

Battle Creek HOME-ARP Strategic Priorities Guide (DRAFT)



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Battle Creek HOME-ARP Strategic Priorities

Mission: To use the City of Battle Creek’s \$1,094,358 HOME-ARP allocation in the most effective way possible to meet the priority needs of Battle Creek’s homeless population, and further the goals of the Calhoun County Continuum of care and its plan to end homelessness.

Executive Summary

In April of 2021 the City of Battle Creek was notified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that it was awarded \$1,094,358 of HOME Investment Partnership—American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) funding. The American Rescue Plan appropriated \$5 billion to help communities provide housing, shelter, and services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. These HOME-ARP funds were in addition to the City’s regular fiscal year 2021 HOME formula allocation. This one-time funding creates a significant opportunity for the City to meet the housing and service needs of the community’s most vulnerable populations.



HOME-ARP funding has the following eligible uses:

- Production or preservation of affordable rental housing
- Creation of non-congregate shelter
- Tenant-based rental assistance
- Supportive services, including homeless prevention and housing counseling

HOME-ARP funds must be used for individuals or families from the following qualifying populations:

- Homeless
- At-risk of homelessness
- Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking
- Other populations where providing assistance would prevent the family's homelessness or would serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability
- Veterans and families that include a veteran family member that meet one of the preceding criteria.

This guide examines the priorities that will shape City of Battle Creek's decision making around which strategies to implement and projects to fund. It draws heavily from the Calhoun County Homeless Coalition's Plan to End Homelessness available online here: <http://dev.tcccalhoun.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/A-Place-to-Call-Home-20190825.pdf>.

A strategic value scorecard was created to assist with evaluating and selecting project proposals for HOME-ARP funding. The scorecard was created by a group made up of three City staff and five members of the Housing Solutions Board, the executive board of the Calhoun County Homeless Coalition, using a strategic planning application called Allovance. Allovance follows a five step planning process: strategize, compare, quantify, score, and select. The priorities and objectives derived from the Allovance planning process, along with a brief description and scoring criteria for each objective are provided.

Strategize

The planning process began by confirming the use of the Homeless Coalition's Plan to End Homelessness as the basis for the scorecard at the December Housing Solutions Board meeting. The plan's six goals were used as the six strategic priorities for the scorecard. The objectives under each strategic priority in the scorecard were derived from action steps associated with each goal in the plan.

Compare

Once the initial priorities were created, staff performed a pairwise comparison to obtain the relative weights of each priority and objective. For this step, each strategic priority is compared to every other strategic priority. Within each individual priority all of the strategic objectives are compared to each other to obtain those relative weights. Here is an example from the City's Consolidated Plan of how comparisons are made in the Allovance software application:

This step resulted in a "strategic value score card" showing the relative weights of each priority and objective. These weights represent how important each priority/objective is to achieving the City's HOME-ARP mission.



Quantify

City staff developed scoring criteria and a scoring scale for each objective. Criteria were also developed for urgency and complexity. Low, medium, and high desirability criteria were created for each objective in order to assess the relative impact of proposed project ideas. Low desirability criteria reflect quick wins or the minimum impact necessary for a project to meaningfully further an objective. High desirability criteria reflect ideal outcomes for highly impactful activities.

Score

Proposed project ideas are scored against each of the objectives. Projects are typically scored first by the project owner and then reviewed and modified by City staff and representatives of the Housing Solutions Board. The Allowance software uses the weights from the score card and the objective criterion to calculate the project’s strategic value score. This number is combined with the project’s urgency and complexity scores to create an overall score for the project. Here is an example from the City’s Consolidated Plan of what scoring looks like in the application:



