



HOUSING SERVICES

M I D M I C H I G A N

Opening doors for people in our communities.

Annual Report 2021

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A letter from the Director:

Dear Friends and Supporters,

2021 was a very difficult year here at Housing Services as we continued to fight through the pandemic. Housing Services Mid Michigan (HSMM) continued to stay open and serve our clients who faced housing emergencies. We conducted our appointments remotely, mostly by telephone. Our lobbies were opened during the year so clients could drop off documents and speak briefly with their case manager. In the Eaton office, a window with a transfer slot was added to our waiting room door to allow safe conversations. Adjusting to telephone appointments versus in person was a difficult one that led to case managers gaining techniques of empathy and problem-solving without seeing body language. I feel that we were successful in this transition and were able to assist many people from becoming homeless.

HSMM was awarded the largest grant in its history in March 2021, the COVID Emergency Rental Assistance program, nicknamed "CERA". This program allowed us to assist households in Clinton and Eaton counties who were behind on their rent and/or utilities due to a hardship caused by COVID-19. Since the perceived need was so great, we needed to prepare for a high inflow of new clients. We added Eviction Hotline numbers in addition to our normal phone lines. We hired 5 temporary staff to answer the hotlines, gather required documents, and review applications. For the first time, we worked with a temp agency to fill these staff openings. Initially, turnover was high and filling these positions became so difficult that we posted positions not only with the temp agency, but internally as well, to see who could hire first. We eventually hired 3 of the temp staff into permanent positions, gaining good, hard-working staff. In that way, the temp agency became a blessing in disguise!

Throughout the year, all of our meetings were held virtually. Learning to communicate effectively and work on projects to completion, while talking through the impersonal atmosphere provided by a computer was a difficult task for everyone. We accomplished much, and even wrote a collaborative HUD grant using virtual communication between staff from 5 different agencies. I am now a Zoom expert.

Overall, the year had many successes. Our Housing Counselor passed the HUD Certified Housing Counselor exam. We were able to expand our PATH Street Outreach program by adding an additional half-time outreach specialist and a SOAR dedicated staff member. SOAR is a process of assisting those who are homeless with a disability to apply for Social Security benefits. We also held the Eaton County "Project Connect" event with a "drive-thru" style layout to promote social distancing.

2021 marks the first full year of my position as Executive Director. It was harder than I could have ever expected. The complications of the pandemic added a layer of stress that compounded our client crisis, making everything feel more difficult. I am especially grateful for our Assistant Director, Bridgett, for taking on the position during the most difficult time and staying positive and resilient and for not leaving my side through it all. I am proud of the staff at HSMM and all the positive outcomes and great accomplishments we had in 2021. Thank you for your support!

Best wishes,

Christie

Mission Statement

Opening Doors for People in Our Community.

Housing Services Mid Michigan strives to accomplish this mission by assisting low to moderate income individuals and families fulfill their need for affordable, safe, and sanitary housing through participation in federal, state, and local programs and services. By coordinating such programs along with local providers, Housing Services Mid Michigan works to provide a “continuum of care” approach to better serve the diverse needs of program participants and encourage their economic self-sufficiency.

Eaton & Clinton Homelessness

- In 2021, 368 people were literally homeless in the Eaton, Clinton , and Ingham County area. This does not include people who were “couch-surfing,” i.e., staying with friends or family.
- For our counties, these numbers represent a 12% increase from 2020’s numbers, even as numbers for the State of Michigan decreased by 3% and nationally numbers decreased by 8%.
- During 2021, children (newborn to age 17) accounted for nearly 24% of our area’s homeless population.
- In Eaton and Clinton Counties, women made up well over half (roughly 60%) of the literally homeless population, a reversal of national trends in which men make up just over sixty percent of the homeless population. (courtesy of national alliance to end homelessness)
- The average age of our homeless population is increasing. For our counties, the average age of homeless men jumped from 25 to 30 years old and for homeless women, from 31 to nearly 37 years old.
- National numbers showed that over 15,763 unaccompanied youth experienced homelessness on any given night in 2021. (courtesy of endhomelessness.org)

