

The Way Home:

Promoting Stability, Wellness and Hope

2016 - 2026



Transforming Lives. Building Community Well-Being.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Permanent supportive housing can mean different things to different people. It can mean peace and serenity to a formerly homeless mother when her children are asleep in her adjoining bedroom. It can mean a lock on the door that comes with a key; a key that the tenant controls. It could mean an apartment with adequate hot water, or a place with an annual lease. For some it means a place they will not lose if they get sick and need to be hospitalized. And yet for others it means paying a reasonable portion of their income for housing. It is a chance to prove to everyone that yes, you can do it, you can have your own place even own your home. It also may mean having a person to call when things may not be going too well or you just need advice about things around the house. It means having a choice of communities, neighborhoods, flowers, and the color of the walls. It means pride, hope, and belonging.

The common thread in this type of housing is a value that all people living with a serious mental illness, intellectual developmental disability or in recovery from substance use deserve housing they consider to fall within the following descriptions:

- 🌱 Safe – housing where they will feel secure, where they can enjoy life, where they do not fear for their safety, or the safety of their family and friends;
- 🌱 Decent – housing that is clean, well maintained, functional, comfortable; housing that meets or exceed basic housing quality standards;
- 🌱 Stable – housing where the expectations are consistent, where a person can live as long as they like; protected by the provisions of a standard lease;
- 🌱 Affordable – housing where they pay between 30-40% of their monthly income for the cost of housing;
- 🌱 Supportive – access to as much, or as little, supportive services tenants choose in order to live successfully in the community; and
- 🌱 Housing – a dwelling like any other dwelling without any special sign or indication of being anything other than a place to call home.

The selection of housing is a very personal decision, and too often people living with a serious mental illness or intellectual developmental disability have been denied this opportunity, due to poverty and discriminatory practices. But for all the reasons above and many more not listed, people do want to have a housing choice, and they do want a place to call home.

The goal of The Way Home is the increased development of safe, decent, stable, and affordable supportive housing options within the 25 county Trillium catchment area over the next ten years. This supportive housing will be targeted to people living with a mental illness, intellectual developmental disability, and/or substance use issue.

The Way Home is establishing the groundwork that will support the development and ongoing operation of supportive housing in eastern North Carolina. The overarching aspiration of this plan is the creation of safe, decent, stable, and affordable housing throughout the region that will serve as a personal foundation for individual recovery.

The specific action steps include:

1. The support of 4 current housing committees throughout Trillium's catchment area.
2. Adding an additional Housing Coordinator position in Trillium's northern region in order to support the development of the northern housing committees. This is position neutral, the position will come from within Clinical Operations.
3. Hosting a housing conference with the purpose of sharing new and innovative housing programs from across the state and country that could be replicated in eastern North Carolina.

Trillium will pursue funding for supportive housing resources from sources such as NC Housing Finance Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and USDA Rural Development, etc.

The Way Home establishes the fundamental justification for this essential resource, and a process for accomplishing the goal.

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Trillium Health Resources

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STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

TRILLIUM WILL DEVELOP NEW AND SUPPORT CURRENT HOUSING COMMITTEES THROUGHOUT ITS CATCHMENT AREA.

Permanent supportive housing is safe, decent, community-based housing that provides tenants with the rights of tenancy and links to voluntary and flexible supports. It also provides rent subsidies but the subsidies are not contingent upon participation in services. Currently there are four active Continuum of Care (CoC) Balance of State (BoS) Regional Committees and one stand-alone CoC throughout Trillium's catchment area. These housing committees bring together, but are not limited to, the following groups of people in order to develop, identify, and expand permanent supportive housing:

- 🌱 Law Enforcement
- 🌱 Emergency Shelters (Homeless and Domestic Violence)
- 🌱 Schools
- 🌱 Behavioral Health – public and private
- 🌱 Physical Healthcare
- 🌱 Public Housing Authorities
- 🌱 Rural Development
- 🌱 City and County Government
- 🌱 Food Pantries
- 🌱 Salvation Army
- 🌱 United Way
- 🌱 Departments of Social Services
- 🌱 Public Transportation
- 🌱 Private Landlords/Realtors/Developers

Lack of committee participation in a majority of the counties in the eastern part of the state, particularly in the north east, make those communities ineligible to receive federal funding under HUD's CoC funding and Emergency Solutions Grants. The lack of participation in these communities is often caused by the number of responsibilities that come with forming and maintaining such groups as well as a lack of understanding as to how the need for affordable housing affects all of the groups listed previously. These groups are the center of permanent supportive housing and its development in each community and the expansion of such committees should be supported and cultivated in order to include every county. The BoS is currently working on restructuring Regional Committees to promote involvement.

