

**SURVEY OF HOUSING PROVIDERS FOR
SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS
TOMPKINS COUNTY, NEW YORK
SEPTEMBER 2016**

**PROVIDED BY:
The Danter Company
2760 Airport Drive
Columbus, OH 43219
(614)221-9096**

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS WITH TOMPKINS COUNTY NONPROFIT AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES CONCERNING HOUSING ISSUES

Unmet Housing Needs Reported by Interviewees	Housing Issues Facing Clients, as Reported by Agency Representatives	Greatest Obstacles Addressing Housing Needs (as reported by agency representatives interviewed)	Top Issues to address in housing strategy – as Identified by interviewees
<p>Affordable Housing</p> <p>Accessible Housing</p> <p>Housing near regularly-serviced public transportation (to outlying areas and during evening hours for those who work 2nd and 3rd shifts</p> <p>Safe Housing</p> <p>Quality Housing</p> <p>No Group Home facility for youth who need independent, supervised housing</p>	<p>Section 8 Housing has 2-3 year wait list.</p> <p>DSS Housing voucher is not enough to secure safe, decent housing that is accessible to needed services and jobs.</p> <p>There is no group home to serve homeless youth in Tompkins County (closest is Elmira). Housing available for the 18-24 yr. olds is scattered site transitional housing, when most of these youth need an independent, supervised/supportive environment.</p> <p>Housing located in high crime/high drug use areas, may not be accepted by some (e.g. persons recently released from prison or rehab who are trying to stay clean, or single mothers with children). If this housing is accepted, it may bring with it other issues.</p> <p>Landlords sometimes unwilling to lease to clients.</p> <p>Competition with students for available lower income housing.</p>	<p>Scarcity of independent living housing stock at market rate prices</p> <p>Lack of federal long-term care financing policy.</p> <p>NIMBYism</p> <p>Stereotypical images/discrimination</p> <p>Inadequate transportation to outlying areas makes it hard for clients to live in affordable housing outside of city, yet get to jobs and needed services</p> <p>Politics</p> <p>Lack of space for housing development</p> <p>Capacity of organizations (e.g. funding, supportive services, space) not enough to meet needs.</p> <p>Lack of employment that pays a livable wage/supports stable housing.</p> <p>Some landlords do not want to work with certain populations or take housing vouchers.</p> <p>Some landlords do not keep properties up to code.</p>	<p>Create more affordable housing.</p> <p>Sensitize and educate community on issues related to NIMBYism, need for greater housing density in Ithaca city limits, housing needs and issues related to low-income and other special populations.</p> <p>Create better transportation system to address needs of those who live in outlying areas and who work 2nd and 3rd shifts.</p> <p>Improve housing quality.</p>

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<p>Not enough transitional housing for homeless women and families</p> <p>No detox program offered at local hospital</p>	<p>NIMBYism still prevalent.</p> <p>Limited land for development of new housing in Ithaca</p> <p>High taxes forcing some homeowners to sell homes (esp. seniors on fixed incomes)</p> <p>More people who can afford high housing costs are moving into Ithaca, creating even fewer options for affordable housing to serve the low and middle income populations</p>	<p>Lack of code enforcement.</p> <p>DSS housing vouchers don't pay enough for people to get on their feet.</p> <p>Competition is huge with students for jobs, references, and housing.</p> <p>Lack of marketable skills, limited education, and/or a poverty culture mentality make it difficult for some clients to keep housing once they have it.</p> <p>No good system/mechanism to share best practices.</p> <p>Lack of a specific Housing Office or Dept.</p> <p>Tompkins County is competing statewide for subsidies to help with housing issues.</p> <p>Residents not comfortable with plans for greater housing density.</p>	

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS WITH TOMPKINS COUNTY NONPROFIT AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES CONCERNING HOUSING ISSUES

Format for Meetings:

Individual meetings were held with representatives of 14 Tompkins County nonprofit agencies*, which provide either direct and/or indirect housing services to various special populations. The same questions were asked of each agency representative(s) and their responses were recorded. The questions related to housing services provided by each agency, current unmet housing needs, greatest housing concerns facing Tompkins County residents, action currently underway or in the planning stages to address housing issues, greatest obstacles encountered in addressing housing matters, and identification of top 2-3 issues that should be addressed in an overall housing strategy for the County.

Housing Issues and Obstacles Reported by Interviewees

Leaders of the nonprofit community share a consensus regarding the major housing issues facing Tompkins County. The **major issues** they identified during the interviews were:

- Lack of adequate affordable housing (both transitional and stable, for low-income and working poor);
- Lack of accessible housing (housing often not accessible due to a variety of reasons such as: lack of transportation to be able to get to and from home, jobs and services; landlords who refuse to accept housing vouchers; landlords who do not allow service animals; etc.)
- Poor quality, unsafe housing;
- Lack of enforcement of existing codes designed to ensure safe housing;
- No group home facility for youth who need independent, supervised housing;
- No detox program at local hospital;
- Lack of sufficient advocacy to assist individuals with applications for services, jobs, etc.

All interviewees stated that there are definite **unmet housing needs** in Tompkins County. They supported their statements by citing the waiting lists for housing services and the difficulty in securing safe, quality housing for their clients that is accessible to employment and other needed services, as well as affordable. They reported an overall scarcity of housing stock, noting that housing options are often even more limited for their clients who are low-income or working poor, and/or represent special populations. Interviewees noted that the limited housing stock for their clients is **due to many factors including:**

- limited land available for development and/or renovation within Ithaca city limits;
- high cost of land and high taxes;
- competition with students for available affordable housing;
- “not in my backyard” (NIMBY) mentality is still present;
- some landlords are unwilling to rent to clients;
- housing vouchers are not enough to secure safe, decent housing that is accessible to needed work and services;
- gentrification of the city by individuals who can afford to pay high rents or high prices for home ownership.

