



# YWCA IS ON A MISSION

## An Innovative Project: The Supportive Housing Initiative



- What:** A beautiful new \$5.5 million investment in our community  
**24 Supportive Housing Apartment Units**, fully funded.  
**Office Space** for the Empowerment Center staff, fully funded.  
Community Space (meetings, educational opportunities, warming and cooling space), funding pending.  
This will be supportive housing and offices only. Shelter will not be provided at this location.
- Where:** Original plans from June 2022, were to locate across from the Clinton County Law Center 600 Block of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.  
Alternative plans are to locate at DeWitt Park, on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, next to Park Towers
- How:** A once in a lifetime funding opportunity through a historic award for our community from the National Housing Trust Fund.  
The National Housing Trust Fund has awarded a \$4.4 Million dollar award for the construction.  
The City of Clinton pledged \$500,000 as a one-time award for the construction.  
The Clinton County Board of Supervisors pledged \$500,000 as a one-time award for construction and land costs. Decision now pending final approval due to new location.  
An anonymous donor has pledged \$500,000 towards an Operational Reserve account for ongoing expenses.
- Who:** Those in our community experiencing chronic homelessness. Often in need of more supportive services, facing a greater number of barriers to health and wellness, and thus self-sufficiency.

**Ongoing:** Empowerment Center staff will have offices on-site. Every client in supportive housing programs is assigned a Case Manager. Administration will also be on-site to provide additional support and add to supervision of the building. Additional community-based supportive services providers will also be able to work on-site, as space is available. Services may include: mental health providers, substance misuse/abuse treatment providers, educational opportunities, workforce development opportunities, religious/spiritual supports, peer-to-peer supports, etc.

*For more information, please contact YWCA Executive Director Shannon Sander-Welzien at 563-242-2110 x.100 or YWCA Empowerment Director Michelle Plasschaert at 563-242-2110 x.401.*

## Talking Points / FAQ's

### Why did you pick this location for the facility?

- After exploring 10-15 location ideas in 2022, and seeking County and City input, the gravel lot across from Law Center (formerly a gas station) is the location we collaboratively determined will best serve the community needs. The selection of this location was done in a very meaningful manner, after much consideration, and done so with a committee of individuals. Access to transportation, jobs, medical facilities, public housing, all within walking distance. The proximity to the Law Center and new Community Resource Center was also a large factor in selection. The County jail is already located there.
- After re-zoning was not approved by the Clinton City Council, we reached out to IFA to ask if we could move the location. IFA gave us until 11/30/23 to find new site in the same census tract that met all the HUD NHTF guidelines.
- We asked City leaders to propose alternate sites and DeWitt Park was selected to move forward to set a Public Hearing on. (See DeWitt Park location selection / Presentation at City Council 9-26-23)
- A beautiful new development will increase the aesthetics of the neighborhood. The design resembles a home and not an institution, again part of a thoughtful process. We've designed the facility with dignity and privacy for clients in mind, with private interior outdoor courtyard. This has been an ongoing dream/discussion for over eight years, with many creative ideas explored over the years. The timeline is tight to meet all IFA requirements by the 11/30/23 deadline. Nearly two-thirds of the park space will be maintained and enhanced. We will plant trees for to replace the very limited trees removed.

### Won't this bring more crime to the area? Homeless people have a higher crime rate.

We are seeking to "house" people the therefore end their homelessness. We know having people housed versus on the streets will reduce crime. We plan for the facility to be a part of the crime-free housing program and will put supports in place to reduce crime in the area. Supportive Housing is an evidence-based approach to homelessness that actually reduces crime. Not to mention having on-site case managers and oversight at the facility, which is not required by IFA, but the YWCA will be providing. We are asking the community to entrust we will be good neighbors and stewards of this project.

### Supportive Housing Improves Health, Reduces Crime, and Increases Employment

A recently released independent study by Elior Cohen at UCLA finds that **targeted housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness reduces crime, increases employment, and improves health.**

The study finds that participation in housing programs not only reduces the probability of returning to the homeless support system but also (within 18 months):

#### **Improves Health**

- Lowers the number of emergency department visits by 80%.

#### **Reduces Crime**

- Reduces the number of jail days by 130%.
- Reduces the probability of committing a crime by 80%.

#### **Increases Employment**

- Increases the probability of reporting employment by 24%.

### Will there be an opportunity for people to get their GED or on-the-job training?

- Yes, absolutely! We already do this with our clients.

### What about transportation?

- YWCA Clinton provides transportation assistance through several options based on client need. Both locations were selected for easy access to bus lines which also sets clients up for success and options. We partner with MTA, Riverbend Transit, and Paratransit to address the majority of transportation needs.

### Will there be drug testing?

- Drugs and drug paraphernalia will NOT be permitted in the facility or on any YWCA-owned property and eviction will occur if founded. However, we may not “test for drugs”. We are not a treatment facility; we are a housing opportunity. We will make referrals for treatment and support clients in their recovery. We are not permitted by IFA and HUD regulations to evict due to drug testing. Those that do not agree with the evidence-based practice, should contact their State and Federal legislators to inquire about changing the model for funding.

