

Rare & Brief

The Strategic Framework to Make Homelessness Rare and Brief · September 2026

THE OPENING WORD

30 neighbors housed and \$3.3M requested

A first: two sprints at once. Staff from Families Moving Forward, Family Promise of the Triangle, HOM Inc., Urban Ministries of Durham, and Community Safety worked closely with neighbors every day—the largest group of partners ever involved in a sprint’s daily work. Thirty neighbors were housed (with 10 more anticipated this week) because every organization worked as one team focused on the same list of households.

A 12-day federal deadline. HUD reopened its Continuum of Care funding competition with just 12 days to apply, and Durham submitted on time with a record 13 project applications thanks to the work of providers, the CoC Governing Board, and the backbone agency staff who shepherded the process. More on the application below.

THE ONE NUMBER · THIS MONTH

30

Neighbors housed through the August–September sprints, to date

10

More neighbors on track to housing this week

Sprint figures as reported by the HOPE Team on September 30, 2026.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Celebrations

◆ **Ebony Ross.** In her role as the McKinney-Vento Coordinator for Durham Public Schools, Ebony served the CoC with dedication, compassion, and wisdom. Among other roles, she served as the Homelessness Services Advisory Committee Chair from the summer of 2024 to the summer of 2025. She is on to her next adventure and she will be missed.

- ◆ **UMD's Hope Day Services Center and PATH.** Congratulations on your incredible work serving neighbors and expanding the system's coverage! Both are reaching neighbors who have been experiencing homelessness for a long time, some for years, and offering them new kinds of support.
- ◆ **UNITE Street Medicine.** The UNITE Street Medicine program did remarkable work connecting neighbors to SOAR services and medical assistance over the last year. This was a new and bold initiative that broadened Durham's services and vision of what is possible locally.

WHAT WE LEARNED THIS MONTH

Working as one team moved neighbors faster, but coordination alone can't create units we haven't yet found or secured. Four-bedroom homes for large families were hard to find, and so were units that accept neighbors with criminal records. Building that inventory, and the landlord relationships behind it, is work still underway. Our own process added delay, too: neighbors sometimes went through separate intakes and introductions, which cost time and at points left them confused about what came next. In future sprints, we'll try combining intake, briefing, and introductions into one step at the start.

We also learned that the system is reaching more people. As Urban Ministries of Durham's Hope Day Services Center and PATH have come online (see Partner Spotlight) and as our data work has improved, neighbors who were already experiencing homelessness but weren't connected to services are now on the by-name list. That is the system working. It also means the list is larger than the one our Year 1 targets were built on. That, together with funding that came in below the level the targets assumed, means we will adjust them. We'll post the revised targets here once they're set.

THE NOFO

A finished application, delivered on an expedited deadline

On Friday, September 18, HUD reopened the FY 2026 Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) with an expedited deadline of September 30. Durham delivered a finished application within those 12 days. That's notable on its own: the NOFO process has been on and off since November 2025, and communities across the country have spent that time figuring out what comes next.

The NOFO also asks communities to change direction. After more than a

decade of building systems around permanent housing, it shifts emphasis toward temporary housing. Responding meant many difficult conversations about what Durham's system should look like now. Those conversations also built trust, and partners came together around a shared aim: making sure neighbors are served appropriately, including those who are hardest to serve.

18 applications. The most Durham's local competition has ever received.

5 first-time applicants. Five agencies that have never received CoC funding applied, including faith-based organizations and others that had been at the edges of the system.

\$3.3 million requested. Durham received \$2.9 million in CoC funding last fiscal year. The \$3.3 million is a request, not an award; HUD's decisions are still to come.

Thank you to the providers who turned around project applications on this timeline; to the CoC Governing Board, which reviewed and approved the application at only its second meeting; and to Rikki Gardner and Anthony Henderson of the HOPE Team, who shepherded the application from start to finish.

FROM THE TABLES

Governance in motion

- ◆ **Executive Table.** Met last month for a deep dive into the Strategic Framework, Durham's locally funded rapid rehousing program, and how system partners can work more closely together.
- ◆ **Lived Experience Table.** Not yet seated. We're taking the time to build it well and aim to launch it by the end of the year.
- ◆ **CoC Governing Board.** Held its first two meetings this month, including one devoted to the CoC application (see The NOFO, above). The Board is now drafting its governance charter.

LOOKING AHEAD • OCTOBER 2026

October. Landlord engagement moves to a new provider.

End of October. Padmission Connect trainings, dates to be announced.

Padmission Connect is the shared platform providers use to manage landlord relationships and help neighbors search for housing.

This quarter. We aim to open barrier-busting funds that providers can use to help the neighbors they serve move into housing.

White Flag. Watch for a partner briefing in the next couple of weeks on this season's plan for White Flag, Durham's expanded shelter on nights at or below freezing (or 35° with rain or snow), November through March. The plan adds

capacity at two hotel sites, compensates providers for the first time for opening additional shelter capacity, and uses White Flag as a launching point for sprints, so that cold-weather shelter leads to stable housing.

This work belongs to all of us. Here is one way to help this month:

- ◆ **Connect more people to this newsletter.** Tell us who else should be receiving it: reply to this email with a name, write to hope@durhamnc.gov, or simply forward this along.

By June 2031, Durham will make homelessness rare and brief.

HOPE Team · Durham Community Safety Department

City of Durham · Durham County

Questions or items for next month's update: hope@durhamnc.gov

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