COVID-19 Impacts on Housing

Over the past two years COVID-19 has had a significant impact on HSMM and the population the agency serves. While the eviction moratorium and various eviction assistance programs have been an invaluable resource to prevent families from entering homelessness, these efforts have also reduced the overall rental pool and contributed to longer periods of homelessness. In addition, many private landlords have chosen to sell their rental properties to large-scale property management companies who have favored raising rents and are frequently unwilling to work with supportive services and programs. This is exacerbated by the influence of increasingly middle-class, and higher, families moving into the rental market rather than buying homes due to uncertainty in the housing market. All these factors have combined to contribute to increased rental prices and stricter eligibility requirements on applicants, as well as a greatly reduced overall rental market. For HSMM clients, this has led to increased difficulty in locating housing and longer periods of homelessness.

COVID Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA)

HSMM's Largest Program to Date!

The CERA program was created to help those who have experienced a hardship due to the pandemic. HSMM received \$9 million dollars to provide assistance with past due rent and utilities to residents of Clinton and Eaton counties. CERA is administered through MSHDA and applicants can apply through an online portal. Funds are planned to end in December of 2022. CERA was the first of its kind that assistance could be given with past due rent, 3 months forward rent, past due and forward utility assistance and a one time internet payment all at one time. Since many people have experienced a financial hardship, the demand for this program was huge.

CERA funds spent in 2021: \$8 million in direct financial assistance

New Eviction Hotline added: 517-997-6057

CERA Application Portal: <https://ceraapp.michigan.gov/>

Funding Due to the Pandemic

CARES ACT - Emergency Solution Grant

Additional funding:

- ◇ Rapid Re-Housing assistance: one to twelve months of rental assistance for those who are literally homeless
- ◇ Prevention/Relocation: one to six months of rental assistance for those who are “doubled-up” or facing an unresolvable eviction
- ◇ Motel assistance for those who are literally homeless in Clinton County only

Housing Navigators:

- ◇ We were able to add 2 full time Housing Navigators, one for Clinton and one for Eaton to assist with housing search.

(Funds are scheduled to end September 30, 2022)

Emergency Housing Vouchers

HSMM was awarded 7 Emergency Housing Vouchers from MSHDA for Eaton and Clinton counties. These vouchers have more flexible guidelines for determining who is eligible versus “regular” homeless preference vouchers. For the regular homeless preference vouchers, you must be literally homeless. For Emergency Housing Vouchers, individuals and families can be:

- Homeless,
- At risk of homelessness,
- Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or
- Were recently homeless or have a high risk of housing instability.

HSMM is the lead agency in both counties to put eligible people on the waitlist. We provided clients with housing search resources, assistance in completing housing-related paperwork, and potential move-in costs such as a security deposit.

HSMM Data

**In 2021, HSMM provided case management for
1345 adults and 672 children
and assisted a total of 1071 households.
This assistance was provided throughout
the Tri-County Area and included:**

361 Homeless	38 PSH households
105 Evictions	206 Relocations
1 Foreclosure	21 Home Buyer Ed
138 Offender Success households	
156 Mainstream Voucher households	

2021 Board Members

Sean Cotter, President
Julie Hales-Smith, Vice President
Richard Ballard, Secretary
James Dexter, Treasurer
Sarah Adams
Robert Brown
Thomas Fuller
Susan Hoffman
Jessica Maas
Levi Martin
Tom Reich
Emma Swinton
Christie Harry, Ex-Officio

Total Support and Revenue

Program Expenses:
\$4,700,479

Management & General Expenses:
\$190,984

Fundraising Expenses:
\$434

End of Year Net Asset Balances:
\$664,628

Total Revenue & Other Supports
\$4,993,835

Housing Services Mid Michigan utilizes qualified staff to coordinate its services and ensure that clients have access to other agencies and programs.

