



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

a home
for all

POWERED BY UNITED WAY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report made possible by:

Representatives from the following organizations have been integral in conceptualizing, developing, refining, funding and/or otherwise offering direct support to this comprehensive, community-wide effort. Each business, nonprofit and public sector leader has made meaningful contributions in bringing this Implementation Plan forward. This group will continue to collaborate in driving progress toward the goal of creating a community where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring, and every person has access to permanent, affordable housing with the resources to sustain it.



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|--|---|--|
| A Giving Heart | Crisis Assistance Ministry | Lotus Campaign |
| A Way Home | DreamKey Partners | Mecklenburg County |
| Alliance Health | Foundation For The Carolinas | Novant |
| Anuvia | Freedom Fighting Missionaries | Promise Resource Network |
| Ascent Capital | Greenway Group | Rebuilding Together
of Greater Charlotte |
| Atrium | Habitat for Humanity,
Charlotte Region | Roof Above |
| Avid Exchange | Heal Charlotte | Safe Alliance |
| Barings | Hearts for the Invisible | Samaritan House |
| Block Love Charlotte | Hope Haven | Supportive Housing Communities |
| Care Ring | Housing Collaborative | The Relatives |
| Central Piedmont Community College | Housing Justice Coalition | The Salvation Army |
| Charlotte Center City Partners | Individual Community Members | The University of North Carolina
at Charlotte |
| Charlotte Community Health Clinic | Individuals with lived experience
of homelessness and
housing instability | The Yes Academy |
| Charlotte Family Housing | Inlivian | Truist |
| Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools | Lakewood Neighborhood Alliance | Urban League of Central Carolinas |
| Charlotte Works | Laurel Street | US Bank |
| Child Care Resources, Inc. | Leading on Opportunity | Veterans Bridge Home |
| City of Charlotte | Leon Levine Foundation | Wells Fargo |
| Commonwealth Charlotte | LISC | West Side Community Land Trust |
| Communities in Schools
of Charlotte-Mecklenburg | | YWCA Central Carolinas |
| Community Link | | |

Special thanks to Stacy Lowry and Tchernavia Montgomery for co-chairing the A Home For All Technical Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW OF HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS CHALLENGES

Housing instability and homelessness have been rapidly increasing in Charlotte-Mecklenburg despite a broad ecosystem of service providers and among the highest production of market rate housing in the country.

Economic and population growth have put pressure on the regional housing system. Since 2010, the number of starter homes available for \$150,000 or less has dropped dramatically. Similarly, low-cost rental apartments are disappearing. All of this has contributed to an increase in people experiencing homelessness to more than 3,000 in 2022. While most people experiencing homelessness are single, the number of homeless families has increased rapidly. The loss of affordable homes also makes it more difficult for people to transition out of emergency shelters. Since 2016, the average length of stay in shelters has increased 63%. Furthermore, even when people transition into permanent housing, they are returning to homelessness at increasing rates. That is, in 2016, 18% of people returned to homelessness compared to 25% in 2021.

ENGAGEMENT AND PLANNING PROCESS

In April 2021, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community came together to address these worrying trends, examine the causes, and coordinate priorities. Their work resulted in the A Home For All Strategic Framework. The first-ever comprehensive framework – spanning the continuum from shelter beds to affordable homeownership – was the result of an 18-month community engagement effort with input from hundreds of stakeholders through the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing & Homelessness Strategy Working Group. The Strategic Framework was organized around nine work areas and 99 key initiatives. This effort created important momentum and focus on the issue of homelessness and housing instability in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg community came together again in October 2022 to develop an implementation plan, identifying which of the strategies to move forward first. United Way was selected to lead and HR&A Advisors, Inc. was hired to facilitate the process. The full process took place over nearly nine months and involved consultation with more than 150 individuals and organizations. A key centerpiece of the engagement was the convening of a Technical Committee made up of 73 individuals. The committee members, comprised

of subject matter experts with professional and lived expertise, brought insight into what supportive services are required and how services should be offered, and how to add supply of all forms of shelter and housing to meet the current need. Committee members began with 99 initiatives and, through four meetings and countless interim conversations, narrowed down to nine near-term priority initiatives.



