

CASE STUDY: CITY OF JOPLIN'S HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC PLAN

THE CLIENT

Joplin is a city in southwest Missouri.

THE NEED

In 2011, a vicious multi-vortex tornado struck Joplin. It was the deadliest and costliest tornado in recorded US history. In the aftermath, much of the city's affordable housing was destroyed. A significant number of people became homeless. As the city recovered, it established service providers in a concentrated area downtown, near U.S. Highway 66. Today, the city is a regional provider of services that were built up post-tornado. This created a situation in which addressing homelessness – typically a regional problem – is perceived to be the City's issue.

THE PROJECT

The City engaged Sharity to develop a homelessness strategic plan. Sharity's role is to develop and facilitate a process to obtain significant input from the Joplin region. This involves engaging in a robust dialogue with the City of Joplin, citizens, community organizations, and Joplin Homeless Coalition service providers. The project is actively progressing and will culminate with a final strategic plan.

THE RESULT

Community engagement work has included:

- A community-wide survey, completed by over 1,000 members;
- A survey of people experiencing homelessness;
- A survey of homelessness service providers;
- Focus groups (four on-site focus groups were conducted, one each for business, City administrative leadership, service providers, and community stakeholders. A total of 68 individuals participated);
- Interviews (more than 20 one-on-one and small group calls via Zoom and phone have been conducted with coalition partners and leaders); and
- Other consultations (Sharity and city staff participated in ride-alongs with the police engagement team to visit some of the community encampments and other relevant locations. This also included interviews with people experiencing homelessness).

