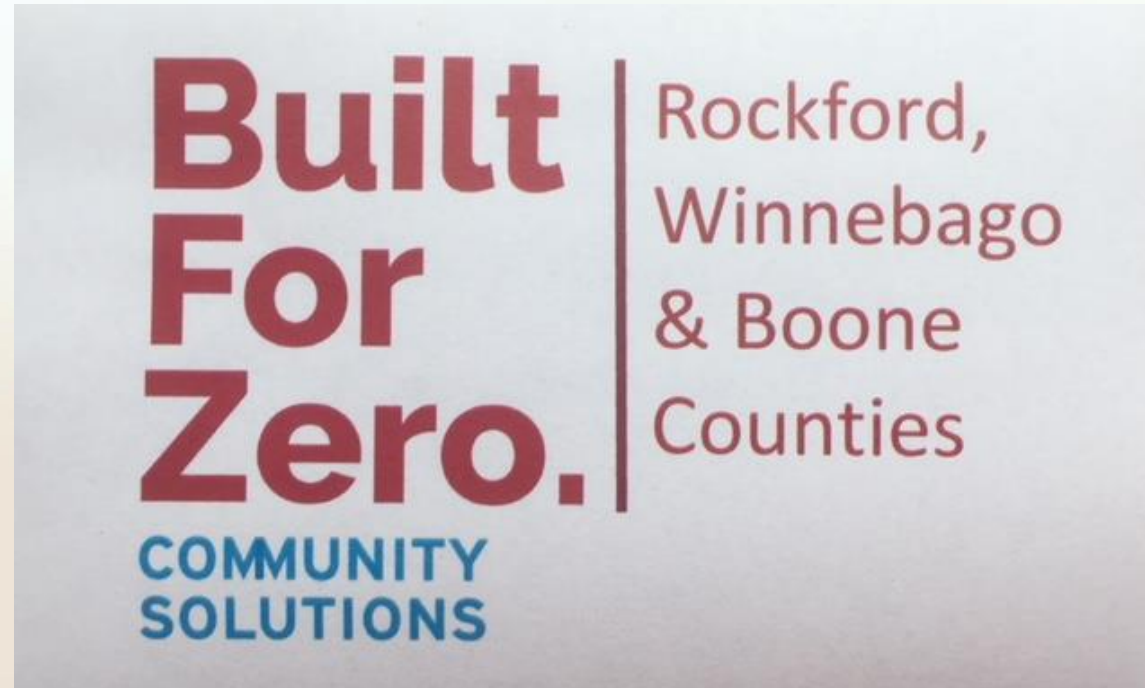


Rockford-Winnebago-Boone

**(815) to ZERO**

Ending Homelessness



<https://youtu.be/h7VTYtGl2m4>

# Where did we begin?



- In late 2014, Rockford enrolled in the Mayors' Challenge to End Veteran Homeless and the Zero: 2016 campaign (now called Built for Zero)
- Prior to 2015, we had a homeless system that was very reactive rather than proactive. Agencies were all working on their own missions with their own policies and procedures, without a singular goal of ending homelessness.
- In January 2015, our community implemented a Single Point of Entry for the Homeless (SPOE) a centralized intake location

# How did we do it?

- ❖ Housing First Strategy
- ❖ Coordinated Entry System/Single Point of Entry
- ❖ Create the By-Name List
- ❖ Work the list as a group—Collective Impact Model
- ❖ Outreach, outreach, outreach!!
- ❖ Relentless Public Oversight (Rockstat)



# What is Housing First?

As defined by the National Alliance to End Homelessness:

Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness.

This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues.

Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their life.



