



# Addressing Homelessness through Health and Public- Private Partnerships

BGR Breakfast Briefing

March 21, 2024

Low to No Unsheltered Homelessness

# AGENDA

- Homelessness in New Orleans
- Health Impacts
- New Strategies: Encampment Decommissioning Model and Strengthening the System
- Public-Private Partnerships in Action





# Homelessness In Context

# New Research

Mental health, addiction and poverty can be precipitating factors that make one more susceptible to homelessness but are not the drivers of homelessness.

- *Rates of mental health, addiction and poverty are not higher in communities with high rates of homelessness. In fact, some are lower.*
- *Only correlating factor is housing market conditions – cities with higher rental rates and less vacancy have higher rates of homelessness.*

Homelessness is driven by structural factors in the housing market and further challenged when homelessness response systems are not able to seamlessly connect individuals to housing opportunities.

GREGG COLBURN  
CLAYTON PAGE ALDERN

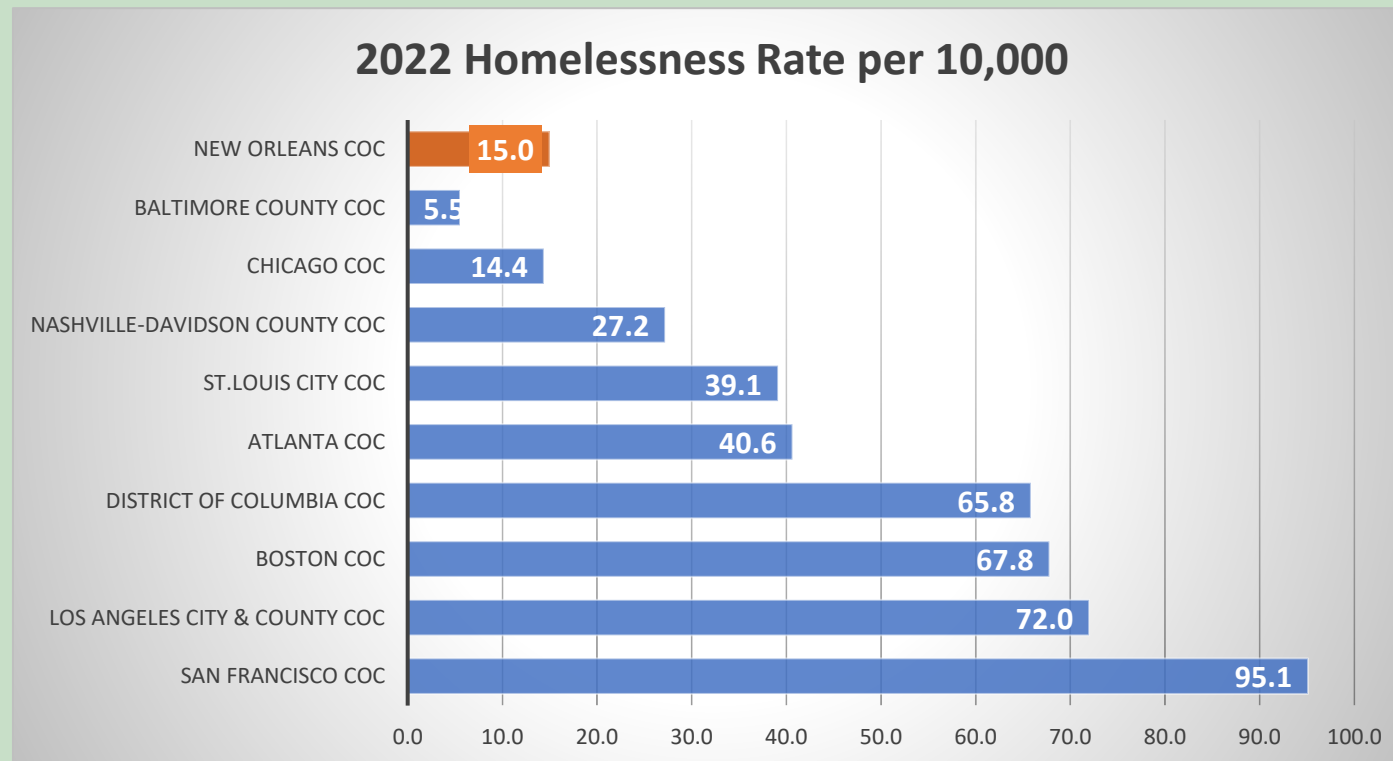
# HOMELESSNESS IS A HOUSING PROBLEM

HOW STRUCTURAL FACTORS  
EXPLAIN U.S. PATTERNS



# New Orleans In Context

- In comparison, still have a low per capita rate of homelessness today (15/10,000)
- **Rising rents a bellwether**  
*>20% increase since 2020, one of fastest growing in nation*