A Home For All - FROM PLANNING TO IMPLEMENTATION

FIGURE 1: Planning & Engagement Process

APRIL 2021

Strategic planning to create framework launches

JANUARY 2022

A Home For All Strategic Framework released

MAY 2022

United Way asked to lead implementation

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

250+

Individuals Engaged

150+

Organizations

150+

Stakeholder Interviews

73+

Technical Committee Members

20+

Homelessness Services Providers

15+

Housing Developers and Landlords

12

Lived Experience Focus Groups

7

Open-Invitation Community Meetings

4

Technical Subcommittees

3

Briefings with Elected Officials

2

Briefings with County Manager

1

Briefing with City Manager

OCTOBER 2022

Implementation
planning begins

JUNE 2023

Implementation Plan
to be released

JULY 2023

Begin work to plan and
pilot initial priorities



IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

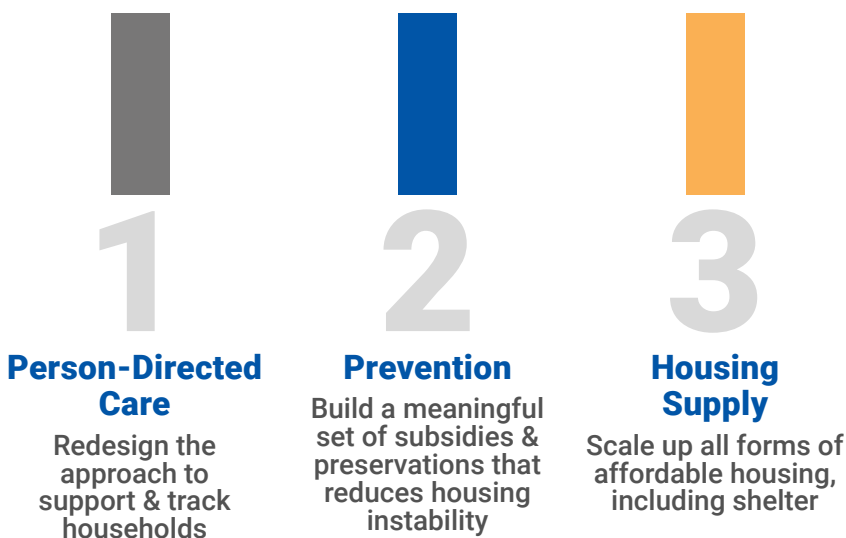
The overall vision of A Home For All is to create a community where homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring and every person has access to permanent, affordable housing and the resources to sustain it. A Home For All seeks to create systemic change that will reduce housing instability and homelessness across Charlotte-Mecklenburg by aligning investments in affordable housing and service provision. The overall theory is that connecting services and housing in a more nuanced, person-directed manner will reduce homelessness and make the housing system function for everyone. The idea is to continue building on a Housing First model to ensure that services are tailored to people’s immediate needs, and that the services offered evolve over time as people’s conditions change. To create the systemic change necessary to achieve A Home For All’s vision, public investments must be coordinated, and private philanthropic investment must be leveraged to support the scaling of affordable housing and services throughout the region.

The engagement process resulted in an innovative approach to implementation. We seek to better integrate service and housing provision by creating public-private partnerships that offer flexible funding sources and result in a more prevention-oriented system. Building a more robust and far-reaching system of homelessness service provision and affordable housing options – from shelters to single family homes – requires simultaneous action on several fronts. The implementation framework centers action around three key pillars.

These include **1: rethinking service coordination** so that it is person-directed and more individually adapted to people’s housing and service needs, **2: building out a prevention system** that is stable and accessible beyond the recent surge related to COVID-19, and **3: expanding housing production tools** to include more support for all types of affordable housing, including shelters and permanent supportive housing. In combination, these actions will be the near-term focus. Successful implementation will lay the foundation for taking on additional initiatives laid out in the A Home For All Strategic Framework in future years.

FIGURES 2a & 2b:

Implementation Pillars



Pillar Integration

All nine initial priority initiatives are part of the Prevention pillar, though some share a cross-over relationship with one of the two other pillars.