# Our Coordinated Assessment system

- **A system-wide process that serves any and all homeless populations.**
- **We use a combination of a homeless hotline, a single point of physical entry and street outreach entry to provide assessment and enrollment into coordinated intake.**
- **Each entry point handles assessment, data entry, referrals, and placement. We are building these points to be the entry point for prevention and diversion services as well.**
- **Assessment staff provide the necessary prevention or diversion services or refer a family to the program that is best equipped to get them into permanent housing as quickly as possible taking into consideration client choice**
- **Our CoC, in conjunction with Coordinated Entry, has established common intake, assessment, termination, and discharge policies that all agencies follow**
- **Our system is community wide, every agency that provides any type of housing for the homeless participates.**



# The By-Name List (BNL)



- The SPOE maintains the BNL
- Each homeless person we encounter is put on the list
- There are 5 separate BNLs: Singles, families, youth, veterans, chronically homeless
- Partners can add names or missing data
- Those persons at the top of the lists are the first referred for housing openings
- Currently there are: (240) singles, (85) families, (31) youth, (4) veterans, and (1) chronically homeless. This is LITERALLY homeless only except the youth

# Collective Impact Model



**Each BNL has a collective impact team of all agencies that would naturally interact with the population/have resources to serve them.**

**Our list is on google docs and we pull out sub lists as needed to work on specific populations and we share them with the specific collective impact team.**

**For each population, we start by meeting weekly to “work the list”. Each person on the list is discussed and information shared. Then a housing plan is developed (and outreach strategy, if necessary).**

**Using this method, the entire team becomes responsible for ensuring the people on the list are permanently housed.**

**They also make up the outreach team that works to ensure we have contacted all members of the targeted homeless population.**

# Outreach

- **Outreach has been a critical component to our success at reaching functional zero for veterans and chronic homeless populations. More of a challenge with youth.**



Outreach

- **We used unconventional methods. One man was never sober enough to engage/house. We worked with the State's Attorney to "check him out" of jail to take him to a housing appointment. Because he was in jail on a minor ordinance violation, he was clean and sober enough to get through the interview with the landlord.**
- **Another man was on our streets for years. When he showed up in the paper, we figured out that he might respond better to females and changed to female outreach for him, he was housed soon after.**
- **We used a "taste of housing" to convince the most street hardened that we were serious and provided them stays in a residential hotel while working toward permanent housing.**
- **We housed quickly. This was the most effective way to convince the others we were serious.**

Outreach



# Relentless Oversight



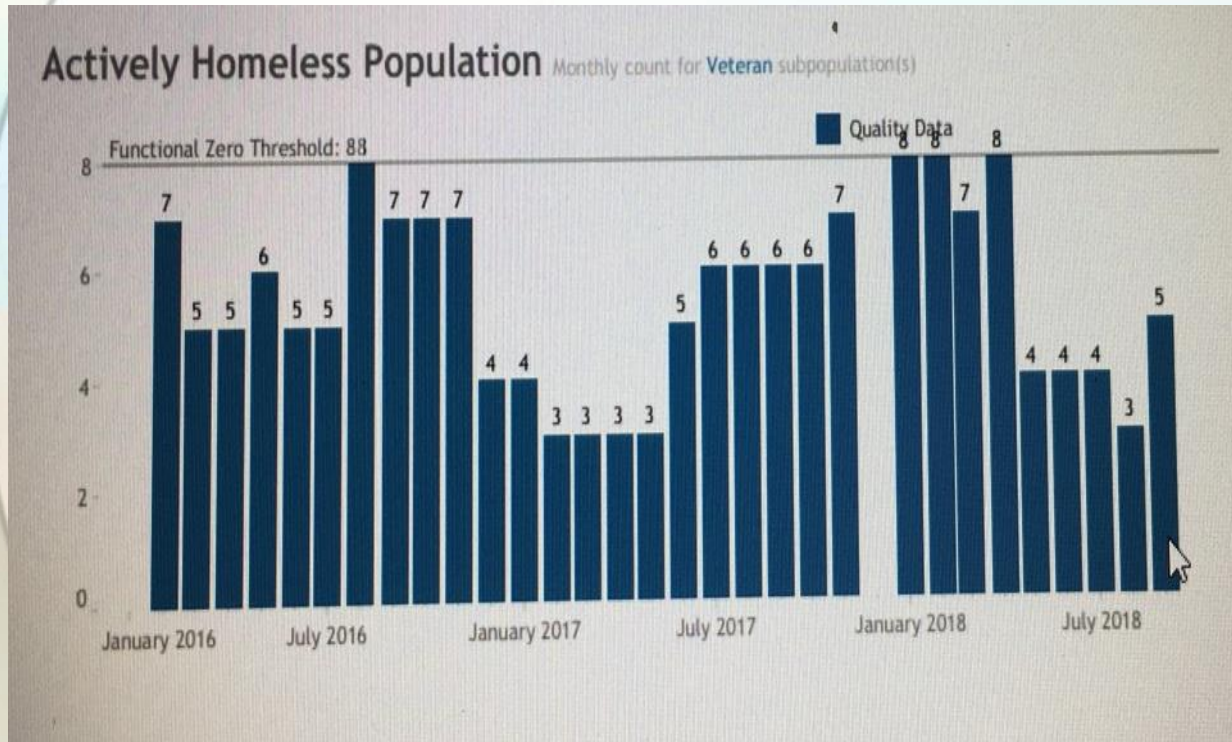
Your process must be transparent, in order to hold you accountable for your work