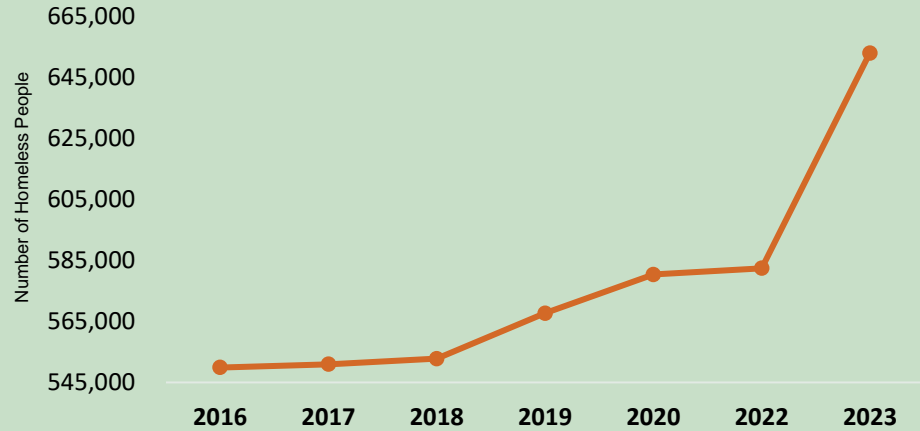
**To respond, researchers suggest**

1. Rapid housing development to balance supply and demand and stabilize prices
2. Secure and connect housing opportunities for those experiencing homelessness

