The Homeless Gap Analysis: Investigating the Homeless Response System in Rochester, N.Y.

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Introduction

Homelessness in Rochester NY can be a painfully visible reality. Tents on public property refuse to allow us to forget that some people in our community sleep outdoors no matter the weather, in parked cars, in garages, on porches, in abandoned buildings and in many other places not meant for humans as fixed, nighttime residences.
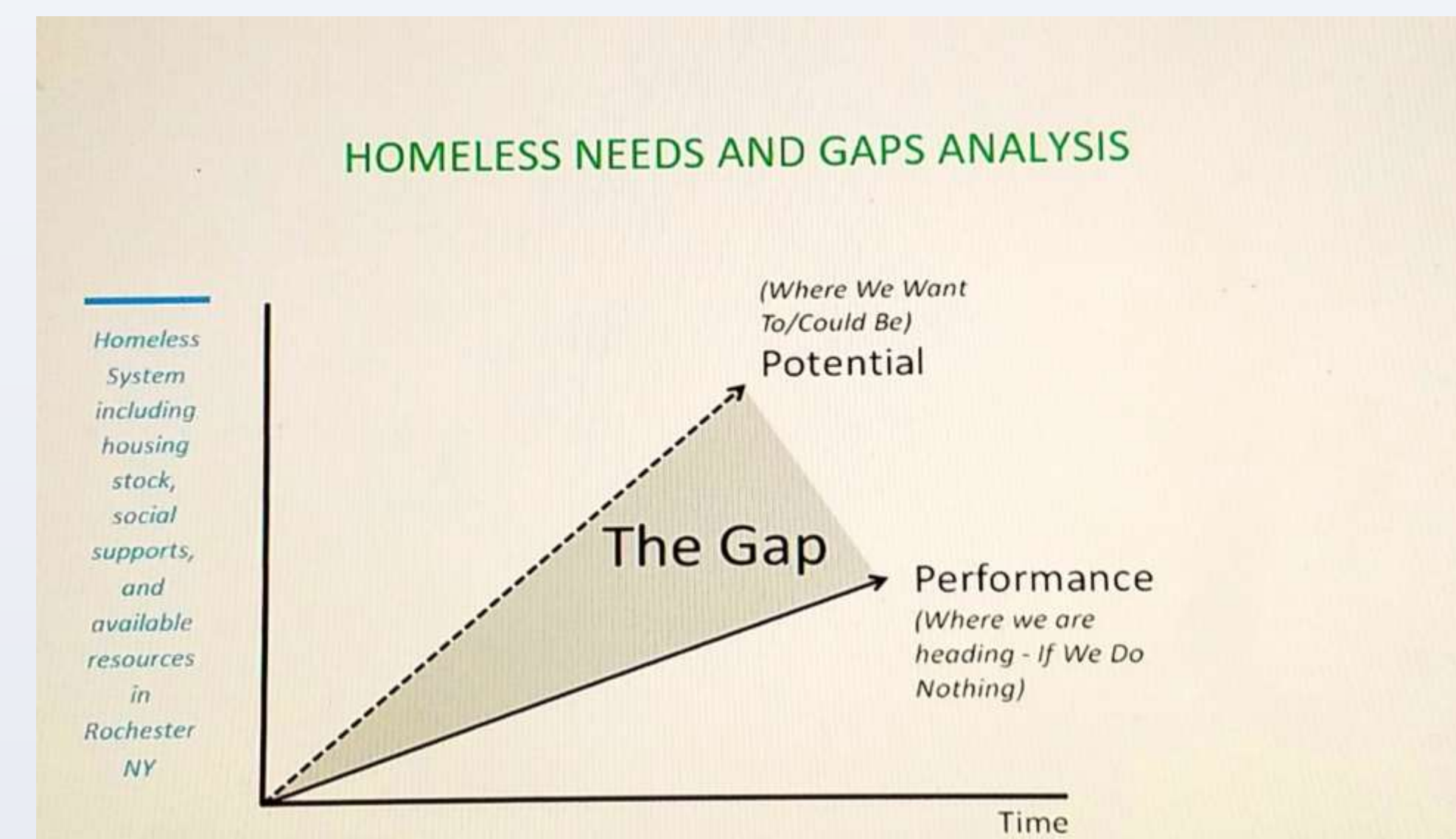
- **A place to retreat,**
- **safety,**
- **social support,**
- **a sense of community,**
- **medicine,**
- **food,**
- **warmth,**

and other aspects of what it means to be **stably housed** are also lacking for these members of our community.

