

**Scarborough Housing Alliance
Committee Meeting**
Wednesday, January 24, 2024 - Remote Meeting Only
[Scarborough Town Hall – 6:00pm]

Zoom Link:

https://scarboroughmaine.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_JfcA0RADRba_X02fiqYyTQ

AGENDA

- **Approval of Minutes - September 27 , 2023**

- **Discussion: Update on CDBG grant on Homelessness**

- **Discussion: Hotel/Motel Conversions**

- **Public Comment.**

- **Adjournment .**

WHY SHA EXISTS:

The purpose of the Council in establishing the Alliance is to create a broadly-based community group to:

- Work together to develop and recommend a local housing agenda to the Town Council.
- Implement a local housing program under the guidance of the Town Council.
- Perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Town Council from time to time.



CDBG

Town of Scarborough



CBDG Grant July 2023-June 2024

- SPD Social Services made contact with 60 individuals reporting being unhoused in the 2022 fiscal year.
- \$15,000 was secured through the CBDG

- In July 2023- Contract with Milestone's Home Team
- August-October 2023, Social Services Navigator and the hometeam completed 13 assessments

Scarborough Unhoused Population

August 2023:

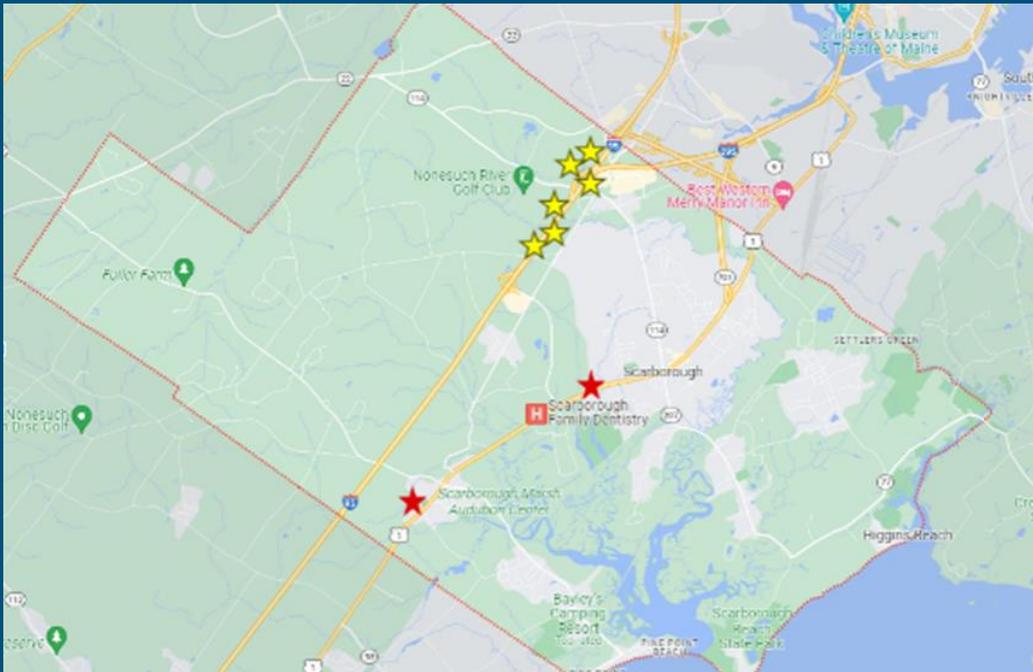
- 3 individuals off Gorham Road
- 8-10 individuals off of Payne Road Corridor
- 1-2 individuals in Pine Point/Dunstan area
- 2-3 individuals that would rotate through General Assistance and being unhoused

Current:

- 6 individuals off Payne Road Corridor
- 2-3 individuals that would rotate through General Assistance and being unhoused

Progress:

- 3-4 individuals were sheltered at the Homeless Services Center in Portland
- 1 individual who was camping in Dunstan area has secured winter rental at a local motel
- 2-3 individuals have relocated to another town to be closer to services and their treatment needs