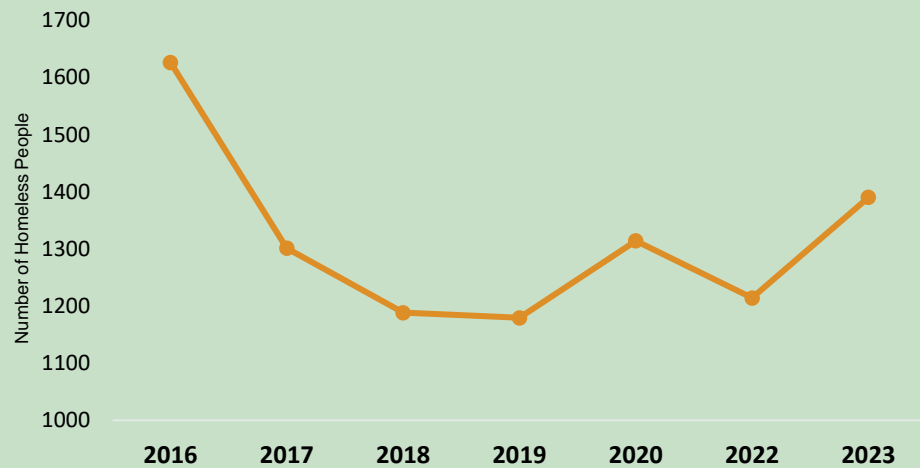
# New Research In Context

## National and Local Homeless Trends Correlated to Rising Rents and Insufficient Rehousing Efforts

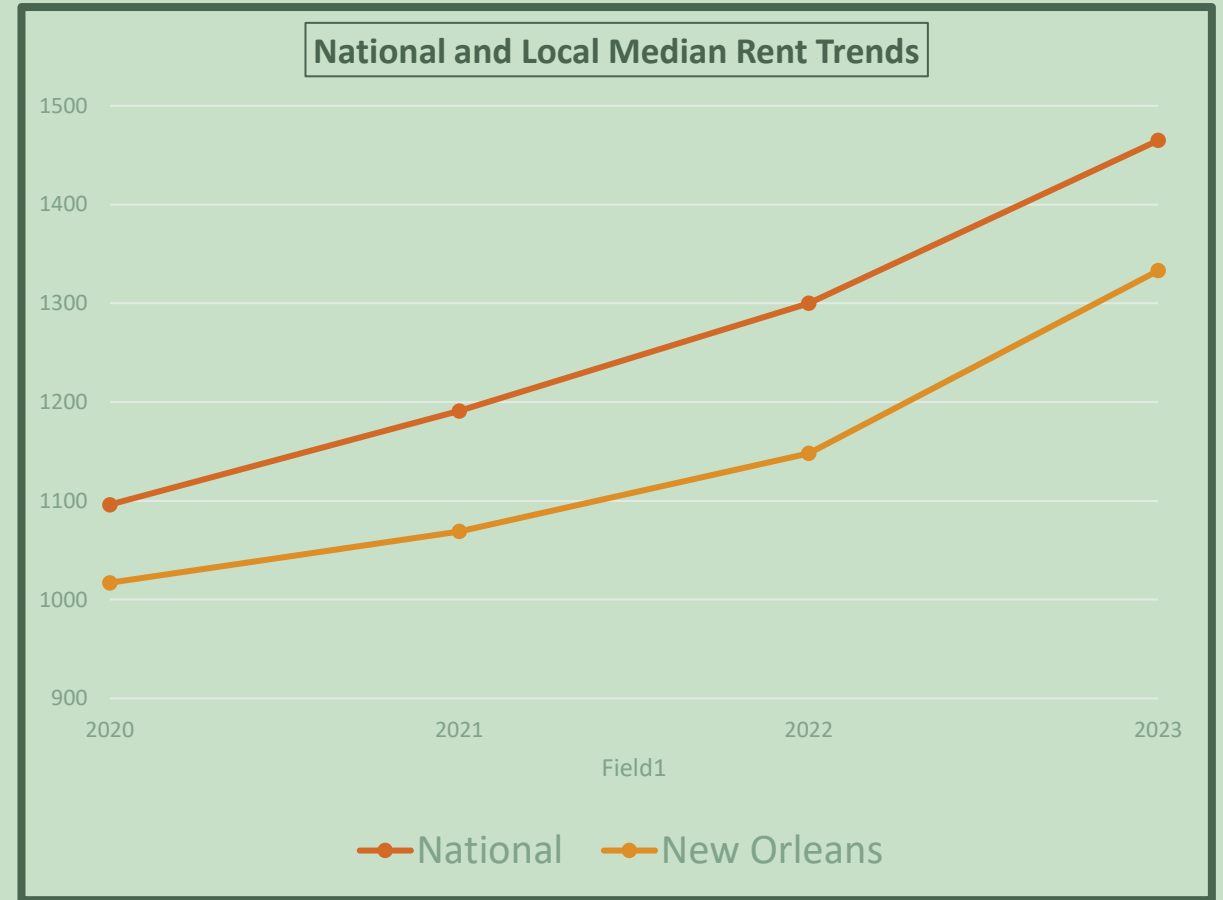
Homelessness Nationally Rises 12% 2022-2023



Homelessness Locally Rises 15% 2022-2023



Data Source: HUD AHAR



Data Source: US Census Bureau

# Slow Rehousing Systems have Major Impacts on Individual Health

- Being homeless – even for a short time – significantly decreases life expectancy – as low as 50 years on average
- Homelessness among non-elderly individuals is associated with 3.5x higher mortality rate
- Chronic conditions – diabetes, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, mental illness and substance use – all significantly higher among homeless
- Higher rates of traumatic injuries
- Access to appropriate treatment and care extremely limited for unsheltered individuals



# Slow Rehousing Systems Create Public Health Hazards For Everyone

- **Emergent hazardous health conditions that are unique to highly concentrated, congregate, outdoor encampment areas**
  - Communicable diseases
  - Food-borne illness
  - Animal-associated disease
  - Motor vehicle injuries
  - Violent assault injuries
  - Substance use disorders
- **Alarming high numbers of calls for service in encampments**
  - Overdoses
  - Shootings
  - Deaths
- **Acting under the guidance of City Ordinance (Sec. 82:693-703)**
  - New Orleans Health Department coordinates regular public health cleanings and outreach events
  - Charged with remediation of these areas to mitigate harm to residents and the wider community, new encampment decommissioning model will allow for the closure of such encampments eliminating the public health risk while providing safe environments for the unhoused individuals.



