

FINAL DELIVERABLE

Title Homelessness and Housing Affordability in Clinton

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UI Department Planning and Public Affairs

Course Name Public Policy and Persuasion
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Instructor Carrie Schuettpelz

Community Partners YWCA of Clinton

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MEMO

Date: December 9, 2022

To: City of Clinton

From: Hannah Akey, Alexis Carfae, Grace Jobgen, Tess Rauenbuehler, Sam Avery

CC: Angie Bloomfield, YWCA

Re: Homelessness and Housing Affordability in Clinton

SUMMARY:

Homelessness and lack of affordable housing are immediate concerns in Clinton that require a rapid response. In 2016, a study by the United Way of Clinton County found that 43% of Clinton households struggle to cover their basic costs of living, ultimately leaving them at risk of homelessness.¹ There are around 300 homeless individuals in Clinton.

Increasing rates of poverty as well as a lack of quality housing units, jobs, and accessible resources exacerbate homelessness in rural communities. If these challenges are not addressed, individuals and families will continue to experience generational poverty and homelessness in Clinton.

BACKGROUND:

One of the challenges with homelessness in Clinton—as with many small towns and rural locales—is that it is hidden from public view. Often, people experience periods of transitional homelessness, which consist of “couch surfing,” accessing space in emergency homeless shelters, and living in motels/hotels, cars, or abandoned houses.²

In addition, Clinton suffers from an aging housing stock. Out of the 12,202 housing units in the city, about 88% is more than 40 years old, while only 694 units have been built since 2000.³ The upkeep needed for this type of aging housing stock can be difficult to manage if landlords and owners are not proactive in their maintenance.

Accessibility to resources is also a barrier for citizens of Clinton who find themselves in need of housing assistance. The Clinton Housing Authority has no online presence outside of a phone

¹ “Alice.” *United Way of Clinton County, Iowa*, <https://www.clintonunitedway.org/alice>.

² Editor, Scott Levine Herald Associate. “No Place to Call Home Clinton County's Homeless Numbers on the Rise.” *Clinton Herald*, 5 Apr. 2016, https://www.clintonherald.com/news/local_news/no-place-to-call-home-clinton-countys-homeless-numbers-on-the-rise/article_8f0454e9-da2f-52da-b151-f938d1b06b54.html.

³ “Clinton Demographics.” *Point2*, <https://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/IA/Clinton-Demographics.html>.

number and an address, which makes it very difficult to access housing resources and information.

Finally, there has been a decline in locally owned properties. Cheryl Wilson, a member of the Clinton Housing Authority, reported that many local landlords who used to own more affordable housing have recently had their properties bought by out-of-state contractors. As a result, this has driven up the price of rent, providing yet another barrier to affordable housing.

CURRENT EFFORTS:

Current efforts in place to help those who are homeless in Clinton include:

- **The Victory Center**
A 9-month faith based, Christ-centered teaching and financial planning course that supports its residents' transition to self-sufficiency.⁴ Entry into the Victory Center is voluntary, and their programs cost \$50 a month for the men's and women's shelter. The transitional housing has a monthly cost of \$430.⁵
- **National Housing Trust Fund**
There is not currently a shelter in Clinton, but the city just received a \$4.4 million grant through the National Housing Trust Fund that will be used toward resources for homeless citizens.⁶ Clinton plans to use this money to build a development that will house 24 chronically homeless individuals, 10 emergency shelter beds, a hot kitchen, a public mail center, a public shower center, community college programming, on-site mental health facilities, and provide a nurse practitioner for residents.⁷
- **Clinton Community School District**
Currently, the school district receives \$100,000 a year for homeless children. This money is used to help them stay in school and receive resources beyond what their parents can provide, including clothing, school fees, school supplies, immunizations, food, medical or dental services, counseling services, and other resources that children need to attend school.⁸ ⁹ This program helps to keep children in school and prevent them from falling behind due to homelessness.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Develop a website for the Clinton Housing Authority.** An online presence ensures that citizens can quickly obtain information about housing programs offered in Clinton, check

⁴ School of Urban & Regional Planning Housing Policy course, spring 2020. "Victory Center Clinton, Iowa." 2020. PDF file.

⁵ School of Urban & Regional Planning Housing Policy course, spring 2020. "Victory Center Clinton, Iowa." 2020. PDF file.

⁶ Bloomfield, Angie. Personal interview. 3 November 2022.

⁷ Bloomfield, Angie. Personal interview. 3 November 2022.

⁸ Wright, Rhea. Personal interview. 10 November 2022.

⁹ Clinton Community School District. "Resource Identification Sheet for McKinney-Vento Students 2022-2023 School Year." 2022. *Google Docs* file.

their eligibility for these programs, apply for housing, and immediately access resources from area nonprofits if they're in urgent need of assistance. By creating an easy to navigate website, the Clinton Housing Authority can further complete its mission of providing safe, affordable, and accessible housing for its citizens while amplifying and connecting a variety of nonprofit resources. (Full mockup of website available at link in Appendix).

