



Navigating Challenging Political Environments

*New Orleans Journey From
Tchoupitoulas to the Superdome*

A Presentation for NAEH Conference
by Valerie Coffin, Director of CoC Programs
at UNITY of Greater New Orleans
July 8, 2024



UNITY of Greater New Orleans was founded in 1992 coordinate community partnerships to prevent, reduce and end homelessness in New Orleans, Jefferson Parish and the City of Kenner.

60+ member organizations

31 CoC funded projects
+ **6** SNOFO
+ HOPWA-C
+ State ERA
+ PATH

60 subcontracts managed by UNITY with project sponsors.

4 PSH buildings

Rental subsidy administrator for **900** participants in State PSH program.

About Our Community

Population	Orleans	Jefferson
Total	421,777	364,136
Black	58%	27%
Hispanic/Latino	6%	16%
White	32%	60%
Poverty Rate (2022)	22%	15.5%

1 Bedroom FMR	2024 \$1149	2022 \$927
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1454

People experiencing homelessness at
2024 Point In Time

983 Unsheltered **484** Sheltered

72% Black

53% Black

22% White

40% White



Homelessness Rises for 2nd Straight Year as Rents Soar: Blacks, Seniors, Families, Women Especially Hard-Hit

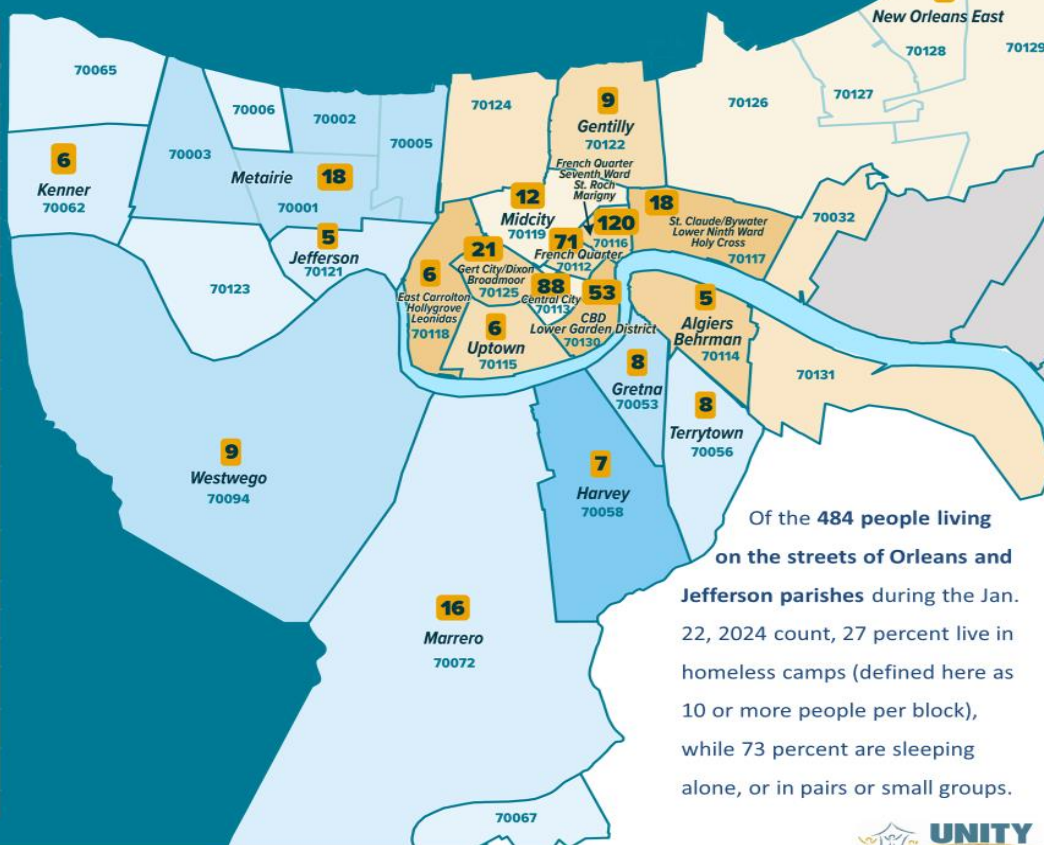


- Post-Ida impact on decreased unit availability and increased insurance costs
- Increase in rents compared to FMR and flat funding for CoC programs
- End to COVID rental assistance

Where People Are Living On the Streets

Orleans and Jefferson

Neighborhood	Zip Codes	Unsheltered People
Metairie	70001/70002/70003/70005	18
Gretna	70053	8
Terrytown	70056	8
Harvey	70058	7
Kenner	70062	6
Marrero	70072	16
Westwego	70094	3
French Quarter	70112	71
Central City	70113	88
Algiers/Behrman	70114	5
Uptown	70115	6
French Quarter/Seventh Ward/St. Roch/Marigny	70116	120
St. Claude /Bywater/ Lower Ninth Ward/Holy Cross	70117	18
East Carrollton /Hollygrove/Leonidas	70118	6
Midcity	70119	12
Jefferson	70121	5
Gentilly	70122	9
Gert Town/ Dixon/Broadmoor	70125	21
New Orleans East	70126/70127/70128/70129	4
CBD/Lower Garden District	70130	53
Total People Living on the Streets		484



Of the 484 people living on the streets of Orleans and Jefferson parishes during the Jan. 22, 2024 count, 27 percent live in homeless camps (defined here as 10 or more people per block), while 73 percent are sleeping alone, or in pairs or small groups.

