OUR MISSION
The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County (CFTH) acts as a catalyst, uniting partners and maximizing resources to move people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing with supportive services.

OUR VISION
Everyone in our community has a safe place to call home.
“To get through the hardest journey, we need to take only one step at a time, but we must keep on stepping.” This Chinese Proverb is relevant to the Coalition for the Homeless and the entire homeless response system — and quite meaningful for me personally.

Nearly five years ago, CFTH’s board called and asked me to join the organization as Interim President/CEO. The goal of making homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring seemed like a huge mountain to climb, but my life experiences taught me that great and difficult tasks all begin by taking that first step. So I accepted their invitation.

Now, as I prepare for my retirement, I would like to share with you the sources of inspiration that have kept me moving forward through what has sometimes been a difficult and complex journey:

**The incredible, hardworking, creative, and committed staff of CFTH.** They have taken so many steps and have been so successful in building collaboration and capacity, remaining optimistic and nimble to overcome various bureaucratic and financial barriers.

**The tenacity of our community’s philanthropic supporters and their commitment to the system.** Their dedication and long-term vision have helped CFTH and The Way Home leverage and increase public funds and build the sustainability of our collective work.

**The partnership of The Way Home’s direct service providers.** Their trust in CFTH and commitment to our shared vision has made it possible to transform the system. And their dedication to helping people and families day in and day out gives me faith that we will continue to make progress.

**And the people who are experiencing — or who have overcome — homelessness, who are putting in the work to move forward** on their journey to stability are at the front of my mind every day. It is because of them that all the rest of us put one foot in front of the other.

Although I will be leaving the organization at the end of 2023, I am excited to continue to follow CFTH’s journey. I know that the leadership of our board, the dedication of our partners, and the commitment to helping people will allow our staff to turn our vision — of a greater Houston community where everyone has a safe place to call home — into a reality.

Michael Nichols, President and CEO
Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County
For people experiencing homelessness, the journey back to a safe place to call home is often full of obstacles. In most cases, no one agency working alone can help someone overcome homelessness; it takes many partners working together. CFTH, an independent nonprofit, helps bring the right partners — public and private, government and nonprofit — and sources of funding together to help individuals and families find The Way Home.

We improve the homeless response system so direct service providers can improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness.

What does that journey entail? And where does CFTH help along the way? Let’s take a look.

"FROM MY EARLIEST INVOLVEMENT IN ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN THE HOUSTON AREA, I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO RELY ON THE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT OF CFTH. THEIR EFFECTIVE COORDINATION OF SCORES OF SERVICE PROVIDERS AND RESOURCES HAS SET HOUSTON APART AS A LEADING NATIONAL MODEL FOR MOVING PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS INTO PERMANENT AND INNOVATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS WITH AMAZING SUCCESS."

PASTOR RUDY RASMUS
FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BREAD OF LIFE INC.
AND FORMER CFTH BOARD MEMBER
Before we can begin the work to solve homelessness, we must first understand the scope of the problem.

To that end, we lead the annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count & Survey, also known as the “PIT” Count. Each year, hundreds of partners and volunteers survey people experiencing unsheltered homelessness throughout Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties. We use the results of the PIT Count to show us changes in homelessness trends year to year, and even over longer periods of time. The 2023 Count showed a 17% decrease in unsheltered homelessness from 2022 and a 21% reduction in overall homelessness since 2018.

On our journey, we must also have a tool to track our progress. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is an online database managed by CFTH that allows client data sharing between partners. It also measures and tracks the performance of our programs so that we can continue to fine-tune them to meet clients’ needs. Our partners rely on our access to data and macro view of homelessness.

This year, we trained nearly 500 new users on HMIS and added more than 50 new projects to the database. Our leadership helped more than 110 organizations track data for more than 23,000 people who accessed a homeless assistance project.

“OUR WORK WITH CFTH AND IN HMIS HAS SHAPED HOW WE DELIVER SERVICES, TO MAKE SURE WE ARE BEING INTENTIONAL IN MOVING CLIENTS FROM CRISIS TO STABILITY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY. OUR COLLABORATION HAS ENSURED THAT OUR AGENCY REMAINS DATA-DRIVEN WHILE FIGHTING TO ERADICATE HOMELESSNESS.”