All services are subject to funding availability.

HSMM is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation.

Donations may be made directly to HSMM and may be tax deductible.

Unknown Future of Funding

Most of our Covid-related funding will be ending between October and December of 2022. HSMM's pre-Covid funding was declining, leading to concerns of whether the need for emergency housing assistance will be met. We will need the support of our communities to continue to provide a high level of assistance.

Fundraising

Thank you to all our donors and **Eaton Community Bank!**

November is Homeless Awareness Month and Eaton Community Bank has graciously taken the position as our lead sponsor for fundraising during this month.

Shopping at
**Amazon
Smile**
also helps
support us!

Annual Giving Campaign

Please Assist HSMM in Preventing Homelessness
and Help Us Continue Our
AmeriCorps Member Support

**Please make your donation
to HSMM, and mail to:**

**PO Box 746
Charlotte, MI 48837**

Give for long term sustainability!

HSMM has its own endowment that is managed by
the **Eaton County Community Foundation**.
Your contribution may qualify for federal tax credits.

**Remember to make your check out to
the Eaton County Foundation.
Put HSMM in the memo line and send to:**

**PO Box 294
Charlotte MI, 48813**

Donations
may also be
made via our
webpage.

2021's Invaluable Sponsors and Donors

Amazon Smile	Eaton Community Bank	Maxine C. Davis
Aaron Stevens	Elly Hendrick	Merry Rosenberg
AD Ink & Toner Supply	Eric & Monica Hufnagel	Michigan Bankers Association
Archer Financial LLC	Eric Rogers LLC	Nancy Holderread
Auto-Owners Insurance, Charlotte	First Congregational Church, Char.	Neisha Reid
Auto-Owners Insurance, G.L.	First Congregational Church, G.L.	New Hope Community
Balanced Health Chiropractic Center	First National Bank of America	Nicole Shannon
Barbara Fulton, Women Giving Together	Flagstar Foundation	Olivet College Cheer Team
Bob Wilson, State Farm Insurance	Greg Nitchman	Patricia Irwin
Capitol Communications Systems	Janet Sjoquist	Phillip & Karen Bombrys
Carol Monroe	Jennifer Cameron Cogan	Richard Ballard
Carole Reynaert	Jennifer Schrader	Robert Brown
Cathleen Johnson	Jill & Jason Cates	Robert Robinson
Charlotte Chamber of Commerce	Jo VanderSteldt	Saints Church of Jesus Christ
Charlotte F.O.E., #3552 Auxillary	Joe Fix	Sandra Dennis
Charlotte High School	Julie Hales-Smith	Sandy Hennings
Charlotte Moose Lodge 2565	Karen S. Johnson	Sharleen Moyer
Cheryl Barnhart	Knights of Columbus, Council 7311	Sherri Crandell
D A Barnes	Kubay Preuss, Preuss Pets	Sparrow Eaton Hospital
Dave Reynolds, Re-Max	Lawrence Ave United Methodist Church	St. John's Lutheran Church
Dawn Sollid	Levi Martin	St. Joseph Catholic Church
Denise Cornelius	Linda Henderson	Susan Hoffman
Desk Drawer Fund	Lisa Gottlieb-Kinnaird	Swanson Design Studios
Diana Benjamin	Lyle Robinette, Hope Landing	The Eaton Place/Eaton Pub & Grille
Diane Warren	MacDowell's, Grand Ledge	Tri County Electric People Fund
Diversified Financial Concepts	Margie Grove, AgroLiquid	Trumley Family Foundation
Donna Dickert	Marissa Geyer	Wayne & Diana Mavis
Dombos Signs, Inc	Mark's Place, Eaton Rapids	William & Carol Yerkes
Dr. Robert Leeser	Matthew Oppenheim	William & Danita Brandt

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It shall be the policy of Housing Services Mid Michigan to provide equal membership, employment, and service opportunities to all eligible persons without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, membership in any labor organization, age, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, and for employment only, height, weight, and arrest record.