# Imperative

**We Must Come Together as a Community to Rehouse Faster**

## Community Taskforce to Reduce Street Homelessness

- UNITY brought partners together to apply for HUD funding
- Resulted in \$15M HUD Award



## New Orleans Home For Good Initiative

- Expanded effort by adding major City investments and leadership to reach no or low unsheltered homelessness by end of 2025
- Creating transparency among partners to reduce time to housing
- Led by Nate Fields, Director, City Office of Homeless Services & Strategies





Public and private sector collective impact initiative that aims to reach low or no unsheltered homelessness in Greater New Orleans by the end of 2025.

### Initiative Goal & Strategies

House and stabilize 1,500 individuals experiencing homelessness

2023-2024  
Targeted  
Encampment  
Decommissioning  
(Inner Core)

2023-2025  
Coordinate Housing  
Navigation to All  
Other Unsheltered  
Persons

2023 & Beyond  
Accelerate Exits to  
Housing from  
Shelters

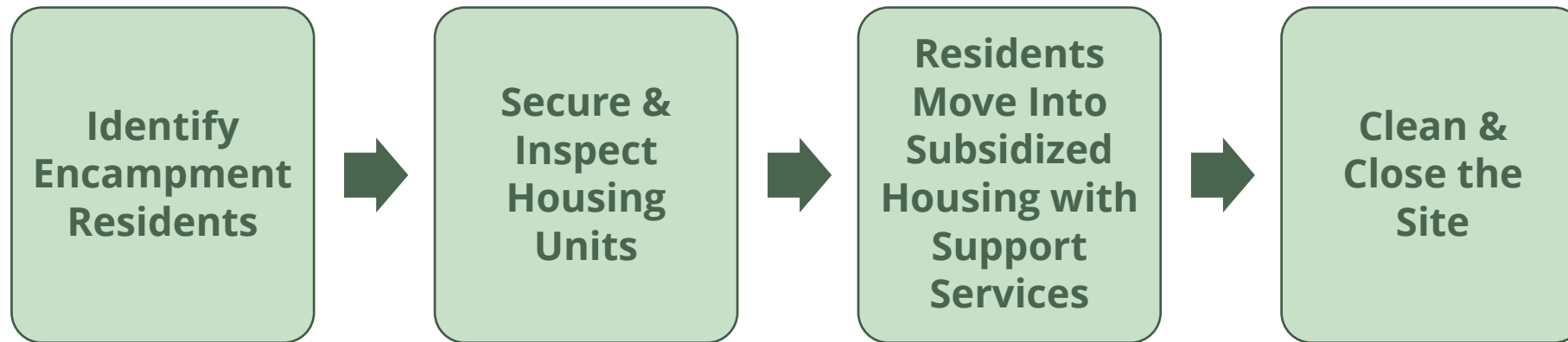


# Direct to Housing Encampment Decommissioning

Improving public health for persons and neighborhoods  
experiencing unsheltered homelessness

# Closing Encampments Site By Site

## New Direct to Housing Encampment Decommissioning Model

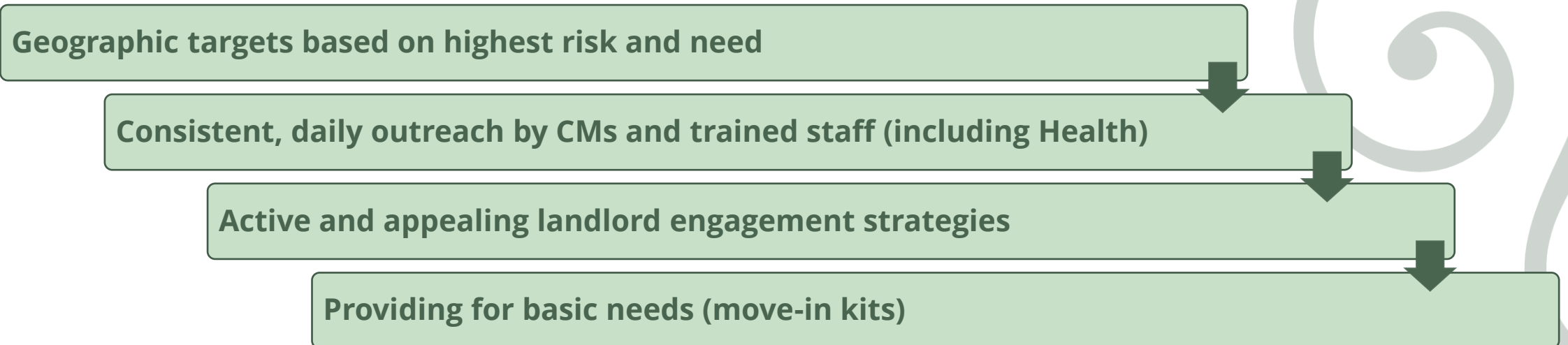


Typically **4-8 week cycle** per encampment – size and housing availability will dictate timeline - **up to 12 weeks**



