



*Department of **Human Services***
Monroe County, New York

Cheryl Dinolfo
County Executive

Corinda Crossdale
Commissioner

**HOUSING / HOMELESS
SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT**

For Calendar Year 2017

April 2018

TEMPORARY HOUSING ASSISTANCE/ HOMELESS SERVICES – 2017

Increased focus on emergency housing applicants, recipients, shelter providers and local district practices on the State level, continued in 2017, resulting in new policies and procedures being implemented, by both Social Service Statute and Regulations. NYS OTDA continued its expansion of local certification requirements for facilities under OTDA Certification thresholds. Use of an online Shelter Management System, submission of Operational Budgets (in addition to requests to approve Operational Plans, Safety and Security Plans) were required by NYS OTDA's Office of Shelter Oversight and Compliance in 2017. These continuously evolving requirements require increased coordination, cooperation and communication between MCDHS and community providers. We continue to work together with the homeless provider community to serve Monroe County residents in the most efficient and effective ways, while also complying with all applicable rules and regulations from NYS and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA).

Temporary Housing Assistance (THA) Placements

In 2017, the Monroe County Department of Human Services (MCDHS) made 9,424¹ temporary housing placements for individuals and families. This represents a 21% increase from the 7,815 temporary housing placements made in 2016. This increase may be, in part, the result of the implementation and clarification of New York State Social Services Regulation 304.18 <https://otda.ny.gov/legal/Emergency-Measures-Homeless-Incident-Weather.pdf> which requires placement in emergency shelter of otherwise ineligible individuals when the temperatures fall below 32 degrees Fahrenheit with wind-chill.

| Year | Families | Individuals | Total | Change from Previous Year | % change | Total Cost | Average cost per placement |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2013 | 2678 | 6179 | 8857 | 509 | 6% | \$4,908,746 | \$554 |
| 2014 | 2674 | 5811 | 8485 | -372 | -9% | \$4,948,029 | \$583 |
| 2015 | 2318 | 5137 | 7455 | -1030 | -12% | \$4,631,902 | \$621 |
| 2016 | 2424 | 5391 | 7815 | +360 | 4% | \$4,743,783 | \$607 |
| 2017 | 2984 | 6440 | 9424 | +1,609 | 21% | \$4,635,699 | \$492 |

The 2017 temporary housing assistance placement numbers do not include Monroe County residents that were placed in domestic violence shelters outside of Monroe County. In 2017, an additional \$450,494 was issued for out-of-county placements.

Leading Causes for Temporary Housing Assistance Placements in 2017

The primary cause of homelessness in 2017 continued to be eviction by the primary tenant. Individuals and families residing in the homes of relatives or friends are often asked to leave due to overcrowded conditions, substance use, domestic disputes, family breakups and strained relationships. This cause represented 60% of the total temporary housing assistance placements made in 2017.

¹ The number of temporary housing placements made is not unduplicated, and does not include canceled placements or certain no show placements.

The second leading cause of homelessness in 2017 was a result of being released from an institution without a plan for permanent housing. Institutions include hospitals, substance use treatment programs, Monroe County Jail and other jails and prisons. This cause represented 11% of the total emergency housing placements that were made in 2017.

Temporary Housing Assistance Placement Reasons 2013-2017

| <u>Cause of Homelessness</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2014</u> | <u>2015</u> | <u>2016</u> | <u>2017</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Eviction by Primary Tenant | 68% | 64% | 65% | 69% | 60% |
| Release from Institution | 11% | 13% | 12% | 11% | 11% |
| Eviction by Landlord | 6% | 8% | 7% | 7% | 8% |
| Arrived from out of county | 6% | 6% | 6% | 5% | 5% |
| Domestic Violence | 5% | 7% | 7% | 6% | 5% |
| Street Homeless* | | | | | 3% |
| SS Law 304.1* | | | | | 3% |
| Fire | 2% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| All other causes | 2% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 4% |

