

CASE STUDY: CITY OF JOPLIN'S HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC PLAN

THE CLIENT

Joplin, a city in southwest Missouri. Sitting on the famous route 66, Trolley and rail lines made Joplin the hub of southwest Missouri and, as the center of the tri-state district, it soon became the lead and zinc capital of the world.

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. The city became a regional provider of services, 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 was to develop and facilitate a process to obtain significant input from the Joplin region. This involved engaging in a robust dialogue with the City of Joplin, citizens, community organizations, and Joplin Homeless Coalition service providers. The project is actively in progress, but many key elements have been achieved so far.

THE RESULT

The community led project has had tremendous success including an immediate increase in HUD and other government funding, the creation and sustainable operation of the Regional Commission on Homelessness and its first full time dedicated staff member. The community is well on its way to addressing the need, together.