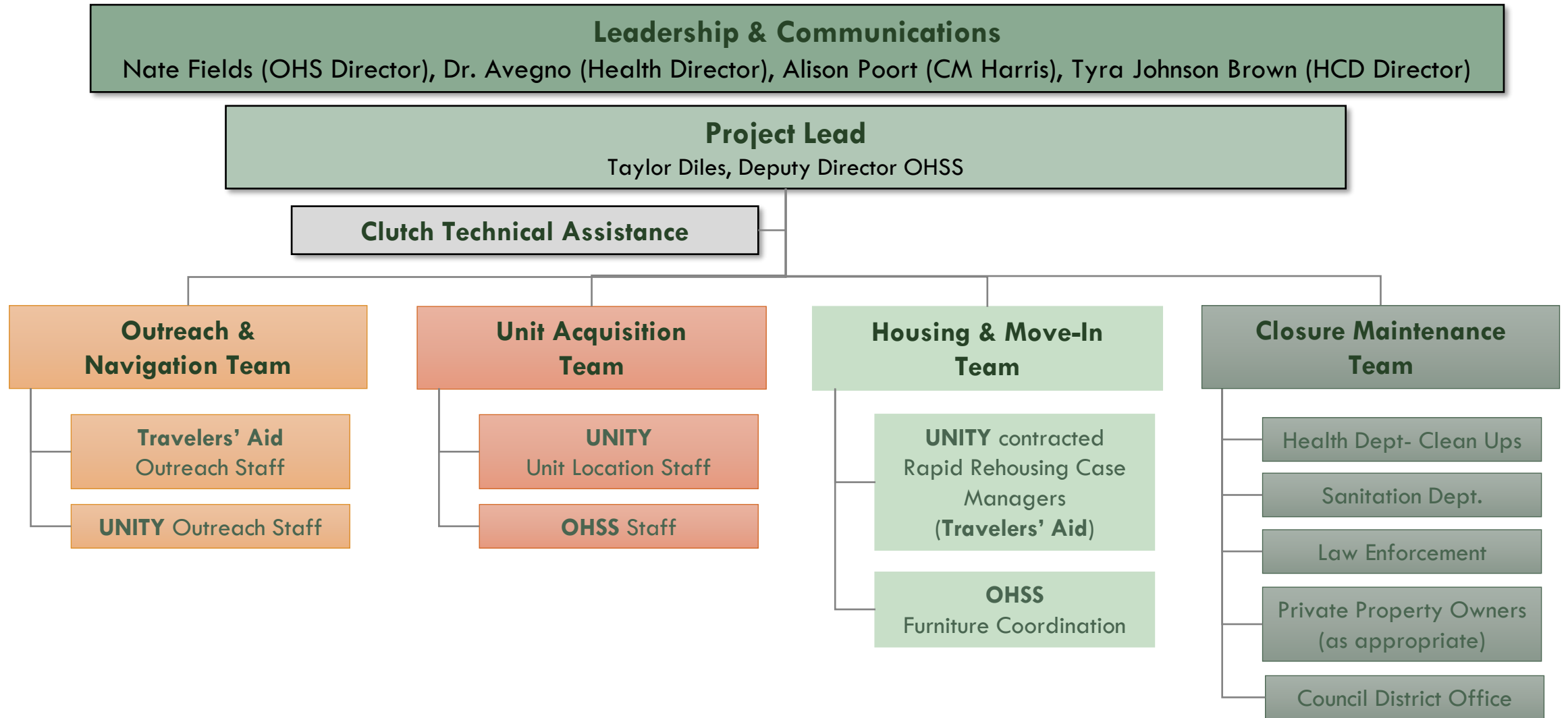
# How is this different from usual process