2. **Create an infographic outlining the Good Samaritan Law.** Drug use and homelessness are often connected, and it is important for all people to know their rights and know they are protected if they call 911 to get help for someone who may be experiencing a drug overdose. Removing these barriers to information will allow for the protection of and safety for all members of the community. (Full draft infographic available in Appendix).
3. **Host a meeting for all of the landlords in Clinton.** This meeting would outline the benefits of participating in Section 8 housing and create an environment that is conducive to learning and effective communication. Landlords will better understand the need for affordable housing in Clinton, and how participating in Section 8 could directly benefit them. (Draft meeting agenda available in Appendix).

CONCLUSION:

These are immediate issues that must be addressed promptly and carefully. In order to create a coordinated response to the rising issues surrounding housing in Clinton, members of the City Council, Clinton Housing Authority, YWCA, Clinton Community School District, and any other relevant stakeholders should meet to develop a strategic plan for improving housing conditions. This plan may include increasing funding for housing-related initiatives beginning in fiscal year 2024, reviewing the efficacy of current efforts, and working to abate existing stigma surrounding homelessness in Clinton. With a proper plan, Clinton will have the opportunity to track the progression of housing measures taken and will be able to adjust accordingly to changes within the community.

APPENDIX

1) Full Housing Authority website mockup can be found at:

<https://smavery68.wixsite.com/clinton-housing-auth>

2) Draft Infographic on Good Samaritan Law



3) DRAFT Agenda for Housing Meeting

City of Clinton Housing Winter Meeting

December 1st, 2022

Present:

Absent:

- Call to order: 5 P.M.
- Combating loss of housing in Clinton
- Effects on community
 - Children and families
 - Landlord/tenant relationships
- Housing Choice Voucher Program/Section 8 best practices
- Review of previous minutes

