OCHCD COVID-19 Response Summary
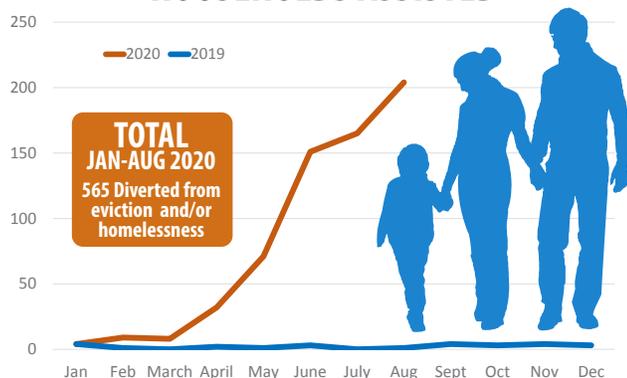
Orange County Housing and Community Development (OCHCD) promotes affordable housing, economic opportunity, and living free from discrimination.

The Board of Commissioners created the **Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA)** fund in 2018. In 2020, the Board of Commissioners significantly supplemented funding for this program and endorsed OCHCD's recommendation to enhance service delivery to:

- **STABILIZE** housing with financial assistance to 565 households, January – August
- **PREVENT** eviction and homelessness
- **STREAMLINE** referrals and eligibility with funding in the Towns of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Hillsborough
- **ADMINISTER** funds for the Towns and County, improving access and efficiency

HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED

— 2020 — 2019

TOTAL JAN-AUG 2020
565 Diverted from eviction and/or homelessness

This number reflects new households assisted; 58 households also received repeat assistance. Total number of households assisted in 2019: 26

"I do not think you understand the stress and worry that has been lifted off my shoulders. This will allow me to get back on track so much."

— Orange County Resident assisted by EHA

"I truly hope your organization knows how much of a life saver this help is. Thank you again for everything."

— Orange County Resident assisted by EHA

"Thanks for responding so quickly and you're so thoughtful and kind with your words and helping me feel important still in these times."

— Orange County Resident assisted by EHA

ORANGE COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA

OCHCD ORANGE COUNTY HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

www.orangecountync.gov/Housing

OCHCD partners with the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness (OCPEH) to run the **Housing Helpline**. Staff on the Helpline assist callers and emailers to:

- **ACCESS** programs and services
- **DIVERT** people from homelessness
- **REFER** to shelter and housing programs
- **PRIORITIZE** people on housing waiting lists

Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness

OCPEH HOUSING HELPLINE		
# OF PEOPLE	# OF CALLS	# OF EMAILS
APRIL 113	210	5*
MAY 350	617	116
JUNE 391	1,005	194
JULY 365	915	598
AUGUST 507	1,527	1,579

Housing Helpline began email access on April 28, 2020

With support from Orange County Department of Social Services and Federal ESG-CV funds for case manager positions, OCHCD created the **Housing Help Rapid Re-housing** program in March 2020, for people experiencing homelessness to secure and maintain stable housing with a flexible mix of:

- **HOUSING SEARCH** to locate units that match client needs
- **CASE MANAGEMENT** and linkages to programs and services
- **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE** for housing costs over a few months or more

In partnership with the Towns, in August OCHCD hired a Housing Access Coordinator that will

- **RECRUIT** landlords to accept vouchers
- **PROVIDE** a point of contact for landlords in the community
- **UTILIZE** landlord incentives to provide a $1,000 lease-signing bonus to landlords willing to accept tenants with housing subsides/vouchers

OCHCD administers the Orange County **Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)** program to provide long term housing affordability to people with low incomes, including recent initiatives to:

- **CREATE** new preferences for vulnerable populations
- **ISSUE** 125 HCV applications for people experiencing homelessness
- **INITIATE** the Landlord Incentive Program to increase available units for people with housing subsidies by providing a $1,000 leasing bonus

OCHCD COVID-19 Response Summary

HOUSING THROUGH COLLABORATION

Orange County service providers meet monthly at the HOME Committee meeting to **COORDINATE CARE** and **PRIORITIZE HOUSING** for people experiencing homelessness in Orange County.

This group reviews a by-name list of households and case conferences housing solutions — people can choose to participate on the list using their legal names, using other names, or using a completely anonymous number.

HOME Committee participants include representatives from the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service (IFC), the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF), Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Department, DSS, Chapel Hill Public Housing, Orange County Housing, UNC Healthcare, the Durham VA and other veterans organizations, law enforcement, Cardinal Innovations, and the group is coordinated by the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness.

OC Homeless System COVID-19 Coordination

At the onset of the health emergency caused by COVID-19, OCPEH began hosting biweekly housing and homelessness stakeholder coordination calls to

- **COORDINATE** the response to COVID-19 for homelessness and housing agencies in Orange County
- Ensure **RESOURCE** delivery for proper health and safety measures
- **SHARE** information among service providers

Group members include health care professionals, service providers who serve people experiencing homelessness including staff from the homeless shelters and permanent housing programs.

| MEETINGS MARCH 16-AUGUST 31, 2020 ||
NUMBER OF MEETINGS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
28	26

OC Homeless System COVID-19 Coordination
Unsheltered Workgroup

This subset of the overall Coordination group meets weekly to:
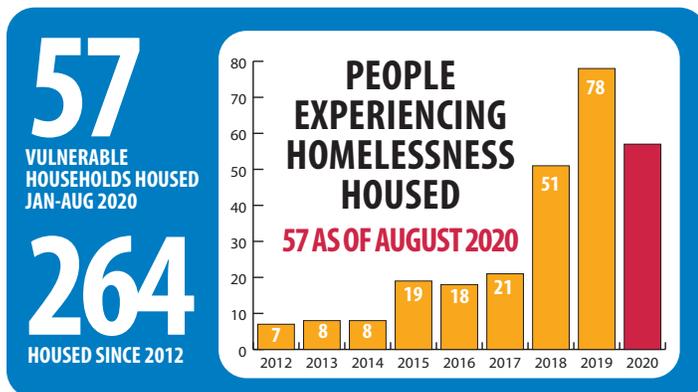
- **IDENTIFY** unmet need and
- **DIRECT STRATEGIES** related to the COVID-19 outbreak for people living unsheltered in Orange County.

Group members include service providers who serve people experiencing unsheltered homelessness — people living in a place not meant for human habitation.

| MEETINGS MARCH 26-AUGUST 31, 2020 ||
NUMBER OF MEETINGS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
21	11

57
VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS HOUSED JAN-AUG 2020

264
HOUSED SINCE 2012

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS HOUSED
57 AS OF AUGUST 2020

Year	People Housed
2012	7
2013	8
2014	8
2015	19
2016	18
2017	21
2018	51
2019	78
2020	57

OCHCD partners with the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service, the Town of Chapel Hill, Orange County Emergency Services, and OCPEH on **Noncongregate Shelter Conversion** to:

- **PROTECT** people at homeless shelters from COVID-19
- **MOVE** homeless shelter to hotel in May 2020
- **FUND** safety modifications to shelter

The Board of Commissioners created the **Eviction Diversion Program** in June 2020.

OCHCD partners with OC Human Rights & Relations and OC Criminal Justice Resource Department to:

- Provide an attorney to **COUNSEL** and **REPRESENT** people in eviction with court proceedings
- **LINK** tenants to services and Emergency Housing Assistance

ORANGE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

OCHCD
ORANGE COUNTY HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

www.orangecountync.gov/Housing