

# COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS OF EASTERN IOWA

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2029



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This strategic plan enables CSEI to navigate intensely changing times – including political and policy changes, surviving the COVID-19 pandemic, a national housing shortage, inflation, and increasing mental health and substance use issues. Even as we complete this plan, we adapt to new events.*

*The plan maps our course for the next five years and is the result of a process that deeply engaged our board and staff. It expresses our deep commitment to engage the region in the work of providing housing and comfort to our neighbors.*

*And we are energized to change how we operate – seeking to diversify our funding, utilize data systems and talented volunteers and staff to build efficiencies, and invest in higher impact programming.*



## Calls Answered by CSEI Staff

554

490

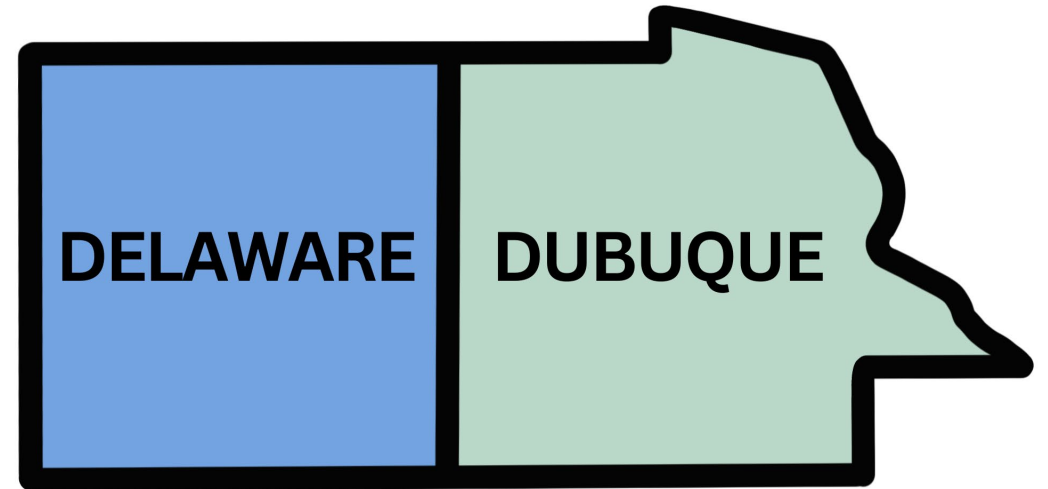
1189

2463

3216

## OUR MISSION

Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa promotes and encourages public well-being; provides homeless prevention resources to those living in poverty and threatened with homelessness; helps individuals and families survive and exit homelessness; and expands opportunities and empowers people to be self-sufficient in east central Iowa cities and counties.



# OUR PROGRAMS

- Housing Helpline
- Housing Programs
  - Homeless Prevention
  - Rapid Rehousing
- Street Outreach
- Program Support for Partners



## OUR GOALS

*In July 2023, the Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa Board of Directors and key staff reviewed the existing CSEI Strategic Plan, studied key data points, asked questions regarding current practices and finances, and make recommendations for the new plan. Working with a facilitator, the group arrived at the following three goals on which to focus for the next five years.*

- **Goal I: Ensure that our programs meet the needs of our region.**
- **Goal II: Secure and maintain funding to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness and housing instability.**
- **Goal III: Secure and maintain staffing to successfully obtain and implement the funding.**

# GOAL I: ENSURE THAT OUR PROGRAMS MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR REGION

High Level Action	Activities
Understand the housing and homelessness climate in our region and the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and understand emerging data on housing and homelessness in our region</li><li>• Participate in community action and conversation groups such as the Homeless Advisory Commission, state and federal organizations, City of Dubuque, Dubuque County, and Delaware County groups related to housing and homelessness</li><li>• Attend state/national conferences and training opportunities annually</li><li>• Add People with Lived Experience (PLE) to our committees and board</li><li>• Encourage private developers and mission-driven nonprofits who will work with CSEI programs to house the homeless.</li></ul>
Restructure the “Homeless Hotline” to “Housing Helpline”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to be HUD-Appointed Coordinated Entry lead for Eastern Iowa Region (Delaware &amp; Dubuque counties) which serves Street Outreach, Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention programs</li><li>• Continue to analyze Helpline data to make staffing adjustments as needed</li><li>• Continually realign partnerships for referral services</li><li>• Continue to educate the public on why it is a “Helpline” and not a “Hotline”</li><li>• Secure annual funding to staff Helpline</li></ul>

