



## GREENSBORO HOUSING COALITION *Action Plan 2008*

At Housing Summit 2008, “*Welcome HOME for the Greensboro Bicentennial,*” 175 participants braved the wintry storm to discuss fair, safe, affordable housing. They noted that the paradigm is shifting from focusing on the high cost of housing to recognizing the even higher cost of *not* getting homeless into decent housing. They see that housing is the hub of community quality of life, affecting health, schools, employment, and transportation. Many were surprised to hear that we are spending more to have people cycling through homelessness than it would take to put them in permanent housing, glad to learn that policies are resulting in landlords repairing substandard housing, frustrated to hear of increasing foreclosures, and excited to know about the tremendous collaboration in Greensboro. They learned the importance of data in measuring outcomes and that *everyone’s* voice is needed—especially those most affected by housing crises. And they contributed to Action Plan 2008 to make measurable differences by the end of this year.

Fair, safe, affordable housing in Greensboro will take comprehensive vision, clear understanding of current challenges, unprecedented collaboration, wise investments, bold advocates, and YOU. With everyone’s help, we can all win, because decent housing benefits our whole community. Tell GHC your ideas, partnerships, and progress so that we can report these throughout the year and inspire others to *take action*; call 691-9521 or email [beth@greensborohousingcoalition.com](mailto:beth@greensborohousingcoalition.com).

### **Ending Homelessness:**

Outcome: end chronic homelessness/reduce all homelessness by 2016

- Getting the message out:
  - Develop presentation teams to spotlight the seriousness of homelessness and the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness: success stories, FAQ’s to show cost-effectiveness of ending chronic homelessness, data
  - Use media, video, local access station, panel discussions, word-of-mouth
- Gathering data:
  - Count homeless and note where they are staying
  - Track outcomes of Housing Support Team, shelters, and transitional housing
  - Share data with decision-makers
- Increasing resources and developing new programs:
  - Create day shelter that is substantially operated by the people who use it to coordinate services, single portal for referral for all homeless
  - Increase subsidies, volunteer involvement with newly-housed, job programs, assistance with disability applications
  - Implement Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness
- Changing policies:
  - Repeal laws that criminalize homelessness
- Organizing stakeholders:
  - People who have experienced homelessness

- Agencies that provide homeless services (mental health, shelter, advocacy, case management, vouchers)
- 10 year plan task force
- Americorps members
- Volunteers from colleges, universities, high schools, middle schools
- Local elected officials
- Faith communities
- Civic groups
- Libraries, police, sheriff's department
- Food Not Bombs

### **Promoting Healthy Homes:**

Outcome: reduce unsafe housing by 50% in 2008

- Getting message out:
  - Become more knowledgeable about healthy homes, then inform others about the state of housing in Greensboro: RUCO, lead paint program
- Increasing repairs:
  - Clear lead hazards from 60 homes, repair 30 owner-occupied homes, and rehab 9 homes for resale to homebuyers
- Changing policies:
  - Streamline code enforcement and hearing notice requirements so owners can't drag out process
- Organizing stakeholders:
  - Greensboro Neighborhood Congress
  - Medical care providers, Health Department
  - Contractors, builders
  - Housing Greensboro and faith communities
  - Self-Help Credit Union
  - City of Greensboro
  - Elected officials (state legislators, city council, county commission)
  - Funders
  - Schools (to identify children at risk from unhealthy housing)

### **Accessing Affordable Rental Housing:**

Outcome: reduce turnover (fill vacancies, prepare tenants to be successful), increase affordable units (preserve existing, develop new)

- Getting message out:
  - Publicize NCHousingSearch.org as an online (and telephone) resource to tenants and landlords, adding employment information to increase ability to pay rent
  - Educate tenants about responsibilities and rights, through Ready to Rent and other tenant education
- Expanding availability:
  - Find land for development close to places tenants need to go
  - Advocate for increased subsidies
  - Rehabilitate existing housing to maintain standards
- Building collaboration:
  - Include police and teachers in the partnerships

