

Nashville-Davidson County Continuum of Care **HOMELESSNESS PLANNING COUNCIL**

2025 Nominees

Candidate Profiles

Submitted to the Continuum of Care

Nominating & Membership Committee for Review



Alyssa Fernandez

Oasis Center

Director of Permanent Housing

Brief Biography

As a California transplant, much of my formative years were spent in the North Nashville area. It is here where my family was fortunate to be a recipient of the support of various social services to prevent my family from entering homelessness after my mother experienced a sudden disability. Despite our hardships, and with the help of our community, I was able to eventually become the first in my family to graduate from college. I have an Associate's Degree in Psychology from Volunteer State Community College, a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Sociology from Austin Peay State University and a Masters of Science in Social Work from University of Tennessee – Knoxville. For the past 13 years, I have dedicated my service to the public, with a focus on youth and young adults. My past work experience includes being a licensed therapist, case manager, director of a foster care program and now as Director of Permanent Housing at the Oasis Center. Additionally, I received a certificate in Intrapreneurship from eCornell University. With this certificate, I expanded my knowledge on transforming organizational culture through strategic thinking, change management, team development and other systematic approaches. I believe I use a collection of my personal and professional experiences to drive change and growth in every space I enter.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

The Homelessness Planning Council's mission aligns with my values and strengths, and I would love to contribute even more to this passionate and dedicated community. I believe my relatively short experience within homelessness specifically (2.5 years) can be seen as an asset to bring a renewed and diverse perspective to the Council and its committees. Even during this short time, I hope to have contributed in bringing new energy, and a sense of unity and hope, that the HPC will need to reach its goals and beyond.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year?

Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee?

Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

As Director of Permanent Housing, I am primarily working to address homelessness through leadership of the Oasis Center's Rapid Re-Housing program for young adults and families aged 18 to 24. This program is the second largest recipient of COC funding behind MDHA and managing a successful million dollar budget program requires me to effectively utilize my skills in leadership, community partnerships, diplomacy, and grant management. At the same time, I prioritize ensuring that our staff and those that we serve are seen, heard, valued and appropriately supported in order to meet our mutual goals of getting Nashvillians housed and staying housed for the long term.

Since 2023, I have been an active participant of the COC General Membership as well as the Diversity and Equity Committee. My contributions led me to become Chair of the COC Diversity and Equity Committee in September 2024. Recently, I have also taken on leading COC's newest Initiatives Efficiency Ad Hoc Task Force, dedicated to fulfilling specific tasks that move the Homelessness Planning Council's Strategic Plan goals forward.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I truly believe we can essentially end homelessness in Nashville, and this can largely be done with innovative and effective systems and individuals working in alignment. This mentality will be what I bring to the Council - not only in concept but in action, setting forth tangible solutions wherever I can. I'm always ready to answer the call to action toward ending homelessness in our community!

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)?

No

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

Black Hispanic Female

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interest (relationships, service on agency boards, previous employers, etc.)

I work at the Oasis Center as Director of the COC funded program Rapid Re-Housing.

Amanda Smith

Meharry Medical College

Brief Biography

With a deep-rooted passion for promoting health equity and social justice, Amanda is a dedicated Master's level social worker specializing in substance use treatment and harm reduction strategies. With three years of experience in the field, she works to ensure quality care and support for individuals navigating substance use challenges. Currently serving as the Clinic Supervisor at Meharry Addiction Clinic, Amanda oversees the daily operations of the clinic, assisting in implementing evidence-based practices and innovative harm reduction approaches. She collaborates closely with a multidisciplinary team to develop a harm reduction approach that meets each patient's unique needs, empowering them with life-saving tools and providing options without judgment. Amanda earned her Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from Tennessee State University in 2021. She has been with Meharry since 2021, progressing from a graduate-level intern to her current role as Clinical Supervisor.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

I am seeking to serve on the Council to End Homelessness because I believe that housing is a fundamental human right, and I am committed to being part of a solution that ensures no one in our community is left without a safe place to call home. Homelessness is not a singular issue—it intersects with mental health, addiction, economic inequality, systemic racism, and gaps in our social safety net. Ending it requires collaboration, compassion, and action rooted in lived experience and evidence-based practices.

I bring to this council not only a strong desire to advocate for sustainable change but also a willingness to listen deeply to those who are directly affected. Whether through policy, outreach, or partnership-building, I want to contribute to strategies that are inclusive, practical, and long-term. My goal is to help build systems that prevent homelessness before it starts and provide pathways out of it that honor people's dignity and worth.

Being part of this council is an opportunity to serve with others who share a vision for a more just and equitable community. I'm ready to roll up my sleeves, engage with stakeholders, and help ensure that our collective efforts lead to meaningful and measurable progress.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

In my role at a grant-funded outpatient clinic providing free substance use treatment, I have had the privilege of working with individuals experiencing homelessness who are often navigating some of the most difficult circumstances of their lives. Our clinic operates on the principle that access to care should never be dependent on income or housing status, and this has allowed us to serve clients who might otherwise be excluded from the traditional healthcare system.