Obstacles encountered by agencies in trying to address needs of their clients for affordable, accessible, safe housing were reported as:

- Scarcity of housing stock for independent living, especially for market rate options;
- Lack of a federal long-term care financing policy;
- NIMBYism;
- Stereotypical images and discrimination related to low-income and special population individuals-- discrimination due to low-income is not a protected group in Tompkins County;
- Inadequate transportation to outlying areas and during “off hours” -- for those who work 2nd and 3rd shifts -- limits housing options and/or makes it extremely difficult for clients to negotiate getting to and from work and needed services;
- Politics (one example cited is that until recently Trueman had a moratorium on any new water/sewer permits, which made new housing development in that area impossible);
- Lack of space for housing development;
- Capacity of organizations (e.g. funding, supportive services, space) not adequate to meet needs;
- Lack of employment that pays a livable wage/supports stable housing options;
- Some landlords do not want to work with certain populations or accept housing vouchers;
- Some landlords who do not keep properties up to code;
- Lack of enforcement of existing codes – without which, tenants have no leverage when they encounter an unacceptable housing situation;
- Amount that DSS funds with housing vouchers isn’t enough to allow people to get on their feet;
- Competition is huge with students for jobs, references, and housing;
- Lack of marketable skills, limited education, and/or a poverty culture mentality – lack of planning, poor decision-making and problem-solving skills – make it difficult for some clients to maintain housing once it is secured;
- No good system/mechanism in place to share best practices related to how other communities are addressing housing challenges throughout the country;
- Lack of a specific “Office” or “Department” that addresses housing needs within the county;
- Tompkins County is competing statewide for subsidies to help with this issue;
- Residents not comfortable with plans for greater housing density.

Observations:

It is commendable that community representatives are making a genuine effort to work together to come up with housing solutions. This is documented by the fact that all interviewed agency members participate in the Tompkins County Continuum of Care Coalition and the Homeless Task Force, make joint referrals between agencies to meet client housing needs, and are partnering on some programs/projects to address housing concerns.

Recommendations:

Several recently published reports attest to the efforts of Tompkins County organizations to address the housing issues it faces. These reports not only present information about the county's current housing challenges, but also provide recommendations to address them. These reports include:

- ***“Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice”*** prepared for the City of Ithaca in May 2015 by the Office of Human Rights;
- ***“Independent Living Survey Project Summary of Findings”*** undertaken for the Tompkins County Continuum of Care Committee and the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County and published in 2015;
- ***Tompkins County Office for the Aging Strategic Planning 2014 Housing Report*** (a summary of the results from a Consensus Conference on the topic of Housing convened at the County Inn and Suites in Ithaca on July 31, 2014); and
- ***“Report of the Reentry Subcommittee”*** to the Criminal Justice and Alternatives to Incarceration Board and the Tompkins County Legislature in September 2015.

In addition to the suggestions set forth in these reports, or in some cases building on them, the following recommendations are set forth for consideration (not listed in a weighted order):

1. **Establish a Tompkins County Housing Office** – such an office could create a collective impact. Collective impact has been defined as the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors/organizations to a common agenda for solving a specific problem or addressing a specific issue. Different from collaboration, collective impact initiatives are distinctly different because they involve a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants. Establishment of such an office would not entail new staff, but would bring together in one place, representatives from all local agencies that work on housing issues. Such an office could create collective impact by working together on policy development, joint grants, education/training, coordination of services, ensuring language assistance to residents who are not proficient in English, conducting surveys as needed to document numbers served and unmet needs, and much more. Staff might be supplemented with AmeriCorps volunteers, who may be Ithaca College or Cornell University students who want to gain valuable work experience and reduce their student loans.
2. **Hold a “Breakfast of Champions” Conference** bringing together outside and local housing authorities to share best practices, funding opportunities, development of policies, etc. Such a conference could kick off with a breakfast and run for a half day. It could be hosted by Tompkins County Planning and Development, with funding support to come from local business(es). A similar model is conducted in Columbus, Ohio by Huntington Bank, but focused on a wide range of human services – not just housing. The conference, called “Seeds for Growth” is intended to serve as a vehicle for the exchange of ideas, best practices, partnership efforts, and solutions to community

problems among nonprofit organizations – most of which receive some funding support from Huntington Bank. Follow up to such a conference could entail a blog and/or on-line newsletter to continue the exchange of ideas, best practices, potential funding sources and other helpful information to address the housing challenges. This follow-up could be undertaken by members of the Tompkins County Housing Office (#1 above).

3. **Consider offering incentives or subsidies to landlords who meet or exceed housing code requirements.** Enlist help of landlords to work on a “Good Housekeeping”-type seal of approval, and work with various community leaders (including media) to get recognition for those landlords and properties that meet a set standard of quality. Identify ways that these landlords can be rewarded for keeping properties safe, clean, repaired, well-managed – including public recognition and possibly other “rewards. For example, The Danter Company was engaged by non-profit housing providers in Columbus, Ohio to evaluate their housing inventory within the context of improvements and amenities that could be added in order to increase property values and subsequent rent. The assignment was undertaken with the assistance of the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority and an overall rent reasonableness methodology.
4. **Use the “Bridges out of Poverty” Simulation Exercise** as one means for educating and sensitizing community members about the many challenges facing those in poverty. When this suggestion was made by Danter Company during the Department of Social Services interview, Commissioner Carey stated that the DSS had just arranged for “Bridges out of Poverty” to be introduced to Ithaca. Plans are to use this as an educational tool with DSS staff. A recommendation was made to include other local funders and service providers such as foundations, United Way, Cornell and Ithaca College representatives, and representatives from other provider agencies. Some of these organizations may then help to sponsor this exercise for members of the private sector such as landlords, neighborhood groups, local business leaders, and others. This could be an effective education tool to address NIMBYism, discrimination against low-income individuals, and a community-shared understanding of the housing and other issues facing low-income individuals and how best to address them.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Renee Speers
Organization: Catholic Social Services
Date of Interview: January 20, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?
 - **Provide financial assistance to avoid utility shutoffs, emergency rental assistance to avoid eviction, security deposits to help clients get into housing (pay for about 70 per year, but always run out of money for this), pay for hotels and other temporary housing until clients can get into a more stable housing arrangement.**
 - **Just received funding for a 4 BR unit to be used for housing women in transition.**
 - **Catholic Social Service has a paid “Services Navigator” who handles referrals to other agencies for housing and other service needs.**

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.
 - **YES.**
 - **The working poor is a group with large unmet housing needs.**
 - **There is not enough subsidized housing.**
 - **Transportation is a problem, because cheaper areas are often not served by public transportation on a regular basis to allow for getting to and from work (especially for 2nd and 3rd shift work) and to and from needed services.**
 - **Many landlords won’t take DSS rent vouchers.**
 - **There are not as many options for homeless women as men.**
 - **Not enough housing to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients?
Appropriate, affordable, safe and accessible housing for the working poor.

