ST. PHILIP'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH · DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Making homelessness rare and brief

How Durham is helping neighbors move home – and how you can be part of it.

City of Durham | Durham County | Strategic Framework 2026–2031

Ryan Smith, Director, Durham Community Safety Department

WHY WE'RE HERE

This plan belongs to all of us.

Durham has a shared plan to make homelessness rare and brief. My hope is that you leave today with three things:

01

What we're doing, and why

A five-year plan built by the City, the County, providers, and the wider community.

02

Evidence that it's working

Real neighbors in real homes, and numbers we report in public.

03

Your place in it

Concrete ways St. Philip's can help more neighbors get home.

THE NORTH STAR

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

Rare

Few people fall into homelessness each month.

Brief

Those who do move quickly into stable housing.

30 days Our aim: when a neighbor becomes homeless, we resolve it within 30 days, on average, with a move into permanent housing.

WHERE WE START

We know our neighbors by name — and the need has grown.

2,005

neighbors experiencing homelessness in Durham today

1,066

living unsheltered — outside, in vehicles, or in encampments

~4×

growth in unsheltered homelessness since 2020, when it was 270 people

Durham keeps a real-time, by-name list of people experiencing homelessness, so we can plan around each person, not a count.

Source: HMIS, October 2026.

A STORY FROM FEBRUARY 2026

Ten families and one month

15

families housed in a 25-day sprint, against a goal of 10

plus three more into non-congregate shelter

A winter storm left ten Durham families in hotel rooms with nowhere to go next. The county's only family shelter was full.

So partners lined up around those families with a deadline. Housing for New Hope paid deposits and fees within a day. Housing locators found units. Case managers from Families Moving Forward and the City kept every conversation focused on housing.

One month later, fifteen families had moved into homes of their own.

HOW THE WORK GETS DONE

What a housing sprint looks like

A 4–6 week, all-hands push that lines up the payments, the units, and the long-term support around the same neighbors, at the same time.

1 A group and a date

A specific group of neighbors, such as families or an encampment, and a date to house them.

2 Money ready to move

Fees, deposits, and arrears are pre-approved and paid within one business day.

3 Units in hand

Housing locators bring 2–3 unit options per household, with landlord paperwork done up front.

4 A plan from day one

Each neighbor builds a Housing Plan: budget, income, and a 12-month path to full rent.

5 Daily huddles

Sprint teams meet every day to clear barriers and escalate stuck cases in real time.

6 A clean handoff

Housed neighbors start 12 months with a stabilization case manager; others keep their place.

A NEIGHBOR'S STORY · ROCKY

"I'll show them my keys."

For about six years, home was a tent. Rocky assumed housing programs were for other people, until a Street Outreach Specialist told him about Housing Sprints. Days later, he was looking at apartments. He chose one, and the help didn't stop at the door: pots and pans, bed covers, towels.

6 years
in a tent

15 days
from paperwork to move-in

"It was a great feeling of, you know, I can now move on with the rest of my life."
Rocky, on his first night in his own apartment



A NEIGHBOR'S STORY · JAMES

"It's a real thing."

James spent almost four years in the woods. Help had been offered before, but the next call never came. This spring, a Street Outreach worker told him about Housing Sprints: no hoops, and speed. He moved in with a close friend and their two cats, Ace and Rad.

Moving in came with help: cleaning supplies, tables and chairs, and a little desk lamp.

> "[The] final relief off me was when I got the two cats here, I was like, okay, official."

4 years

almost, living outside

27 days

from intake to move-in

"Every day is different now."

WHERE SPRINTS HAVE WORKED

Sprints have worked in three settings

Families

Households with children, housed in homes of their own.

Encampments

Neighbors moved directly from an encampment into housing.

Interim housing

Neighbors housed after a stay in a hotel room or non-congregate shelter.

A SYSTEM COMING TOGETHER

Families Moving Forward, Family Promise of the Triangle, Housing for New Hope, Urban Ministries of Durham, and HOM, Inc. have all devoted significant staff time and resources to sprints.

We have gotten better with every sprint, and there is still a lot to learn.

PROGRESS SO FAR

Four sprints, and neighbors home

104

neighbors housed through four housing sprints

49

of them children

+169%

more housing placements system-wide, June–September 2026 vs. 2025

16 of 18 people living in an encampment at Oakwood Park were housed as part of these sprints.

Source: HMIS and DCSD, October 2026.

BETTER OUTCOMES FOR PARTNERS

The results are showing up across the system

FAMILIES MOVING FORWARD · THIS PAST QUARTER

The shortest length of stay for families leaving shelter, and the highest rate of moves to permanent housing, recorded in at least five years.

+58%

growth in housing placements outside the sprints, as partners adopted the same discipline

LEARNING FROM PEER CITIES

Denver shows this can work at city scale

64%

decline in Denver's unsheltered population since 2023

91%

decline in Denver's large encampments from 2023 to 2025, per an Urban Institute evaluation

On October 13, 2026, a *New York Times* opinion piece by a member of its editorial board held up Denver as proof that focused, sustained effort can shrink street homelessness. Denver is one of the peer cities whose experience shaped Durham's framework.