NEYSA L. GAVION
SENIOR CASE MANAGER, WEST HOUSTON ASSISTANCE MINISTRIES (WHAM)
For some people, like Sheri, their journey back to housing begins when the encampment they have been staying in is selected to be decommissioned. Our outreach team has been a crucial partner to the City of Houston and Harris County in leading the on-the-ground efforts and coordinating our partners to holistically decommission encampments through housing.

Working together, from February to June 2023, we decommissioned close to 50 encampments at 17 sites around Houston and Harris County. Along the way, we helped 194 people begin their journey to housing directly from encampments. This brings our total to more than 100 encampments decommissioned since 2021.

Other people’s journey back to housing might begin with a phone call to the Coordinated Access intake line. People who cannot or don’t want to complete a housing assessment in person can call this phone number to determine their eligibility for permanent housing programs and get on the centralized waitlist. This year, our Coordinated Access team supported the completion of more than 5,400 housing assessments over the phone.

“THE CFTH OUTREACH TEAM HAS ALWAYS BEEN MORE THAN WILLING TO ASSIST OUR AGENCY ANY TIME WE’VE WORKED TOGETHER. IN THIS LINE OF WORK, HAVING THE RIGHT KIND OF HEART CAN MAKE OR BREAK WHAT YOU DO. SO, IT’S BEEN NICE WORKING WITH AN AGENCY AND STAFF THAT HAS JUST THAT.”

JONATHAN SPEARS
OUTREACH/HOUSING ASSESSOR/CASE MANAGER, H.O.P.E HAVEN

“IN A COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE A LEAD AGENCY THAT SETS THE TONE FOR LEADERSHIP AND ACTION, AND CFTH HAS FILLED THAT ROLE FOR THE BEACON AND SO MANY PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE WAY HOME.”

BECKY LANDES CEO, THE BEACON

THE JOURNEY HOME BEGINS

PROJECT MANAGEMENT
Sheri’s next step was the housing navigation center. The opening of this City of Houston facility in Jan. 2023 was made possible by the project management of CFTH. We managed renovations, procured a direct service agency (Hamony House) to run day-to-day operations, and built relationships with the surrounding Fifth Ward community. The navigation center is a “pit stop” — a safe and low-barrier place where people can stay on their journey back to permanent housing. Onsite medical and mental health services are available for both residents and community members. From its opening through June 2023, 177 clients moved into the navigation center, and 72 of them have moved onto permanent housing!

BUMPS IN THE ROAD

One of the main barriers to helping people to regain housing is lack of official government identification. And if someone has any outstanding warrants, they can’t get an ID. Homeless Court within the City of Houston Municipal Court helps people experiencing homelessness to address and resolve minor offenses. CFTH manages referrals and prepares dockets for Homeless Court, and this year, we helped resolve 2,508 cases for 360 clients.

“CFTH CONTINUES TO BE A THOUGHT PARTNER TO US FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE. HAVING A PARTNER THAT IS OPEN TO POSSIBILITY CAN LEAD TO SOLUTIONS THAT WORK FOR ALL — FOR INDIVIDUALS AND THE SYSTEM OVERALL. WE SEE LIVES BEING IMPROVED AND HOPE BEING RESTORED. I AM SO PROUD OF THIS COLLABORATION.”

BARBIE BRASHEAR, MSW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HARRIS COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
CHAIR, THE WAY HOME STEERING COMMITTEE
To help thousands of people each year complete the arduous journey from homelessness back to housing, the system needs plenty of fuel to keep going. CFTH builds positive reputational capital for the homeless response system, educates key stakeholders about the real causes of and solutions to homelessness, advocates with elected officials, and ensures that both our own organization and the system have sustainable funding.

This year, our communications team engaged more than 60 different local, regional, national, and international media outlets, including CNN.com, the Wall Street Journal, and Vox; podcasts like Fixing Our City from The San Francisco Chronicle, The Majority Report with Sam Seder, and “Notes from America with Kai Wright” and “The Takeaway” from WNYC; industry-specific publications like Smart Cities Dive; international media in the Netherlands, New Zealand, France, and Canada; and a production company working on a forthcoming feature-length documentary.

Our advocacy team directly engages elected officials and government entities to advocate for policies that prevent and end homelessness. This year, during the 88th Texas Legislature, we met with more than 20 legislators’ offices and partnered with other homeless service agencies from across the state to support or oppose legislation and provide testimony on key bills. Our efforts helped bring an additional $5.5M annually in state funding for homeless service programs.