Person-Directed Care + Prevention



Prevention + Housing Supply



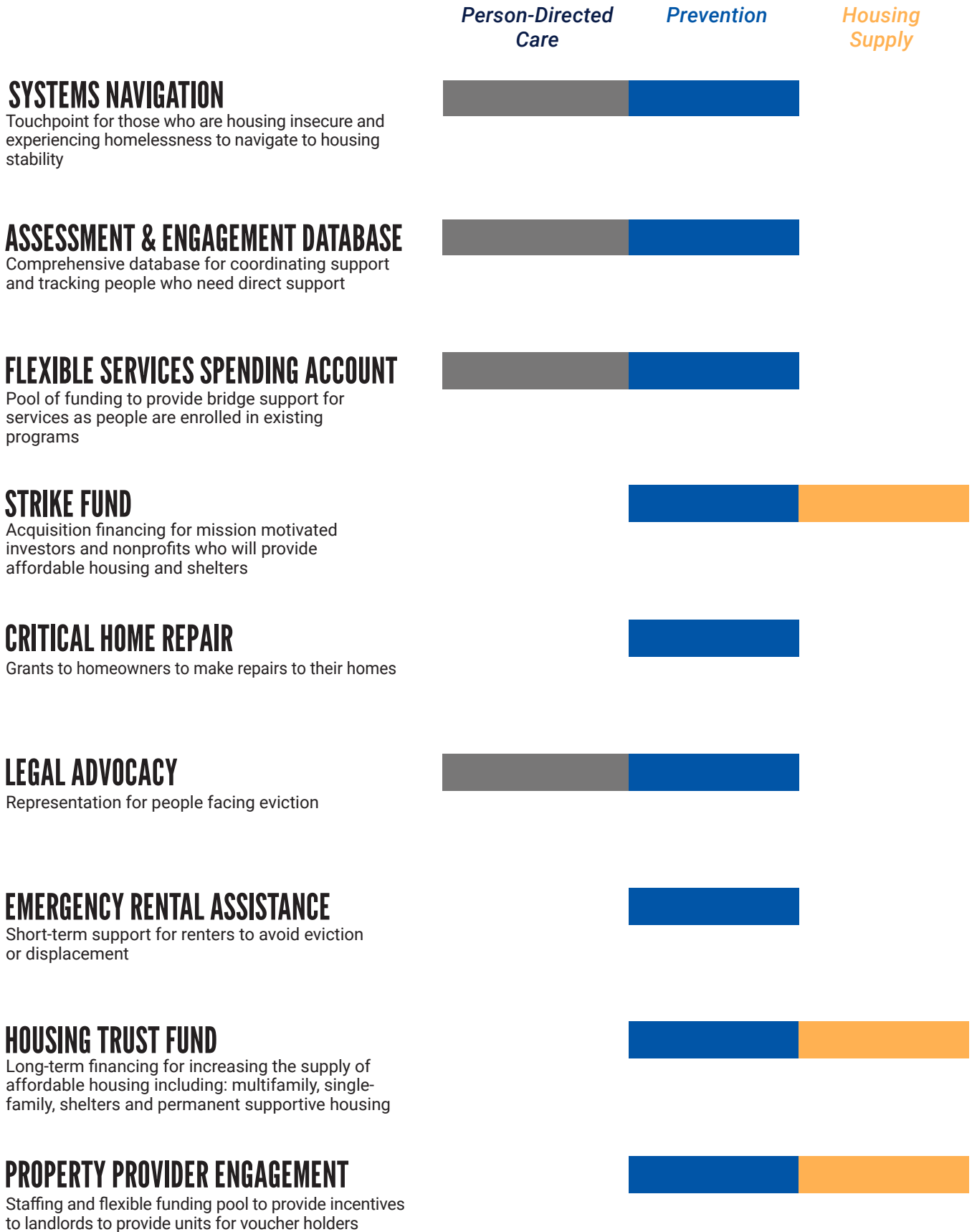
Prevention

Person-directed care will help to overcome a currently fragmented system of service provision that makes it difficult for people to connect to critical services. The current system patches together a series of programs with agency-based case managers that must operate within their funding and staffing constraints. This leads to many hand-offs and a dizzying mix of services for people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity and for the case managers supporting them. A new approach would provide a systems navigator who offers consistent support and helps families connect with and progress through the various systems. This approach would also integrate people with lived experience on teams of systems navigators. These teams would have access to a flexible services spending account that could help meet basic needs as people transition between programs. The teams would also be able to better navigate people's progress through an integrated data management system that people would opt into as they begin their journey. The information gleaned from such a database could also provide insight into the long-term outcomes of various interventions to better understand the cost efficacy of different public and private investments.