Housing & Homelessness *Clinton, Iowa*

Hannah Akey, Sam Avery, Alexis Carfrae, Tess
Rauenbuehler, and Grace Jobgen

December 1st, 2022



Background

300 homeless families



River front- Clinton, Iowa

Background



River front- Clinton, Iowa

300 homeless families

12,202 housing units

Background



River front- Clinton, Iowa

300 homeless families

12,202 housing units

90% of housing stock over 30 years old

Background



River front- Clinton, Iowa

300 homeless families

12,202 housing units

90% of housing stock over 30 years old

7% unemployment rate

Background



River front- Clinton, Iowa

300 homeless families

12,202 housing units

90% of housing stock over 30 years old

7% unemployment rate

\$650 average monthly rent

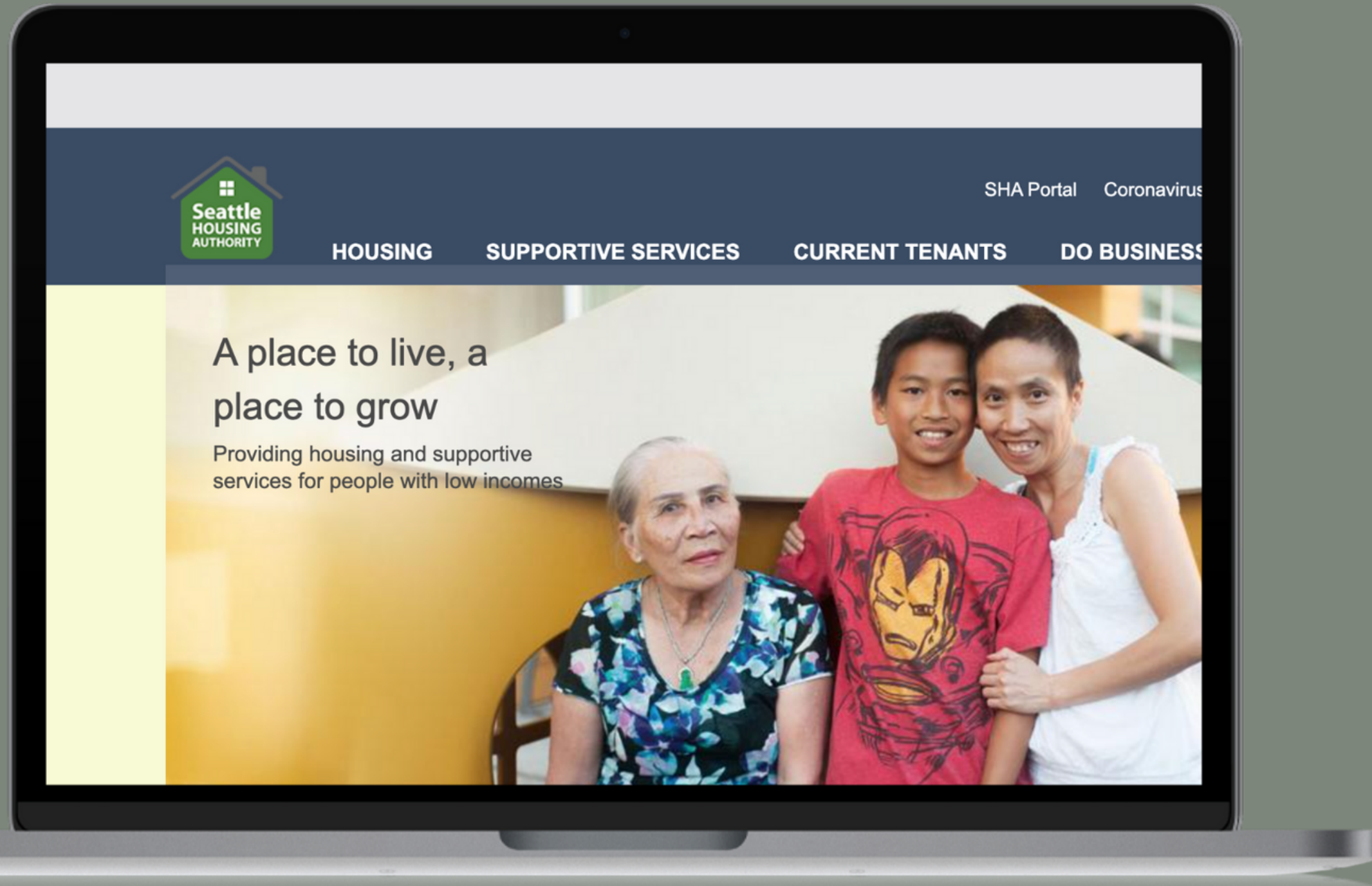
Best Practices

Council Bluffs Housing Authority

- Information for tenants and landlords
- Online applications for housing assistance
- Waitlist status



Best Practices



Seattle Housing Authority

- Up-to-date and easy-to-read
- Language options
- Comprehensive list of resources

Policy Recommendations



**Harm Reduction
Infographic**



**Clinton Housing
Authority
Website**



**Informative
Landlord
Meeting**

Harm Reduction Infographic

IOWA GOOD SAMARITAN LAW

**YOU ARE PROTECTED IF YOU SEEK HELP FOR
SOMEONE WHO IS OVERDOSING**

ASSIST

Seek medical assistance, call 911

STAY

Remain on the scene until help arrives

CONTACT

Provide your contact information to necessary
first responders

COOPERATE

Cooperate with law enforcement and
medical personnel

***WHEN IN DOUBT, SEEK MEDICAL
ATTENTION AND CALL 911***

Harm Reduction Infographic

Cannot include:

- Needle exchange programs
- Fentanyl test strips
- Clean usage instructions

Iowa Code 124.414

Sample Website

CLINTON HOUSING AUTHORITY (CHA)



[Home](#)

[Apply](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Resources](#)

[Staff](#)

The Municipal Housing Agency
of Clinton, IA

Clinton Housing Authority (CHA)

[Apply Now >](#)

[Housing Assistance >](#)

Our Mission:

We are committed to providing and sustaining safe, affordable, and accessible living

Landlord Meeting

Objectives:

- Increase conversations with landlords
- Benefits of Section 8
- Keep landlords local



Clinton Court House- Clinton, Iowa

Sample Meeting Agenda

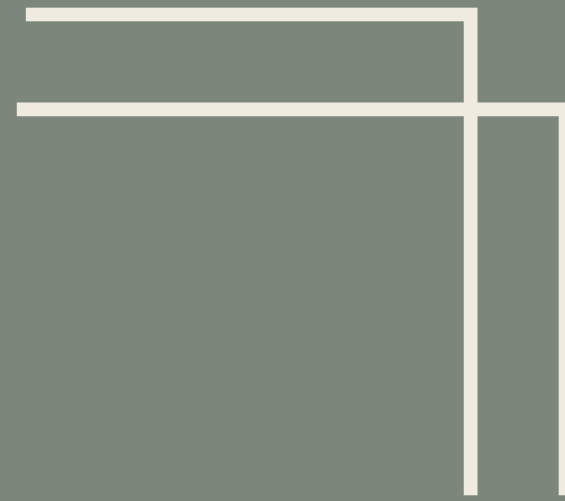
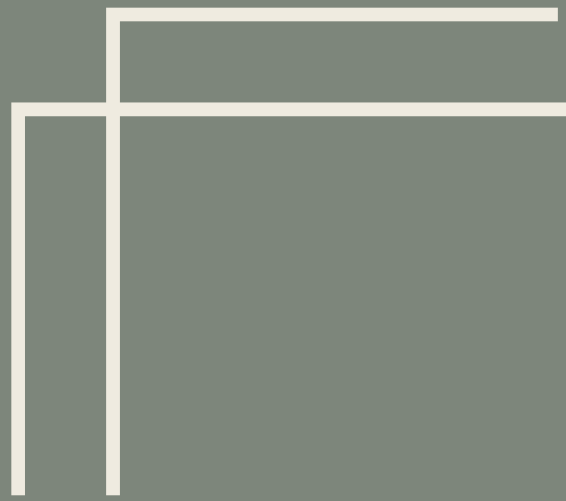
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**Thank
You!**



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