Prior Success

Increased Pressure

Unsheltered SNOFO
\$

COVID NCS

Veteran
Homelessness

State vs. Local

Mayor vs. City
Council

Superbowl

Encampment
Visibility

From Tchoupitoulas to Superdome

- Primary encampment at Tchoupitoulas needed to be decommissioned due to impending construction.
- Additional pressure to reduce homeless visibility leading up to the Superbowl in 2025.
- New partners at the city's newly staffed Office of Homeless Solutions and Strategies and consultants.
- High pressure environment to demonstrate success to the City Council, which had not dedicated city funds in the past to address homelessness.
- Awarded HUD SNOFO for Unsheltered Initiative but unsure when grant agreements will be in place.

Political and Community Pressures

City of New Orleans clearing out homeless encampments Friday

Crews were seen clearing out homeless camps Friday morning giving the unhoused three days to get remaining items

SOCIAL SERVICES

After New Orleans sweeps away a homeless encampment, some residents have nowhere to go

BY: LUE PALMER, VERITE - NOVEMBER 18, 2023 10:00 AM



Facing angry crowd, Cantrell officials blame nonprofit for issues clearing Treme homeless encampment

Martha Kegel, head of UNITY of Greater New Orleans, defended the nonprofit and said earlier city timelines were unrealistic.

BY SOPHIE KASAKOVE | Staff writer Jan 9, 2024 3 min to read

State Representative Suggests Assistance from State Police and Requests Performance Audit from Louisiana Legislative Auditor

New Orleans officials pledge to clear Treme homeless encampment before Mardi Gras

BY SOPHIE KASAKOVE | Staff writer Jan 10, 2024 5 min to read

Guest column: UNITY is making strides in tackling homelessness in Treme despite what critics say

BY AUSTIN PENNEY AND DALVIN JOHNSON Feb 1, 2024 3 min to read

New Treme homeless camp pops up down the road from city-cleared site





Increased State Pressure

Louisiana Legislative Auditor (LLA) is conducting a performance audit of UNITY, the City of New Orleans, and all the CoC's in the State of Louisiana for activities since January 1, 2019.

- LLA considers UNITY a “quasi-governmental” organization subject to their jurisdiction based on receiving any city or state funding.
- LLA considers all government funding and activities subject to their auditing powers, even federal funding.
- Request for complete access to HMIS data, including PII and data for providers that do not receive any government funding. Request access to Stella and Stella M.
- All project evaluations, renewal applications, project scoring.
- All risk assessments, monitoring results, corrective actions since January 2019.
- All financial transaction data and back-up documentation for transactions.
- All contracts and subrecipient agreements and contact information.

What is at Stake: HMIS Data

Data request for PII is based on:

- 1- Need for PII to determine if participants are being served by multiple CoCs
- 2- Connect to other data held by the legislative auditor regarding Medicaid services and wages. Possibly other data sets.

Privacy of program participants and their data in HMIS

- Prior audit in 2013 we were successful in limiting access to data around disabling condition as a violation of the Fair Housing Act.
- Request would open up data to programs not funded through state, local or federal funds.

Road Ahead

Collaboration

CoC Community Task Force to End Street Homelessness

State CoCs and Statewide HMIS Implementation

People's Council

Communications

Op-Ed Column

Newsletter to highlight success.

Ongoing Struggles

Coordinated Entry Prioritization

Balancing Priorities vs. Political Pressures

Protecting Privacy for Participants

Defining Success

Ongoing State Pressure

STREET *to* HOME

A June 5, 2024 Progress Report On Ending Homelessness

By The Community Task Force To Reduce Street Homelessness, Bill Hines and Calvin Johnson, Co-Chairs

For the past 7 years, 60-year-old Johnny Banks lived on the streets of Central City. He said it was terrible.

“I was tired of living like I was living. I knew there had to be better things.”

And better things have come for Mr. Banks. He is now living in a brand-new apartment thanks to the hard work of so many people!

UNITY Outreach Social Worker Jeremy Finnegan found Mr. Banks on the street, unkempt and so depressed he had almost stopped talking. Easterseals Louisiana Case Manager Gwen Foster did an awesome job of placing him in a beautiful new apartment complex run by nonprofit Belle Reve and is visiting him regularly to provide him with ongoing supportive services to keep him stably housed and improve his health.

“I’ve always felt that it’s my purpose to help people in general,” Gwen said. “To know that I’m a part of changing people’s lives just makes me want to continue to do my job even more.” Gwen helped Mr. Banks get furniture from the UNITY warehouse, and she got him a cell phone through Ms. Kay at Mission Rebirth. Gwen says Mr. Banks is now much more at peace having a home.



Above: Mr. Banks in his new kitchen.

At right: Easterseals Louisiana Case Manager, Gwen Foster

“I’m 100% now,” he said. “I’m much happier, feeling better and looking much better. I love having a roof over my head and enjoy cooking in my kitchen. Really, I just love being able to say ‘I’m going home,’ because I do actually have a home to go to.”

Thank you to all who are part of or have supported UNITY’s Unsheltered Homelessness Initiative and have helped make this happen for Mr. Banks.



425

Total people
housed
from September
2023 to May 2024



150

people housed
through
Encampment
Initiative



162

people housed
from other
unsheltered
situations

113

people housed
from homeless
shelters