Homeless encampment near the 490 overpass in Rochester, NY

OUTLINE of Proposed Investigative Steps

1. Create a survey instrument for assessing the homeless system (both baseline system and potential system)

2. Administer the survey in person (at the Homeless Services Network meeting) and by distribution list

3. Collect and review Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data to support assessment of baseline system

4. Create an interview to learn about resources and eligibility requirements of accessing resources, inviting core agents to be interviewed

5. Analyze surveys, interviews, and HMIS data to create Gaps Analysis

6. Inventory all resources and needs, show how resources fit needs, and include a proposal for how the community can choose to prioritize gaps

7. Create a methodology to triangulate gaps analysis findings using Annual Performance Reports

Strategic Model

HOMELESS NEEDS AND GAPS ANALYSIS

Homeless System including housing stock, social supports, and available resources in Rochester NY

Potential (Where We Want To/Could Be)

The Gap

Performance (Where we are heading - If We Do Nothing)

Time

"Gap analysis compares the gap between an organization's actual performance against its potential performance. In gap analysis, you typically list out the organization's current state, its desired state, and a comprehensive plan to fill out the gap between these two states.." See https://blog.udemy.com/gap-analysis-template/

EXAMPLES OF GAPS IN THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS FOR HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IN ROCHESTER NY

GAP: CODE ENFORCEMENT INTELLIGENCE NOT BEING UTILIZED TO SOLVE HOMELESSNESS

• **Code enforcement personnel or patrol division RPD officers know more about which abandoned buildings are used by homeless persons** and how homelessness persons' safety is affected by absentee landlords and code non-compliance. Yet their knowledge is under-utilized.

GAP: INTENSIVE ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS

• Recently Time Warner, RPD, Rochester Housing Authority and street outreach workers piloted a program to house twelve people living under the 490 overpass. Housing them illuminated **paperwork challenges about the RHA process of housing people that are not easily overcome.**

GAP: The Youth Drop In Center closed

• The **Hillside Drop In Center for Homeless Youth closed. Now some homeless youth have one less place to do laundry, fill out resumes, apply online to jobs, or network** with one another for peer-to-peer support.

GAP: The Hotel Problem

• DHS sometimes places people in hotels, especially families, when emergency shelters for families are full. This is very expensive, first, but worse, there is no transportation to and from the hotels where people are placed

GAP: Client History Problem

• <u>Some unsheltered homeless persons are sex offenders and have difficulty accessing housing</u> for that reason. They are no safer in unknown housing than in a known permanent residence.

GAP: RG&E Outstanding Bills

• Many homeless persons have to find housing that includes heat because **they owe thousands of dollars to Rochester Gas and Electric**. So, even if they get a housing subsidy, they can't afford to turn on the heat.

A strong gap analysis will point to the needs, but it will also illuminate the solutions.

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WHAT WILL THE COMMUNITY DO WITH A GAP AND NEED ANALYSIS?