From the beginning (in 2015), we have been required to report our housing data locally at Rockstat meetings and to our federal partners at BFZ on a monthly basis.

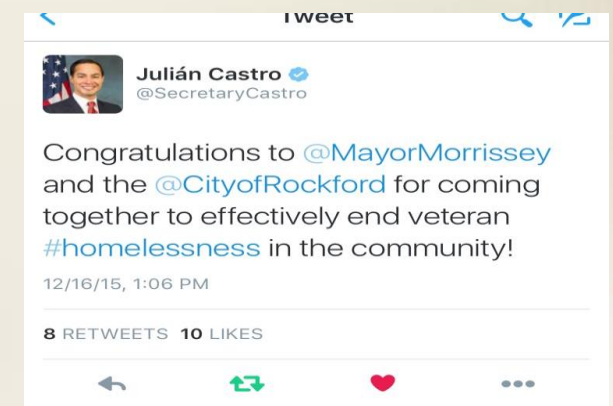
Our data and processes were scrutinized intently by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) before we were confirmed for our “functional zero” status.

\*You must also be prepared to make constant upgrades/changes to your system based on your data to better serve your population and meet your goals.

# 2015—Veteran Homelessness



- Mayors' Challenge vs. BFZ
- Functional Zero
- 2015 ended with Rockford being the first city recognized at functional zero





THE WHITE HOUSE

January 5, 2016

The Honorable Lawrence J. Morrissey  
Rockford, Illinois

Dear Mayor Morrissey:

I am thrilled to congratulate the City of Rockford on the extraordinary achievement of ending veteran homelessness.

Since we launched Joining Forces, I have had the opportunity to meet with our troops, veterans, and military families and thank them for the sacrifices they have made to keep our Nation safe. However, saying thank you is simply not enough; it is up to all of us to make sure each of our service members has a place to call home.

To ensure that all homeless veterans throughout our country find permanent housing, we need to start at the ground level. More than 800 state and local leaders have banded together as part of the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness—and we are seeing tremendous results.

Thank you for your leadership—and that of your colleagues in Rockford—for the work you are doing and will continue to do. I am so proud of your city's commitment, dedication, and resolve to reach this milestone, and I am grateful for all you have done for America's heroes.

Congratulations again, Mayor Morrissey, and I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

Michelle Obama

## Zero: 2016

from Community Solutions

December 15, 2015

Dear Mayor Morrissey, Shelton Kay, Ron Clewer, Jennifer Jaeger and Angie Walker,

Congratulations!

This letter confirms that the Rockford, Winnebago & Boone Counties Continuum of Care has achieved Functional Zero on veteran homelessness, according to the standards adopted by the 75 communities participating in Zero: 2016.

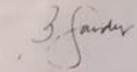
In reaching this milestone, you have proven and documented that fewer veterans are now experiencing homelessness on your streets and in your shelters than your community is routinely housing each month. You have identified these veterans by name and proven your monthly housing performance using a rolling, 6-month average. You are measurably ensuring that, from now on, homelessness among veterans will be rare, brief and non recurring.

This achievement marks a major milestone in our Zero: 2016 initiative, a movement of 75 communities across the country working to do whatever it takes to end veteran and chronic homelessness by the end of next year.