Through this work, I've seen how substance use and homelessness are deeply interconnected—not just clinically, but socially and structurally. Many of our clients are facing barriers such as lack of ID, transportation, trauma, stigma, and long waitlists for housing. In response, our team has taken a holistic approach that integrates substance use treatment with wraparound support, community partnerships, and a strong emphasis on trauma-informed care.

Working in a setting sustained by grant funding has also deepened my understanding of the importance of sustainable public investment, data-driven outcomes, and equitable resource allocation. I've contributed to outreach, care coordination, and service delivery that help bridge gaps between emergency services, housing providers, and recovery supports.

Being part of the Council to End Homelessness would allow me to bring these insights to a broader systems-level conversation—helping to shape policies that reflect both the lived experiences of those we serve and the frontline realities of service delivery. I’m committed to advocating for strategies that are inclusive, compassionate, and rooted in the understanding that recovery and housing stability must go hand-in-hand.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

As a social worker, I bring both a compassionate lens and a systems-oriented approach to addressing homelessness. I understand that housing instability is rarely the result of a single issue—it is often the product of systemic inequities, generational poverty, untreated trauma, and limited access to behavioral health services. My work focuses not only on providing immediate support to individuals but also on advocating for long-term solutions that promote housing stability, dignity, and equity.

In our community, I contribute by doing the following:

- Build trusting relationships with individuals experiencing homelessness, meeting them where they are, and connecting them to services that are accessible, trauma-informed, and person-centered.
- Collaborate across systems—healthcare, housing, criminal justice, and behavioral health—to ensure that people don’t fall through the cracks.
- Advocate for policies and funding that expand access to affordable housing, supportive services, and harm-reduction programs.
- Use data and lived experience to inform service improvements, reduce barriers, and drive change at both the individual and systemic levels.
- Elevate the voices of marginalized populations, especially those often overlooked in policy decisions, to ensure our community’s response to homelessness is inclusive and just.

I see every interaction as an opportunity to help someone move closer to safety, stability, and wellness—and every system as something we have the power to improve. I’m committed to being a voice, an advocate, and a collaborator in our shared work to end homelessness.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

None

Caanen Cleg

The Salvation Army

Program Director

Brief Biography

I've served in key leadership roles within Homeless Services, including Case Manager, Homeless Services Coordinator, and now Residential Program Director for The Salvation Army in Nashville. I specialize in trauma-informed, faith-based support for single adults and families in transitional housing and rapid rehousing programs. My work focuses on client-centered engagement, staff development, and operational oversight, with a strong track record of improving program outcomes, strengthening partnerships, and leading teams with compassion and accountability.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

I want to be a part of the Homelessness Planning Council because I'm deeply committed to strengthening our community's Housing Crisis Resolution System and ensuring that our approach to homelessness is both coordinated and client-centered. With frontline and leadership experience in transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and emergency services, I bring a practical perspective on the challenges providers and participants face daily. Serving on the HPC would allow me to contribute to system-level solutions, advocate for trauma-informed and equitable policies, and help bridge the gap between direct service providers and broader strategic planning. I'm passionate about collaborative, faith-rooted, and data-driven efforts to reduce homelessness in Nashville—and I see HPC as a critical space to help drive that mission forward.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

I bring over five years of experience in homeless services and transitional housing, with a strong track record of leadership, collaboration, and system-level thinking. I currently serve as the Center of Hope Program Director for The Salvation Army in Nashville, where I oversee residential programs for single men, women, and families, integrating trauma-informed and faith-based approaches to promote housing stability and self-sufficiency. Previously, I served as the Homeless Services Coordinator for The Salvation Army in Southern Nevada, managing emergency shelter operations, supervising multidisciplinary teams, and stewarding a \$2 million program budget. My background also includes direct case management, grant coordination, and reentry services through roles with Romans Eight Health & Wellness, Novum-U, and various nonprofit initiatives focused on housing and reintegration. I am passionate about bringing frontline insight to strategic planning efforts and contributing to collaborative, data-informed solutions that strengthen our community's response to homelessness. I would be honored to bring this experience to the board and help shape sustainable, equity-driven outcomes for individuals and families in crisis.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

As someone with direct experience overseeing emergency, transitional, and rapid rehousing programs, I believe I can contribute meaningfully to system-level strategies aimed at ending homelessness in our community. My current role as Program Director at The Salvation Army in Nashville has allowed me to witness firsthand both the barriers our clients face and the creative solutions that make lasting impact. With The Salvation Army now expanding to include income-based housing and gap housing, I am uniquely positioned to help bridge these new developments with our existing continuum of care. I bring practical insight into what successful service delivery looks like on the ground, and I am committed to using that perspective to inform policy decisions, strengthen collaboration, and advocate for programs that are trauma-informed, client-driven, and grounded in dignity. I am especially passionate about addressing the systemic gaps between emergency services and permanent housing, and I see this expansion as a critical opportunity to move more individuals and families toward long-term stability.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? Yes

