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# John Fallon

## Memorandum

*Date: November 1, 2020*

*To: Mayor James Langfelder*

*From: John R Fallon*

***RE: Executive Summary Report of Recommendations to the City of Springfield:  
"Helping the Continuum to Develop an Effective, Sustainable Response to  
Street Homelessness in Springfield, II"***

Housing &  
Support



I want to thank the Mayor of Springfield and the City Council for the opportunity to assist the City in developing the attached report. I have created this report with external data, interviews with unsheltered individuals on the street in multiple encampments, and spent a great deal of time working to introduce new concepts to the Heartland Continuum of Care. I have included an index of resources and am available for the continued development of these ideas in your community.

The full report details my work areas with links to the specific work scope, as listed in my contract.

Upon first observations, I summarized my immediate concerns as follows:

1. For at least one more season, the City of Springfield will need to provide an overflow emergency shelter for persons unable to access existing emergency shelters. By next year, the Heartland Continuum will need to plan and manage the availability of limited emergency shelter beds. They will need to identify and house the unsheltered population more effectively and more quickly to meet the county's current demand. Without the pressure of a limited number of emergency beds in the winter, it is unlikely that the Continuum will make the required housing changes.
2. Too many vulnerable women are unsheltered and on the street who need emergency shelter and protection despite unused capacity.
3. Unsheltered people are not getting sufficient access to ongoing support services, including health care, addiction treatment services, and affordable housing.
4. Unsheltered people are not currently being assessed or included in the coordinated entry list. Not being included on the list limits the identification of a population which needs prioritization for housing.
5. The Community of Springfield has insufficient assertive, intensive, community on-site case management treatment teams for addiction services, health care, and mental health support.
6. The Hospital Emergency Rooms need to be more effective in treating and stabilizing people with significant addiction issues and mental health symptoms.
7. There will need to be more housing that permits persons with a criminal history and currently refuse substance training. Landlords will need more support to risk housing people with higher support needs.

As a result of sharing my insights and providing some education to the Continuum Executive Director and a small group of interested agencies, the Continuum has now increased the number of agencies evaluating unsheltered individuals. They now have started to include the unsheltered individuals on the Coordinated Entry list. Previously, the Continuum primarily assessed and prioritized persons who had entered and involved with the emergency shelter setting. Individuals not on the Coordinated Entry list could not utilize HUD-funded housing resources for long-term housing.

As a result of an event at "tent city," Officer Jones identified and entered 22 new individuals into the Coordinated Entry list. On the same day, multiple other assessors entered additional new people into the system. Different assessors that day also included people from the Salvation Army, Fifth Street Renaissance, Inner City Mission, and Helping Hands. The City does not have the total number of persons entered that day by other assessors.

While dozens of individuals remain at other encampments throughout the city, the Continuum still needs to identify and assess those other unsheltered individuals for housing on a regular basis. Another event focused on this group may be required by the Mayor and the Continuum.

Providers interested in working specifically with the unsheltered population gathered that next week for the first of a bi-weekly gathering chaired by Josh Sabo and Officer Chris Jones. An ongoing forum for training and case conferencing, the "kitchen table" has already proved popular with attendees to collaborate and coordinate resources. The agencies that attended the initial meeting are in the full report.

In the future, the Continuum must do a better job at identifying and meeting the needs of all unsheltered homeless and not just confine themselves to the individuals currently housed in Continuum funded shelters. Services and assessments need to occur in the geographical area where a person presents with an ongoing provision for on the street services and engagement independent of law enforcement intervention or accompaniment.

To provide sustainable support services, this will require an expansion of Medicaid support services in mental health (rule 132 in-home services), physical health (FQHC), and substance treatment services (rule 240- recovery coaching). Currently, the lack of intensive in-home behavioral services in Springfield makes housing the most challenging populations nearly impossible.

**In evaluating the available options, I make the following interim recommendations as a package of services:**

- 1. It is recommended that the City of Springfield allocate \$275,000 for a 24/7 Shelter operations.**  
For at least one winter season, the City of Springfield will need to provide an overflow emergency shelter for persons unable to access existing emergency shelters. With the assistance of the "kitchen table", more detailed assessments and case conferencing will be provided. The goal is to have residents receive additional supportive services to increase the likelihood for them to obtain supportive housing by the spring. By next year, the Heartland Continuum will need to plan and manage the availability of emergency shelter.