## Significantly shorter time from street to housing



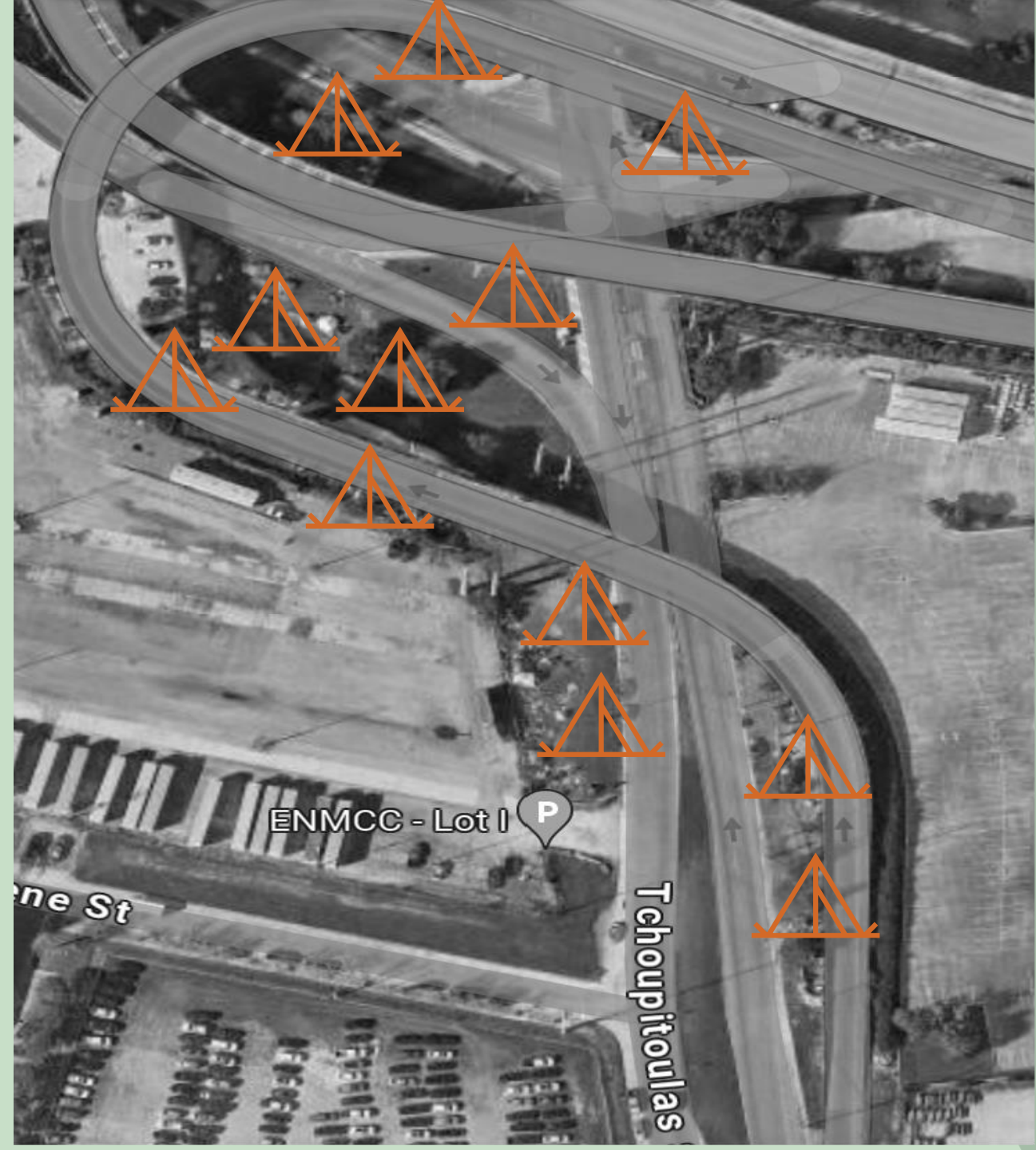
Works with **heightened urgency** due to elevated public health risks

# Encampment Team Structure & Roles



## Test Site #1 - Tchoupitoulas

- Multiple Public/Private Land Parcels
- 32 Regular Residents
- Lots of tents/structures/personal items
- 8 Weeks (Sept. 25 – Nov. 17)
- 42 Housed (2 housed after closure)
- Closure Maintenance Partners
  - New Orleans & Company, DDD
  - Convention Center
  - NOPD
  - Harbor Police
  - Council Office
  - DOTD
  - Private Developer
- 4 Outreach Staff (UNITY & Travelers' Aid)
- 4 Housing Locators (UNITY & OHSS)
- 5 Case Managers (Travelers' Aid)



# Closure Maintenance

- **Led by OHSS**
  - Sanitation, Health Department, Law Enforcement, Management Districts, Council Offices, Neighborhood Organizations
- **Unique plan for each parcel/site**
  - Signage
  - Access control (barriers or fencing when appropriate)
  - Regular patrols and engagement (including crisis care and specialized outreach)
  - Activation (farmers markets, murals/parks etc.)