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

She/Her

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

None



Catherine Knowles

Metro Nashville Public Schools HERO Program

Director of Special Population Services and McKinney-Vento Liaison

Brief Biography

Catherine Knowles has served as the Director of The HERO Program for Families in Transition of Metro Nashville Public Schools in Nashville, Tennessee for twenty-six years. During that time the program has grown from serving 200 students a year to more than 4,500. Catherine is known as a leader and advocate not only in Nashville, but also throughout the state of Tennessee and nationally. Catherine was recognized in 2019 as The Homeless Liaison of the Year by the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. She currently serves on three state-wide councils under appointments from the Governor as a service provider representing the concerns of families who are experiencing homelessness. Catherine received her Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Tennessee and serves as an internship supervisor for both graduate and undergraduate students in the Nashville area.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

As a Nashville native and former Homelessness Planning Council member, I understand that there is urgent work to be done in our city. I have dedicated my professional career to supporting students and families experiencing homelessness and I recognize there is still so much work to be done--as an individual, a neighbor, and an organization, but more importantly at a systems and community to ensure we build a strong systems of support out of homelessness for everyone in our community. I want to serve in order to elevate the needs and concerns of students and families who are experiencing homelessness and to collaborate with others on programming and services that really will make a difference.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

For the past 26 years, I have served students and families experiencing homelessness in Metro Schools. I have grown the program from a one-room portable building in a parking lot to an entire wing of a former elementary school. We converted the library into a clothing store and established a food pantry stocked with microwaveable and other ready to eat foods built from a list of what our students and families said they wanted to eat. I value my conversations and direct interactions with the families and students above all else as they are the experts who have taught me the most.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

As a social worker and Nashville native, I think the greatest contribution I bring to the work is my focus on educating the community about the issue of homelessness in order to bring new partners in to work on supports and solutions. We have more than 75 partners for our work at The HERO Program and I truly believe that if we talk openly and honestly about homelessness in our community then we can rally the financial support and resources that our unhoused neighbors need.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

White female, married with 2 kids

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

None



Courtney Berner

Oasis Center

Senior Director of Street Outreach and Prevention Services

Brief Biography

I currently serve as the Senior Director of Street Outreach and Prevention Services with the Crisis to Housing Department at The Oasis Center. I have spent my career working across the continuum of housing and homeless services for youth and young adults, from Street Outreach Programming to Permanent Supportive Housing and Homelessness Prevention. During my time at Oasis, I have also had the opportunity to participate heavily within the Continuum of Care through committee and workgroup level engagement. I previously served as the Chair of the Nashville Coalition for the Homeless and currently serve on the CoC Coordinated Entry Oversight Committee, the CoC Shelter, Weather, Outreach and Prevention Committee, the CoC Standards of Care Committee, the Coordinated Entry Core Assessment Workgroup, and the United Way Family Collective Prevention and Diversion Workgroup. My work, both organizationally and communally, is rooted in a commitment to equitably and responsibly ending homelessness in Nashville, TN through the human right of affordable housing and access to resources for all individuals.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

I would like to serve on the Homeless Planning Council to continue to be a part of creating a community level homelessness response system that is equitable and easy to access for anyone navigating homelessness, housing loss or housing instability. I believe that a person-centered coordinated community response is essential to making homelessness rare and brief in our community. I would like to serve on the Homeless Planning Council so that I can continue to serve and lead our community in our work to end homelessness in Nashville through dedicated collaboration and advocacy.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

- Senior Director of Street Outreach and Prevention Services at Oasis Center, Inc
September 2022-Current

- Supportive Housing Manager at Oasis Center, Inc
September 2020-September 2022

- Fisk Court Permanent Supportive Housing Coordinator at Oasis Center, Inc
June 2019-September 2020

- Nashville Coalition for the Homeless Board Member, January 2020 - December 2021
- Nashville Coalition for the Homeless Board Chair, January 2022 – June 2023
- Metro Nashville CE Assessment and Prioritizing Stakeholder Group, July 2022 - Current
- The Family Collective (United Way) Steering Committee Member, January 2024 - Current
- United Way Prevention and Diversion Community Task Force Member, May 2024 – Current
- National Prevention Learning Collaborative Team Member, May 2024 - Current
- Nashville Continuum of Care Shelter, Weather, Outreach and Prevention Committee, June 2024 – Current
- Nashville Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Oversight Committee, August 2024 – Current

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I will continue to contribute toward ending homelessness in Nashville through my dedication to the quality of services provided at the organizational level, through programming oversight at Oasis Center. I also continue my commitment to representing underserved voices and experiences at the community level, through my participation in both CoC and non-CoC committees and workgroups. Finally, I will remain abreast of best practices and advocacy, through my engagement with National level work and continued education.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

She/her/hers

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

FTE at a CoC funded agency - Oasis Center, Inc.



H.G. Stovall

Nashville Launch Pad (Executive Director)

**Shelter Weather Outreach and Prevention Committee
(Member)**

Connection UMC, Trustee Building Chair

Brief Biography

Stovall is near-native of Nashville and middle Tennessee and an accomplished non-profit leader based in Nashville, TN, with over 20 years of experience in hospitality, healthcare, higher-ed, non-profit, and sectors blending these fields.