Select

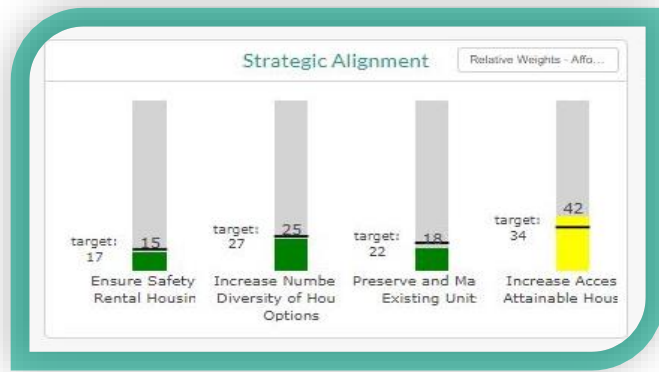
Once the model is set up and all the projects are scored, the next step is to select the projects that will have the greatest impact. This process can be a bit more involved and produce deeper insights if a pre-determined budget is used. Allowance has a feature that will generate a list of optimal program portfolios based on the strategic value, complexity, and urgency of the projects. Of equal importance is the alignment of the proposed projects



with the strategic values. This means that in addition to choosing the projects that are the most strategic, it is important to select a mix of projects that hit on all the values reflected in the score card.

The graph below is an example from the Allovance software that shows how a proposed mix of programs meet a set of objectives of the City's Consolidated Plan:

In the example, the proposed portfolio is closely aligned with three of the objectives, but exceeds the target for "increased access to attainable housing".



Battle Creek 2022 HOME-ARP Guide – Strategy Team and Subject Matter Experts

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Strategic Value Score Card

Mission: To use the City of Battle Creek's \$1,094,358 HOME-ARP allocation in the most effective way possible to meet the priority needs of Battle Creek's homeless population, and further the goals of the Calhoun County Continuum of care and its plan to end homelessness.





Priority 1: Broad Community Awareness 11%

Promote and maintain a broad community awareness of the reality and impact of homelessness in Calhoun County.

Objective 1A: Expand a System-wide Data Approach 46%

This objective prioritizes expanding the system-wide data approach by improving data collection, quality, and use, including:

- Information on the costs of temporary housing
- Thorough, documented PIT counts
- Full use of HMIS, including reporting
- Increased usage of HMIS by expanding Coordinated Entry access points

Low Desirability Criteria:

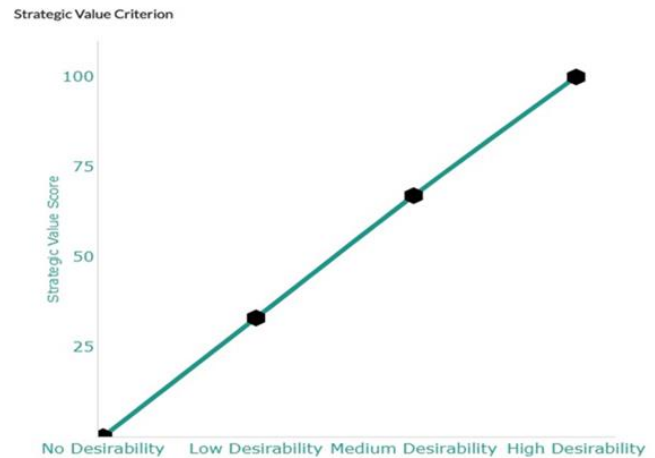
- Results in improvements to yearly PIT count
- Project uses HMIS reporting
- Results in improved data distribution within an organization

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Expands usage of HMIS data in decision making or program implementation
- Project has a data quality focus (i.e., resources, training, or strategies are targeted at improving data quality)
- Results in improved data distribution within the Homeless Coalition

High Desirability Criteria:

- Expands usage of HMIS by creating a new CES access point
- Results in improved data distribution to the public



Objective 1B: Expand Public Engagement 36%

This objective prioritizes expanding ongoing efforts to engage the public using local media, private sector representatives, and homeless individuals as partners.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Uses social media, local media, private sector representatives and/or clients as partners in sharing information (1 to 3 instances)
- Results in an event (up to 200 people) that increases awareness

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Uses social media, local media, private sector representatives and/or clients as partners in sharing information (3 to 10 instances)

- Results in large event (200+ people) that increases awareness

High Desirability Criteria:

- Uses social media, local media, private sector representatives and/or clients as partners in sharing information (11+ instances)
- Results in a platform for disseminating information and increasing awareness (regular newsletter, re-occurring program or event, website, exhibit, etc.)