*added as new reasons in 2017

Temporary Housing Assistance Placements – Youth

In 2017, 450 youths (ages 16-21, unduplicated) were placed in temporary housing. As some youths experienced multiple bouts of homelessness, the total number of youth placements into temporary housing for 2017 was 966. Of the total youth placements made in 2017, 54% were placed in the adult shelter system, 39% were placed in the youth shelter system and 7% were placed in hotels.²

Temporary Housing Assistance Placements – Youth (ages 16-21) 2013-2017

| Year | Youths Placed | Change from Previous Year | % change | Total Placements | Change from Previous Year | % change |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2013 | 630 | -97 | -13% | 1,016 | -260 | -20% |
| 2014 | 523 | -107 | -8% | 934 | -82 | -9% |
| 2015 | 465 | -58 | -11% | 858 | -76 | -8% |
| 2016 | 479 | +14 | +3% | 845 | -13 | -2% |
| 2017 | 450 | -29 | -6% | 966 | 121 | 14% |

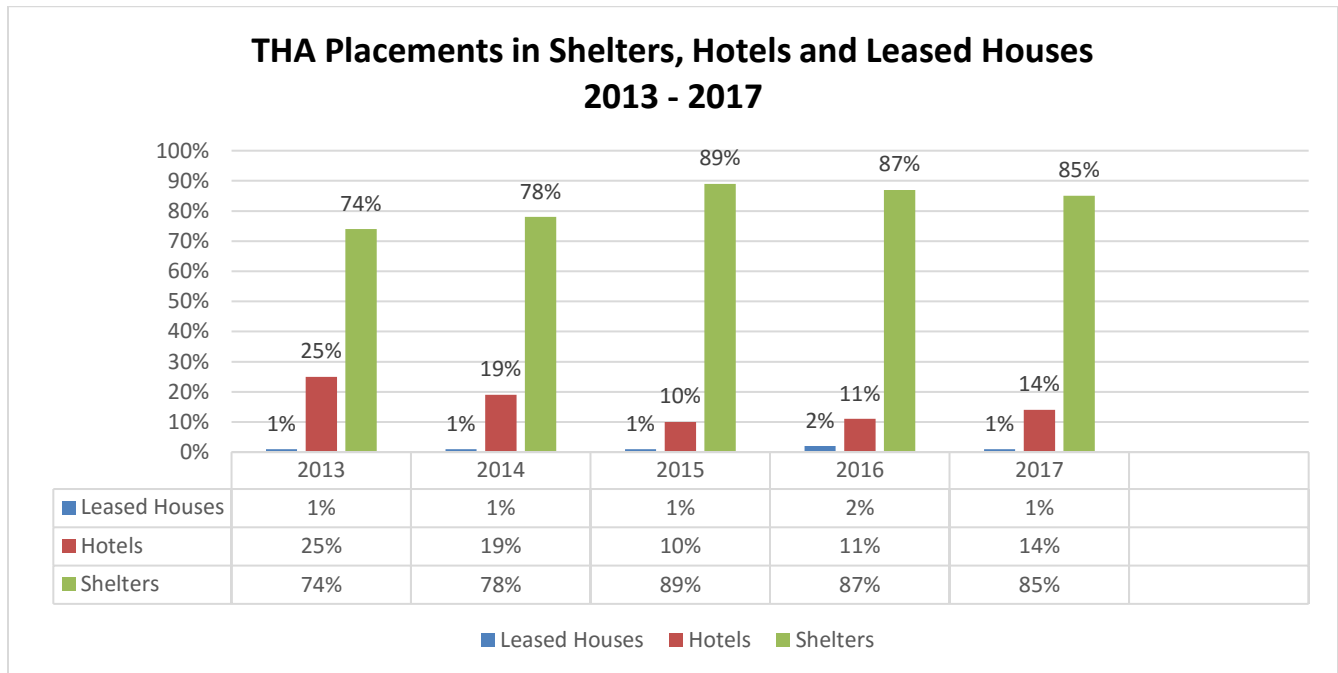
Temporary Housing Assistance Placements – Shelters, Hotels and Leased Houses

Shelters and leased houses provide case management services that are not provided at a hotel. When making a placement, shelters are always utilized first, and a hotel placement is only made when a shelter bed or leased house is unavailable. In some situations, hotel placements are utilized when a shelter option is not

² These percentages are based on the unduplicated numbers.

appropriate based on the household circumstances. MCDHS Emergency Housing Unit staff work with those families and individuals who have been placed in a hotel to move them as quickly as possible to a shelter or leased house.