His expertise spans executive leadership, strategic planning, fundraising, and program expansion. Equality and equity are his life's mission while his greatest joys are his family, his dogs, limited time outdoors and more time than reasonable in antique stores and enjoying southern food. Stovall is founding board chair of Connection United Methodist Church in Donelson and holds a Bachelor of Science in Political Science from Middle Tennessee State University.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

If I am to be selected, it will be my joy and my aim to provide a voice of practical wisdom and to passionately advocate for all our unhoused neighbors with a particular understanding of the unique challenges faced by young adults and those in the LGBTQIA+ community.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

I am known as a visionary non-profit leader with over 20 years of experience, demonstrating a strong commitment to combating youth homelessness in the Nashville area. My leadership is characterized by a passion for equity, innovation, lifting under-served voices, and empowering marginalized youth.

In my role as Executive Director at Nashville Launch Pad, I have demonstrated exceptional leadership by with the support of the board and our funders, transforming the organization and significantly expanding its services to address a critical community need. Upon joining Nashville Launch Pad, I reorganized operations to preserve services and create a pathway for financial recovery. I expanded the reach of Nashville Launch Pad, increasing bed capacity from 6 to 43 and growing the staff from 2 to 20. This demonstrates a direct effort to provide more resources to homeless youth.

My leadership also stabilized the organization's finances through fundraising, increasing the cash flow position significantly. Securing grant funding from Metro Nashville to provide 24/7 staffed transitional housing showcases my ability to address a critical community need and secure vital resources. Furthermore, my efforts to represent the agency in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) application for the City of Nashville, included the reinstatement of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), highlighting my commitment to systemic change and incorporating the voices of those directly affected.

Beyond direct service provision, I have cultivated strong relationships with community leaders, clients service providers and governmental agencies alike, promoting trust and increasing service quality and scope. This collaborative leadership style ensures the organization's sustainability and effectiveness in the long term.

Overall, my career reflects a dedicated leader who not only manages organizations but also drives significant positive change, most recently in addressing youth homelessness through strategic growth, operational excellence, and a deep commitment to those in need.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

Strategic Leadership: With over 20 years of experience in non-profit leadership, I can provide strategic direction to organizations focused on combating homelessness. This includes developing and implementing effective programs, ensuring operational efficiency, and driving organizational growth.

Leading with Authenticity, Common Sense, and Grace: Known for a pragmatic mindset, I am (generally) a kind but direct truth-teller who places a high value on holding partners accountable. This commitment to responsibility is paired with an unwavering focus on the missional needs and priorities of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, driving all actions and decisions.

Collaboration and Community Engagement: I have experience in building trust strong relationships with boards/committees/team, community stakeholders, and government entities. This collaborative approach is essential for coordinating efforts and creating comprehensive solutions to homelessness.

Advocacy: My involvement in community leadership roles, such as work with Tennessee Equality Project and Urban Housing Solutions Community Council, demonstrates a commitment to advocacy and addressing social issues. This experience can be leveraged to raise awareness, promote policy changes, and advocate for the rights of the homeless population.

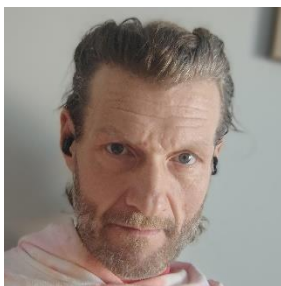
Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

I am a cis-gendered, gay, white, male who has lived in middle Tennessee for more than 80% of his life. It is my duty to, whenever possible hand the microphone to those who are not heard frequently enough.

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

Executive Director of Nashville Launch Pad



James Johnson

Strobel House (Tenant)

Los Angeles Film School (Student, Program Writer)

Brief Biography

20 plus years lived experience across the country, Father, Husband to a glorious bride, Son, Brother Apologist and defender of the Word and those therein. All in all I desire to free those that are in need, champion voices that are vulnerable, well prepared and unheard.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

See above bio

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

Multiple councils, private and public funding money miner and Networker. One who prays for the mother, father heart. Writer of the Federal Housing Bill for Affordable and Continued Passionate Care and Needs.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

What I am instructed. Or what the spirit leads.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? Yes

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

Simply I am myself

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

None, I am objective and know how to refuse myself in those circumstances.



Jaquita Maye

Mary Parrish Center (Housing Navigator)

Dream Streets (Transitional Housing Floor Manager)

Brief Biography

I began my career in social services as an Outreach Worker at The Salvation Army, where I provided meals, assisted clients in obtaining essential documents, and connected them with vital resources to support their success and integration into the community. My dedication to serving others, driven by a deep sense of purpose and calling, led to my promotion to Case Manager, and eventually to Lead Case Manager. In this role, I worked extensively with the unhoused population and actively contributed as a member of the Community Advisory Board (CAB).