 - b. Tompkins County residents overall?
Affordable, accessible, safe and decent housing.

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
 - **Participate in local committees and task forces on housing matters.**
 - **Advance education to help people go from PT to FT work and get better paying jobs to allow for better housing (provide semester-long bus passes for clients to get to Tompkins County Community College for classes).**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
 - **Affordability**
 - **Employment that supports stable housing options**
 - **Transportation to outlying areas and evening hours so people can access jobs and services**
 - **Amount that DSS funds with housing vouchers (\$400/mo.) isn't enough to allow people to get on their feet.**

6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
 - a. ALL populations?
 - **Need for more than one main developer for affordable housing (currently Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services is about the only one – can't produce enough stock to meet needs).**

 - b. The population you serve?
 - **Shelters for the homeless -- not adequate to meet needs of homeless women (particularly those with children)**
 - **Not enough affordable, safe and accessible housing to meet the needs of those who are working entry level jobs.**
 - **Student competition for affordable housing (parents can often give a deposit plus the school year's rent "up front," and working poor can't do that.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Commissioner Patricia Carey

Organization: Department of Social Services

Date of Interview: January 21, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?
 - **Run County Social Services Programs. Charged with providing funds (vouchers) to individuals to purchase housing. Landlords who participate, accept a letter from DSS instead of deposit in most cases, and then accept monthly vouchers which DSS pays directly to them (\$400/mo.)**
 - **Fund the Rescue Mission Shelter (for homeless men) and provide case management to clients to work towards more stable housing.**
 - **Transitional housing also purchased for homeless at local motels (3-4 in town accept DSS vouchers).**
 - **Provide emergency services to try to help people avoid eviction; deal with bed bug issues, etc.**
 - **Adult protective services may pay back rent also.**
 - **Develop and maintain a strong relationship with Legal Aid to help clients with housing issues.**
 - **STEP program helps individuals get affordable apartments -- provides 1 year of housing support (1st quarter client pays nothing; 2nd quarter client pays 25%, 3rd quarter client pays 50%; 4th quarter client pays 75%; after that, client pays 100% of housing cost.**

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.
 - **Yes. Biggest is amount of DSS benefits or SSI benefits – very low and housing costs are high.**
 - **Some landlords take advantage – offer poor quality housing. Some will not rent to DSS clients**
 - **There is a need for more housing with supportive services on-site.**
 - **Need for more studio apartments.**

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients?
 - **Affordable, quality housing.**
 - **Many struggle to maintain housing once it is secured due to drug abuse, mental health issues, lack of employment that pays a livable wage, transportation to get to work and services as needed**
 - **Transportation is a big issue. City, Cornell and County are working together to try to address the need for routes that better serve outlying areas and time schedules to provide access for 2nd and 3rd shift workers to get to and from work, as well as to access needed services without a car. *GADABOUT* transportation vans serve seniors and people with disabilities by providing transportation (by appointment) to get to medical appointments, shop for groceries, and to participate in social activities at**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

senior centers, etc., but transportation for others such as the working poor and homeless, is often unavailable in outlying areas and “off hours.”

- It is getting harder to get aides into homes to provide in-home long-term care for those in need. These jobs don't pay much, yet need is increasing. If people cannot stay in their homes, they will put additional stress on the Medicaid system as they are forced to spend down and move into nursing facilities financed with public dollars through Medicaid as their only care option.
- b. Tompkins County residents overall?
- **Affordable, safe housing that is decent and accessible. There is a need for affordable housing at ALL levels from transitional, to rentals, to first-time home ownership, to mid-level “move up” housing.**
4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
- **Attend Homeless Housing Task Force meetings (sponsored by the Human Services Coalition),**
 - **Participate as members of the Tompkins County Continuum of Care Coalition**
 - **Seek HUD funds through the Continuum of Care Coalition**
 - **Constantly looking for opportunities to apply for available grant funds**
 - **Assess housing needs**
 - **A Senior Case Worker in Adult Protective Services scouts the community to find homeless individuals and work with them to secure housing and other supportive services**
 - **Just hired a Housing Specialist to address growing housing needs**
 - **Bringing “Bridges Out of Poverty” poverty simulation to Tompkins County to improve awareness of the many obstacles facing low-income individuals**
5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
- **More funds for better quality, affordable housing.**
 - **Space is limited for building new housing.**
 - **Breaking down stereotypical images of low-income people.**
6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
- a. ALL populations?
- **Affordability**
 - **Quality of affordable housing**
 - **Housing near services and employment and/or transportation to create easier access to work and services for those who live in outlying areas**
- b. The population you serve?
- **SAME as above.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Karen Baer and Xavier Rusk

Organization: Human Rights

Date of Interview: January 22, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?
 - **Handle discrimination complaints**
 - **Try to enforce Fair Housing Law (see #2 below)**
 - **Enforce State/Local anti-discrimination law**
 - **Make referrals to other agencies for housing**
 - **Conduct education and outreach related to housing issues (e.g. conduct Fair Housing workshops for clients, landlords, and others concerning Fair Housing laws/rights)**

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.
 - **Yes.**
 - **Human Rights organization does not have any enforcement authority – used to have, but the State of NY withdrew a Memorandum of Understanding granting this authority. Residents now have to go to Binghamton or Buffalo to file a complaint with HUD or the State of NY to take advantage of the “free” process for getting a resolution to housing issues with landlords. No money is available for transportation to get to and from these locations to file a complaint, and most cannot afford the time (if working) or the cost for transportation. Courts are an option to file a complaint within Tompkins County, but individual must pay for legal representation to go this route. In either case, the State has 180 days to investigate any filed complaint against the landlord, and this investigation is usually handled by phone with the landlord.**

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients?
 - **Seniors and persons with disabilities (sometimes others) are often turned down for housing because landlords won't accept DSS, Section 8, or HUD vouchers.**
 - **Lack of local enforcement.**
 - **Impact of students on local housing market**

 - b. Tompkins County residents overall?
 - **Housing market caters to students – eclipses families with children**