When you applied for Zero: 2016 you agreed to push forward on implementing best practices in supporting all of your homeless veterans into housing: building a local team, optimizing your resources, establishing and working from By Name Lists of all people experiencing homelessness, reporting your housing placements monthly to track your progress, and now, celebrating the work you've done to change your system.

You are leaders in this work and we celebrate you and stand with you to maintain the momentum for ending chronic homelessness in your community next.

Onward!



Beth Sandor  
Director, Zero: 2016  
Community Solutions

P.S. It is with special pride that I note you are the first community in America to receive this certification. Your achievement will set a powerful example for other communities to follow as



December 1, 2015

The Honorable Lawrence J. Morrissey  
Mayor, City of Rockford, IL  
425 East State Street, 8th Floor  
Rockford, IL 61104-1014

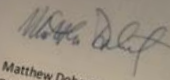
Dear Mayor Morrissey:

Thank you for your commitment to ending Veteran homelessness. Your leadership—and that of your colleagues in the city of Rockford—has been instrumental as we work together to ensure that every Veteran in our country has a home.

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Department of Veterans Affairs are pleased to confirm that the city of Rockford has effectively ended homelessness among Veterans. We are confident that the infrastructure and systems you have built will ensure that any Veteran experiencing a housing crisis in Rockford will get the support they need to quickly obtain a permanent home.

On behalf of USICH and our Federal partners, thank you for answering the First Lady's call to action in the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness. We recognize and appreciate your extraordinary team, and look forward to continuing our collaboration as we work to end homelessness for all Americans.