Under the new restructuring plan Regional Committees will include the following counties:

- 🌱 Hertford/Gates/Perquimans/Chown/Pasquotank/Camden/Currituck/Tyrrell/Hyde/Dare
- 🌱 Bertie/Washington/Martin/Beaufort/Pitt
- 🌱 Onslow/Craven/Carteret/Pamlico/Jones (Onslow is currently a standalone committee and the remaining four make up one committee)
- 🌱 Pender/Brunswick/New Hanover
- 🌱 Northampton will be included in a Regional Committee that will include: Granville/Vance/Warren/Halifax/Nash/Franklin/Edgecombe

Balance of State Regional Committees as well as the stand-alone Continuum of Care is currently working on creating Coordinated Entry systems. These systems standardize how people access housing programs and coordinate referrals. Communities who do not participate in Regional Committees or Continuums of Care run the risk of having no access to many housing programs such as permanent supportive housing. One new Regional Committee, covering 10 counties, is being developed in the northern region of Trillium's catchment area in order to access HUD funded supportive housing programs.

TRILLIUM WILL EXPAND HOUSING COORDINATOR POSITIONS

Traditionally LME/MCO Housing Coordinators are an integral part of developing and maintaining Regional Committees and Continuums of Care. These positions should be strategically placed throughout the catchment area in order to assure community ties and the creation of solid housing committees. A strong housing presence throughout the catchment area would foster landlord and public housing authority relationships as well as build knowledge of local housing resources in rural areas. In addition, the needs of individuals served by Trillium Health Resources would be made known to local communities in order to create housing opportunities to meet those needs.

Trillium currently employs two housing coordinators whose responsibilities include but are not limited to the following activities:

- 🌱 Serve as liaison/point/back-up for the Targeted Program to ensure tenants with disabilities have the support serves they need in addition to affordable housing.
- 🌱 Actively participate in local Continuums of Care (CoC) and Balance of State (BoS) Continuum of Care Regional Committees. The Continuum of Care is a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness.

Continuums of Care are the means by which communities can access the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development housing programs that provide units for people with disabilities who are homeless.

Communities engage in activities that support the expansion of housing opportunities to ensure access to Continuum of Care housing units.

- 🌱 Ensure representation at quarterly housing specialist meetings conducted by DMH/DD/SAS Supportive Housing Specialists, Transitions Team.
- 🌱 Educate and act as a resource for professionals, advocates, enrollees, families and service providers on accessing and maintaining affordable housing using resources such as How to be a Good Landlord-Tenant, N.C. Fair Housing Law and Fair Housing for Tenants with Disabilities: Understanding Reasonable Accommodations and Reasonable Modifications.
- 🌱 Develop positive working relationships with public housing authorities and other HUD Housing Choice Voucher administering agencies.
- 🌱 Establish partnerships with municipalities and county governments in order to improve access and increase the supply of affordable housing for people with disabilities.
- 🌱 Develop and maintain an internal housing waitlist for Trillium enrollees who are seeking access to affordable housing.
- 🌱 Work with community agencies to identify and secure housing funding opportunities from private, city/county, state and federal sources.
- 🌱 Develop relationships with private landlords in order to access housing resources in the private sector.
- 🌱 Host landlord forums to foster relationships with local property owners and managers to expand the available housing stock in the area.

In order to provide adequate coverage of Trillium's catchment area Trillium will need to employ a minimum of three Housing Coordinators, one per region. The Housing Department currently has 2 Housing Coordinators, one in the central and one in the southern regions and will need to add one in the northern region from within the available Clinical Operations staff resources.