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
 - **Trying to get “source of income” designated as a protected category as local law**
 - **Trying to get enforcement ability restored**
 - **Education and outreach programming conducted**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

- **Coordinate with Tompkins County Community Action to conduct an every-other-month workshop for Section 8 voucher holders regarding what are your rights as you look for housing. Also conduct these workshops for real estate groups, landlords, human service organizations, etc.**
5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
- **Discrimination due to low-income is not a protected group**
 - **Politics – political ramifications to anything you want to do – “trump cards” are often played for more powerful/influential constituents**
 - **Without local enforcement, tenants have no leverage (e.g. afraid to not accept poor quality housing offered, afraid to complain about housing violations for fear of losing a roof over their heads, cannot afford the time and money to travel out of county to file a complaint when they believe they have experienced housing discrimination, and cannot afford legal counsel to go through complaint process in Tompkins County court system, etc.)**
6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
- a. ALL populations?
 - **Discrimination in housing**
 - **Lack of local enforcement protections**
 - **Homelessness**
 - **Affordability**
 - b. The population you serve?
 - **Same as above plus:**
 - **Lack of housing authority capital investments since 1980's**
 - **Substandard Housing (no study on substandard housing)**

NOTE: A point of clarification: Human Rights Office is a paid, government entity. Human Rights Commission is an ALL volunteer group.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Kathy Schlather

Organization: Human Services Coalition

Date of Interview: January 22, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?
 - **Serve as administrative arm for the Continuum of Care group (i.e. write grant, facilitate meetings, prepare reports, etc.)**
 - **Administer the 2-1-1 Information and Referral Phone Line**
2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.
 - **Yes. Not enough low-to-moderate, affordable housing available that is safe and accessible.**
3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients?
 - **Affordability, accessibility, poor quality. The \$400/month DSS subsidy is not adequate in the Tompkins County market. If people do get housing that is unsafe and/or poor quality they are afraid to say anything about problems for fear of losing what they have.**
 - b. Tompkins County residents overall?
 - **Affordable housing options to meet needs of various populations.**
4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
 - **The working committees within the Continuum of Care are looking at what other communities in the U.S. are doing to address housing needs.**
 - **Identifying gaps in housing market for special populations (e.g. Tompkins County has no half-way house for those coming out of prison or treatment facilities).**
 - **Examining housing needs/issues combined with employment training as one way of addressing problem (e.g. if people have more education/skills they are likely to make a higher income and be able to afford better housing)**
5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
 - **Housing is sometimes based on abstinence – people need housing while they get help to address issues of substance abuse.**
 - **Cost – not enough options, availability limited overall, location of available/affordable housing often not a viable option if transportation to jobs and/or services is limited or possibly not available at all.**
 - **Not enough funding for supportive services, which are critical for individuals to maintain housing once they acquire it.**
 - **Not enough options.**
 - **Need more education/training programs to help individuals be able to get better paying jobs that will allow for better housing.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

- **Student competition for jobs and for affordable housing.**
 - **INHS does a good job, but are not able to develop enough housing to meet needs.**
 - **SRO's needed.**
 - **Currently there is not a specific "Office" or "Department" that addresses housing needs within the county. A variety of agencies have individuals working on the issue within their own agencies.**
6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
- a. ALL populations?
 - **More affordable housing**
 - b. The population you serve?
 - **Options that address mixed needs.**
 - **Subsidies may be needed to attract more builders.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Paul Mazzarella

Organization: Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services & Better Housing for Tompkins County

Date of Interview: January 21, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?
 - **Manage 400 units at 30 properties (some are very small)**
 - **Have developed eight (8) properties, each with 22-50 units**
 - **Run a “Home Ownership” program**
 - **Have been building houses for eight (8) years under Land Trust (have built 50 over 8 yrs.). Subsidies are needed, due to building-related costs.**
 - **Offer financing for people to buy existing homes (assist 50-60 per year).**
 - **Engaged in new construction (tax credit projects) to build rentals. Three other developers (private): NRP, Conifer and Domain.**

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.
 - **Yes. There are people in need of housing who can't afford it unless Section 8 (2-3 year wait for that).**
 - **Need more affordable housing (like Trueman) with services nearby.**
 - **Current need is for 1-2 bedroom units by students and others, yet some of the older buildings often have 3-4 bedrooms, so they are not what is in demand for today's demographics (42 of INHS's proposed new property are 1 bedroom units)**

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients?
 - **Very little workforce housing that is affordable (e.g. where individuals pay around 30% of income for housing).**
 - **Student housing market is lucrative, putting others in competition with students for available, affordable housing.**
 - **15,000 people commute daily into Ithaca – most living outside the City due to high costs of local housing, if NO car then it is nearly impossible to get to jobs and services in the city due to limited transportation in outlying areas.**
 - **Home ownership is out of reach for those making 80% or less of median income.**
 - **Tompkins County had no downturn in housing prices during the recession (prices were flat, and then rose again as economy picked up). Cost for limited available land in Ithaca is exorbitant.**

 - b. Tompkins County residents overall?
 - **Same as above.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
 - **A new project is underway. It will consist of 59 residential apartment units (53 units in a four-story apartment building, and 6 two-story townhome apartments).**
 - **Always looking for new project opportunities. Currently looking at the downtown area and suburban areas to start another project in 2017 – looking to partner with other agencies that may have land that can be developed.**
 - **Holding community meetings and planning meetings to try to change public perception about affordable housing and draw attention to INHS's 40-year track record of not only building, but maintaining, quality affordable housing in the community.**

5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
 - **Competing statewide for subsidies.**
 - **Limited Land available in Ithaca proper for development/re-development and cost is exorbitant**
 - **Community Support (NIMBY)**
 - **Public policies (e.g. until recently Trueman had a moratorium on any new water/sewer permits, which made development in that area impossible).**

6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
 - a. ALL populations?
 - **Affordable home ownership for low-income individuals**
 - **Adding affordable rental units**
 - **Developing housing options that allow people to “move up” to better levels of housing (currently no mid-market).**

 - b. The population you serve?
 - **New housing needs to address changes in household composition (60-65% of new, first-time homebuyers are single; rental households are smaller with most needing 1 or 2 bedroom units)**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Annie Perry and Brad Kelsey

Organization: Lakeview Mental Health Services

Date of Interview: January 22, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?