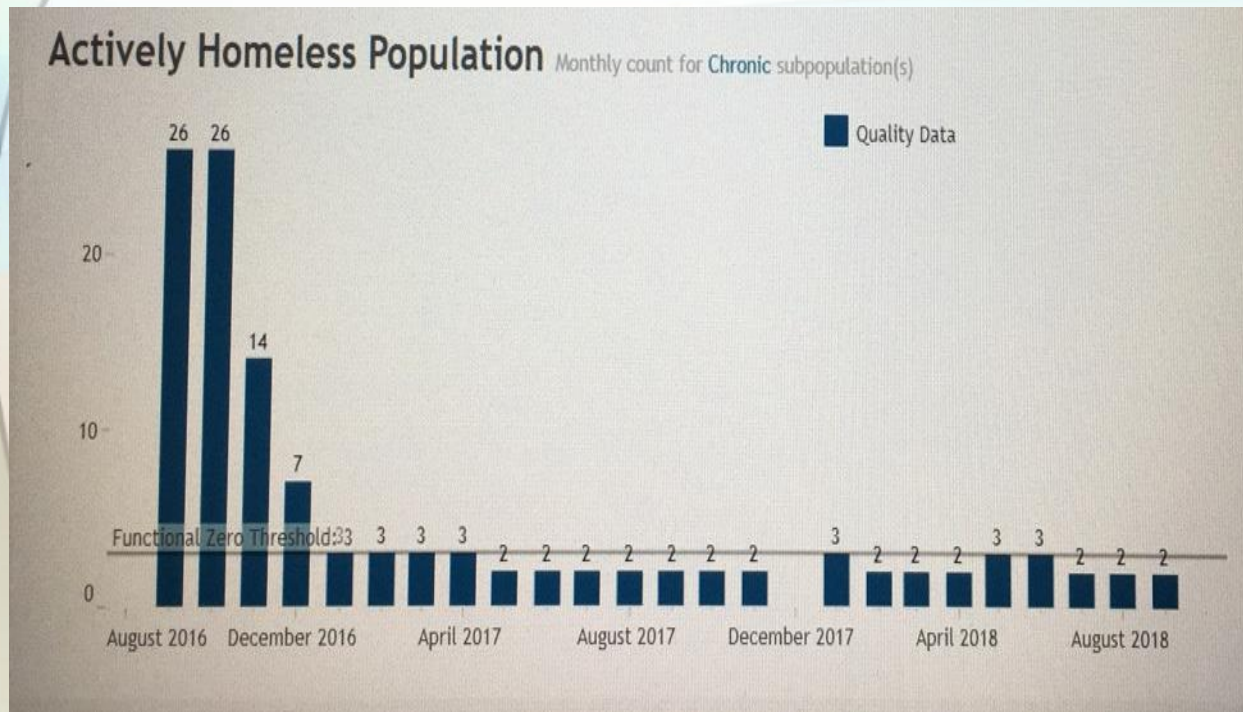
Sincerely,



Matthew Doherty  
Executive Director

Cc: Ann Marie Oliva, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs, HUD  
Lisa M. Pape, Executive Director, VHA Homeless Programs, VA

# 2016-2017—Chronic Homelessness



- Work with chronically homeless began. New challenges arose.
- 2017 ended with Rockford being recognized as the 2<sup>nd</sup> city to achieve functional zero (and the first DOUBLE ZERO city).







October 31, 2017

The Honorable Thomas McNamara  
Mayor, City of Rockford  
425 E. State Street  
Rockford, IL 61104

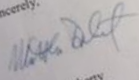
Dear Mayor McNamara:

Thank you for your commitment to ending chronic homelessness. Your leadership—and that of your colleagues throughout the City of Rockford—has been instrumental as we work together to ensure that every individual experiencing chronic homelessness in our country has a home.

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Department of Housing and Urban Development are pleased to confirm that the City of Rockford has ended chronic homelessness. We are confident that the infrastructure and systems you have built will sustain this remarkable achievement—so that chronic homelessness in Rockford is prevented whenever possible, and if any resident does experience chronic homelessness in the future, they will get the support they need to quickly obtain a permanent home.

Along with our federal partners, we recognize and appreciate your extraordinary efforts, and look forward to continuing our collaboration as we work to end homelessness for all Americans.

Sincerely,



Matthew Doherty  
Executive Director

Cc: Norman Suchar, Director, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs, HUD

[www.ushah.gov](http://www.ushah.gov) | 301 7th Street, SW, Suite 2080, Washington, DC 20407 | 202.708.4663



November 7, 2017

The Honorable Thomas McNamara  
Mayor of the City of Rockford  
425 E. State Street  
Rockford, IL 61104

**Built  
For  
Zero.**  
Assistance  
Programs

Dear Mayor McNamara,

This letter confirms that in April of 2017, Rockford/Winnebagoo/Boone Counties Continuum of Care achieved an end to chronic homelessness according to the standards adopted by the 70 communities participating in Built for Zero. Built for Zero is a movement of US communities working to end veteran and chronic homelessness. You are one of the first communities in the country to end chronic homelessness, and the very first to end both chronic and veteran homelessness. Congratulations!

In reaching this milestone, you have proven and documented that the number of individuals who continue to experience chronic homelessness does not exceed 0.1% of the total number of homeless individuals or 3 people, whichever is greater. You have created an essential national proofpoint, changing the story of what is possible.

When you applied for Built for Zero, you agreed to implement best practices in supporting all individuals experiencing chronic homelessness into housing: building a broad local team, optimizing your resources, establishing and working from a real time, by-name lists of all people experiencing homelessness, reporting your housing placements monthly to track your progress, and now: celebrating the work you've done to change your system.

You are national leaders! To date, you have sustained an end to chronic homelessness for 8 months. We know you will continue to be at the forefront of efforts to end all homelessness.