Seeking to expand my impact, I transitioned to Dream Streets Transitional Housing, where I served as Floor Manager and provided case management support. Motivated by a strong desire to grow professionally and continue serving vulnerable populations, I accepted a position as a Housing Navigator at the Mary Parrish Center. In this role, I assist individuals who have experienced interpersonal and domestic violence in securing safe, stable housing and rebuilding their lives.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

I am interested in serving on the Homelessness Planning Council to contribute both my lived experience and my broader perspective on the needs of individuals, the community, and the city as a whole.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

I have over five years of experience working with individuals experiencing homelessness, during which I have developed extensive knowledge and resources to support their transition to stability. My work has included engaging with private landlords to expand housing opportunities, building partnerships with employers and organizations to create pathways to employment, and collaborating with financial institutions to provide financial literacy workshops. I have also coordinated with childcare providers and facilities to help families secure childcare and established effective communication with school boards and counselors to support the educational needs of school-aged children.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I would be able to contribute knowledge on needs of the Unhoused population, resources, and support in areas needed

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? Yes

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

I identify as an African American female hard working, determined, passion driven

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

N/A

Kennetha Patterson

“The Homeless CEO”

Re-Election Statement: Continued meaningful communal , change in homelessness policy

Three years ago, I joined the Homeless Planning Council (HPC) with a deep commitment to improving outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Through persistence and collaboration, I quickly emerged as a leader—first as Chair of the HPC Continuum of Care (CoC) Consumer Advisory Board in my second year, and later as the " First Historical Lived Expertise Chair " of the HUD CoC Homeless Planning Council. In this role, I have championed the integration of firsthand experience into policy conversations, ensuring that diverse perspectives contribute to more effective solutions.

My mission is centered on fostering " real people creating data-driven transformation " that prioritizes long-term stability for individuals and families.

In pursuit of progress, I have worked to strengthen the council’s approach, ensuring that individuals with lived experience remain at the core of policy development. Without these voices, the CoC risks overlooking key insights necessary for lasting change.

As I seek reelection, I remain committed to advancing strategic improvements across the following priorities:

1. Expanding Stakeholder Inclusion –

Elevating the role of individuals with firsthand experience in homelessness within policy discussions to inform responsive and effective solutions.

2. Advancing Housing Access & Stability –

Enhancing pathways to housing through strengthened coordination, streamlined services, and sustainable strategies that support long-term affordability and stability.

3. Strengthening Policy Innovation & Implementation –

Prioritizing evidence-based approaches that enhance rapid rehousing, affordable housing initiatives, and systemic improvements that address root causes.

4. Building Collaborative Partnerships –

Deepening engagement with community organizations, policymakers, and funding partners to optimize resource distribution and strengthen collective impact.

5. Enhancing Transparency & System Performance –

Driving accountability measures that ensure policies and programs yield tangible progress for individuals seeking housing stability.

6. Establishing a Foundation for Future Success –

Ensuring that the next generation of leadership inherits a framework designed to sustain long-term effectiveness, innovation, and measurable outcomes.

I remain steadfast in my commitment to " harm reduction, transparency, and solution-driven action ", continuing the momentum of our strategic initiatives.

This work is not about individual leadership but developing other leaders to build up and out — it is about strengthening systems to ensure ALL individuals have access to stable housing, opportunity, and pathways to long-term success.

With your continued support, I will ensure that future leadership inherits a council that is forward-thinking, outcome-driven, and positioned to foster transformative change.



Jesse Call

The Village at Glencliff

Resident Care Manager

Brief Biography

Jesse currently manages care for residents at The Village at Glencliff, a medical respite emergency shelter that utilizes tiny homes. Jesse has lived experience as a survivor of homelessness, domestic violence, and mental health. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Concord University in political science and history, and a Juris Doctorate from Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law, however, is not currently a practicing attorney. He lives in Donelson and enjoys visiting the city's parks and lakes.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

I'm not entirely sure that I do. I think the HPC has significant potential to be a conduit for change in the status quo towards homelessness. It could focus less on sustaining the norm and more on creating new approaches that enable a person-centered, trauma-informed, discrimination-free, and Housing First perspective among Nashville's stakeholders. If we want to head in that direction, I'm on board.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

His work with homelessness began in middle school, when he volunteered daily at an emergency food pantry and soup kitchen. He has worked for homelessness outreach organizations and as a reporter for street newspapers in Cincinnati and Nashville, covering stories about the daily struggles of marginalized people. He has previously managed a street outreach, rapid rehousing, and transitional housing program at The Salvation Army Nashville, directed the housing outreach program at Street Works, and had roles with Park Center, Room In the Inn, and The Contributor. Additionally, he volunteered as a winter outreach canvasser with Open Table Nashville.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I think I may be able to offer a beneficial perspective as a person with lived experience and having worked with various communities among our neighbors that have experienced homelessness, including families, individuals, survivors of domestic violence, people living with HIV/AIDS, and people living with severe, persistent mental illness. My experience includes work done in other communities, both rural and urban.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? Yes

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

I am a white, cisgender male with disabilities and a member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

I serve on the board of the Nashville Coalition for the Homeless. My previous employers were mentioned above.

Laura Alvarez

DePaul USA (Strobel House)

Nashville City Director

Brief Biography

Laura Alvarez is a dedicated and accomplished professional with a robust background in social services and non-profit management. Currently serving as the Nashville City Director for Depaul USA, Laura brings a wealth of experience and a passion for helping others to her role.