In 2017, 85% of the temporary housing assistance placements were made at homeless shelters. Hotel placements accounted for 14% of the total temporary housing assistance placements, and leased houses 1%. Monroe County has actively worked with temporary housing assistance providers to reduce the number of placements made in hotels. It is important to note that 34% of temporary housing placements made in 2006 were made in hotels. In 2017, MCDHS continued to hold hotel placements to some of the lowest levels seen since that time. In 2017 there was a slight increase in the number of placements made at hotels due to the increased total number of placements as well as the temporary loss of beds due to shelter renovation.



Average Length of Stay

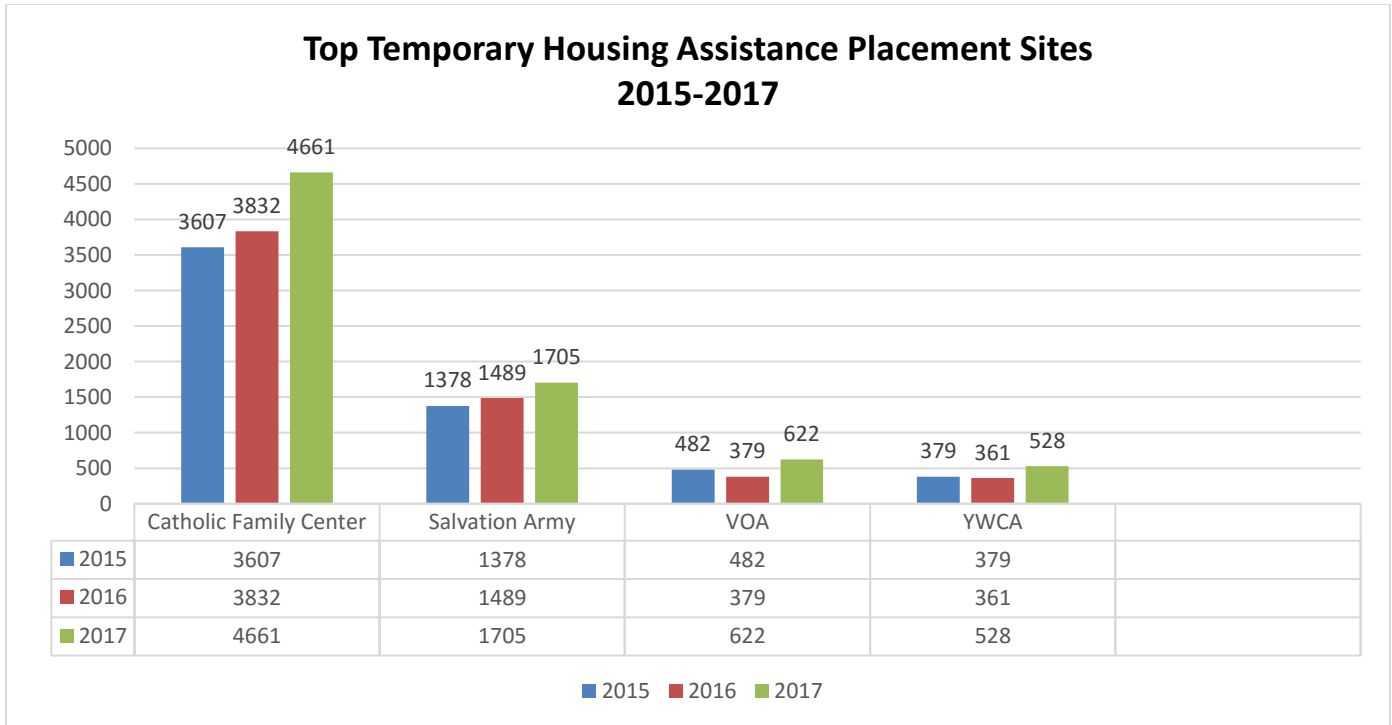
The goal of MCDHS is to assist homeless residents in securing appropriate permanent housing as quickly as possible. In 2017 DHS discontinued weekly meetings with individuals and families at the department and reestablished DHS staff liaisons assigned to each temporary housing facility. This change allows DHS staff and temporary housing staff to collectively assess and address the needs of each household, determine barriers to accessing stable, permanent housing and developing independent living plans tailored to each household’s circumstance. MCDHS THA reimbursed lengths of stay across facility types either remained the same or decreased in 2017.