Prevention will build on highly successful existing programs to create a robust prevention system that helps people stay in their homes and avoid experiencing homelessness. The Technical Committee identified four critical initiatives to pilot and/or scale. To support renters staying in their homes, A Home For All suggests cementing the innovations made in providing emergency rental assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic to help households that, absent intervention, could enter into homelessness. It would also expand legal advocacy for people facing eviction to help them stay in their homes. For individual homeowners, Charlotte-Mecklenburg should scale-up the essential funding it already provides to make repairs on homes to keep them habitable and ensure that those funds are being deployed in a manner that maximizes impact. Finally, there needs to be a long-term financing facility that provides acquisition financing to help acquire hotels, multi-family and single-family homes to expand shelter options and preserve the existing stock of affordable housing options in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. This comprehensive set of tools will work together to create a prevention system that addresses homelessness before it happens.

Expanding the supply of affordable housing units will make all types of housing units – from shelter beds to single family homes for sale – available to people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. The Technical Committee highlighted two priority initiatives to expand supply, including property provider recruitment and retention and expanding the housing trust fund. To address the backlog in people seeking permanent housing, A Home For All will help bring more units into the system for voucher holders through expanded property provider engagement. This will require two key changes: creating a flexible pool of funding and dedicating staff to bring property providers into the rapid rehousing system by offering to offset the additional costs of holding a unit or waiting for payment. These changes will allow people to be placed in permanent housing. To address the limited supply of affordable housing, Charlotte-Mecklenburg needs to increase the total resources and types of projects that receive gap financing. The City of Charlotte has an innovative and well-functioning housing trust fund that has supported the creation of thousands of low-income multi-family units. A Home For All supports building on this foundation through a joint request for proposals with funding from Mecklenburg County, and other funders, that could be used to support the production of shelters and permanent supportive housing.