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2. **It is recommended that people interested in the unsheltered population continue gathering weekly to coordinate support services. (The Kitchen Table)**
  3. **It is recommended that the City, a foundation, or the hospitals directly fund at least two positions (\$164,191.93).** For this investment, Memorial Behavioral Health has the ability to restructure current staff and contribute (\$90,000) to create additional capacity and an intensive in-home COET support team (Community Outreach and Engagement Team). Once approved, I can assist in a request to the Illinois Department of Mental Health for an additional capacity grant based on this contribution. This team would be self-sustainable with ongoing Medicaid support for their clients.
  4. **It is recommended that the Heartland Continuum, a foundation, or a government unit create a dedicated Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund.** A Risk Mitigation Fund is a standing fund or line item allocation in a larger budget. Initially, in a city the size of Springfield, it is recommended that the Fund starts with \$25,000 for a year.
    - a. This Fund can create an alternative to individual security deposits paid by governmental authorities that become an asset to the tenant.
    - b. This Fund can create better protections for Landlords for working with specific populations significant to the City to house but provide a greater risk of damage to a unit.
    - c. A Unit of Government could manage this Fund with a guaranteed line of credit without allocating specific funds.
  5. **It is recommended that the Heartland Continuum, a foundation, or a government unit create a dedicated Housing Locator at one of the Continuum agencies. A Housing Locator position is necessary for the City of Springfield to effectively utilize and grow the Illinois Rental Housing Support Voucher Program (RHSP).** RHSP is a complicated program to use. This voucher program is currently underutilized and can serve individuals with a criminal history not served by other vouchers. Many unsheltered persons have a criminal background that arises as a result of their disability. With sufficient support, the person can live successfully in the community without incident. The position would do the following:
    - a. Manage Landlord Relationships as a liaison for the Continuum and locate additional rental units suitable for the unsheltered population. (They may also serve the sheltered community as time permits).
    - b. Conduct expedited initial HQS (HUD Health and Quality Standards) inspections and approvals for the Illinois Rental Housing Support Program for the Springfield Housing Authority as LAA (Local Administrating Agency).
    - c. Assist in managing the Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund
    - d. Meet with a case manager and prospective Illinois Rental Housing Support Program tenants as a part of the Continuum to determine which apartments will meet a person's needs and qualifications.
    - e. The position would be available to the Springfield Housing Authority for 7 hours weekly to assist in administrative duties to offset insufficient coverage for the administrative overhead of the Illinois Rental Housing Support Program.

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## Final Recommendations

**My work involves transitioning the City of Springfield from an interim strategy towards a permanent low-barrier support strategy. The City of Springfield must move away from focusing on Homelessness and instead focus on housing people.** Solving long-term housing issues involves a more comprehensive approach by the Continuum, churches, philanthropy, and government partners.

For the City of Springfield, I created "Fallon's 7 Intervention Points for Better Housing & Support" as a framework to plan to improve housing options for all of Springfield. These 7 Interventions Points help Springfield to look more broadly at housing and support.

Ending homelessness is not just about homeless agencies or the immediate state of homelessness.

Like SAMSHA's sequential Intercept model <sup>1</sup>, these seven intervention points allow the Continuum and the City of Springfield to work on more broadly developing adequate quality housing. The focus is on ensuring that every citizen can find the support services they need to live in their housing.

Each point of intervention could be utilized by each individual Alderperson as these issues impact their wards. I have listed some of the potential funding sources available to address these issues in the full report.

### The Seven Intervention Points are:

1. **Improving the existing rental and owned housing stock**
2. **Creating ongoing supports for existing landlords and renters**
3. **Improving access and the effectiveness of existing treatment supports for more challenging individuals**
4. **Increasing the effectiveness and the funding for existing prevention programs to prevent people from ever entering the Homeless emergency shelter system.**
5. **Transition people from Emergency and Transitional Housing to permanent housing**
6. **Creating New sustainable Rental and Owned Housing without time limits**
7. **Investing in new sustainable community support to avoid the ongoing use of emergency services.**

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<sup>1</sup> The Sequential Intercept Model : Developed by the SAMSHA Gains Center and Policy Research associates-  
<https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/mhlp/tac/documents/mapping/sim-handout-new.pdf>