| | Families | | | Individuals | | |
|---------------|----------|------|--------|-------------|------|--------|
| | 2016 | 2017 | Change | 2016 | 2017 | Change |
| Hotels | 3 | 3 | NC | 12 | 3 | -9 |
| Shelters | 17 | 15 | -3 | 13 | 11 | -2 |
| Leased Houses | 24 | 24 | NC | - | - | n/a |

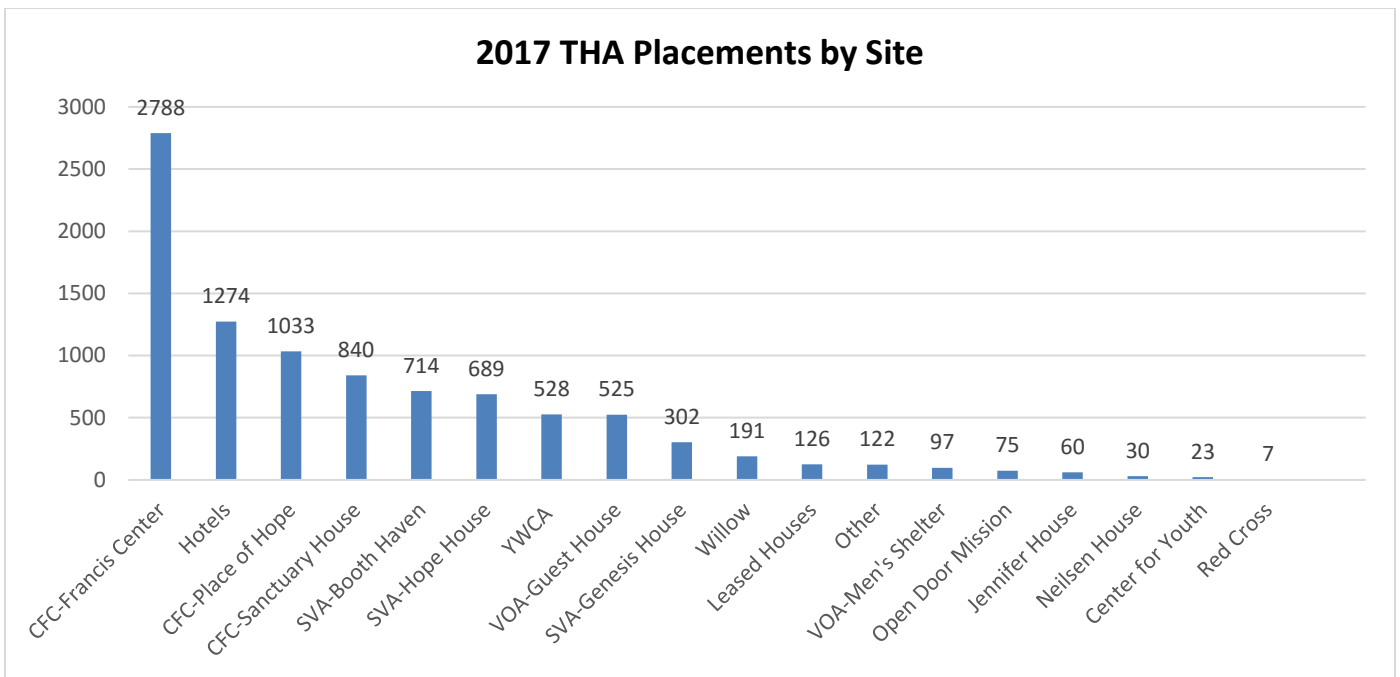
Contracted Temporary Housing Assistance Beds and Placements