Laura began her career as a law clerk before transitioning to the Board of Probation and Parole, where she supervised probationers, parolees, and sex offenders. She was instrumental in piloting gender-specific parole supervision and she created the Guidelines for Approved Transitional Housing Providers after identifying a need to ensure safe and stable housing for individuals leaving incarceration.

Her commitment to improving reentry outcomes, and a department merger, led her to the Tennessee Department of Correction, where she served as the Director of Offender Housing. In this role, Laura created the Reentry Housing Program, a partnership with the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) to provide funds to transitional housing providers for housing indigent individuals upon release. Her innovation in this field earned her Tennessee's Best Award for Outstanding Advocacy in 2013 at the Governor's Housing Summit. In addition to reentry housing for individuals upon release, Laura also worked with the specialized housing units in the facilities to provide incarcerated individuals with access to reentry programs and tools prior to release.

After a brief stint in hospitality management, Laura returned to her true calling in social services. However, during her time away, she continued to push for success. Among other accomplishments, her excellence in hospitality was recognized in 2022 by country music star Lee Brice, who publicly announced, via video, Laura as his favorite restaurant manager and her restaurant as his favorite place to eat.

In 2024, the social services world came calling again, which resulted in her joining Depaul USA as the Program Director for Strobel House. In her current position as Nashville City Director, she continues to make a significant impact by developing and implementing programs that support individuals in need.

A Nashville native, Laura graduated from John Overton High School and played softball at Tennessee State University, where she earned her degree in Criminal Justice.

Laura's diverse experience and unwavering dedication to social justice make her a valuable asset to Depaul USA and the Nashville community.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

To work in the best interest of individuals who have been marginalized and are often overlooked. To find innovative and new solutions to recurring issues and problems with individuals experiencing homelessness.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

During my time at Board of Probation and Parole and Dept. of Correction, homelessness was a very real problem for individuals under supervision, and those leaving incarceration. I created the Reentry Housing Program in order to fund housing options for those individuals. I created informational training sessions to dispel myths and fear around housing sex offenders and violent offenders. In my current role I work to keep individuals who have been chronically homeless previously, housed.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I can continue working to ensure supportive services are available to the Strobel House residents. I can also contribute towards looking at new ways to address old problems. I have a knowledge of and contacts in the legal and criminal justice systems. I have experience with creating programs, administering funding, and identifying funding sources. I also have direct experience working with the most at risk populations.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

She/her

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

None

Mary (Dede) Byrd

Brief Biography

I was born, raised, and educated in Davidson County. I earned my Bachelor's of Science in nursing at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. I completed my Certificate of Anesthesia at Middle Tennessee School of Anesthesia and worked at Centennial Medical Center for over 30 years. My interest in homelessness began at the beginning of COVID due to individuals dying at Brookmeade's encampment. I joined the Continuum of Care to educate myself on homelessness and the efforts surrounding this issue. I have attended thousands of hours of COC committee meetings, community meetings, council meetings, commission and board meetings in the attempt to move housing of those experiencing homelessness forward. Serving on the Homeless Planning Council would be an honor and an opportunity to learn and contribute on another level.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

Serving would allow me to bring the homeless communities needs to other entities. A position on the council opens doors that would otherwise be more difficult to enter. I would promote a culture of hope that would involve services and push for a safe place to do the work.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

My involvement with Brookmeade's encampment exposed me to the layers of services needed. Housing in a safe place was my number one priority, for the camper and the outreach worker. The individuals in the encampment are as different as the services they need. It was the sense of hopelessness that motivated me. The answer was not cookie cutter simple. It was as diverse, repetitive, and unique as each person. It is complicated, but if we work as a community, it is achievable.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I would start by pushing at the state and local level for more beds, not just housing. Some of the most vulnerable have specific needs that must be triaged, addressed, and treated. We need facilities that meet these needs.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

She/her

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

None

Mick Nelson

Nelson Community Partners

Managing Principal

Brief Biography

Mick is the Managing Principal of Nelson Community Partners (NCP), which has a singular focus on partnering to create the most meaningful affordable housing and community development projects in Tennessee. He earned his doctorate from Vanderbilt University, where he focused on affordable housing policy, real estate analysis, and urban development patterns. While there, he joined community advocates in working towards establishing the Barnes Fund for Affordable Housing in Nashville.

Mick specializes in complex affordable housing transactions, with a particular focus on mixed-income housing, permanent supportive housing (PSH) and public-private partnerships. He previously worked for the Tennessee Housing Development Agency where he oversaw major asset management, strategic planning, and research projects. He sometimes teaches courses in Community Development at Vanderbilt University and was honored to co-chair the Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

I am a strong believer in a Housing First approach to addressing homelessness, and would love to be a part of the city's response to helping end homelessness here in our city. I hope my experience developing over 100 units of PSH housing would be helpful to the Council.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

We were the co-developers, with Volunteer Ministry Center, of Caswell Manor in Knoxville, which created 48 units of permanent supportive housing in Knoxville and was completed in 2022. We also were the codevelopers of Callahan Flats, with Knoxville Leadership Foundation, which includes 58 units of permanent supportive housing and will be complete this summer. Our firm also has 2 projects underway to help create another 40 units of permanent supportive housing here in Nashville, and is working on another significant PSH project with the City of Chattanooga.