### Sounds like a handout, what makes this different?

- Case management is the critical component in all of our services. We work on financial management with clients, help with assistance to services, address mental health and substance misuse issues, nurturing parenting. We deliver trauma-informed, client-centered services that are strength-based. One stable person in someone’s life can make a world of difference to those living in trauma. A roof over their heads, and some stability in their lives is the key to affecting change.

### What do you mean by High Utilizer / Low Barrier / Permanent Supportive Housing

- Permanent supportive housing is an intervention that combines affordable housing (tenants have the legal right to remain in the unit as long as they wish, as defined by the terms of a renewable lease agreement and pay no more than 30% of income for housing) with voluntary support services designed to help tenants stay housed and address health issues while building the necessary skills to live as independently as possible. PSH is an **evidence-based housing intervention** that significantly reduces returns to jail and homelessness, reliance on emergency health services, and improves overall quality of life.
- As we receive State and Federal funding awards, and bring resources to our City/County, we agree to follow State and Federal funding guidelines. These are Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) and HUD guidelines. Serving high utilizers with low barrier services is an IFA and HUD mandated practice. It’s how all funded agencies across the State operate. Those that do not agree with this evidence-based practice, should contact their State and Federal legislators to inquire about changing the model for funding.

### Will there be places for families?

- Yes, based on unit availability and family size. Although ideally, we will place families in the community versus on site, depending on needs and resources available.

### How will men, women and those with children be separated?

- For Supportive Housing, each person/family would have access to their own unit/apartment, the same as any apartment complex. If Shelter is built, in separate space/rooms.

### Can we adopt different programs from other housing providers?

- We have already been doing this for many years, this project has been in discussion for over eight years. We are always involved in best practices, attending trainings, serving on committees, speaking with colleagues.

### What is the long-term planning for finances? How will you pay for this?

- Rental Income. The 24 units of Supportive Housing will be funded by program dollars and rental income of an estimated \$411 per unit. If all units are full, we will have \$9,864 per month in monthly rentals.

- Debt-free project. Hatch Development has assured us this will be a debt-free project.
- Supplemental funding. We will house diversified services under one roof, with a diverse funding stream, as is best practice for all non-profits and businesses.
- Operating Expenses, Operational Reserves, Building Reserves and an 8-10% vacancy rate are built into the NHTF award.
- Operational Reserves. The National Housing Trust Fund application requires a budget including operational reserves and building reserves.
- An anonymous donor has pledged an additional \$500,000 for an Operational Reserve account to offset any years of hardship.
- Long-term funding is fluid. As with all businesses and even cities, finances are fluid.
- Iowa Finance Authority has never funded an unsuccessful project and have stated they are partners with us in this project.
- The YWCA has a history of successful grant writing, and supportive housing is the evidence-based best practice to help address homelessness. We have many grants in mind to write for once we have a project.

## 1 in 3 people are at risk of homelessness

**In Clinton County, 1 in 3 people are at risk of homelessness due to poverty and this has only increased with the impact of the COVID-19.** YWCA Clinton operates under the Housing First Model. Housing First is an evidence-based homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness, and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. **This approach strives to break the cycle of poverty/homelessness so that people utilizing funds are on the road to self-sufficiency.**

## YWCA Empowerment Center Services

The YWCA Empowerment Center seeks to stop homelessness before it starts. We assist families with children and individuals in both Clinton and Jackson Counties who are experiencing or on the verge of experiencing homelessness through our Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention programs. YWCA Clinton believes that safe housing is a basic human right.

**Ongoing case management** is provided for all program participants to address barriers, provide stability, and set goals.

### Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness Prevention services assist community members who are in danger of becoming homeless within the next 14 days. YWCA Homelessness Prevention Program seeks to stop homelessness before it starts. It is a program that assists families with children and individuals who currently have housing but are at risk of becoming homeless. Homelessness Prevention provides funding for rent and utility deposits as well as rent and utility arrears, **along with wrap around case management.** Income and grant guidelines are what determines which clients are served first.

### Rapid Re-Housing

YWCA Rapid Rehousing is a program that offers short-term financial case management services to families who are currently experiencing literal homelessness. The goal of the program is to assist in obtaining safe, affordable, permanent housing while providing families with on-going case management services to ensure long-term success. Literally homeless is defined as currently in a shelter, on the streets, in a car, in a tent, or living in any place not suitable for human habitation. Income, needs, and grant guidelines determine which clients are served first.

Those seeking services should call the YWCA Homeless Hotline at 833-849-8976. All services are free and confidential.

## Supportive Housing

Permanent Supportive Housing is permanent housing in which housing assistance (long-term leasing or rental assistance) and supportive services are provided to assist individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in achieving housing stability. The services are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills, and connect clients with community-based health care, treatment, and employment services.

## Street Outreach

Street Outreach services are designed to meet the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness in unsheltered locations by connecting them with emergency shelter, housing or critical services and providing them with urgent non-facility-based care. The program consists of engagement, case management, emergency health and mental health services, and transportation.