During 2017, MCDHS contracted with various community agencies for approximately 427 temporary housing assistance beds for homeless individuals and families. These are approximate numbers as rooms can be reconfigured based on need, and some of the shelter beds are “moved” between various programs when necessary. When the shelters are unable to accommodate a placement, MCDHS utilizes various hotels and motels across Monroe County.

| | | |
|--|---------|--|
| Willow Domestic Violence Center | 49 beds | Individuals with children |
| Catholic Family Center – Francis Center | 36 beds | Single men |
| Catholic Family Center – Sanctuary House | 46 beds | Women – single and with children (17 rooms) |
| Catholic Family Center – Place of Hope | 43 beds | Families, couples and singles (18 rooms) |
| Center for Youth | 13 beds | Youth (16-20) male or female |
| Salvation Army Men’s Shelter- Booth Haven | 39 beds | Single men |
| Salvation Army Youth Shelter – Genesis House | 14 beds | Youth (16-21) male or female |
| Salvation Army Women’s Shelter – Hope House | 19 beds | Single women |
| Tempo Development (Temple B’rith Kodesh) | 58 beds | Families (11 units) |
| VOC Richards House | 6 beds | Single men (Veterans) |
| Volunteers of America – Guest House | 44 beds | Families, couples and singles (12 rooms) |
| Volunteers of America - Men’s Shelter | 4 beds | Single men |
| YWCA | 56 beds | Families, single men or women with children (20 rooms) |



2017 THA Placements by Site



Temporary Housing Assistance Placement No –Shows

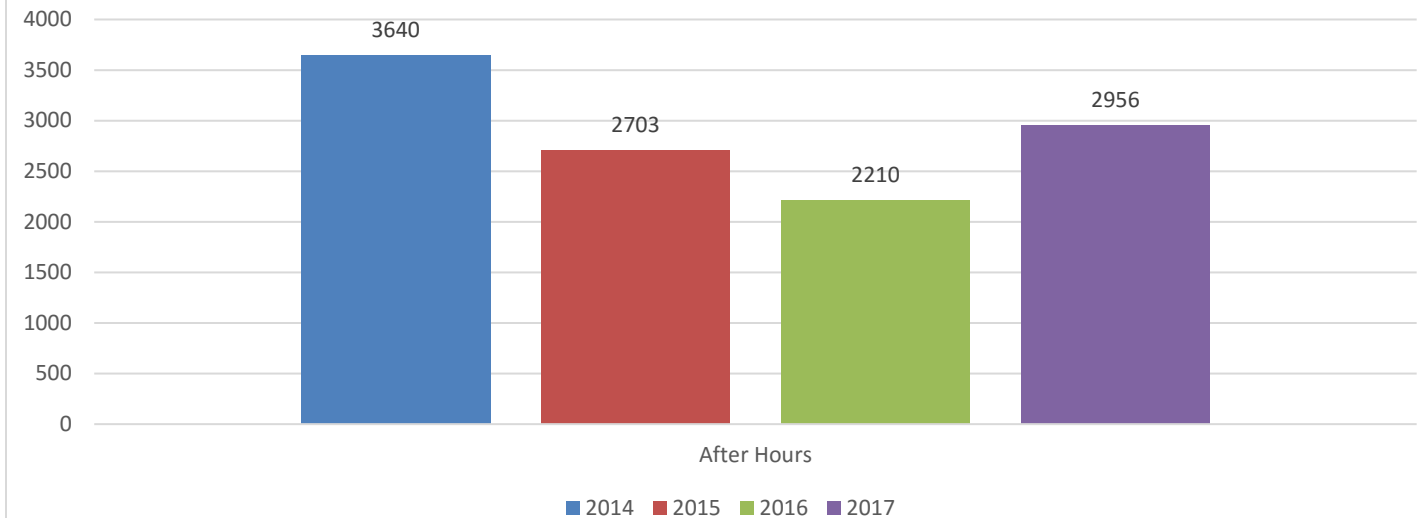
When a family or individual is placed by the Housing Unit they are instructed to report to the shelter by 5:30 PM. If they have not arrived by 6:00 PM, their placement is canceled and their bed(s) are once again made available for other homeless individuals and families. When the placement is made during non-business hours (through the After-Hours process), the placement is paid for by MCDHS even if the client fails to show for the placement. The numbers in the “Temporary Housing Assistance Placement No Shows 2013 – 2017” chart represents the No Show placements that were paid for by MCDHS. In 2017, a total of 772 no show placements were paid by MCDHS.