Direct housing services are provided to individuals who meet the state definition of “adults, both male and female, who have a severe and persistent, clinically diagnosed mental illness.”

- I. ***Horizon Treatment Apt. Program – 32 units, scattered sites (agency signs lease for client)***
- II. ***Markham House – 14 bed community residence (Lakeview owned and operated)***
- III. ***Elmshade Community Residence – 9 bed (Lakeview owns and operates)***

NOTE: The three sites above are all transitional housing programs with a two-year maximum housing time frame. The average time clients spend in one of these transitional residences is approximately one year.

- IV. ***Ithaca Single Room Occupancy (SRO) – 38 beds (owned and operated by Lakeview). Each individual has a private room and kitchenette. Meals are provided through the SRO facility’s kitchen for those who participate in the meal plan. Various services are provided. Each client has an individual service plan and individual goal(s) set for him/her. The SRO differs from other options above in that the clients housed here have had limited success in other housing environments and they may not have the ability to transition to more independent housing.***

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.
Yes. Currently there are 12 people on the waiting list for SRO permanent housing.

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients?

Availability, accessibility (housing needs to be close enough to services and treatment needed by clients OR have transportation that makes services/treatment accessible)

- b. Tompkins County residents overall?

Affordability

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
 - o **Serve as member of Continuum of Care Coalition, Homeless Task Force, and Single Point of Entry Team**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

- **Agency is part of a seven county organization that develops housing for target population with mental illness; however, no new housing has been built in Tompkins County since 2009 – other counties recently targeted for housing development.**
 - **Complete discharge plans for clients to insure next level of safe care when they leave a transitional housing site. Work with other agencies/programs to achieve this goal.**
5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
- **Some landlords do not want to work with certain populations or accept housing vouchers.**
 - **Land available for housing development is not always in areas where housing is most needed.**
6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
- a. ALL populations?
 - **Affordability (need more incentives for developers and landlords to serve populations in need of housing) There is little housing stock to serve working people who are not eligible for housing subsidies, yet can't afford the high rents, selling prices and taxes to live in Ithaca city limits.**
 - **Land use issues and density issues -- need policies and support**
 - b. The population you serve?
 - **Same as above.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: J. R. Claiborne

Organization: Loaves & Fishes

Date of Interview: January 21, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?
 - **Referrals (mainly to Rescue Mission since at least half of clients are homeless);**
 - **Assistance in completing applications for housing through INHS, Tompkins Co Action agency, Catholic Social Services (for deposits and temporary housing);**
 - **Accompany clients to appointments to obtain housing and other services; and**
 - **Provide bus passes for clients to get to housing and other service appointments.**

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.

Yes. The majority of clients are homeless. It is often difficult to get them into temporary housing, and permanent housing is a major challenge. The wait time for Section 8 housing approval is currently 2-3 years. The affordability and quality of housing is an issue (most landlords want a deposit of the first AND last month's rent before they will lease to an individual). Poor quality of some available housing options may force a client to turn down the option – e.g. if client has recently been released from prison and/or a rehab facility and the only available housing option is in an area with a high rate of drug use and violence, he may choose to enter the housing jungle -- living outside in order to stay clean and have a better quality of life.

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients?

Quantity, quality and affordability of housing.

 - b. Tompkins County residents overall?

Same as above. *The rising cost of housing in the city is causing changes in the diversity and demographics of Ithaca.*

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?

**Meet and develop relationships with other organizations trying to address the housing issue, particularly as it affects homeless men (e.g. work closely with Second Wind and Rescue Mission)
Serve on the Tompkins County Homeless Task Force and Continuum of Care Coalition.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
- **Employment with Livable Wages (most clients who are employable will be working in the service industry at entry level jobs, which make it difficult to pay for housing AND they are often competing with college students who want to work while they attend school at Cornell or Ithaca College);**
 - **Affordable Housing (costs are high due to many issues such as most older properties that could be retrofitted/renovated have already been completed, there is limited land within Ithaca city limits to be developed for housing, living in town is desirable and sought after by people who are willing and able to pay high costs, taxes are high, developers can make much more money developing housing for a population that is not low-income, landlords can make more money renting to students, etc.); and**
 - **Transportation (people who cannot afford to live within the city limits and seek housing in outlying areas face limited public transportation services – some routes were cut recently due to limited funds, yet housing needs have continued to escalate).**
6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
- a. ALL populations?
Affordable and accessible housing options to meet needs of various populations (e.g. seniors, college students, home owners, first-time home buyers, renters who are single AND with families, individuals who have disabilities, the working poor, etc.)
 - b. The population you serve?
 - **Affordable housing for low to moderate income individuals (more education and work with landlords is needed, since some won't accept DSS vouchers – they insist on cash).**
 - **Higher wages (service industry jobs vs. rising housing costs) so the “working poor” can afford housing (some are paying 60-80% of their incomes for housing, when the recommended percentage is 30% of income for housing).**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: David Bulkley
Organization: Mental Health Association of Tompkins Co.
Date of Interview: January 25, 2016 via Conference Call

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?

Main role is advocacy – helping clients with mental illness find and maintain housing. Help clients fill out applications, identify housing options, work with landlords and agency housing providers. Work not only with clients who meet the state definition of serious and persistent mental illness issues, but also with others who have mental health issues and need housing.

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.

Yes. Clients typically have no work history (or limited, often unsuccessful work histories) due to mental health issues. They are usually receiving SSI, which is about \$750-\$800/month (unsure of exact amount). If client cannot get a housing voucher, Section 8 housing, qualify for Unity House or Lakeview housing, then there are limited housing options for them – especially with such limited monthly income. IF they do qualify for a housing voucher from the Department of Social Services, the \$400/month voucher is not enough to allow them to purchase housing other than a single room arrangement at a boarding house or similar. These arrangements are often located in less desirable parts of town, where drug/alcohol use and violence are more apparent and make it difficult for a person with mental illness to function. IF they do not qualify for any of the above housing options, then they end up on the street, where they often become prey to other individuals who know when their SSI checks arrive and who take advantage of them by asking for money or worse. Clients also need supportive services (e.g. help with paying bills, keeping mental health service appointments, making sure they have food) once they obtain housing – this is not always adequate, depending on the housing arrangement.

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :

- a. Your clients?