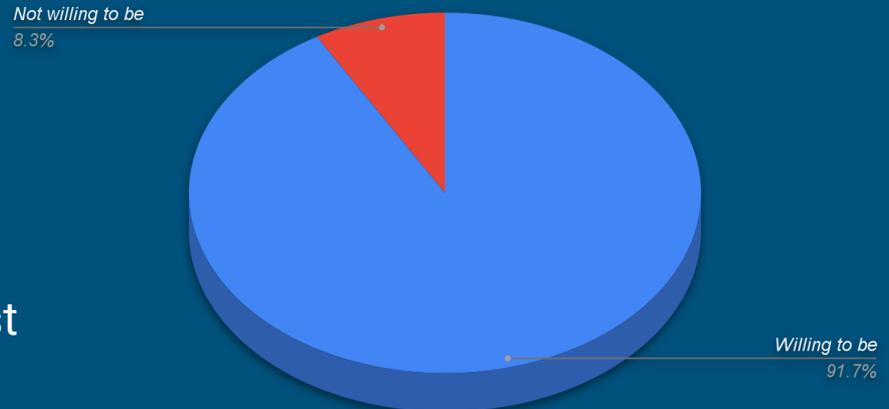


What else have we learned?

Substantial decrease in individuals utilizing parking lots/employing cars as shelter.

12 of the 13 assessment indicated being willing to be sheltered- perception of housing crises. Several individuals willing to access own motel room or apartment space but hesitant to access shelter in Westbrook

- Trauma histories/close quarters
- Bed Bugs
- Service animal
- Not being able to stay with partner
- Turned away from shelter in the past

