



Homeless Awareness Month

# *HOMELESS AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT*

*"We Each Have a Role in  
Ending Homelessness"*



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# MCAH & HAM

## ***TOGETHER FOR OVER 20 YEARS!***

Homeless Awareness Month (HAM) takes place every November in Michigan to raise awareness about issues relating to housing insecurity and homelessness and ***to get communities invested in making a difference.***

The Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) promotes HAM throughout Michigan, providing support for local partner events and leading the state's communication and awareness raising campaign.

Michigan's observance, ***which has taken place for nearly 20 years***, has become an essential part of our collective effort to promote awareness and understanding of those experiencing homelessness.



# 2023 THEME

***"WE EACH HAVE A ROLE IN ENDING  
HOMELESSNESS"***

Specifically, how can each one of us play a role in ending homelessness by breaking down the barriers homelessness and housing challenged folks face in achieving safe and affordable long-term housing?



# WHY A TOOLKIT?

## DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL!

This toolkit is designed to cover the basics of planning your HAM event:

**Preparation**  
**Communication**  
**Wrap Up**

Via subsequent emails and social media posts, we will give you lots of specific project ideas around **voting, volunteering, and validating** to help launch some specific projects.

Or, you may have already come up with your own idea already!

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*DON'T SCROLL, CLICK!*



## **1** **PREPARATION**

## **2** **COMMUNICATE**

## **3** **WRAP UP**



# 1 CHAPTER

# PREPARATION

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# PREPARATION 101

5 minutes, 5 days, 5 weeks

*We have something for everyone !*

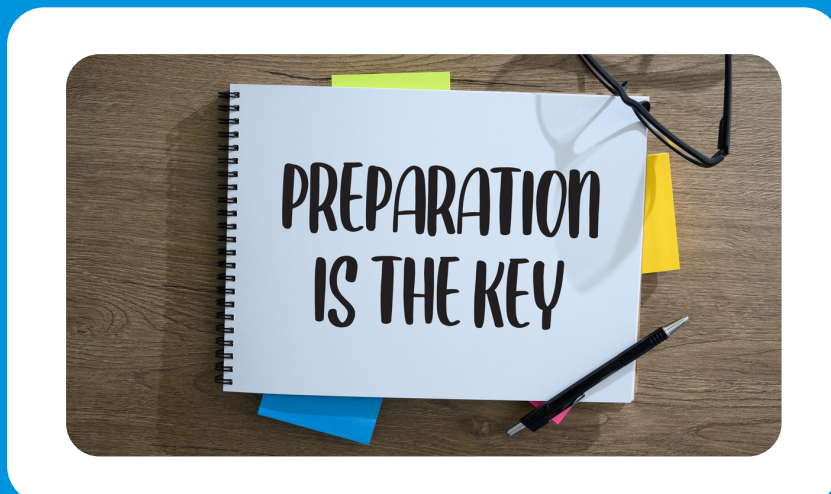
**The goal of Homeless Awareness Month (HAM) is to raise awareness about issues related to homelessness and to call in your community as partners in the work to prevent and end homelessness.**

Whether you are a seasoned veteran or this is your first time hosting a HAM event, remember ***that you do not need an event or activity for each day.*** It might be better to focus on one or two well-planned, marketed, and attended activities to increase your impact without unnecessarily increasing your workload.

Homelessness cannot be solved in a month, but a creative, dedicated, and timely effort will contribute greatly to your organization and our collective cause.

MCAH recommends pulling together an informed, dedicated committee to plan and implement your HAM activities.

**This can be done whether your planning begins months, weeks, or even days before November 1st**





# BUILD YOUR PLANNING TEAM

We recommend that you begin by seeing what is already happening in your community and identifying partners who can help plan and implement your ideas.

Start by contacting:

- Your local Continuum of Care (CoC) leadership
- The Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) for your community
- Shelters in the area
- Other nonprofits interested in housing, homelessness, and poverty
- Faith-based organizations and institutions
- Universities, colleges, and high schools



If you don't know where to start, we can give you contact information (including CoC leadership and HARAs). Working together on a project, no matter how big or small, will make sure that you have all the best available information and resources to make your event a success!

# A WORD ABOUT PREPARATION

*Take 5 Minutes To Answer These Questions*

## Considerations:

- What community organizations, local businesses, schools, or other entities should we engage with to partner, sponsor, or market our event or activity?
- What individuals (members, donors, staff, volunteers, etc) might want to participate in our event or activity?
- Who is knowledgeable about organizing events within the community?
- What is the value of our event or activity for our community, agency, or individuals experiencing homelessness?
- What information (data, policy/advocacy info, stories, etc) would be helpful for our event or activity?
- How do we market and publicize our event or activity?
- When and where should the events take place?
- How many people should coordinate each event?
- How can we get decision makers and people in power (local elected officials, state legislators, members of Congress, business, funders, media, etc) to participate or attend our event or activity?