1. **Cost of housing in Ithaca is prohibitive for many clients ability to secure safe, affordable housing if they are not able to be accepted into Unity House or Lakeview or other.**
2. **Stigma is attached to persons with mental illness, and many landlords may not accept them.**
3. **Quality of available housing units is sometimes less than desirable (e.g. thin walls where clients conversations with “people in their heads” can be heard by neighbors OR clients who have extreme sensitivity to noise may become irritable and/or find it difficult to rest/sleep); housing may be not well maintained or in an area where client is exposed to high drug/alcohol use, etc. and client often does not know how to advocate for self.**
4. **Transportation for clients who live outside city may pose problems for client to access needed services or participate in beneficial programming.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

b. Tompkins County residents overall?

1. **Cost.**
2. **Accessibility, quality of available options, and transportation are issues for many outside the Mental Health population – particularly for low-income individuals.**

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?

Education about needs of this population (meet with public officials, serve on the Homeless Housing Task Force and the Continuum of Care, develop positive relationships with landlords and with organizations that are trying to address the housing issue)

Advocacy about client needs to NY policy makers involved in deinstitutionalization planning.

Majority of time is spent dealing with individuals who are cold, hungry and needed a place to stay yesterday.

5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?

Availability of affordable, safe housing. Some landlords have stigma against mentally ill individuals. People in need of lower income affordable housing are in competition with students. Limited land in Ithaca means limited new product and developers want to get the most money for their developments, so product built or renovated may not be affordable AND accessible to our population. Gentrification. Applying for housing is complex for clients with mental illness – like applying to be an FBI agent (e.g. criminal background checks, reference checks, lots of paperwork). Client may have difficulty explaining questions and/or past issues/situations due to mental condition.

6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for

a. ALL populations?

1. **Expense**
2. **Access**
3. **Quality**

b. The population you serve?

Same as above.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Carmen Guidi
Organization: Second Wind Cottages (SWC)
Date of Interview: January 22, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?

Have built 9 cottages to provide housing for homeless men (6 opened in early 2014 and 3 more before Thanksgiving 2015). Goal is to have 18 cottages, a community building and a social worker on the premises. Land was donated by Carmen Guidi on the property behind his Collision Repair Shop on Route 13 in Newfield (the site is serviced by the TCAT bus line). Mr. Guidi has established a network of volunteers and donors committed to addressing the issue of housing for the homeless in Tompkins County. Thanks to donations of both time and money, the cost to build each of these studio bungalows has been between \$14,000 and \$17,000 including all infrastructure (each unit has its own septic tank and is serviced by City water). Second Wind Cottages has secured status as a not-for-profit organization which now operates with a Board. Indirect information and referral services are provided to tenants of the cottages AND to those seeking to be considered for a future cottage. Men are placed on a wait list for a cottage through the SWC website.

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.

Yes. Currently there are 27 men on the waiting list – the number is constantly changing.

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :

- a. Your clients?

Affordable, accessible, quality housing that is stable and provides individuals with a sense of independence and dignity. Men living at Second Wind Cottages can have a garden (most do), and a pet (all do). There is NO cost to clients – they are asked to pay what they can afford towards rent and utilities – currently 5 tenants are paying something every month. Most want to stay busy, so often help out with various projects, in addition to maintaining their own cottage. Board sets guidelines for tenants. Alcohol and drugs are NOT allowed on the premises.

- b. Tompkins County residents overall?

Affordability is definitely an overall issue.

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?

Still working towards achieving the 18 cottage goal (half-way there) for homeless men. Recently purchased 7 acres one mile north of current site, where the plan is to initially build 10 cottages to serve homeless women, both single and with children. For both sites the goal is to build a community center and hire a social worker to provide supportive services for clients. SWC representatives serve on the Tompkins County Continuum of Care Coalition, the Homeless Task Force and its sub-committee, Housing Solutions Team.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?

Funding – this project would have all 18 cottages completed if there was money available.

Initially, the project received a little push back from the community residents, but this was overcome by holding community meetings – being open and honest with people and helping them to understand how this project would address a community need.

6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for

- a. ALL populations?

Affordability

- b. The population you serve?

Sub-standard housing (need to enforce existing laws to improve this); transportation for those who live outside downtown area so they can get to jobs and/or needed services.

All stakeholders need to strive to develop and maintain relationships that will allow issues to be addressed in a holistic manner.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Lee Dillon
Organization: Tompkins County Community Action
Date of Interview: January 22, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?

Serve as local administrator for 988 Housing Choice voucher (includes home ownership option and family self-sufficiency).

Have built and own three permanent (if needed) housing projects:

- a. **Magnolia House (24 studio apts. For homeless women in recovery)**
- b. **Chartwell House (rooming house with 12 rooms for homeless men in recovery)**
- c. **Corn Street Apts. (6 apts. For families)**

Hold the lease with landlord for HUD Transitional Housing Program which serves 6 families for 24 mos. max

Work with DSS and Family Court to coordinate supportive services such as developing goal plans and acquiring benefit assistance.

Home Weatherization Program helps low-income, elderly and special needs individuals get needed repairs to their homes so they can remain in them.

Information and referral services provided to those in need.

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.

Yes.

Rescue Mission shelter is full, wait list for Section 8 housing is 2-3 YEARS, other low-income housing facilities are full and have waiting lists. Clients often have to be housed in temporary housing in local hotels or rooming houses until more stable options are available. Housing that is available may be in undesirable areas where drug and crime issues are more prevalent (not a great option for any client, but particularly problematic for clients who may be trying to stay clean after release from prison or a rehab facility OR for women with and without children). Housing is more affordable outside city, but then clients do not have access to transportation for needed services and/or jobs. *NOTE: Many clients who find employment work at service industry jobs that often do not pay livable wages to allow for purchase and upkeep for a car. These jobs may also require the client to work 2nd or 3rd shifts, when public transportation is not available to the areas where they are able to find affordable housing. Currently there is NO detox program at the local hospital, so individuals who need a detox program must be able to find accommodations at other residential sites that offer this program.*

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients? **Supply and affordability. The long wait list for Section 8 housing (2-3 years). Transportation to outlying areas to allow individuals to find affordable housing there.**
 - b. Tompkins County residents overall? **Supply, affordability.**
4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
 - **In conversation phase with Neighborhood Reuse and INHS for a 4-story building (1st floor for retail, 2nd floor for offices, 3rd and 4th floor for studios with a shared kitchen and a shared community center).**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