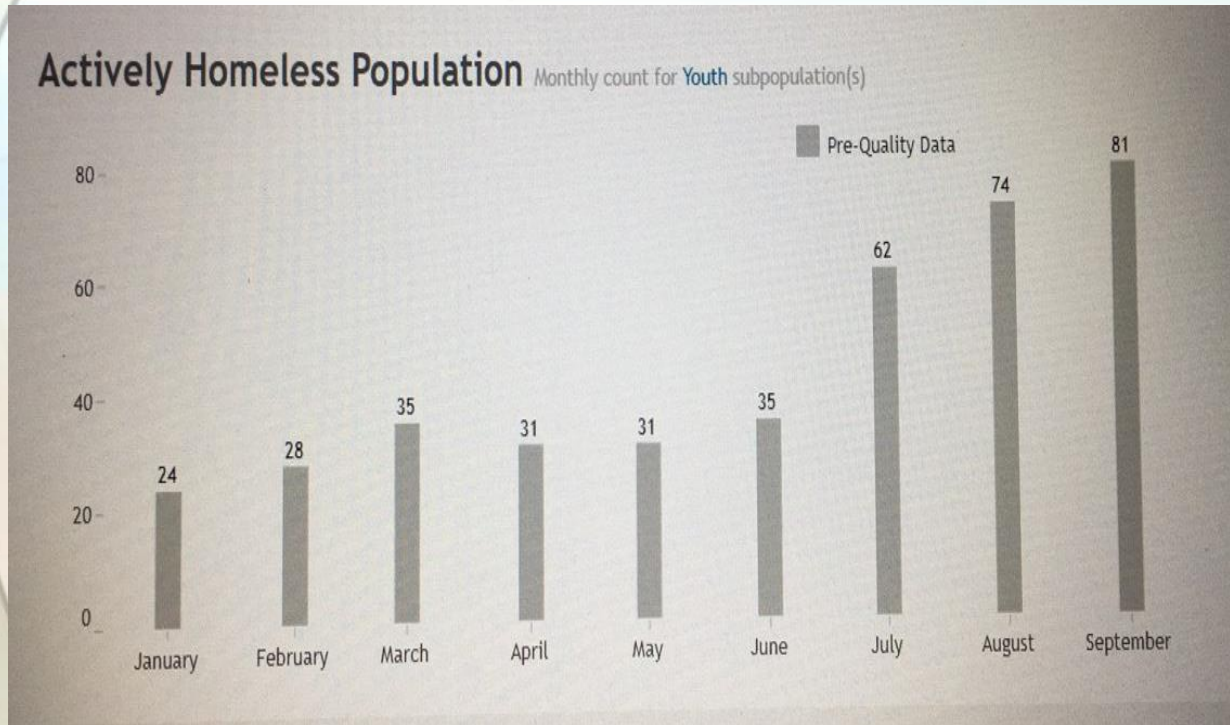
Onward!

  
Beth Sandoz  
Director, Built for Zero  
Community Solutions

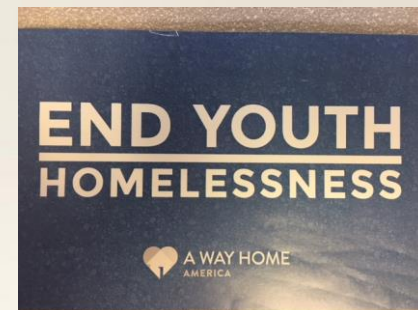




# 2018—Ending Youth Homelessness



- Our current goal is to sustain the end to veteran & chronic homelessness while **ENDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS BY March 31, 2019**
- We are required to collect data from youth who are at-risk of homelessness or unsafely housed, not just the literally homeless.
- This has caused # to Increase significantly.



# What's next?

- RRHC working with the State's Attorney office to finalize and implement the homeless diversion court program.
  - Also looking at possible Legal Project to assist the homeless who are being charged with these homeless crimes
- Hospital discharges—what affects do they have on the homeless system?
- Working on a communication plan to release our information to the community on a monthly basis to re-engage the public in our efforts
- Homeless Diversion Pilot
  - Working with people with 5 day notice or court order to see if a smaller amount of money and assistance with LL/tenant repayment plan for the other money can keep people from evictions
- Participating in a pilot with BFZ focusing on Racial Disparities in homeless systems
  - Have begun looking at data around evictions and housing placements by race.
- Will be working one on one with BFZ, to develop a plan to be one of the first communities in the country to END ALL HOMELESSNESS in the next few years.

Thank you for attending today's event

If you have questions about any of our BFZ work please contact  
Angie at 779-348-7567 or by email at [angie.walker@rockfordil.gov](mailto:angie.walker@rockfordil.gov)

Rockford-Winnebago-Boone

**(815) to ZERO**

Ending Homelessness