12.1 Strengthen Municipal Workforce Capacity to Address Homelessness

5 Points | 10 Points | 15 Points | 20 Points

Action Updates

This action was last updated in 2024. The previous version of this action is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow.

Objective

Develop an informed and coordinated response to homelessness within the municipality and in collaboration with the Coordinated Access Networks (CANs).

Complementary Actions:

- Increase Public Support and Awareness for Efforts to End Homelessness
- Collect and Share Homelessness Data
- Provide or Mobilize Resources to Address Homelessness

What to Do

1. Designate and train a municipal representative on homeless services in your municipality.

   a. Designate a municipal employee, elected leader, other individual officially designated by the municipality to serve as the liaison for homeless services in your municipality. Post the name, title, and contact information of such person on your municipal website and/or other relevant platforms. ***Note:*** If your municipality has a designated webpage for sharing homelessness resources as part of the Sustainable CT Action Increase Awareness and Support Efforts to End Homelessness, you may post the information for your designated municipal representative there. **(5 points)**

   Submit: A hyperlink and a screenshot of the webpage that shows your designated municipal liaison for homeless services.

   b. Send your designated municipal liaison for homelessness and/or municipal elected official(s) and/or staff member(s) and/or member(s) of a relevant commission to three or more trainings related to addressing homelessness. The three trainings must include one training on race equity and homelessness and one training on CAN function and shelter diversion. Topics for the third training may include, but are not limited to: principles of the "housing first" approach to homelessness; the impact of domestic violence on of homelessness; trauma-informed care; mental health first aid (including mobile crisis and other emergency response teams); diversion for specific populations (minors and youth, elders, people with disabilities, people with mental illness or substance use disorder, domestic abuse survivors, people affected by incarceration); and best practices for community resources (such as access to vital records, basic necessities such as food, water, clothing and other personal necessities, job training, transportation access, internet access, child care, and health care access). All trainings must have taken place in the last three years. **(10 points)**

   Note: Activities that are used to earn points toward this Action may not be used to earn points toward any other Sustainable CT event or training action (i.e., no "double-counting").

   Submit: For each training, the name and contact information of the individual who attended the training and the name of the training, date(s) it occurred, and the organization that provided the training.

2. In collaboration with your municipality's Coordinated Access Network (CAN), develop a municipal Task Force to address homelessness, or use your Sustainability Team or other existing municipal group. The Task Force should ideally be composed of representatives from each municipal department that engages with individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Its exact composition will depend on your community and may include: an official community liaison from the police force serving the community, library staff, schools, youth services, senior services, family services, transportation staff, vital records offices, hospitals, public health staff, corrections officials, finance staff, and elected officials. Your Task Force is strongly encouraged to consult with and compensate residents who have lived experience of homelessness. Municipalities are encouraged to collaborate or form regional Task Forces as appropriate. The Task Force must be active and meet at least annually. **(5 points)**

   Submit: A list of names and titles of current members of the Task Force, the date of the most recent meeting, and at least one additional piece of documentation related to the meetings, such as a promotional flyer, an agenda, minutes, presentations, or photographs.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Key collaborators to implement this action include representatives from Human Services, Youth Services and Youth Service Bureaus, Senior Services, library staff, law enforcement, tax collection, public works, the registrar of voters, parking enforcement, business districts or downtown associations, healthcare providers, hospital emergency departments, soup kitchens or pantries, churches and congregations, courthouses, school districts, mental/behavioral health providers, community non-profits, and cultural centers. Regional entities including Coordinated Access Networks, DEMHS regional coordinator, Local Health Department, Local Mental Health Authority, Council of Governments, AMTRAK and state police troops, state parks may help in implementing this action.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Sustainable CT Community Match Fund
- State Funding Readiness Project

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- Role Description for Registered Municipal Homelessness Contacts
- CDC Guidance on Unsheltered Homelessness
- DEMHS Regions

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness
- United Way 211 Connecticut website
  - Mobile crisis intervention services for youth and adults
- Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Federal Communications Commission, Lifeline Support for Affordable Communications

Benefits

Coordination between departments allows for municipal employees with varying roles and duties within the municipality and/or surrounding region to contribute to a coordinated response to homelessness. The municipality can then take a systematic approach towards meeting the housing needs of residents experiencing homelessness.

CT Success Stories

- Vernon - Oct 2022 Certification
- New Haven - Sep 2023 Certification
- East Haddam - May 2024 Certification
- Milford - Oct 2024 Certification