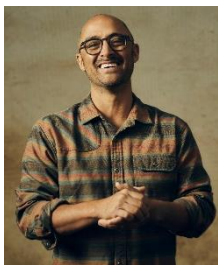
How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I hope my real estate development and policy experience will be helpful in ending homelessness.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

While I am not aware of any direct conflicts of interest at this time, from time to time our firm partners with other organizations that work on ending homelessness and will disclose and recuse myself from any matters as required by the conflict of interest policy.



Ryan Lampa

People Loving Nashville

CEO

Brief Biography

Since a young boy, Ryan Lampa has felt a calling: to help people see beyond where they see themselves. Whether through mentorship, service, or community, he loves journeying alongside others as they step into something greater.

His own journey has taken him from touring the world managing concerts to launching a grassroots movement that now is one of Nashville's largest homeless outreaches. As the Founder and CEO of People Loving Nashville, Ryan leads a mission inspired by Jesus, dedicated to bringing Relief, Community, Connection, and Restoration to those suffering in his community. He knows that real transformation happens when those who can help step into the story and take action, whether by serving, giving, or simply showing up.

But his greatest adventure? Marrying the love of his life and raising three amazing kids. When he's not leading or serving, you'll likely find him on a quiet river, fly rod in hand, listening for what God has for him next.. Join him in helping others see beyond their circumstances and into the hope of what's possible.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

I see the opportunities for us to grow in trust, effectiveness and even simplicity around the complications and challenges of solving the issues causing and sustaining homelessness in our community. I'd like to offer energy, vision and hope and really try to bring focus to the CoC, and set the table for hope for those we serve.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year?

OTHER - If the meeting day can be moved from second Wednesday, I would consider sitting on this board.

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

I currently lead an organization that brings relief efforts, community building, connection to resources and once in housing a program to find healing and work for sustainability after leaving the streets. I have been doing this work since 2008.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I have passion around locating issues, rallying around tangible solutions and staying hyper focused towards goals. I have hope that our community can come together and do better than we are doing now.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

Male

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

Currently Chair of SWOP of community

Sarah Champion

The Beat (Co-Director)

The Contributor (Housing Stability Guide)

Brief Biography

I came to Nashville from Houston, TX in 2009 to attend Belmont University - spending about 8 years in the music industry after graduation. I gained experience in almost every area of administration and legal with an expertise in data management. In searching for my own sense of direction, I found Forest Therapy and completed training to be a certified Forest Therapy Guide in 2022. Having this new lens with which to look at the world, I felt that my career at the time did not align with what I want out of life so I left it, got an interim job as a barista, and stumbled into helping homeless people (see more under Experience).

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

I am dedicated to my community. I began this work because I saw individuals being utterly overlooked and I gave what I could - which at first was only water and kindness - and it grew into me knowing most of the community by name. I believe that I can be a fair advocate in communicating the needs of the people. My own brain excels at puzzling through complex systems and enjoys increasing efficiencies. I strive to be nonjudgemental, fair, and compassionate.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? No

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

Over three years ago I began engaging with the Madison homeless community by chance when I took a job as a barista right of Gallatin Pike. Within a year, this expanded into street outreach with The Beat alongside what I could do from my position at the coffee shop. In 2024, I piloted a "lemonade stand" as an outreach effort at a downtown Madison camp that ran throughout the whole warm season and helped us act as trusted mediators when the camp had to close. Over the winter, I hosted a warming shelter through The Beat for 70 of the coldest days. We served hot food every evening and negotiated a shuttle from our shelter to the Overnight Shelter each night that it was open. We transitioned this into a Saturday Dinner that has run every single week since the warming shelter closed. In April of 2025 I began working with The Contributor as a Housing Stability Guide. In 2024, I worked with the necessary governmental departments to ensure that the path to obtaining an ID as an unhoused person was clearly explained online and that the Homeless or Shelter Resident Affidavit was available for download (as it was not previously). In March of this year, I testified alongside Lindsey Krinks of Open Table against HB0197 at the House Transportation Committee.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I want to keep helping people! I've already seen how fostering community within a specific neighborhood ripples out into positives for the individuals and I have truly grown to love the people we serve. My dream is to open a dedicated community space within downtown Madison and The Beat's Saturday Dinner is our effort in working up to that dream.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

She/Her

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

Not aware of any.