## TELL US ABOUT IT

*Please take the time to contact MCAH and let us know about your event!*

Having a complete list of all activities happening around the state allows us to support your efforts, but it also gives us crucial information we can take to decision makers.

By illustrating just how many communities host HAM events, we are showing our elected officials that this is an issue that our communities care about and want to see more resources and attention paid to ending homelessness.



- [Register your event](#)

- Questions?  
[Contact Amy Stephenson](#)

# ABCs | Preparation

## CAPACITY

What is our capacity for hosting well executed, successful events and activities?



## GOAL

- What is our primary goal? (educate, advocate, raise funds, etc)

## STAKEHOLDERS

How are we incorporating individuals who have experienced homelessness into our planning process?





# 2

## CHAPTER

# COMMUNICATE

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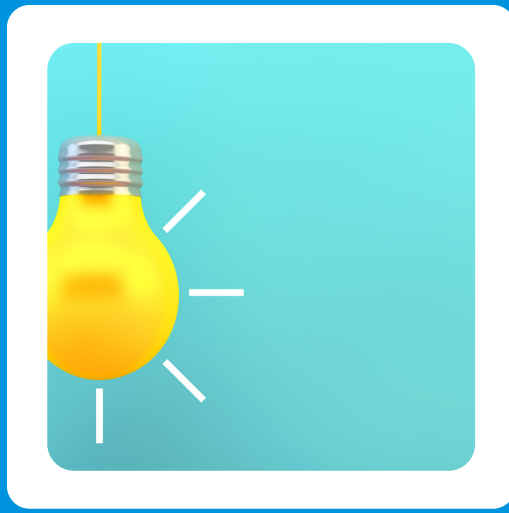
# COMMUNICATION 101

**Homeless Awareness Month is first and foremost an opportunity to talk about homelessness with a wide range of audiences:**

- *Donors*
- *General public (who may rarely thinks about housing insecurity)*
- *Local and State decision-makers*

**MCAH, along with service providers throughout the state, coordinates messaging and activities designed to build awareness, break stereotypes, and create champions for issues related to homelessness.**





## GREAT IDEAS | COMMUNICATIONS

- Participate in MCAH's HAM social media campaign by sharing our daily content and engaging in conversation about the data and narratives used in our materials. Make sure to tag us on Facebook and Twitter at @mihomeless, and to use our hashtags: #HAM2023 and #EndMIHomelessness
- Engage with traditional media (such as your local newspaper and radio or news stations) to produce content related to homelessness, such as educational information, stories from people who are now experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness, and homeless service providers
- Promote your HAM events in the local newspaper
- Partner with the graphics department at a local school or business to create flyers and posters for your events or fact sheets with information about homelessness (and offer recognition opportunities to those who participate/contribute)
- Market your events, activities, and educational materials to community organizations, schools, and businesses and ask them to help disseminate through their networks.
- MCAH promote your events, activities, and educational materials to a statewide audience! Register your activities with us and we'll post on social media and our website.



**UTILIZE THE SOCIAL MEDIA OF YOUR ORGANIZATION  
AND YOUR NETWORK TO EXPAND YOUR INFLUENCE AND  
RAISE AWARENESS FOR YOUR EVENT**



## OTHER RESOURCES

- Your agency or organization's contact list (for email or mailing) and the contact list of your community partners
- Local media such as TV, newspaper, radio, student publications, and local influencers
- Your social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Use the hashtag #HAM2022 and #EndMIHomelessness to connect to the larger statewide conversation
- Homeless Awareness Month #HAM2023



**Feel free to check out our own Facebook and Twitter and retweet/share our materials, or modify them to include your local info**



## MEDIA RELATIONS 101

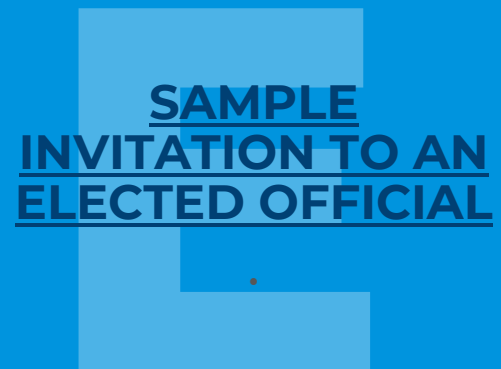


TAG  
LIKE  
SHARE  
TWEET  
FOLLOW  
COMMENT  
SUBSCRIBE

## SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

SAMPLE SOCIAL  
MEDIA POSTS  
(SECTION PENDING)





## MCAH Is Here For You

Email [Amy Stephenson](#), Communications Manager, for any assistance with communications.