During 2017, an additional 557 (135 Family and 422 Individual placements) No Show placements were released and MCDHS did not pay for those placements.

After Hours Placements

In 2016, 2,210 placements were made through After-Hours during non-business hours. 137 of these placements (6%) were made for callers in which erroneous information regarding their identity was provided. Past evidence suggested that callers through After Hours, who would not otherwise be eligible for Temporary Housing Assistance through MCDHS, provided inaccurate information to be placed at hotels, particularly on holidays and weekends. Since 2015, improvements to the After-Hours process, including the 211 Coordinated Entry process and use of laptops by After Hours staff, has helped to better determine Temporary Housing eligibility. **In 2017, 2,956 After Hours placements were made – an increase of 746 or 34%.** This increase can also be attributed, in part, to the implementation and clarification of New York State Social Services Regulation 304.18. The number of placements with erroneous information was 170 or 6%. This increased volume has resulted in difficulties with the Coordinated Entry process that will necessitate changes in 2018. MCDHS continues to explore solutions for individuals needing THA placement during non-business hours

THA Placements Initiated During After Hours 2014-2017



Tenant Accountability Training (TAT)

In September 2009, MCDHS, the City of Rochester and the Housing Council collaborated to offer TAT. The goal of TAT is to assist recipients of Temporary Assistance (TA) in achieving their highest level of self-sufficiency. The training focuses on the value of being a good tenant and neighbor, along with the costs to the individual, their children and the community of a transient lifestyle. The client's attendance is considered a continuing eligibility requirement for TA, and failure to attend would be cause to discontinue the client's TA grant. Circumstances that warrant a referral to TAT include: Two moves within the last 12 months, a former landlord has filed a claim on a Landlord Tenant Security Agreement for \$500 or greater, two emergency housing placements within a 12-month period, the head of household is under the age of 21, administrative discretion, a TA household that contains a child under the age of 6 and is residing in the areas that have been identified by the City of Rochester as posing the highest risk of exposure to lead poisoning, or a request from a city, town or Housing Council inspector, the Health Department, a MCDHS case worker or investigator.

In December 2010, the curriculum for half of the training sessions was revised to include a segment on Healthy Homes, specifically geared toward to lead poisoning. The goal of this portion of the training is to increase the tenant's knowledge and awareness of potential lead hazards. The participants are also given instructions, resource materials, and contact information to use in the event that they identify a potential lead hazard in their home. In August of 2011, this was expanded and now all TAT trainings include a segment on Healthy Homes and specifically lead poisoning. In July of 2013, educational information was added to the training regarding the identification, prevention and treatment of bedbugs.

Surveys of participants consistently find that over 96% of those who respond felt that as a result of the presentation they were better able to identify lead hazards in their home. During 2017, 725 TA recipients attended TAT. Since its resurrection in September 2009 through December 31, 2017 there have been 9,602 participants in TAT.

