

Strategic Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in Summit County EXECUTIVE SUMMARY August 2025

The Summit County Continuum of Care (CoC) developed our first ever plan to prevent and end homelessness in 2024-25 in response to growing needs to better prevent, respond to, and end homelessness. A series of planning and stakeholder engagement sessions, listening sessions, interviews, and workgroup sessions were held to examine needs and build a strategic plan to guide our collective efforts.

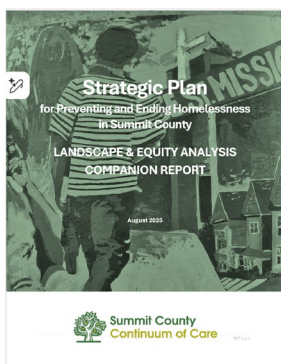
The result is our **Strategic Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in Summit County**. The plan provides a detailed look at local needs and the priority strategies and actions local partners identified for implementation.

Housing Trends & Challenges

Summit County is facing a growing housing and homelessness crisis. More than one-third of residents spend too much of their income on rent, and many people can't find or keep stable housing.

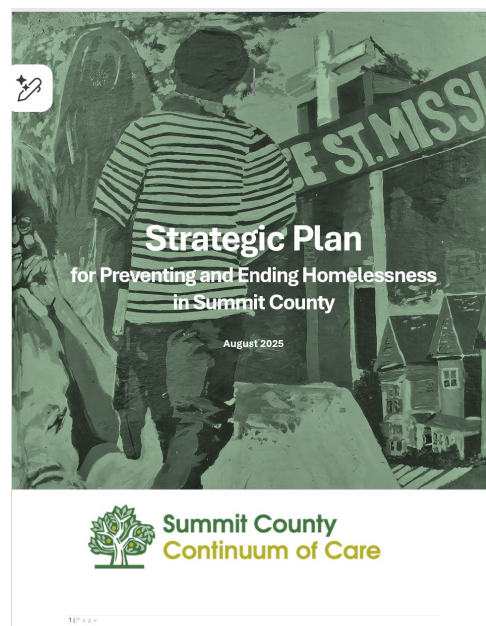
Housing needs since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic have worsened as housing costs continue to rise and federal emergency aid has been discontinued. Even though the community helped distribute over \$63 million in rental support, many people are now being evicted and struggle to stay housed.

Key trends show the need for urgent action:



- Homelessness increased 56% since 2022 and chronic homelessness has risen 196%.
- 49% of people experiencing homelessness are Black, even though they make up only 14% of the population.
- More seniors and people with disabilities are living without shelter than ever before.
- Shelter capacity has barely grown, and most beds are in Akron.

At the same time, demand is rising. The 211 Housing Assistance Crisis Line saw a 50% increase in calls last year. But prevention funds are running out, and services like street outreach, emergency shelter, and rapid rehousing aren't keeping up. Staff are overworked, and there aren't enough affordable housing units.



Our Plan

Our Strategic Plan is our **roadmap** to build a better, community-wide approach for Summit County that helps people stay in their homes or find safe housing quickly. The plan focuses on ensuring our community's capacity builds and maintains capacity to help people who face a housing crisis across three inter-connected primary service areas:

1. **Prevention and Stabilization** – helping people to maintain and stabilize in housing
2. **Crisis Response** – helping people in immediate need of shelter
3. **Rehousing** – helping people get into permanent housing

Within these areas, the plan identifies various ways Summit County can improve, such as:

- Building a prevention network to help people before they lose housing
- Creating more flexible help like short-term financial assistance
- Expanding shelter options and health services for people living outside
- Developing more permanent housing options, including permanent supportive housing, shared housing, and tiny homes
- Strengthening partnerships across housing, health, courts, and community groups.

The plan also outlines system “backbone” elements that support these services, including:

1. **Coordinated Entry** – providing a clear, easy and fair way for people to access help
2. **System Governance & Management** – providing effective leadership and shared responsibility
3. **Landlord Engagement** – building and supporting landlord partnerships to expand housing options.

A Call to Action

To make this vision real, we need everyone to work together: government, service providers, landlords, community organizations, healthcare, and people with lived experience. We must act now to create a system where homelessness is rare, brief, and doesn't happen again. By committing to this plan and building the services and support needed, Summit County can become a place where everyone has a safe, stable home.

For additional information: <https://summitcoc.org/strategic-planning/>



Summit County
Continuum of Care