Objective 1C: Address Stigma and NIMBY

19%

This objective addresses the negative impact that stigma and NIMBYism have on the homeless population's right to conduct their way of life and access needed services. It promotes advocacy and the disruption of mindsets that center the causes of homelessness on the individual.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a public education activity that addresses the impact stigma and NIMBY have on the homeless population's right to conduct their way of life and access needed services.
- Proposes a community planning process centered on the best way to meet the needs of the homeless population
- Project includes supports for homeless individuals to share their stories and advocate for themselves

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Addresses stigma and/or NIMBY with a well-thought out public engagement strategy based on best practice
- Results in advocacy to a policy or decision-making body that addresses the impact stigma and NIMBY have on the homeless population's right to conduct their way of life and access needed services.

High Desirability Criteria:

- Project has already completed its community planning or public engagement; has addressed stigma and/or NIMBY; and has identified the best location for services or housing based on homeless population need.
- Results in a platform for homeless individuals to share their stories with the public, the media, and/or community leaders



Priority 2: Robust Coalition 14%

This priority involves strengthening and expanding the coalition of providers, private sector partners, and other key community leaders participating in the coalition.

Objective 2A: Recruit Experienced Leadership 28%

This objective prioritizes the ongoing recruitment and development of experienced leadership for the coalition.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Results in collaboration with a partner that hasn't previously been involved in the work of the Homeless Coalition
- Engages community leaders in supporting the work, mission, and values of the Homeless Coalition (attendance at events, letters of support, referrals, training or learning opportunities, etc.)

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Results in recruitment of new members to the Homeless Coalition
- Involves community members and the private sector in efforts to prevent and end homelessness

High Desirability Criteria:

- Results in the recruitment of new leadership to a Homeless Coalition sub-committee or HSB
- Engages community leaders in championing the work, mission, and values of the Homeless Coalition (speaking at events, proclamations, endorsements, commitments of support or resources, advocacy on behalf of the coalition, etc.)

Objective 2B: Build a Shared Positive Vision 37%

Continue to build a shared positive vision of a community that wisely engages all of its members to the full extent of their capacities. Maintain an informed consensus amongst CoC members on the scope, causes, costs, and solvability of homelessness; continue to build consensus around the CoC's goals and strategies. Promote housing first and a permanent solutions mindset. Learn best practices in support of the vision (quarterly training sessions on Housing First, permanent supportive housing, intensive case management, etc.; also include training and education on services/providers in the community).

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a learning activity for CoC members on best practices that align with CoC objectives
- Results in the active promotion of CoC values, practices, or strategic objectives to member organizations
- Results in a new alignment between a partner organization and the CoC through a change in policy or practice

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a project or activity that involves multiple CoC organizations, creates shared financial risk and reward, AND models best practices or CoC values.

High Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a project or activity that involves five or more CoC organizations, creates shared financial risk and reward, AND models best practices or CoC values.

Objective 2C: Maintain Shared Standards and System Measures 34%

Maintain shared standards and system measures by increasing knowledge of the standards and system measures used within the Continuum of Care; reviewing standards periodically with Homeless Coalition members and the executive board; and engaging all access points through the Coordinated Entry System.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Results in increased knowledge and application of the CoC standards and system measures within a Homeless Coalition member organization.
- Results in a review of CoC system measure data with Homeless Coalition members and/or the executive board

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Results in an activity that engages MOST access points through the Coordinated Entry System

High Desirability Criteria:

- Results in an activity that engages ALL access points through the Coordinated Entry System

Priority 3: Aligned Funding Approach 19%

Maintain an informed, aligned funding approach across member organizations in the coalition.