Monroe County Department of Human Services Housing Unit

The Monroe County Department of Human Services Housing Unit was established to serve the emergency needs of the homeless and the housing needs of the low-income residents in our community. The following services are provided by the Housing Unit and other units within MCDHS:

- Housing Unit staff work with shelter providers to assist residents in securing financial assistance, locating housing and providing relocation services such as moving, utility turn-on and acquiring essential furniture and appliances.
- The Housing Unit provides the homeless with housing assistance and linkages to other County staff, including: Adult Protective, Child Protective, Financial Assistance, Mental Health, Youth Bureau, Probation, as well as community service providers.
- The Housing Unit has a Senior Examiner designated as a single point of entry for any youth between the ages of 16 to 18 that are homeless and/or applying for cash assistance as the head of household. MCDHS staff conducts investigations to locate responsible adults, or, in the event no adult is available, work with community providers to locate appropriate permanent housing and link the youths to needed services.
- MCDHS operates an after-hours placement line: 442-1742. After hours telephone coverage is available during non-business hours to provide emergency assistance to the homeless. Since 2014, After Hours has worked in conjunction with 211 Lifeline to coordinate after hours placement as a part of Coordinated Entry. 211 Lifeline focuses on diversion and warm transfer to DHS when diversion is not possible.
- The Housing Unit is the central point of entry for MCDHS placement into temporary housing. Staff coordinate the placement of the homeless into available beds. A daily census is taken at the shelters and hotels to maximize use of available beds and identify and address any client-specific barriers to relocation into permanent housing.
- Screening of all homeless individuals and families who are not receiving Temporary Assistance to determine eligibility for temporary housing assistance. When appropriate, expedited Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, personal needs allowances and assistance with first month's rent are issued.
- The Housing Unit operates a Landlord "Hotline": 753-6034. Questions and concerns are resolved quickly, and in many instances have prevented evictions. Staff work directly with landlords to resolve agency/landlord disputes. In 2017 348 calls from landlords and property managers were received.
- The Housing Unit conducts yearly inspections of the shelters and semi-annual hotel inspections to ensure that safe and sanitary housing is being provided to homeless residents.
- The Housing Unit operates the Rent Withholding Program which works to ensure that buildings with open health and safety violations occupied by Temporary Assistance recipients are brought up to code compliance. When necessary, rental payments are withheld until major violations are corrected.
- MCDHS issues a Landlord Tenant Security Agreement (LTSA) in lieu of a cash security deposit. The LTSA secures the landlord against tenant-caused damages and unpaid rent up to a maximum amount equal to two months of the household's Temporary Assistance shelter allowance. The Emergency Housing Unit is responsible for processing claims made on Landlord Tenant Security Agreements. In 2017, there were 134 claims filed on Landlord Tenant Security Agreements. There has been a steady decline in the number of LTSA claims that are being filed annually. MCDHS does not maintain statistics on the number of Landlord-Tenant Security Agreements that are being issued each year, but there has been a decline in the number of inspections that are being done related to the LTSA process. While there may be several factors that are causing this it is felt that more landlords are requiring cash security deposits. The Community Homeless Coordinator regularly meets with landlords and property managers to review the LTSA process and encourage more landlords to accept the LTSA to increase the number of property options available to DHS clients.

- Provide emergency payments to financially eligible home-owners which include payments to prevent tax or mortgage foreclosures or help with necessary repairs to maintain current occupied housing.
- MCDHS, in partnership with the Rochester Housing Authority (RHA), operates a Shelter Plus Care grant. The Shelter Plus Care program is funded through HUD and provides rent subsidies to low-income households. This program helps house homeless individuals and families in which the head-of-household suffers from mental illness, chronic substance abuse and/or other disabilities. Rochester Housing Authority manages the rental subsidies and MCDHS Emergency Housing Unit staff assists in determining preliminary eligibility. Ongoing case management services are provided by various agencies in the community. Currently, 397 households in Monroe County are receiving rent subsidies through this grant.
- Housing staff is a component of the Homeless MICA (Mentally Ill Chemically Addicted) Program. This program, funded by MCDHS's Office of Mental Health, uses a team approach to serving homeless MICA individuals. Staff from MCDHS and Person Centered Housing Options (PCHO) Street Outreach Team work together and are able to draw upon the resources of their respective agencies. The program is able to assist these individuals in securing financial assistance, temporary, supportive and permanent housing. PCHO Street Outreach staff provides linkages to mental health services and ongoing case management.