WHITE FLAG · WINTER 2026–27

This winter, more doors open – every night

THE WHITE FLAG HOTEL SHELTER

40

hotel rooms, open every night from November 1 to February 28

8 for families · 8 for medically vulnerable adults · 24 for single adults

Operated by Open Table Ministry

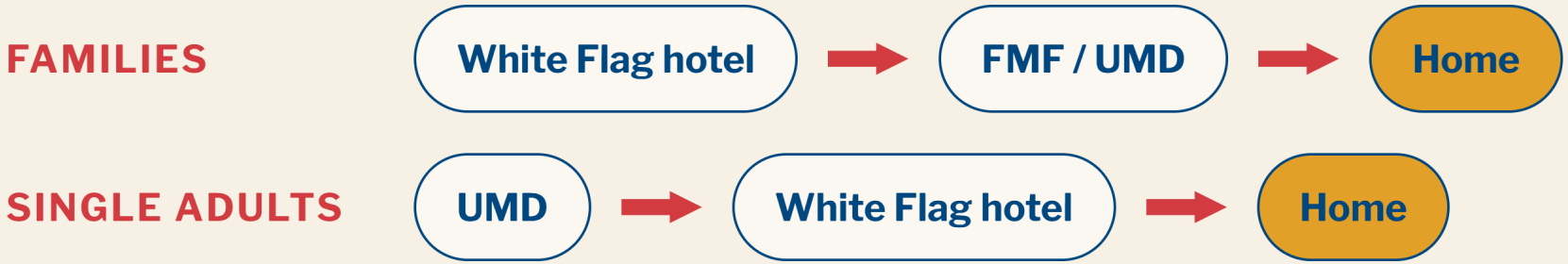
On the coldest nights, partners open more

Urban Ministries	10 additional beds
Families Moving Forward	5 rooms for families
Durham Crisis Response Center	3 rooms for survivors
Durham Rescue Mission	Open to walk-ins

White Flag nights: 32°F or below, or 35°F with rain or snow. HEART teams can transport neighbors to shelter.

SHELTER THAT LEADS HOME

White Flag as a bridge to housing



4 sprints

in two windows: Nov 1 – Dec 15 and Jan 15 – Feb 28

70 households

our target for stable housing, about 90 to 110 people

1 for 1

every household that moves home opens a shelter spot behind it

KEEPING PEOPLE HOUSED

A home, and a year of support to keep it

Homeward Durham

12 months	of rental assistance, on a known timeline
12 months	of stabilization case management

Case management follows the Critical Time Intervention model, one of the most rigorously tested in the field. Its strongest results are for people with the greatest needs.

$1.25M

City investment in case management, so every neighbor we house has support for the year that follows

Our aim: 90% of people housed stay housed.

THIS YEAR

400

neighbors home this year

Our goal for people currently experiencing homelessness in Durham. At today's cost, about $16,400 houses one household for a year.

$2M

City investment in the Flexible Housing Assistance Fund

$1.25M

City investment in case management for the year after move-in

One fund

where philanthropy, faith communities, businesses, and residents all give together

IT TAKES ALL OF US

A shared effort across Durham

An illustrative list, not a complete one: many more partners make this work possible.

PUBLIC

- City of Durham
- Durham County
- Durham Housing Authority
- Durham Public Schools

ANCHORS

- Duke University & Duke Health
- Alliance Health
- A.J. Fletcher Foundation
- Community Solutions / Built for Zero

PROVIDERS

- Housing for New Hope
- Families Moving Forward
- Urban Ministries of Durham
- Open Table Ministry
- Durham Crisis Response Center
- Durham Rescue Mission
- HOM, Inc.

COMMUNITY

- Lived Experience Advisory Group
- Landlords & property owners
- Durham CAN & faith partners
- Neighbors like you

The work is yours as much as anyone's.

YOUR PART IN THE PLAN

Ways St. Philip's can help

Units for neighbors

Own or manage a rental? Join the landlord network: rent on time, a real person on the phone, and shared risk.

One gift to the Flexible Housing Assistance Fund supports all three:

Housing
Rent, deposits, and move-in costs that turn a landlord's yes into a lease.

Interim housing in the cold months
Hotel rooms through winter, as a bridge that leads to a home.

Essentials to move in
Beds, tables, and basics, so no one has to sleep or eat on the floor.

Already support a provider? Please keep it up, and add a gift to the Fund on top of it.

GIVE TODAY

Scan to give to the Flexible Housing Assistance Fund

100% of your gift goes to financial assistance: rent, deposits, and move-in costs, or an interim housing option while we work toward a more durable solution.

Your gift joins the same fund the City has invested $2 million in. Gifts of every size count.

buy.stripe.com/6oU7sLfm70v39DjgcfdIA06



Scan with your phone camera

AN INVITATION

Where else can we work together?

- What spaces, skills, and relationships does this congregation already have?
- Who here owns, manages, or could help us find a rental unit?
- How can we stay connected and share what we learn together?

Get monthly updates: email **hope@durhamnc.gov** to join our *Rare & Brief* newsletter.

Thank you.

Ryan Smith, Director, Durham Community Safety Department · hope@durhamnc.gov