## Emergency Shelter

Temporary emergency shelter provides shelter in emergency situations. YWCA Clinton currently has very limited funding to provide emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness due to FEMA funding ending. If you would like to donate our emergency shelter fund, please contact us.

## In 2022 the YWCA Empowerment Center provided

**3,346** hotline calls answered for those seeking services to address homelessness or near homelessness.

**400** hours of street outreach services were provided, for those found out in the community in need.

**396** adults and children were served with special funding for homelessness due to COVID.

**1,478** nights of emergency shelter provided due to FEMA/COVID funding. FEMA funding ended in May of 2023.

## We received 600+ calls per quarter for those in need on “Coordinated Entry hotline.” The YWCA Empowerment Center serves as the Access Point for Homeless Services for Clinton & Jackson Counties

YWCA Clinton serves as the access point for all homeless services funded by the State of Iowa for Clinton and Jackson counties. This is the “coordinated entry” system that was created to reduce duplication of services and prioritize people with the most barriers to housing. All homeless and at-risk of homelessness individuals/families are directed to call the 1-800-number that is answered by our Case Managers here locally and are added to the “prioritization list”. All state-funded agencies are required to use the coordinated entry system to serve the homeless. When agencies have opening in their programs, they pull from the top of the list.

## The waiting list to access services “prioritization list” has ranged from 125-200 applications

This number represents applications, not people. Each application represents 1-8 people -- families, women, men, and children. These are the people we unfortunately are unable to help without additional resources and options.

## Homelessness is a “community issue” to collaborate on to solve.

### 1 in 3 people in Clinton County live in poverty or just above

**UNITED WAY ALICE REPORT:** Despite the critical nature of many jobs to keep our local economies running – educating our youngest children, keeping our ailing parent safe – these workers often struggle to keep their own households from financial ruin. ALICE is your childcare worker, the cashier at your supermarket, the gas attendant, the salesperson at your big box store, your waitress, a home health aide, an office clerk. ALICE cannot always pay the bills, has little or nothing in savings, and is forced to make tough choices such as deciding between quality childcare or paying the rent. One unexpected car repair or medical bill can push these financially strapped families over the edge. The future success of our communities is directly tied to the financial stability of these fragile ALICE households.

Source: <https://www.uwiowa.org/united-way-alice-report-iowa>

## Point in Time Count determines “needs” of Clinton County

YWCA Clinton is the lead agency for the Clinton County PIT count which reports homelessness to the State of Iowa. It is a count of homelessness for one day in time, which is done twice per year. We thank the Clinton Police Department, Clinton County Sheriff's Department, Sisters of St. Francis and many other community volunteers for assisting with the count.

## Additional Partnerships

**Sole Purpose** The YWCA partners with Shoe Sensation to provide new shoes to the literally homeless. The average homeless individual walks 10 to 20 miles per day in search of shelter, food, and safety. With limited resources, they must continue to move from place to place to avoid legal ramifications for loitering, or trespassing, and simply to avoid the stigma associated with homelessness. The need for shoes and socks is a necessity for health and dignity.

**CHAMP** Amerigroup Iowa and the YWCA Empowerment Center have partnered to bring the CHAMP program to residents of Clinton County. CHAMP is a grant-funded program that offers last resort flex funding for Amerigroup members that are facing housing instability.

**Clinton County Resource Center** The YWCA Empowerment Center staff volunteer at the Clinton County Resource Center to provide on-site, in person access to all of the programs and services offered by the YWCA. The Clinton County Resource Center offers the opportunity to access several community-based services all at one location. Located in the Clinton County Courthouse.

## Housing Terms:

**High Utilizer** – Frequent users who continuously cycle through a variety of emergency systems. Legal. Medical. Psychiatric. Detoxification. Jail. Emergency Room. Shelter. Repeat. State and National funding gives preference to high utilizers, it is mandated by state and federal grant funding.

**Low Barrier Housing** – The definition of low barrier housing varies greatly, but generally means that requirements for entry are limited or minimal, and focuses on harm reduction, which in turn encourages individuals who are experiencing homelessness to seek resources. In other words, accessing shelter and supportive services shouldn't be an additional barrier. This means that we also need to consider the location for ease of access to supportive services and considering elderly and mobility impaired individuals. **“Low Barrier” does not mean low standard – possession of drugs and weapons are prohibited, and all program participants are expected to abide program guidelines. “Come as you are, and we'll meet you there. We'll do our best to welcome you and provide you the resources to achieve your housing, health, and employment goals.”**

## Current YWCA Funding Sources

The majority of YWCA Clinton services are provided through state and federal funding through the Iowa Finance Authority and HUD. This funding has specific grant guidelines to serve those with the highest needs with the lowest barriers to assistance. (HUD and IFA guidelines).

Additionally, we are thankful to our local county and city governments for supporting the YWCA Empowerment Center, as well as United Way and other generous donors who help with funding. This funding counts as matching funds for our grants, but also allows for more flexibility in how the funds may be used.

## \$400,000 is invested back into our community

In 2021-22, the YWCA Empowerment Center funneled \$400,000 in direct program costs and case management into keeping community members in their own home and securing safe housing.