Monroe County Department of Human Services staff are also active participants in the following organizations:

- **Homeless Services Network:** This organization facilitates networking, coordinating, training, consulting and fundraising among individuals who work for, or with agencies who provide high-quality, accessible and effective health, social, housing and other services to individuals who are homeless. Members represent approximately 60 community agencies, including County and City departments. In 2015 the Homeless Services Network became the official stakeholder body of the Rochester and Monroe County Homeless Continuum of Care.
- **Homeless Continuum of Care Team:** This team, comprised of staff from Monroe County, the City of Rochester, and the Homeless Service Providers' Network, facilitates and evaluates the implementation of the local Homeless Continuum of Care Plan. Each year, this group is responsible to coordinate the community's submission for the HUD Super NOFA. This includes collecting community data, facilitating a community priority exercise, ranking proposals to meet community needs and writing the Rochester/Monroe County application for HUD funds.
- **"Rapid Re-Housing Services" Program:** This team functions as a collaboration of community partners. Some of the key elements of this collaboration include:
 - A staff person that will work in conjunction with DHS staff in developing a pool of potential landlords that will have housing readily available for our homeless clients. As part of this process, they will identify and address any issues that landlords may have to renting to our clients. (I.E. Landlords who are reluctant to accept a Landlord Tenant Security Agreement.)
 - A staff person who will work with DHS and shelter staff in locating appropriate housing for families that have completed the Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), score in the Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) intervention spectrum and have been prioritized through the Coordinated Entry Community Prioritization List.
- **Coordinated Entry:**

The vision for Coordinated Entry is to:

1. Ensure that everyone who needs emergency shelter is able to access and receive services.
2. Reduce episodes of homelessness and the number of bed placements through coordinated diversion strategies and tactics.
3. Utilize DHS or 2-1-1 as the only entry points into the homeless services system. Eliminating “side doors” ensures equitable access to necessary services.
4. Emergency shelters and outreach programs will use the common assessment tool (VI-SPDAT) that is supported in our community.
5. Decrease the length of homeless episodes by moving households to permanent housing as quickly as possible.
6. Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-Housing programs are expected to fill beds/vacancies from a single prioritization list that is accessible in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

- **Chronically Homeless Workgroup:** The MCDHS Community Homeless Coordinator co-chairs this group and it became a committee of the Continuum of Care with the charge of addressing the needs of all the chronically homeless in Monroe County. Along with members of the CoC, the Monroe County Department of Human Services, PCHO, Rapid Rehousing, the Veterans Administration, Rochester Regional Health System, faith based providers, community volunteers and community shelter and homeless services providers, this group continues to work with other community partners to identify this group of individuals, their specific needs and remove any barriers they face. The group regularly goes out where the chronically homeless members of our community are, to offer options, case management, apartment searching and other services.

In 2017 the CH Workgroup accomplished the following;

November 2016 – June 2017

- Pilot project with RHA, PCHO, Trillium, and the Cadillac Hotel – Housed 10 of 14 individuals from the South Ave Encampment. 2 other individuals were housed later.
- PIT Training and Implementation – January of 2017
- Spring Cleanup coordinated with City of Rochester and Bivona Child Advocacy May 2017 and again in June/July 2017
- REACH temporary winter closing support planning and shelter placement – April 2017

June 2017 – December 2017

- Micro Housing planning meeting with REACH, City, PCHO – Summer 2017
- Housing 1st Conference planning and support of the event – August 2017
- Department of Transportation Outreach and Debris clean up at 104 and Carter Street – Sept – Oct 2017
- Connection to City Code Enforcement for abandoned buildings occupied by the homeless – October 2017
- Prioritization List Pilot – October – December 2017