Objective 3A: Align Current and Future Funding 22%

This objective prioritizes aligning current and future funding (MSHDA, HUD, other) with the Homeless Coalition's Plan to End Homelessness.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Project aligns with the Plan to End Homelessness (reflects priorities, uses best practice, no stated aims or impacts that undermine current CoC goals or funded programs, accounts for and coordinates with other relevant resources and CoC funded activities, etc.)

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Project aligns with Plan and has an indirect impact on an under-funded need
- Project aligns with Plan and enhances or compliments other CoC funded activities leading to an increase in their outcomes or impact

High Desirability Criteria:

- Project aligns with Plan and has a direct and measurable impact on an under-funded need
- Project aligns with Plan and enhances or compliments other CoC funded activities leading to a measurable increase in their outcomes or impact

Objective 3B: Continue to Educate Local Funders 17%

Continue to educate local funders to support system goals and approaches including: fundamental rather than temporary solutions, programs applying national best practices, and programs that promote collaboration and accountability to the whole system.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Project engages local funders in an activity that promotes national best practice, CoC values, and/or accountability to the CoC system.

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Project receives 10% or more of its funding from local funders and promotes national best practice, CoC values, and/or accountability to the CoC system.

High Desirability Criteria:

- Project receives 30% or more of its funding from local funders and the funders acknowledge national best practice, CoC values, and/or accountability to the CoC system as priorities for all of their local grant making.

Objective 3C: Transition Funding from Temporary to Permanent Solutions 31%

This objective prioritizes identifying and implementing new opportunities to transition existing funding from temporary solutions to permanent solutions.



Low Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a project that has a sustainability plan beyond the HOME-ARP funding.

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a project with funding in place to continue the project for at least 3 years after HOME-ARP funding

High Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a project with funding in place to continue in perpetuity.

Objective 3D: Develop Funding Strategy for Community Priorities

30%

This objective prioritizes projects that result in a funding strategy for long-standing community priorities such as a youth shelter or expanded family housing

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Impacts a community priority need (such as youth shelter, or expanded family housing) AND leverages new resources

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Fully addresses a priority need (such as youth shelter, or expanded family housing) AND leverages new resources; OR
- Partially addresses a priority need AND includes a new, stable, long-term funding source

High Desirability Criteria:

- Fully addresses a priority need and includes a new, stable, long-term funding source

Priority 4: Affordable Housing 22%

Increase access to quality, safe, permanent affordable housing with permanent supportive services.

Objective 4A: Use Existing Housing Resources More Effectively 34%

This objective focuses on using existing housing resources more effectively/efficiently. Examples include projects that: improve on current use of resources; develop, educate, and encourage a strong network of landlords; improve use of BCHC housing and vouchers; improve use of current permanent supportive housing; or repurpose/activate vacant properties as attainable housing for the homeless.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Provides housing referrals for supportive housing services

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Provides or expands existing housing to include additional sub-populations
- Increases outcomes for a current program without increasing needed resources (up to 20%)
- Replaces a current activity with either increased impact or reduced resource cost

High Desirability Criteria:

- Adds new permanent supportive housing capacity
- Increases impact of a housing solution by 20% or more without increasing costs

Objective 4B: Continue to Develop Supportive Housing Options for Chronically Homeless 22%

This objective prioritizes projects that result in efforts to develop supportive housing units for chronically homeless. This includes developing, educating, and encouraging a strong network of private sector housing providers as well as implementing best practice supportive services to sustain the chronically homeless in their housing.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a supportive housing option that's available to chronically homeless (one or more units)
- Creates a connection with landlords for education on the needs of chronically homeless