Stephanie Cooper

Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Office of Wellness and Employment, Assistant Director

Brief Biography

I spent 8 years working in community mental health in Nashville, TN, 5 of these years were spent exclusively with individuals experiencing homelessness as well as a behavioral health disorder. I worked with the Supportive Services for Veteran Families working with HMIS, outreach, as well as Coordinated Entry. I then started the Keys to Recovery program, a SAMHSA GBHI grant, working with individuals with substance use disorders and experience issues with housing. During these years I was on the Veteran Committee and served as the Vice Chair of the HMIS Committee while working to move Davidson County in the direction of an open system, allowing for HMIS data sharing. I took over as Chair of the HMIS committee and left this position when I joined the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. I have been a member of the PEC since December 2021. I currently am the Assistant Director of the Office of Wellness and Employment for the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, where I have worked with the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) to establish an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment team to provide supported employment in Davidson County.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

Though I do not work directly with individuals experiencing homelessness anymore, I continue to advocate for this community. I joined the PEC to continue to work with this community and work to make a more effective system that moves individuals through quickly but also prioritizing their choice. I want to continue to reduce barriers and make sure everyone has access to the resources they need.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

I worked with the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, served on the Veterans Committee, was Vice Chair/Chair of the HMIS committee where we worked towards an open HMIS system to allow for data sharing, served as the agency representative for Centerstone (as the voting member) for all General CoC meetings. have served on the PEC since December 2021, and participated in the annual Point in Time count for three years. In my current role I advocate for supported employment programs as well as self-management/wellness workshops being integrated into programs working with individuals experiencing homelessness.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I could use my past experience working directly with individuals experiencing homelessness as well as experience working within the CoC to help build infrastructure and capacity of the system in Davidson County. My direct service experience helps me understand what is actually needed in the community and not just what sounds good. I also can take things that I learn working with this group to take back to my department to help influence changes and programs on that level. My experience serving on the Veteran Committee, HMIS Committee, and time on the PEC will also help me continue to push Davidson County forward.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please share any information regarding how you identify.

White female, non hispanic

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

I previously worked for Centerstone, left in November 2021. They were never a CoC funded agency but was a member of the CoC. My office now contracts with OHS for their Individual Placemen and Support (IPS) Supported Employment program.



William Joel Clendenning

Greater Nashville Realtors

Realtor

Brief Biography

As a native of Nashville, I love this city and the people who live here. I know the value of real estate financially and I know the value of safe and affordable housing. I had an amazing childhood growing up in the Inglewood neighborhood of Nashville, attended high school at Father Ryan and earned my Bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University, but throughout my life I've sought out ways to serve those in need and to give voice to those who may not otherwise be heard.

For the majority of the past 22 years, I have sought to serve the residents of Nashville and the Middle Tennessee area by helping them achieve their home ownership goals. This includes helping them buy and sell homes, being a leader in a real estate company to empower others to serve the residents of Middle Tennessee, and helping to keep over 8,000 Tennessee families in their homes when they were facing foreclosure while I was leading the State of Tennessee's Foreclosure Prevention efforts.

For the last two years, I have served as the Grants Coordinator for the Metro Nashville Office of Homeless Services, I learned so much about the amazing work done in our Continuum of Care, but I've also learned that there is still a lot of work to do. When I was young, I would roam the woods along the Cumberland River where I would see the campsites and wonder who had lived there. It wasn't until later in life that I began to understand that not everyone is afforded the same basic opportunities. All of this gives me an invaluable perspective and a deep understanding of housing and the challenges and inequity that exists for so many.

Why do you want to serve on the Homelessness Planning Council?

I believe that I can bring a unique voice to the HPC. My expertise in the real estate and housing industry, my time with the Office of Homeless Services and my lifetime as a Middle Tennessee resident afford me a wide and strong perspective that will balance the many facets of the effort to end homelessness in Nashville. I can see that the needle is moving in the right direction and I know the paradigm of hopelessness is shifting, and I want to help this momentum continue.

Can you commit to attending at least 75% of meetings within a year? Yes

Can you commit to joining at least one Continuum of Care Committee? Yes

Tell us about your experience working to address homelessness and/or support people experiencing homelessness.

As the Grants Coordinator for OHS, I was able to learn about a wide variety of efforts and services throughout the Nashville homelessness services community. Whether it was the Continuum of Care funded programs, the Metro funded programs or the programs funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, I was given a window into the beautiful work being done by the community service providers. Understanding the sources of funding as well as the many complex processes surrounding the funding is vital as the funding environment continues to change and shift towards a faith based and philanthropic model. I also served as the Metro Council liaison, interacting with the Public Health and Safety Committee on a regular basis and gaining an understanding of the legislative process. While funding was the central component of my role, my favorite part was building the relationships with the service community members. I hope to continue to build those relationships going forward.

How could you help contribute toward ending homelessness in our community?

I was once told that I have the heart of a social worker, which I think is an enormous compliment. I was raised by parents who loved their neighbors and cared for anyone who needed. The experience and expertise I've mentioned

in this application give me tools, skills and knowledge, but for me, the most important I can bring to the HPC is the same thing I bring to every real estate transaction and that is honesty, integrity and the desire to better the lives of those I serve.

Do you have lived experience of homelessness (past or present)? No

Please disclose any potential conflicts of interests.

From April 17th, 2023 to April 30th, 2025, I served as the Grants Coordinator for the Metro Nashville Office of Homeless Services. I don't believe that creates any conflicts of interest, but rather enhances my ability to be effective as a member of the HPC. I did, however, want to disclose this.