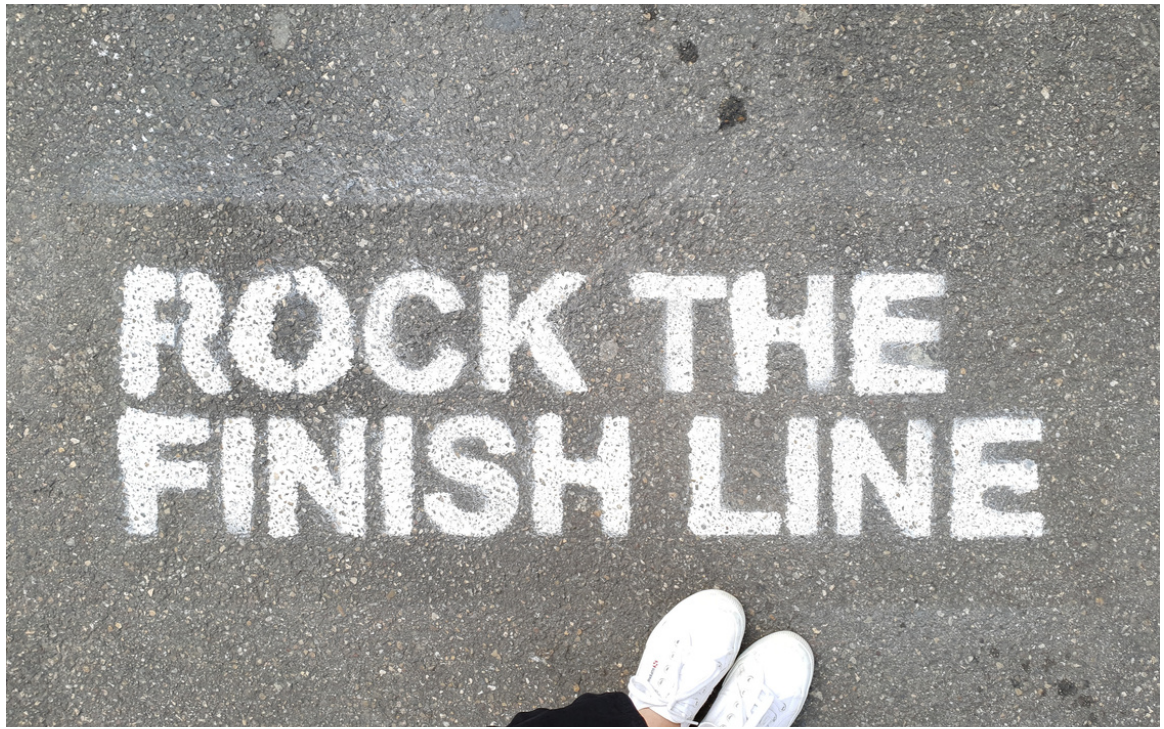


# 3

CHAPTER

# THAT'S A WRAP

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## WRAP UP

When Homeless Awareness Month has concluded, there will still be a few loose ends that you will need to tie up on your way to the finish line.

1. Remember to send thank you letters to all of your contacts and your support network. You or other Homeless Awareness Month organizers will probably refer to these same people in the future.
2. Meet with your team to discuss what went right and what went wrong during Homeless Awareness Month. Make sure everyone evaluates their own project, as well as how they viewed Homeless Awareness Month as a whole. Gather these individual and group evaluations to comprise a resource folder—one that you and other groups will be able to refer to in following years. This resource will allow you to have a foundation upon which to build your future awareness activities.
3. Contact the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness to let us know how things went with your awareness activities — send us newspaper clippings, posters, commentary and other news! Forward to [astephenson@mihomeless.org](mailto:astephenson@mihomeless.org)
4. Start planning for next year!



# THE WORK DOESN'T END HERE

During HAM, as community members begin to really think about issues relating to homelessness, it is crucial that you provide information on how they can take action after HAM has concluded. Provide them with the following information and any other material that you believe is important for your own community.

- The name, address, email, and phone number of a local shelter at which they can volunteer.
- The names, addresses and phone numbers of local, state, and national homeless coalitions and advocacy groups which they can join.
- Information about writing Members of Congress.

**A truly successful HAM will inspire people to become further involved with the issue of homelessness.**