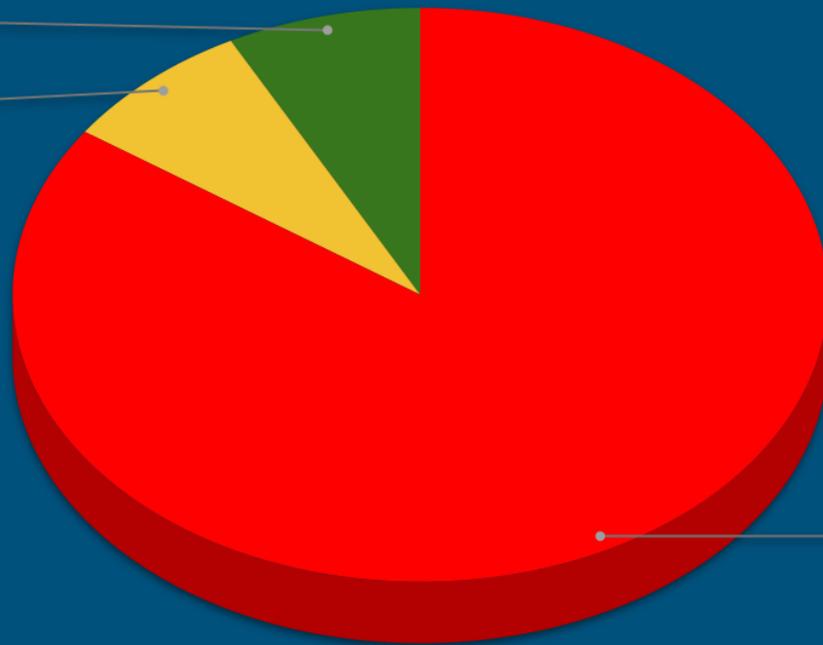


Motel

7.7%

Vehicle

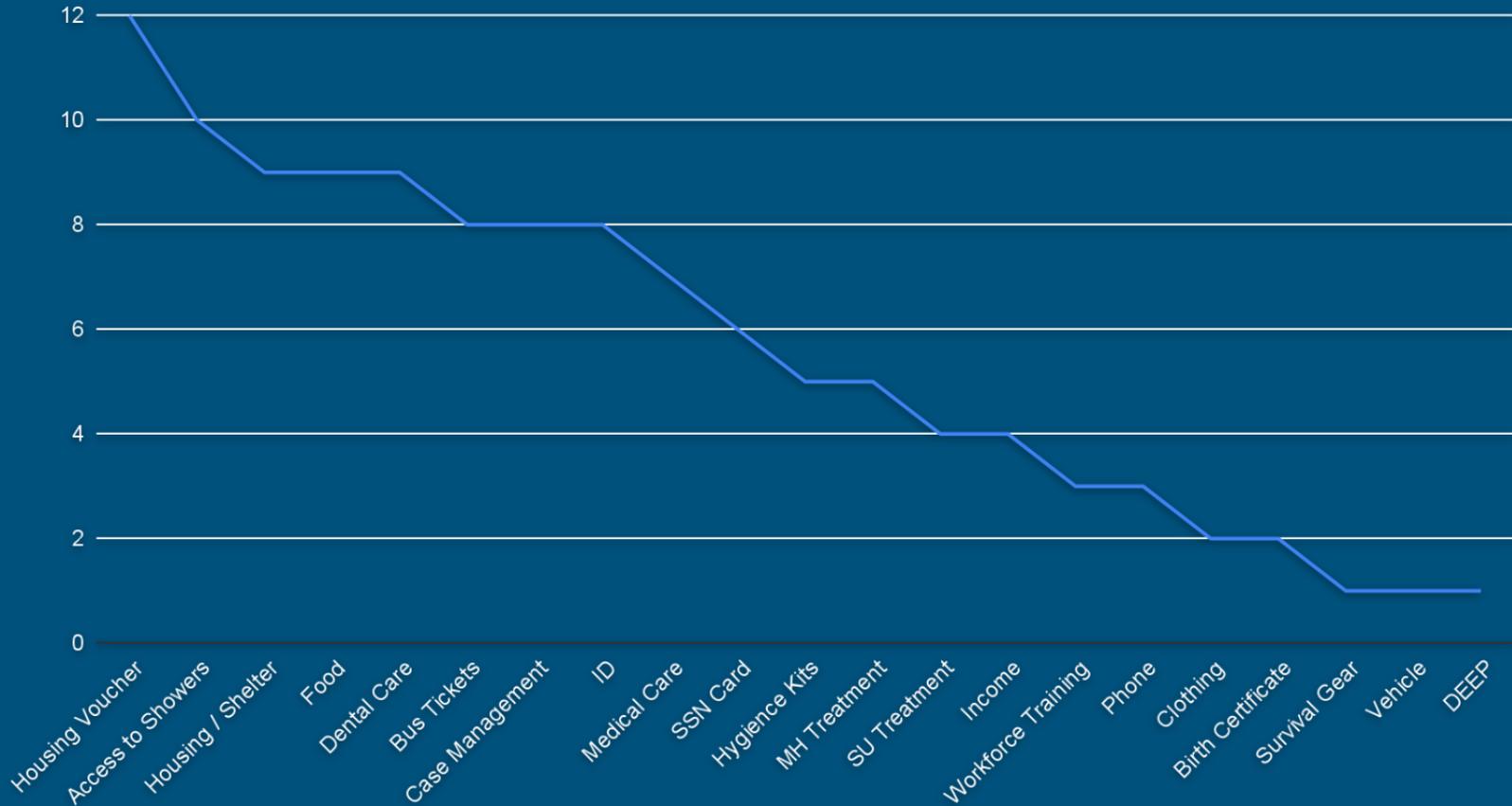
7.7%



Encampment

84.6%

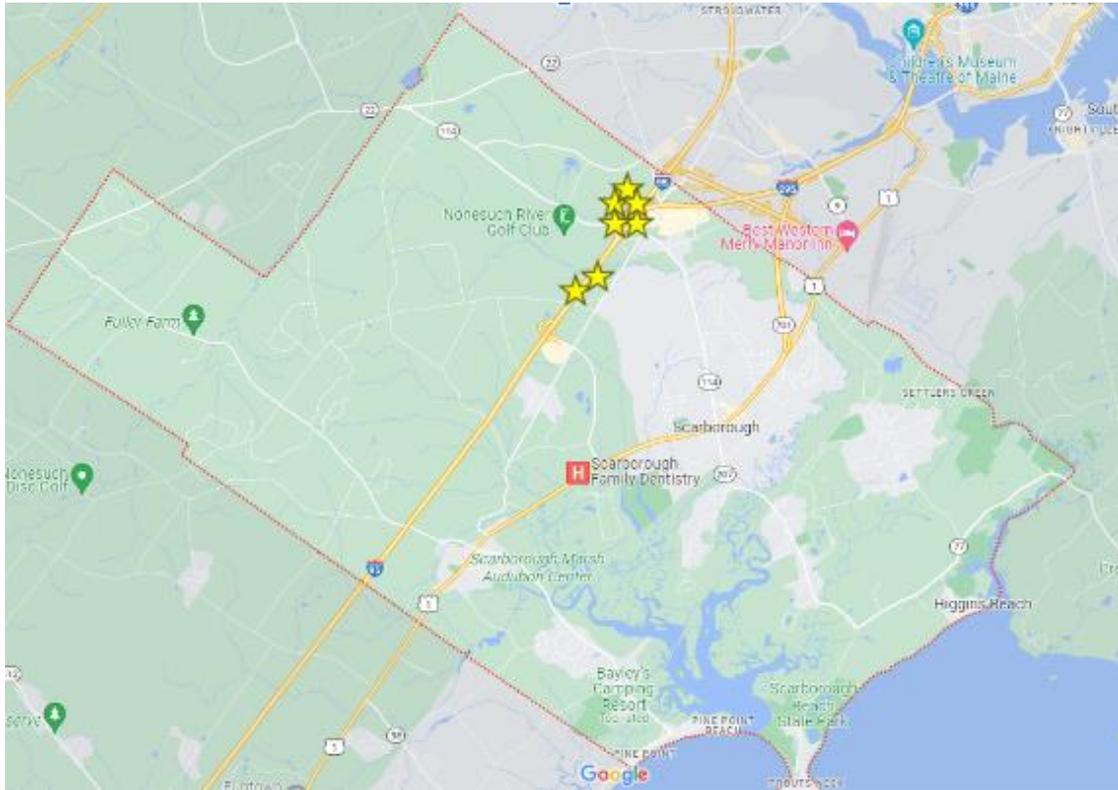
Scarborough Unhoused Population Critical Needs