- Encourage rental property managers and housing counselors to work together to decrease lease terminations
- Enhance rental property managers' relationship with RUCO program
- Changing policies:
  - Explore inclusionary zoning
  - Find innovative ways within governmental programs to expand rental subsidy possibilities
- Organizing stakeholders:
  - Landlords and other housing providers
  - Media (about NCHousingSearch.org)
  - City of Greensboro
  - Employers
  - Elected officials (federal, state, local) about inclusionary zoning, vouchers, tax credits
  - Tenant educators

### **Preserving Homeownership:**

Outcome: retain homeownership through reducing foreclosures and repairing homes

- Getting the message out:
  - Inform homeowners of programs to help with code violations & health hazards & predatory lending & foreclosure prevention
  - Share success stories as well as the cost of not attending to the at-risk population, so that community leaders know where to refer homeowners in trouble
- Building collaboration:
  - Involve neighborhoods, “sponsors” helping homeowners, GHC, building and real estate industries
  - Work block by block
  - Recruit volunteers for building and rehabbing through Habitat and Housing Greensboro
  - Invite agencies to “Lunch and Learn” programs; GHA will take the lead
- Increasing resources:
  - Create mini-repair program, focus on energy efficiency in construction and rehabilitation
  - Create single portal of entry for financial assistance with ability to fund several months of housing assistance in order to give households time to recover from an economic shock
  - Find more grant funding for preserving homeownership and preventing pitfalls of predatory lending
  - Diversify types of housing
- Organizing stakeholders:
  - Mortgage lenders, realtors, appraisers, closing attorneys, contractors
  - Neighborhood associations
  - National Builders Association, GCRA
  - Housing counseling agencies
  - Habitat, East Market Street Development, Housing Greensboro
  - Relief agencies who may be required to support downwardly mobile
  - City of Greensboro
  - Elected officials

## **Protecting Children's Housing:**

Outcomes: assure that more children grow up in healthy, safe, and nurturing physical, social, and emotional environments where they are not at risk for harm

- Organizing stakeholders:
  - YWCA teen parent program
  - United Way Thriving at Three
  - Department of Social Services
  - Housing counselors, homeless shelters
  - Pediatric health care providers
  - Lead poisoning prevention programs

## **Opening Doors for Immigrants and Refugees:**

Outcomes: promote social, cultural, psychological "home" that is critical to effectiveness of overall process

- Getting the message out:
  - Educate refugees and immigrant communities on safe and fair housing, tenant rights, buying and maintaining homes, lead paint, and other housing issues
  - Educate landlords about rights and responsibilities, especially related to immigrants
  - Expand information to public about the benefits immigrants bring to the community vs the negative impact some perceive
- Changing policies:
  - Protect refugees and immigrants in rental housing through education about leases, home maintenance, and what to do if landlords have code violations
  - Apply fair housing laws, inform immigrants and refugees of responsibilities, protect them from politicians who scapegoat, advocate for defeating racist laws that affect immigrants and damage American economy
- Organizing stakeholders
  - Immigrant communities and Americans with experience
  - Center for New North Carolinians, African Services Coalition, Lutheran Family Services, Jewish Services
  - FaithAction, faith communities from many countries
  - Self-Help, Latino Credit Union
  - Health care providers
  - Attorneys
  - Fair housing officers
  - Elected officials

## **Keeping Seniors and Disabled Safe in their Homes**

Outcomes: create new Share-a-Home, develop new models, repair homes

- Getting the message out:
  - Prepare presentation on what needs are for seniors in our area and what volunteers can do (examples: build ramps, clean homes, clear pathways to reduce falls)
  - Educate about avoiding pitfalls of predatory lending and of disconnects with savings and SSI
- Designing new models:
  - Create "senior friendly" model for housing, identifying features that are needed but not required
  - Create a trust and receive remainders in exchange for services

- Connect to Islamic Center as a faith-based housing provider
- Increase participation in existing problem-solving groups
- Expanding best practices:
  - Establish new available affordable homes for seniors, such as Share-a-Home so can live in family setting
  - Increase long-term care insurance and counseling for reverse mortgages
  - Rehab houses for elderly and disabled
- Organizing stakeholders:
  - Senior Resources of Guilford, Triad Retirement Living Association, Senior Roundtable
  - Corporation of Guardianship, Council on Aging
  - Disability advocates
  - Business community
  - Beauty schools
  - Housing counselors
  - Home repair programs
  - Landlords