“WE RELY ON CFTH TO HELP US ORGANIZE TEXAS ADVOCATES’ VISITS WITH CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THIS YEAR, OUR PARTNERSHIP WAS ALSO INTEGRAL TO HELPING PREVENT THE PASSAGE OF SEVERAL PIECES OF STATE LEGISLATION THAT WOULD HAVE HARMED THE ABILITY OF TEXAS COMMUNITIES TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS.”

ERIC SAMUELS
PRESIDENT/CEO
TEXAS HOMELESS NETWORK
Our advocacy work also supported the renewal of $2.6 million in general revenue from Harris County to support 300 people in permanent supportive housing (PSH) and the commitment of an additional $3.3 million for supportive services, which will be awarded to a partner service provider. Harris County also awarded $2.2 million in new general revenue via Harris County Public Health for coordinated care for at least 150 people. This represents progress in leveraging healthcare funds to address homelessness.

Furthermore, the Houston Housing Authority committed to a one-time allocation of 450 new homeless preference vouchers. The annual rental assistance value of this commitment is $5.9 million!

This year, our development team raised funds not only for our own organization, but also for the homeless response system. Through efforts including our first major donor event on World Homeless Day, a Corporate Cocktail Reception, and our first-ever “Driving Home” Charity Golf Tournament, as well as an extraordinary $10 million grant from Houston Endowment, we raised nearly $12.4 million in general operating funds for CFTH. In addition, we secured a $5 million grant from the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund, which will be regranted to local direct service providers for supportive services that keep families housed over the long term, and we raised money to support the implementation of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (read more on page 12).

“ACCESS HARRIS COUNTY IS EXCITED TO BEGIN THE PARTNERSHIP WITH CFTH TO PROVIDE INTENSIVE WRAPAROUND SERVICES TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN NEED OF MULTIPLE SERVICES ACROSS THE COUNTY’S SAFETY NET SYSTEM THROUGH A NO-WRONG-DOOR APPROACH. THIS PARTNERSHIP WILL HELP ELIMINATE THE SILOED AND FRAGMENTED SERVICE DELIVERY EXPERIENCE BY WORKING COLLABORATIVELY TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO THESE SHARED VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.”

BARBIE L. ROBINSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
VICE CHAIR, THE WAY HOME STEERING COMMITTEE
NEARING THEIR DESTINATION

BUILDING SYSTEM CAPACITY

For our clients, their new home isn’t only an apartment. It’s an apartment, funding for the rent, and a case manager and supportive services to help them stay successfully housed. So before they can move into their new home, CFTH works behind-the-scenes to make sure all three pieces are in place for people in need now — and those who will be in the future. In total, CFTH and our partners in The Way Home housed more than 2,900 people this year … including Curtis!

APARTMENTS

We work with local governments and housing developers to advocate for the creation of additional Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) apartment units. Thanks to our work this year, 99 new PSH units opened, and another 316 units are in development.

Our landlord engagement team builds and fosters relationships with property managers in the private rental market who are willing to support our efforts by renting apartments to people exiting homelessness. This year, the team identified 864 new units and onboarded 122 new landlords.

“AS WE STRIVE TO HELP PEOPLE MOVE FROM HOMELESSNESS BACK INTO STABLE HOMES OF THEIR OWN, CFTH HELPS TO STREAMLINE THAT PROCESS. THEIR EFFICIENT COORDINATION HAS HELPED TO SHORTEN THE DURATION OF THE HOMELESS EXPERIENCE FOR CLIENTS. CFTH HAS HELPED TO OPTIMIZE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR RAPID REHOUSING TEAM, LEADING TO HIGHER SUCCESS RATES AND IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR THE CLIENTS THAT WE SERVE.”

DAVINA HOLLIN
ASSOCIATE PROGRAM MANAGER
SEARCH HOMELESS SERVICES
FUNDING

A crucial function of CFTH is to build capacity – not just for ourselves, but for the entire homeless response system. We increase the capacity of the system and individual partners to get people back into permanent housing.

Thanks to CFTH’s work as the funding application organizer, this year, our homeless response system was awarded over $46 million in federal funding by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which allows us to sustain existing permanent housing slots.