# GOAL 1: ENSURE THAT OUR PROGRAMS MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR REGION

High Level Action	Activities
Balance types of programs offered to better meet the needs of the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add Homeless Prevention (HP) funding</li><li>• Add Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)</li><li>• Provide Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) case management for housing partners</li><li>• Provide administrative/finance assistance for nonprofit partners in the region</li><li>• Consider seeking PSH grants</li><li>• Continue to secure Rapid Rehousing (RRH) funding</li><li>• Continue to secure Street Outreach (SO) funding</li></ul>
Address loneliness and the need for additional sense of community for people experiencing homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to strengthen Street Outreach program</li><li>• Advocate for different types of housing (apartments, campuses, etc.)</li><li>• Advocate for a community center serve to increase community connection between and authentic engagement with those experiencing or at risk of homelessness (similar to Mission Garden space in summer)</li><li>• Work with community partners to create a community center for daytime access to case managers, computers, social areas, etc.</li></ul>

# GOAL II: SECURE & MAINTAIN FUNDING TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING INSTABILITY

High Level Action	Activities
Increase Public Awareness & Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardize Communications: Annual Report, Quarterly Newsletter, Website, Press Releases, Social Media, Grant Reports</li> <li>Create &amp; Maintain Public Awareness Campaigns</li> <li>Participate in community events at schools, fundraisers, and other advocacy and policy groups.</li> </ul>
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue contract of services with ECIA to provide staff, indirect and direct overhead, and cash flow.</li> <li>Provide additional services where feasible (e.g., grant writing, case management, financial) and discontinue when not.</li> </ul>
Grant Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify relevant funding sources: Public &amp; Private</li> <li>Maintain appropriate staffing levels to manage grant writing.</li> </ul>
Private Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a Fundraising Plan for the organization.</li> <li>Secure 3-6 months of private operating funds in reserve</li> <li>Create monthly “sponsors” campaign for Housing Helpline</li> <li>Transition/combine public awareness events with fundraising</li> <li>Work with Faith Communities</li> </ul>
Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide all directors with “Expectations of Board Members” document</li> <li>Provide on-boarding session for all new directors</li> </ul>



## GOAL III: SECURE AND MAINTAIN STAFFING TO SUCCESSFULLY OBTAIN AND IMPLEMENT THE FUNDING

High Level Action	Activities
Recruit and maintain high caliber employees	Continue to offer competitive salaries, benefits, and flexible time schedules/work-life balance.
Maintain parent/subsidiary relationship with ECIA	Maintain Contract for Services with ECIA for employees and overhead until such time that CSEI can financially exist independently.
Achieve funding levels to support needed staffing	Continue to work toward dedicated balance of staff to support CSEI functions/programs.
Offer training and education to stay current with program needs/requirements and advance skills.	Offer quality training and conference opportunities to staff.

# COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS OF EASTERN IOWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

- Beth Bonz, Board Chair, City of Asbury
- Cori Burbach, Vice Chair, City of Dubuque
- Connie Behnken, City of Manchester
- Martha Donnelly, Sisters of the Presentation
- Martha Doyle, Community Volunteer
- Rick Mihm, Dubuque Rescue Mission
- Andy Mozena, Premier Bank
- Stephanie Ottavi, Community Volunteer
- Nicole Recker, Delaware County Community Services
- Mindy Wiley, Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority
- Sam Wooden, RSH Legal
- Kelley Deutmeyer, Board President & Secretary, ECIA Executive Director
- Steve Stoffel, Board Vice President & Treasurer, ECIA Director of Finance & Administration
- Jennifer Walker, Director of CSEI, ECIA Director of Special Programs
- Shelby Eipperle, ECIA/CSEI Homeless Program Coordinator
- Ashley Noonan, ECIA/CSEI Homeless Program Coordinator



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