TRILLIUM WILL HOST A HOUSING CONFERENCE

This one day event in New Bern would bring together various groups, agencies, organizations and individuals with an interest in safe, decent and affordable housing particularly for people with disabilities.

It would provide an opportunity for education, networking and development centered on housing. The conference would include presenters from across the state and country sharing innovative housing programs that could be replicated in eastern North Carolina. The conference would also serve to strengthen regional housing committees and continuums of care by educating communities on the need and purpose of these committees. Various vendors would be present to share housing programs, resources and supports.

TRILLIUM WILL DEVELOP PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Trillium will apply to federal, state, local, and private funding sources that leverage the investment of safe, decent, stable and affordable housing in eastern North Carolina. Financing tools include the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH), and Federal Home Loan Back Affordable Housing Program (FHLB), and North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA).

Housing resources developed by Trillium will meet federal housing quality standards, and use energy efficient appliances, as well as utilize Smart Home technology. Approximately fifty percent of the units will target specific populations such as people with physical disabilities, homeless families, veterans, or transitioning youth (ages 18 to 24 years old).

Fifty percent of the development will be located in Pitt and New Hanover counties with access to public transportation, health care, commercial conveniences, and employment. The other fifty percent will be located throughout the Northern, Central and Southern regions where there is access to sidewalks, transportation, health care, commercial conveniences, and employment opportunities.

In addition to standard apartments and housing units some possible projects that could be developed are:

-  Tiny Homes: Tiny homes would provide low cost construction as well as affordable living for people with disabilities. They would offer low maintenance and upkeep for the property manager and tenant. Tiny homes could be constructed as standalone units or small neighborhoods of similar designs. As in all units developed by the nonprofit tiny homes would be energy efficient, accessible, and would employ Smart Home technology when needed.
-  Good Neighbor Project: This project would allow university students to live rent free in exchange for a particular number of hours per month of volunteering with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The volunteers would assist tenants in gaining and maintaining independent living skills as well as participating in a variety of activities with tenants such as watching and participating in sports, celebrating birthdays, buying groceries,

attending various community events. All of these activities would encourage stronger community ties and inclusion.

- 🌱 Charles Lea Center: The Charles Lea Center located in Spartanburg, SC, uses technology in numerous ways to allow tenants to live more independently. Trillium is already involved in the development with Charles Lea. Some examples of the use of technology are:
 - A night monitoring program is used so no overnight staff is required. Monitors are utilized throughout the night and if hands-on support is needed a staff member can provide assistance in less than 10 minutes.
 - The center's Transitions program is another way they are using technology to promote independence. Instead of onsite staff 24/7 tenants are monitored using technology and help is only a call away.
 - The Charles Lea Center also uses S.M.A.R.T. Home (Supporting Mobility Around Redesigned Technology) technology. This equipment enables residents to manage their living environment with as little staff as possible. Tenants are able to do such things as: control their TVs and DVD players, turn on/off their lights and use the restroom privately. They alert staff as needed.

- 🌱 Housing First: The development of a Housing First project would allow individuals access to housing first. Their tenancy would not be based on requirements such as medication and treatment compliance or sobriety. There are only two requirements under the Housing First model: 1) residents must agree to in-person visits by a housing coordinate or tenancy supports person (frequency is based on the needs and desires of the individual) and 2) tenants must agree to pay 30% of their income toward their housing costs. Tenants living in a Housing First program hold leases just like any other tenant and are responsible for the requirements under that lease.

- 🌱 Sober Living: Trillium will continue the development and creation of sober-living housing similar to the current partnership with the Oxford House. Development of sober-living housing will provide supportive housing for people graduation from Healing Transitions as well as being discharged from drug and alcohol treatment centers.

CONCLUSION

This housing plan will enable Trillium to compete for annual funding opportunities to develop dedicated permanent supportive housing. Trillium resources will be leveraged into the development of energy efficient, quality housing in areas within the region with public transportation, health services, and employment options. Trillium's housing plan; *The Way Home: Promoting Stability, Wellness and Hope*; will enable the individuals and families served by Trillium to not only meet their housing needs but accomplish their dream of having a place they can call home.