Other critical information:

Due to the sweeps of Portland Encampments, at the end of December 2023, The Homeless Services Center in Westbrook was closed to any individuals not identifying as unhoused in a Portland!





(01/2024- unoused population in Scarborough)

In a proactive approach to assess the unoused population in Scarborough, Social Service’s Manager, Lauren Dembski-Martin, partnered with Scarborough’s Economic Development Corporation Director, Karen Martin, to secure a 2023 Cumberland County Community Development Block Grant. The goal of this project was to assess the ever-changing unoused population (In the 2022 fiscal year, the Social Services Manager highlighted that contact was made with over 60 individuals identifying as being without shelter).

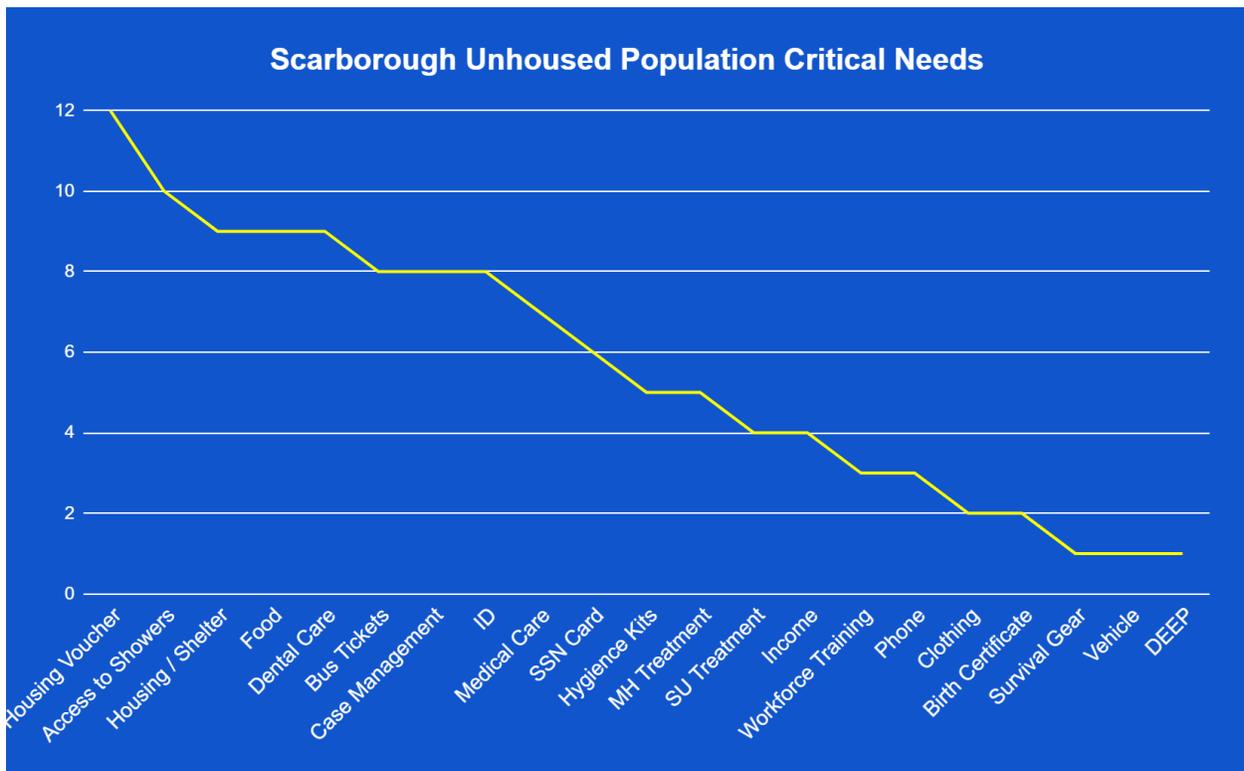
Securing \$15,000 through the CDBG, the bulk of funding was allocated to provide a two-step process:

- 1.) Grassroots field assessment, including in depth conversations with those unoused;
- 2.) Policy and Strategy development from the data collected.

In July of 2023, the Town of Scarborough contracted with Milestone’s Hometeam to help in the field assessment process of unoused individuals within the community. Milestone’s Hometeam is an out-reach program working collaboratively with police, Emergency Medical Services and local businesses. HOME Team helps to navigate the mental, physical, and behavioral health challenges those experiencing homelessness may encounter while providing basic necessities, medical care, referrals and transportation to emergency shelter programs, and/or assistance programs.

Working diligently throughout August, September and October of 2023 to provide outreach and conversations, Scarborough Police Department’s Social Services Manager and Milestone’s Hometeam collected 13 assessments, with one of the first highlighted observations being that the unhoused population in Scarborough has significantly decreased since 2022. Staff of the Social Services Division of Scarborough’s Police Department have witnessed a substantial decrease in individuals utilizing the lots of big box stores to park the vehicles they are employing as shelters, as well as a decrease in the number individuals setting up and utilizing encampments.

It is vital to point out that the shift in the unhoused population will continue to evolve. In August of 2023, 15-17 unhoused individuals were identified in the Scarborough Community. With a continued downward trend, in January 2024 only 6-8 individuals were identified. One of the greatest questions being asked is what causes these variations? Between August 2023 and January 2024, 3-4 individuals access the Homeless Services Center in Portland, 1-2 individuals secured a winter rental with help from their local community mental health teams, 2-3 individuals secured short term shelter through the local General Assistance Program and 2-3 individuals relocated to another town (remaining unsheltered, but closer to their service providers).



The Social Services Manager fields several calls a month from community members wondering why individuals will not access the local shelter with temperatures dropping below freezing.

Data collected from the 13 outreach assessments indicated that 12 of those individuals were “willing to be housed/sheltered.” It is critical to mention that the perception of housing and shelter varies. Several of these individuals stated they were willing access their own motel room or apartment space, but were hesitant to access the shelter in Westbrook due to their own trauma histories and close-knit space, fear of bed bugs, having a service animal that is not allowed or being denied at the shelter in the past. Due to the sweeps of encampments that occurred in Portland in December 2023 and January 2024, there were several weeks that the Homeless Services Center in Westbrook was closed to any individuals not identifying as living in a Portland encampment. These challenges and hurdles continue to be navigated.

Scarborough Police Department’s embedded Social Services Division is uniquely comprised of 3 positions:

- 1.) **Social Services Manager**- this clinical position consists of a Licensed Clinical Social worker who provides clinical outreach and support to community members, manages the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program and oversees General Assistance.
- 2.) **Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Case Manager (LEAD)**- this position provides intensive case manager services to individuals engaged in the department’s LEAD program. This Program allows individuals engaged in low level offenses a chance to address adverse challenges (i.e. substance use, homelessness, mental health) they faced while being connected to a continuity of care, rather than being cycled through the criminal justice system.
- 3.) **Social Services Coordinator/General Assistance**- this position helps to support individuals in the community with the navigation of basic referrals, follow up and screening of eligibility for General Assistance.

In a proactive approach to ensure community members, including those unhoused, are assisted in navigating the complex and rocky waters of mental health systems, housing authorities, and other community support resources, the Social Services Division is collaborating on a daily basis. Much like a jigsaw puzzle, individuals present with several pieces and just need that little help in fitting them together!

Looking ahead... in the next few months the work of the CBDG will continue as members of a local taskforce will begin to assess the data and work with consultant develop future action steps.