# Test Site #1 – Success

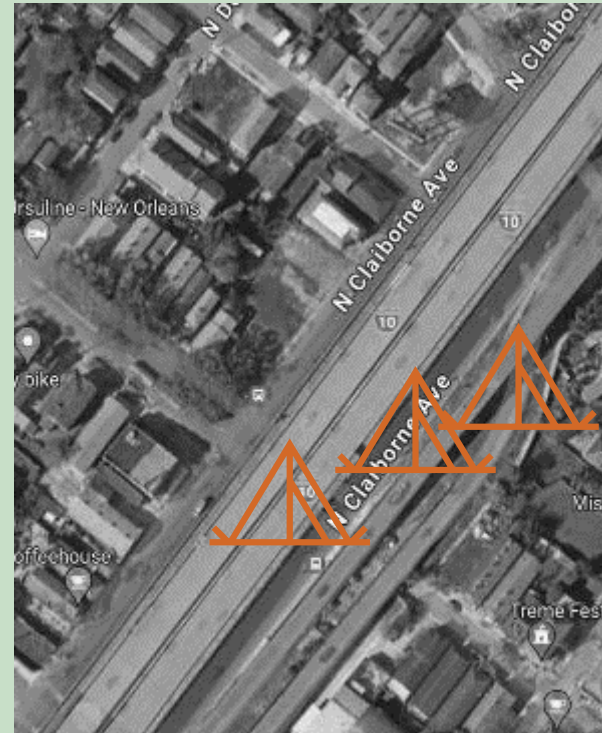


# Test Site #1 – Lessons & Adjustments

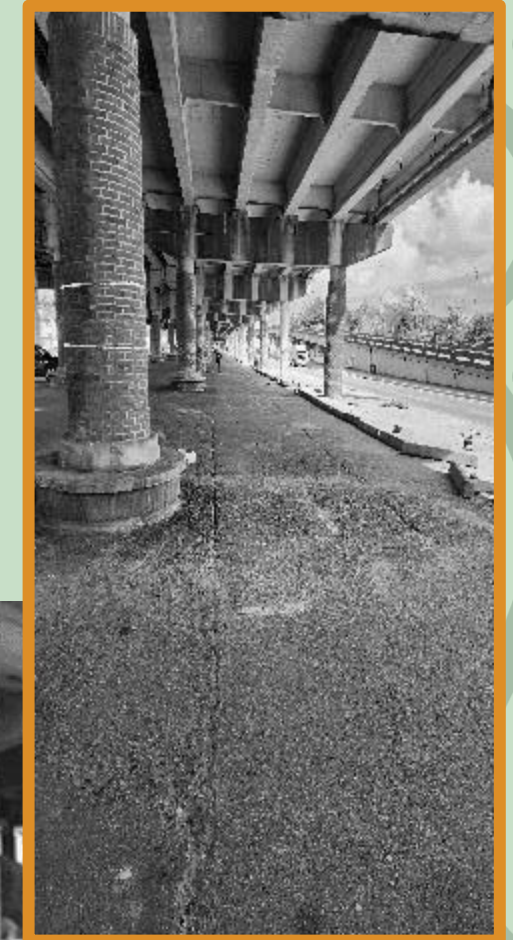
- **Fidelity to the new model is critical to success**
  - We cannot simply house individuals without actively managing the site and redirecting newcomers. It would be irresponsible to allow new folks to come live in such conditions.
  - Cannot close the site without a list of regular stayers to house.
  - Partners will continue to use this model while adjusting staffing and service delivery until we get it right.
- **Need dedicated outreach for encampments** so we can meet with rapid pace and continue to house all individuals sleeping unsheltered
  - OHSS is hiring 3 outreach workers for encampments
- **Flex fund was a difference maker**
  - UNITY's team is excellent at engaging with landlords and the flex fund gave them more access to the market and ensured clients had essential household items to be a good tenant.
  - Need to continue to raise funds for move-in kits and to hold units -\$655K Raised /\$2M