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a long-term or permanent supportive housing option that's available to chronically homeless; OR
- Results in a supportive option that is centered on the needs of chronically homeless.
- Three or more units created
- Provides education and development to landlords regarding the needs of chronically homeless

High Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a long-term or permanent supportive housing option that is centered on the needs of chronically homeless



- Five or more
- Education and training for landlords that results in new supportive options available to chronically homeless

Objective 4C: Expand Housing First 26%

This objective increases Housing First solutions and expands coverage to include more homeless sub-groups, including:

- Families who are homeless – develop expansion programs
- Unaccompanied youth – develop new partnerships
- Veterans (also a transitional housing approach for veterans attending day treatment programs)
- Domestic violence survivors – develop new supportive services for rapid rehousing

(Consult Housing First checklist available here:

https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Housing_First_Checklist_FINAL.pdf)

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Initial orientation or training for departments during roll out of updated plan

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Results in audit, review, or assessment of departments public engagement practices (ex. Equity audit, CDBG-CV affirmative marketing plan)

High Desirability Criteria:

- Designated internal trainers, mentors, point people, enhanced communications team
- Establishes regular training or updates as practices change
- Results in coaching or a coaching resource available to departments

Objective 4D: Grow Network of Trusted Private Property Managers 19%

This objective prioritizes growing a network of solid, ethical private property managers by doing the following:

- Developing safeguards for landlords to rent to people with poor credit, eviction, or criminal records
- Developing incentives for landlords to increase their participation in affordable housing programs
- Mobilizing the community to hold property managers accountable for compliance and code regulations (reduce the percentage of available housing inventory that is considered unsafe or low-quality housing)

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Increases private landlord engagement in rapid rehousing efforts
- Outreach that results in 10 units of privately owned rental housing made "attainable" for homeless families

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Results in the creation of safeguards for landlords to rent to people with poor credit, eviction, or criminal records
- Results in the creation of incentives for landlords to increase their participation in affordable housing programs
- Results in increases in landlord participation and a 10% increase in voucher usage (compare against 2021 BCHC voucher utilization rate)
- Outreach that results in 25 units of privately owned rental housing made "attainable" for homeless families

High Desirability Criteria:

- Results in increases in landlord participation and a 20% increase in voucher usage (compare against 2021 BCHC voucher utilization rate)
- Outreach that results in 25 units of privately owned rental housing made "attainable" for homeless families

Priority 5: Access to Services 22%

Ensure access to needed services by all people.

Objective 5A: Strengthen Homeless Prevention Strategies 23%

Insert definition or explanation here.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Results in assistance that keeps people housed (up to 25 people)
- Reduce evictions (15 of people diverted)
- Results in creation foreclosure prevention resource available to families
- Provides housing case management
- Provides housing navigation, advising or counseling (with HUD certified counselors)

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Results in assistance that keeps people housed (up to 100 people)
- Reduce evictions (25 people diverted)
- Provides housing case management that results in # families staying housed or getting placed

High Desirability Criteria:

- Results in assistance that keeps people housed (more than 100 people)
- Project prevents recidivism or results in very low recidivism
- Results in foreclosure prevention resources for 50 or more (ask content experts)
- Reduce evictions (50 of people diverted)

Objective 5B: Address Shortage of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services for the Homeless 43%

Partner with the CMH and other community partners to address the shortage of current substance abuse treatment options and mental health services for the homeless. Determine what is available in the community, engage with the providers, outline best practice and ensure their use. Educate all providers about services and their availability. Recruit key stakeholders and service providers to develop countywide strategic plan to fund additional treatment options, including psychiatric urgent care and in-patient programs.

