportunity to leverage departmental curricula to create student incubators toward field service preparation and problem-solving.</p>		
<p>Shared Data System: Centralize data and research to increase accessibility for current and future stakeholders</p>	<p>Actions: Create an interactive <i>H.O.M.E. Project Dashboard</i> to share information, map out service areas, track homelessness data, project sharing, and to better facilitate timely, ongoing, and transparent reporting between all entities.</p>	<p>Performance Measurement and Evaluations: Develop and use performance measures to examine progress and to assess impact and emerging opportunities</p>	<p>Actions: Use collected information to develop quarterly reports for the advisory board, government, answer general inquiries, inform policy, and to secure funding opportunities when provided.</p>

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Current Partners

First Name	Last Name	Department/ Organization
Stephanie	Yates	Regions Institute for Financial Education
Greg	Townsend	Jefferson County Department of Health
Deborah	Theford-Zimmerman	Birmingham Black Nurses Association
Gordon	Sullivan	One Roof (Organization to End Homelessness)
Michelle	Farley	One Roof (Organization to End Homelessness)
Kathryn	Strickland	Community Food Bank of Central Alabama
Celida	Soto	Minority Health Research Center
Isabel	Scarinci	Minority Health Research Center
Jennifer	Sanders	Beloved Community Church
Isabel	Rubio	Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama
Paulette	Roby	Civil Rights Activist Committee
Michelle	Robinson	School of Dentistry/ Informatics Institute
Richard	Rice	Mayor Woodfin Social Justice Committee
Tamika	Pilgrom	School of Health Professions
Kathryn	Morgan	College of Arts and Sciences, African American Studies
Lisa	McCormick	UAB School of Public Health
Carin	Mayo	UAB Department of Political Science and Public Administration
Herman	Lumzy	Community Resources City of Birmingham
Jason	Kirby	Department of Civil, Construction & Environmental Engineering
Helen	Kim	Alabama Asian Cultures Foundation
Tina	Kempin-Reuter	Human Rights Institute
Kacey	Keith	Mayor Woodfin's Social Justice Committee
Damita	Hill	Jeff State Community College
Roberto	Hernandez	Dept of Foreign Languages and Literatures
Chris	Hatcher	City of Birmingham-Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits
Scott	Batey	UAB Department of Social Work
Denise	Gregory	Samford University--Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives
Elijah	Davis	Urban Impact, Inc
Chris	Carter	Mineral District Medical Society
Mary	Carroll	Asst Professor Field Education (Social Work)
Bettina	Byrd-Giles	The Bethesda Life Center
Erica	Brown	Birmingham Southern (Multicultural Affairs)
Samantha	Briggs	GEAR UP Alabama
Latoya	Bishop	Birmingham National Pan-Hellenic Council
David	Pollio	UAB Department of Social Work
Brandon	Wolfe	UAB Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Anticipated Partners

First Name	Last Name	Department/ Organizations
Ashley	Kuntz	Honors College/ Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama
Tenika	Huffman	Birmingham Urban League
Robert	Robinson	UAB IT
Khaula	Hadeed	Council on American Islamic Relations -Alabama
Herman	Lumzy	Community Resources City of Birmingham
Anthony	Hood	Collat School of Business Birmingham Land Bank Authority
Jessica	Moody	Create Birmingham
Stacey	Thompson	Jefferson State Community College
Julian	Grant	Alabama Power/ National Society of Black Engineers
Marcus	French	Redemptive Cycles
Brittany	Mullins	YWCA
Deborah	Blaylock	Faith Chapel Christian Center Outreach
Erika	Austin	UAB School of Public Health
Stefan	Kertesz	UAB School of Medicine
Khaula	Hadeed	Council on American Islamic Relations –Alabama
Kamonte	Kelly	Birmingham Urban League Young Professionals
Calvin	Briggs	Lawson State Community College