In FY23, we secured more than $179 million in public funding for homelessness response to the Houston region. (To read more about our efforts to help secure this funding, see pages 8–9.)

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

This year, CFTH rolled out case management practice standards for our homeless response system. This collaborative process involved gathering feedback from more than 40 partner agencies – and The Way Home’s Consumer Advisory Council (CAC), a leadership group for people with current or past lived experience of homelessness. These standards will help clients receive the same quality of supportive services in housing, no matter which agency or program they are referred to.

The story doesn’t end once someone is housed. We help them stabilize in their new home by helping them increase their income. This year, our income team managed more than 1,600 employment referrals and over 1,000 social security outreach and recovery referrals.
“I appreciate the hands-on approach and leadership provided by the CFTH youth team, which has been vital for successful program implementation and swift stabilization of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. Together with our community partners, reaching our goal of ending youth homelessness in our community is attainable!”

Rhonda Adams
YHDP Program Manager
Spring Branch Community Health Center

WALKING ALONGSIDE YOUTH

Youth and young adults experiencing homelessness face unique challenges. Our youth team oversees Houston’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), which successfully launched its first programs in February 2023. Since then, the partners of the YHDP have served more than 200 youth and young adults. At the time of publication, 83 were enrolled in permanent housing programs, and 53 youth and young adults have been connected to job search and employment placement programs.

“Grace Place is a young, small, grassroots organization. The resources and partnerships provided by CFTH have been vital in helping us reach our goals, including receiving federal funding for the first time. They have helped us to provide services — and hope for the future — to young people of all sexualities and genders who are experiencing homelessness, in a way we’d never imagined possible.”

Courtney Sellers
Executive Director, Grace Place
THANK YOU DONORS

We at CFTH are continually inspired by the dedication and generosity of our donors. Your support plays a key role in our success.

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We are grateful to all our donors and regret any error of omission or spelling.
Houston's rising reputation as a model for effectively applying the “Housing First” approach has prompted elected officials, media outlets, and other groups from across the country — and the world — to reach out to see what they could learn from us to address homelessness in their own communities.

They often want to learn about our unique role as the lead agency of our homeless response system — how we unite partners and maximize resources to end homelessness for thousands of individuals and families every year.

In the past year, in one form or another, we have shared knowledge with people from all the places listed below. In this way, we are mapping out the journey back to housing, not only for people in the Houston area, but for people across the country and the world!

**Domestic**
- Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Anchorage, Alaska
- Aurora and Denver, Colorado
- Austin, Texas
- Charlotte, North Carolina
- Chicago, Illinois
- Detroit, Michigan
- Eugene and Portland, Oregon
- Kansas City, Kansas
- Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Francisco, California
- Las Vegas, Nevada
- Miami, Orange County, and West Palm Beach, Florida
- Nashville, Tennessee
- New York, New York
- Phoenix, Arizona
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Princeton, New Jersey
- Spokane and Tacoma, Washington
- St. Louis, Missouri
- Tulsa, Oklahoma
- Washington, DC

**International**
- France
- Luxembourg
- New Zealand
- Ontario and Winnipeg, Canada
As we look ahead to the retirement of our President & CEO Mike Nichols at the end of 2023, I want to celebrate the journey he has led us on.

Mike was asked to join CFTH in 2019 when the organization was going through significant challenges. Throughout his tenure, he has exemplified exceptional leadership.

He led an organizational restructuring that required some tough decisions but resulted in an organization that is more efficient and effective. He also restored community confidence in CFTH, repairing relationships with partners and funders.

This in turn put us in a position to lead the implementation of the Community COVID Housing Program, which brought in more than $160 million in public and private resources to address homelessness through permanent housing.

During Mike’s tenure, the partners of The Way Home have housed more than 12,000 people, reestablishing our community as a leader on addressing homelessness (as widely reported upon)! Mike has shared that he judges himself not on factors beyond his control (e.g., a lack of affordable housing, poverty), but by the number of people we house. I’d say this number is something he should be proud of.

Our next CEO certainly has big shoes to fill, but we are looking forward to the next chapter in CFTH’s journey!

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP WITH CFTH AND YOUR DEDICATION TO MAKING HOMELESSNESS RARE, BRIEF, AND NON-RECURRING.

Troi Taylor, Board Chair
Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County

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