- Partnering with State Department of Social Services and Ithaca Housing Services on the short-term state-supported rental housing program that provides up to one year of temporary housing for eligible clients.
 - Planning 22 units of housing for 16-25 yr. olds with and without children. Will have a Head Start program, community kitchen, training space – seeking funding from NY State Homeless Housing Assistance program to pay for capital expenses. Twenty (20) of the planned units will be 355 sq. ft. studios, and two (2) will be two-bedroom units to accommodate individuals with children.
 - Working to develop a “Housing First” model (a rooming house concept project) for a 15-room unit. Currently in conversation phase of this proposal.
 - Serve as members of the Homeless Housing Task Force, Continuum of Care, Mayor’s Drug Policy Committee and other groups working together to address housing issues.
 - Have integrated Head Start programs into all supportive housing projects with which the agency is involved (helps parents be able to work and provides support to both parents and children).
 - Will be doing focus groups for staff and supportive housing groups – maybe Head Start Parent groups as well. Will use an on-line survey.
5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
- a. **NIMBYism (Not in My Backyard)**
 - b. **Politics**
 - c. **Capacity of organizations (funding, space, supportive services, etc.) not adequate to address needs**
 - d. **Available space for development**
6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
- a. ALL populations?
 - o **Limited supply of affordable housing, due to many factors including limited land for development, competition with students and others wishing to live within Ithaca city limits, limited incentives for developers to build more affordable housing, and high tax rates making it difficult for some individuals to remain in their homes).**
 - b. The population you serve?
 - o **Limited supply of affordable housing, due to many factors including limited land for development, competition with students and others wishing to live within Ithaca city limits, limited incentives for developers to build more affordable housing, and high tax rates making it difficult for some individuals to remain in their homes).**
 - o **Not enough subsidies to accommodate individuals in need of lower income housing arrangements, and long wait list for Section 8 housing.**
 - o **Code enforcement – lack of strict code enforcement results in poor quality housing options in some areas of town.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Amie Hendrix*
Organization: Department of Youth Services
Date of Interview: January 20, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?
 - **Provide funding to programs such as The Learning Web, which provides transitional housing for youth**
 - **Fund “Housing Scholarships”**
 - **Provide resource referral and support for youth up to age 24**
 - **Work with others in the community through committees and task forces to address housing needs.**

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.

YES.

 - **There is no group home facility in Tompkins County – Elmira is the closest one.**
 - **Youth without steady source of income and no adults to guide and support them need “Supervised” independent living programs, which are often not available.**
 - **Landlords often do not want to serve youth.**

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients?
 - **Affordability (DSS vouchers are not adequate for decent housing)**
 - **Transportation to allow for accessibility to and from home to go to jobs, education classes and services.**

 - b. Tompkins County residents overall?
 - **Same issue of affordability and accessibility.**

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
 - **Engaged in planning, coordination and referrals. Conduct needs assessments, surveys, etc. for 18-24 year-old population. Bring funding partners together to address housing and other needs of this age cohort.**
 - **Serve as members of Continuum of Care (Runaway/Homeless Youth Services committee)**

5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
 - **This population (18-24 years old) are undereducated and often don’t have the skills to stay employed.**
 - **Competition is huge with students for jobs, references, and housing.**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

- **Poverty culture mentality – lack of planning, poor decision-making and problem-solving skills**
 - **Slacking landlords who do not keep properties up to code and lack of enforcement of code.**
 - **Not a good system/mechanism in place to share best practices related to how other communities are addressing housing challenges throughout the country.**
6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
- a. ALL populations?
**Affordability (e.g. consider more studio and smaller unit apartments to address today's demographics, rent control, more and better subsidies for renters, subsidies/incentives for developers to build more affordable housing and possibly for landlords to renovate,)
Transportation/Accessibility**

 - b. The population you serve?
 - **More Section 8 vouchers, Youth shelter, supervised independent living vs. scattered housing for youth**
 - **Address inequities related to securing and maintaining housing**

**Note: A joint interview was held with Amie Hendrix (Tompkins Co. Dept. of Youth Services) and Sally Schwartzbach (The Learning Web). DYS is more of a funder and planning body vs. direct service provider, whereas, The Learning Web is a direct service provider of youth services (including a housing service) funded by DYS.*

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Laura Rodriguez

Organization: The Advocacy Center

Date of Interview: January 21, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?
 - **Provide temporary shelter for adults, teens and children who are domestic and sexual violence survivors (operates the *Domestic Violence Safe House* where clients can stay for 30-90 days while staff helps them with long-term stable arrangements). Only one house is available. It has 9 beds. Clients are typically female (98%), but occasionally serve a male client. 1/3 of clients have children.**
 - **Referrals to other county agencies for services AND to out-of-county and sometimes out-of-state agencies if client is deemed “at risk” of further violence by remaining in the county.**

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.

YES.

 - **Affordable, quality housing in non-isolated, safe areas is difficult to find. The Department of Social Services housing voucher of \$400/month is usually NOT adequate to rent a 1 BR unit for 1 person – families have even more of a challenge.**
 - **The Domestic Violence Safe House is full most of the time, and the only domestic violence shelter in Ithaca.**
 - **Occasionally referrals have to be made to shelters in surrounding counties AND sometimes out-of-state depending on the risk of further violence to occur if the woman remains in Tompkins County. DSS usually pays for transportation. The Advocacy Center has a small grant that is used for emergency needs, AND the receiving shelter often shares the cost for relocating the client.**
 - **Resources to help clients locate and keep stable housing are limited (both money and staff). The Advocacy Center recruited a part-time Americorps volunteer to assist clients. The volunteer assignment has increased to 32 hours per week, with the focus solely on housing needs.**

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients?
 - **Access to affordable housing (availability, cost, safety and quality are all issues)**
 - **Discrimination by landlords remains an issue (some do not want to accept DSS vouchers and/or prefer to rent to students whose parents are often able to pay for year-long leases up front)**

 - b. Tompkins County residents overall?
 - **Affordability for low and moderate income populations.**
 -