THE GAP ANALYSIS WILL ENABLE THE COMMUNITY TO IDENTIFY AND INVENTORY EXISTING RESOURCES, DEFINE WHAT RESOURCES WE IDEALLY SHOULD HAVE, AND DESCRIBE THE GAP BETWEEN THE ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL.
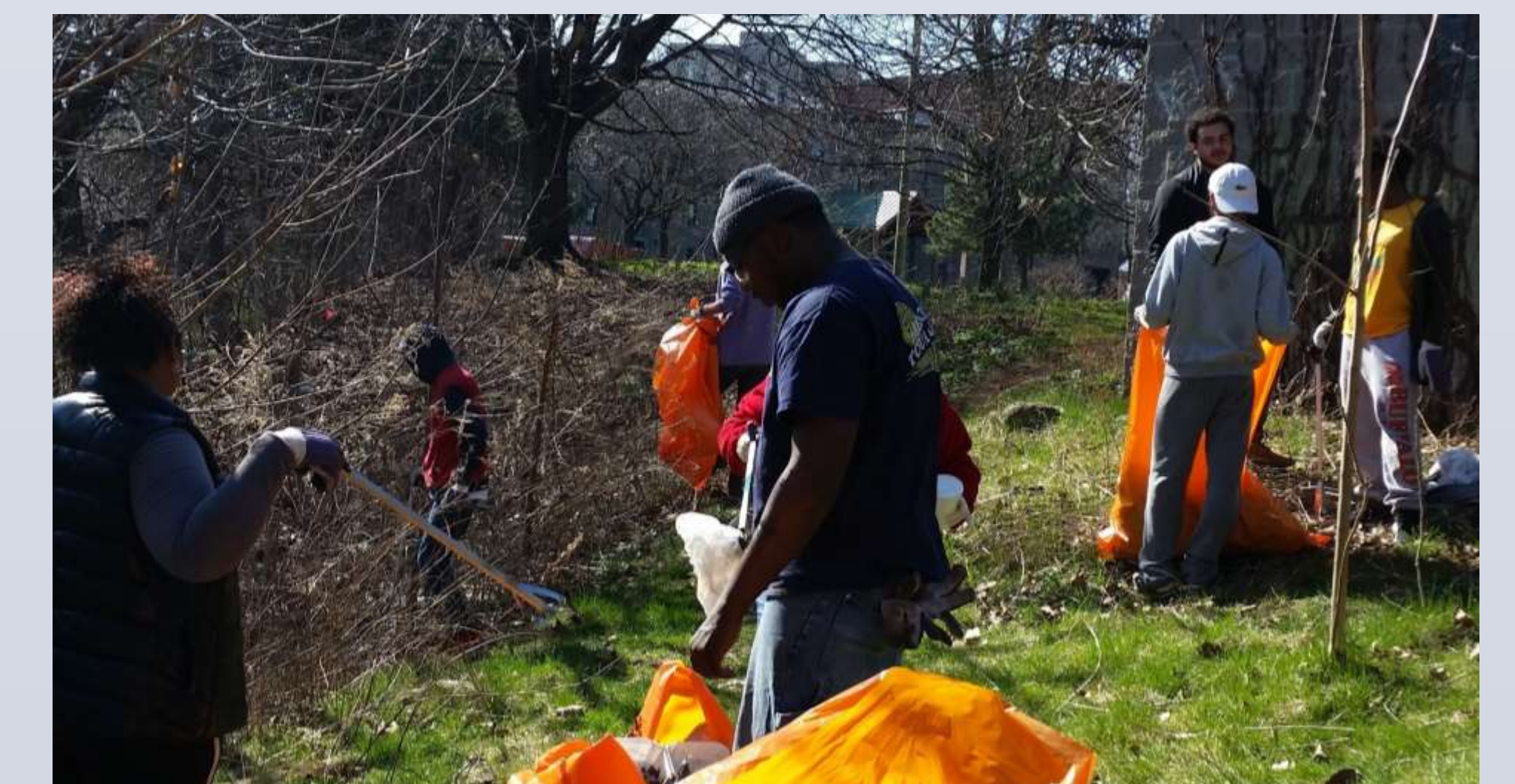
THE COMMUNITY CAN THEN PRIORITIZE THE GAPS AND USE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTYLY TO CREATE A ROBUST HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE SYSTEM IN ROCHESTER, NY.

References and Acknowledgements

https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCGuide.pdf

https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/EstablishingandOperatingaCoC_CoCProgram.pdf

http://www.nashua-coc.org/files/suprnofa/04gaps.pdf

https://ihearttpch.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/gaps-analysis_cos_intro_finrev.pdf

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Pictured above, a seasonal clean-up of a homeless encampment organized by Person Centered Housing Options, and supported by volunteers from Monroe County Department of Human Services, Rochester/Monroe County Homeless Continuum of Care, MC Collaborative, and volunteers from the Homeless Services Network, a collective of over 80 agencies that assist the homeless in Rochester, NY.