

**Housing Not Handcuffs: A CoC's response to Tent City**  
 Joe Scalise – Director Housing Services

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**OH-506 Akron/Barberton Summit County Continuum of Care**

- Summit County Population 541,787
- Akron is the largest city in Summit County – Population 197,846
- Entitlement Community - \$4.6 million CoC funds
- PIT Counts: 2015-**760**; 2016-**679**; 2017-**507**; 2018-**587**
- Shelter System: 1- DV Shelter; 2- Family Shelters; 1 shelter serving individual men & women
- Individual Shelter is Faith-based with related programming. It does not fit the definition of low-barrier.

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**Evolution of Akron's Tent City**

- February 2017 – Private property owner allows tents
- Encampment quickly grows to 30 tents.
- Surrounding neighbors complain to City.
- April 2018 – Property owner applies for re-zoning.
- September 2018 – City Council rejects zoning change
- Media coverage intensifies throughout 2018.
- 9/24/18 – City asks for CoC help in housing residents.

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### Continuum of Care Response

- CoC takes no position on question of zoning.
- CoC believes that tents are not a suitable alternative to shelter.
- CoC acts without political intent – Housing is our mission.
- CoC works with property owner to facilitate transitions out of tents.
- CoC achieved Functional Zero for Veterans in May 2017 – Brings same By-Name-List approach to housing the 46 residents at camp on 9/24/18.




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### The BNL Process

- Street Outreach and Centralized Intake begin active, daily outreach to residents.
- All CoC members participate in weekly meetings to document actions and housing offers to camp residents.
- Camp Operator is part of the weekly meetings.
- A pool of open beds is identified (PSH – RRH – AMHA vouchers).
- Housing plan established for each resident.
- 60 day deadline is set.




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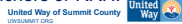
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### Barriers and Results

- Resident were reluctant to engage initially. The encampment was their own community and they often prioritized their role at the camp over working on their housing plan.
- Pressure from the camp operator to follow through with the CoC was necessary to motivate action from the residents.
- Some residents were reluctant to leave. Free food and housing helped facilitate use of personal resources for other desires.
- By 12/18/18 45 of 46 residents were housed. 9 self-resolved to other arrangements with friends or family. 1 was incarcerated. 36 others moved to their own units with PSH, Housing vouchers or RRH.




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### Conclusions about the Experience

- Residents were exercising personal choice. Absent a low-barrier shelter option, many preferred the encampment to the shelter choice in our system.
- More low-barrier shelter beds needed in our system. CoC must explore alternatives including adapting the TH-RRH program model.
- New programs must incorporate resident 'ownership'
- CoC should use these opportunities to engage homeless persons in policy decisions.



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### Contact Information

Joseph Scalise – Director of Housing Services  
330-315-0415  
[jscalise@uwsummit.org](mailto:jscalise@uwsummit.org)



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