## Test Site #2 - Tremé

- Public Land Parcels
- 61 regular stayers housed
- Lots of tents/structures/stuff
- Lots of movement in and out of the 2-block target area that will be closed – daily management to reduce census and house individuals
- 5 Weeks (Jan. 10 – Feb. 9)
- 7 Closure Maintenance Partners
  - Claiborne Cultural Innovation District
  - Neighborhood Groups
  - NOPD
  - Council Offices
  - DOTD
  - Sanitation
  - Office of Nighttime Economy
- 5 Outreach Staff (UNITY & Travelers' Aid)
- 4 Housing Locators (UNITY & OHSS)
- 5 Case Managers (Travelers' Aid)



**Success**



# Test Site #2 – Lessons & Adjustments

- **Must Find a Way to Pay Utilities To Fully Leverage Available Units**
  - To date, UNITY has largely only sought all bills paid units.
  - To fully capitalize on available housing units, we must find resources and ways to pay utilities on behalf of clients (when necessary).
  - Using the flex fund to incentivize landlords to pay all bills and/or setting up a master utility account are potential solutions.
- **Incorporating Street Medicine and Substance Use Specialists**
  - Health among residents in these encampments has suffered and can slow the rehousing process.
  - Including street medicine and substance use specialists as part of initial engagement helps us clear obstacles and move faster.



# Public/Private Initiative

(Braided Funding)

## City Funding

**\$5M** Office of Homeless Service & Strategies

**\$2.5M** Rapid Rehousing

**\$500K** flex fund (+\$1M FY24)

City Sanitation, Health, Police Capacity

## State/CoC HUD Funding (UNITY)

New **\$15M HUD** Award for 420 Rehousing Packages

**375** Existing Rehousing Packages **Annually**

**\$1M** in State ERA Funding for 50 Rehousing Packages

## Private Funding

**\$155K** of \$1.5M Raised to date for Flex Fund (Hosted by GNOF & UW)

**\$500K** to UNITY as Match for HUD Funds

In kind contributions for communications, healthcare and more

# City of New Orleans Housing Trust Fund

Councilmember Harris secured \$49 million for the Housing Trusting Fund that will provide and maintain affordable housing units citywide.

New Orleanians have spent over 1/3 of their income on housing. New Orleans residents deserve a quality of life that reflects their hard work in keeping our economy thriving, especially those in the hospitality industry who are the backbone of our tourism industry.

## Affordable Housing Trust Fund Fast Facts

Councilmember Harris created the housing trust fund in 2023 for the following purposes:

- *Preservation and rehabilitation of affordable rental units.*
- *Closing the racial wealth gap.*
- *Gap financing to increase the production of affordable rental units.*



# City of New Orleans Affordable Housing Initiatives

## Legislative Work

Councilmember Harris led the Council to approve a measure that will add the housing trust fund to the electoral ballot in November 2024, allowing New Orleanians to vote on adding this legislation to the city charter. If this legislation is voted for by the public, two percent of the City's general budget will be allocated to the housing trust fund each year starting in 2025.

## HOMEOWNER CODE ENFORCEMENT PILOT

CM Harris created a \$200,000 pilot program that will assist homeowners in historic districts to address code enforcement violations. The aim is to keep residents safely housed and in possession of their biggest asset: their homes. This program will clear homeowners from outstanding violations and associated penalties owed to the City.



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## Councilmember Harris Motions for Housing Zoning Laws to be Updated

In January, Councilmember Harris set in motion the process to update the City's zoning law, expanding the "small multi-family affordable" incentive for low-income housing developers. Her legislation, M-24-2, directs the City Planning Commission to rewrite existing regulations for "small multi-family affordable" dwellings, defined as buildings with up to four units, at least one of which must be affordable.

The Council created this use in 2022 to incentivize developers to set aside affordable units in residential properties. This new City Planning Commission study will determine whether the definition should be expanded.

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# How can you support ?

- **Contribute to the Flex Fund**
  - Need to Raise another \$1.35M
  - \$65K needed urgently to complete site #3
- **Spread the Word and Partner**
  - City is committed to moving with urgency to resolve this public health crisis
  - Need partners that will help us overcome obstacles
- **Demand and Commit to Sustainability**
  - We must have leadership over the homelessness response system that can sustain these gains – cannot backslide.
  - Demand transparency and accountability.
  - Homelessness response must evolve to rehouse regardless of the market conditions – this will take employing innovative practices and responding to the market.
  - Avoid investing in costly and capacity consuming temporary solutions.