FIGURE 3: Initial Priority Initiatives



BUILDING AN IMPLEMENTATION COALITION

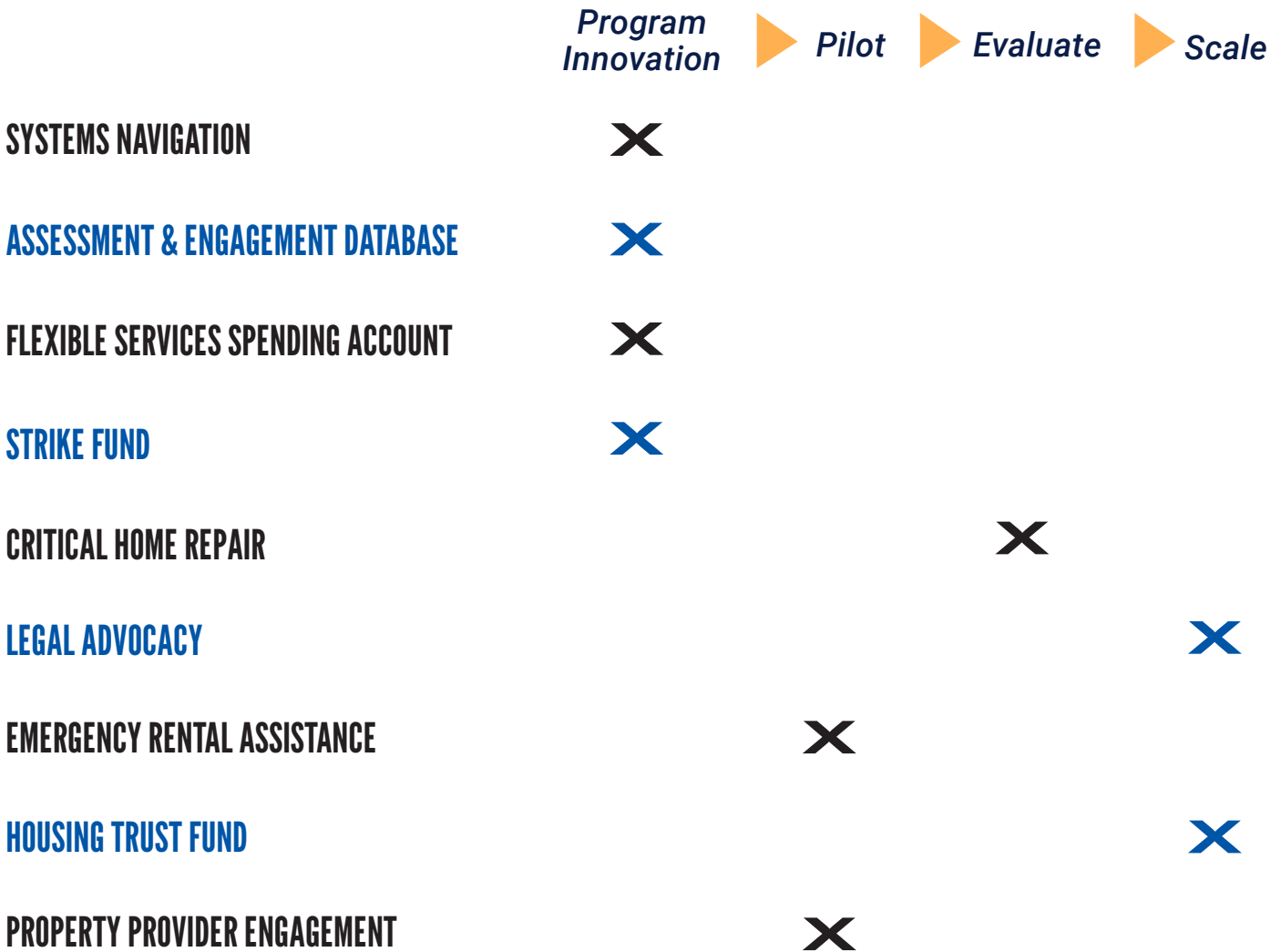


Making these initiatives a reality will require a new coalition of public, private and nonprofit organizations to coordinate action. As A Home For All moves forward, a variety of administrative roles and responsibilities will need to be filled. The basic structure and key actors have already been determined. United Way of Greater Charlotte will continue to convene key stakeholders through a reconstituted Technical Committee, charged with monitoring progress across initiatives, and various implementation teams charged with overseeing program design for each pilot initiative. United Way will work with community stakeholders to ensure the work is adequately resourced through public-private partnerships that will bring flexible funding to these initiatives to support innovation and allow service providers to move quickly. The City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County will continue to play a critical role in supporting these initiatives. One key tool to maintain coordination will be tracking community-wide metrics. Targets will be set and agreed upon as funding is identified and initiatives are launched.

These innovative initiatives will need to launch in sequence beginning with program design. This will result in clear implementation targets as well as the identification of specific funding for each initiative. Several of the initiatives are entirely new concepts and will require full program design. Then, initiatives will need to be piloted and evaluated so that any initial implementation lessons can be incorporated and program design adjusted. This flexibility will be critical, allowing for the creation of initiatives that are adapted to the realities of funding, human resources and organizational capacity. As evaluation lessons are applied and intended positive outcomes are evident, initiatives will be ready to scale to the broader community. Even as initiatives are scaled, it will be critical to continually evaluate and adjust implementation and design guidelines. Each of the nine initiatives are at different points in this process and will move forward independently over the next four years. For instance, the systems navigation role is entirely new and will require program design. In contrast, there are many successful critical home repair programs that need to be evaluated to make program design adjustments before they can be scaled.

FIGURE 4: Initiative Design Process

The Xs below indicate the respective stage of each initiative upon launch of the Implementation Plan.



The implementation coalition will also need to work together to shift the broader policy environment. To both meet A Home For All’s goals and implement key initiatives, it will be essential to push forward and generate community-wide awareness of several local and state policy priorities. Initial areas for advocacy include the following:

- Ensuring that the detailed guidelines on Medicaid expansion match with the goals of A Home For All
- Supporting increased funding for affordable housing across a variety of legislative initiatives, from reinstating the state-level low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) program to increased allocations to the NC Housing Trust Fund
- Advocating for universal access in Mecklenburg County to legal representation in eviction proceedings
- Elevating an office of housing and homelessness at the state level
- Expanding the Homestead Act exemption and circuit breaker

Additional advocacy priorities will likely emerge over time.

MOVING THE PLAN FORWARD:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg's successful creation of the A Home For All Implementation Plan demonstrates the power and potential of deep collaboration between public and private partners, and the critical importance of centering the voices of those with lived expertise in designing solutions to our community's most difficult challenges. Successful implementation of the initiatives identified in this report will hinge on the continued commitment of all stakeholders to remain aligned. We must sustain our collective focus on addressing the full continuum of housing and homelessness in order to create a community where homelessness is rare, brief and nonrecurring, and every person has access to permanent, affordable housing with the resources to sustain it.



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