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
 - **Recruitment of an Americorps Volunteer who is now working 32 hrs./week to focus on clients housing needs;**
 - **Working towards hiring a Shelter Manager (to manage all aspects of the shelter house) using funds from the State Victims Unit. This will allow the Shelter Advocate to focus on helping clients transition to stable housing;**
 - **Serve on various community task forces and committees (e.g. Homeless Housing Task Force, Continuum of Care) and partner with other agencies to secure needed services for clients (e.g. Tompkins Community Action, FUP, Catholic Social Services, DSS, The Learning Web, INHS, Overlook, Cedar Creek, Lakeview, etc.)**

5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
 - **Availability of safe, affordable housing (many obstacles underlie this issue, such as discrimination by landlords, politics, limited space to develop housing, competition with students for affordable housing, etc.)**
 - **Challenges are outpacing ability to provide more housing to meet needs. For example, The Advocacy Center is receiving more calls and more referrals for services to teens who are in unstable or unsafe home environments and have no other place to go on an emergency basis. Also more people are calling that do not meet The Advocacy Center's criteria (not a domestic violence case). Calls are taken by advocates, all of whom are cross-trained so appropriate referrals can be made. The Advocacy Center maintains a 24/7 hotline.**

6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
 - a. ALL populations?
Affordability

 - b. The population you serve?
Access to affordable, safe environments. Housing where transportation is available to access other services and jobs.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: Sally Schwartzbach*

Organization: The Learning Web

Date of Interview: January 20, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?
 - **Provide 15 scattered site transitional housing apts. for youth 18-24 years of age (must apply for a housing scholarship to access this service). The Learning Web is the lease holder for 12-18 month period.**
 - **Assist youth in search for housing, help them apply for Section 8 vouchers or public assistance or help them get into the emergency shelter.**
 - **Help youth talk to landlord to see if eviction can be avoided.**
 - **Provide youth with referrals to other agencies for housing and other services.**

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.

YES.

 - **There is no group home facility in Tompkins County – Elmira is the closest one.**
 - **Youth without steady source of income and no adults to guide and support them need “Supervised” independent living programs, which are generally not available. Current scattered site apts. do not provide a supervised/supportive environment that most of these youth need.**
 - **Landlords often do not want to serve youth.**

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :
 - a. Your clients?
 - **Affordability (DSS vouchers are not adequate for decent housing)**
 - **Transportation to allow for accessibility to and from home to go to jobs, education classes and services.**

 - b. Tompkins County residents overall?
 - **Same issue of affordability and accessibility.**

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
 - **Struggling to maintain the 15 apartments currently made available at scattered sites thanks to Department of Youth Services funding**
 - **Serve as members of Continuum of Care (Runaway/Homeless Youth Services committee)**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
- **This population (18-24 years old) are undereducated and often don't have the skills to stay employed.**
 - **Competition is huge with students for jobs, references, and housing.**
 - **Poverty culture mentality – lack of planning, poor decision-making and problem-solving skills**
 - **Slacking landlords who do not keep properties up to code and lack of enforcement of code.**
 - **Not a good system/mechanism in place to share best practices related to how other communities are addressing housing challenges throughout the country.**
6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
- a. ALL populations?
- **Affordability (e.g. consider more studio and smaller unit apartments to address today's demographics, rent control, more and better subsidies for renters, subsidies/incentives for developers to build more affordable housing and possibly for landlords to renovate,)**
 - **Transportation/Accessibility**
- b. The population you serve?
- **More Section 8 vouchers, Youth shelter, supervised independent living vs. scattered housing for youth**
 - **Address inequities related to securing and maintaining housing**

**Note: A joint interview was held with Amie Hendrix (Tompkins Co. Dept. of Youth Services) and Sally Schwartzbach (The Learning Web). DYS is more of a funder and planning body vs. direct service provider, whereas, The Learning Web is a direct service provider of youth services (including a housing service) funded by DYS.*

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Name/Title of Interviewee: David Stoyell

Organization: Tompkins County Office of Aging

Date of Interview: January 20, 2016

1. What housing services (direct and indirect) do you currently provide for Tompkins County residents?

- **Produce a “Housing Resource Directory for Seniors;”**
- **Make referrals and provide help with housing applications, HEAP applications, applications for weatherization and home repairs, and with accessibility modifications (mainly referrals for this, but do have some limited funds to pay for minor modifications -- goal is to help seniors either locate housing OR remain in existing housing if they have it;**
- **Strategic planning with other agencies to address housing issues of seniors; and**
- **Conduct surveys of senior housing needs and preferences.**

2. Do your clients have unmet housing needs? If so, explain.

Yes.

- **Some defer repairs on their existing homes because of cost;**
- **Some frail seniors need affordable, assisted living (expensive care, especially for memory/dementia patient care -- Longview provides care for some);**
- **Some cannot stay in homes because taxes have become unaffordable;**
- **Need more market rate options for downsizing to areas where services can be easily accessed.**

3. What would you say are the greatest housing issues facing :

a. Your clients?

- **Affordability (Some seniors having to sell their homes in downtown Ithaca because they can't afford taxes – others who don't own homes have difficulty finding housing they can afford);**
- **Availability (housing they can afford may be poor quality OR in an area where transportation is not readily available to access needed services);**
- **Segregation by income, age, disabilities can cause problems – need more integrated, affordable options with easy access to needed services.**

b. Tompkins County residents overall?

- **Scarcity of housing stock**
- **High cost of available stock**

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

4. What action is your organization taking to address housing issues?
 - **Participate in meetings with all community stakeholders;**
 - **Strategic planning addresses housing issues of senior population;**
 - **Advocacy/ Education -- raising public awareness regarding “not in my backyard” mentality.**

5. What would you say are the greatest obstacles you encounter in trying to address housing issues?
 - **Regarding independent living – scarcity of housing stock, especially for market rate options;**
 - **Lack of a federal long-term care financing policy’**
 - **Facing the “NIMBY” mentality;**
 - **No Social Security policy to address “Nursing Home Dread.”**

6. As Tompkins County formulates an overall housing strategy, what would you identify as the top 2-3 overall housing issues that need to be addressed for
 - a. ALL populations?
 - **Incentivized housing that is affordable for people who work.**

 - b. The population you serve?
 - **Universal Design**
 - **Concern regarding “If you keep building for the wealthy, more wealthy people will want to live here and others will be forced into outlying areas as only option.”**