Low Desirability Criteria:

Project includes one or more of the following:

- Results in new supportive SA or MH services for homeless individuals

- Project employs person-centered prevention and trauma informed treatment practices
- Project utilizes, is inclusive of or supports currently offered SA or MH services or resources
- Project is designed to account for participant SA or MH needs (eg., includes SA or MH screening, increases readiness to accept services, sober housing, addresses barrier to treatment, etc.)
- Results in a 5% increase in the proportion of homeless adults with mental health or substance abuse problems who get mental health or substance abuse services

Medium Desirability Criteria:

Project includes one or more of the following:

- Results in new SA or MH services that are evidence-based best practices or have a demonstrated local track record of success over many years
- Results in SA or MH services that include strategies for recovery management and relapse prevention
- Results in 50 or more individuals receiving services
- Results in a 10% increase in the proportion of homeless adults with mental health or substance abuse problems who get mental health or substance abuse services

High Desirability Criteria:

- Results in 100 or more individuals receiving services; OR
- Results in 50 or more individuals receiving services that are:
 - long-term or sustained care; and/or
 - include most or all of the low and medium desirability criteria.

Objective 5C: Simplify Access to Services 35%

This objective prioritizes simplifying and centralizing access to services for individuals who are homeless, including:

- Identifying and implementing an intake process for ‘triaging’ individuals who are experiencing a housing crisis/newly homeless.
- Increasing case management services that help individuals who are homeless negotiate the system of care and access mainstream resources.
- Creation of a centralized, one-stop facility to meet homeless individual’s needs (broad-base of services, social and community center, education and job support, with outreach and transportation)

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Simplifies services or makes services more accessible to individuals experiencing homelessness

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Low desirability outcome AND increases case management services that help individuals who are homeless negotiate the system of care and access mainstream resources.

High Desirability Criteria:

- Results in a centralized, one-stop facility to meet homeless individual’s needs (broad-base of services, social and community center, education and job support, with outreach and transportation)



Priority 6: Employment and Education Opportunities 11%

Develop comprehensive and accessible permanent employment opportunities and education opportunities.

Objective 6A: Create Entrepreneurial Businesses 10%

Create entrepreneurial businesses to help provide jobs that explicitly incorporate the skills of homeless people.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Project generally supplements housing-led initiatives with resources or services that support entrepreneurship.

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Project provides a support pathway to independence through incentivizing and fostering entrepreneurial activities--up to 10 people served.

High Desirability Criteria:

- Project provides a support pathway to independence through incentivizing and fostering entrepreneurial activities--more than 10 people served.

Objective 6B: Strengthen Supportive Employment Opportunities 42%

Strengthen supportive employment opportunities.

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Project supplements housing-led initiative with employment focused programs--more than 10 people served.

Medium Desirability Criteria:

Project provides a pathway to independence through training, job placement, employment incentives, or job integration services--up to 10 people served.

AND

Project design includes at least three of the following:

- Focus on permanent employment
- Focus on temporary, transitional employment
- Clinical mental health services
- Vocational skills training/courses
- Client assessment pre-program participation
- Focus on rapid employment (no assessment period)
- Post-program follow up and support
- Internship/real work placement built into program

High Desirability Criteria:

Project provides a pathway to independence through training, job placement, employment incentives, or job integration services--more than 10 people served.

AND

Project design includes at least three of the following:

- Focus on permanent employment
- Focus on temporary, transitional employment
- Clinical mental health services
- Vocational skills training/courses
- Client assessment pre-program participation
- Focus on rapid employment (no assessment period)
- Post-program follow up and support
- Internship/real work placement built into program

Objective 6C: Address Barriers to Employment 48%

Partner with existing employers to help address barriers to employment and/or employee retention to increase access to employment (e.g., transportation, child care, job training programs).

Low Desirability Criteria:

- Project includes supports to help participants overcome a barrier to employment--more than 10 people served.

Medium Desirability Criteria:

- Project's purpose is to address one or more barriers to employment and will result in **up to 20** individuals attaining employment.

High Desirability Criteria:

- Project's purpose is to address one or more barriers to employment and will result in **more than 20** individuals attaining employment.