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MEDIA RELEASE
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GRAND JUNCTION AND MESA COUNTY CONDUCT UNHOUSED NEEDS ASSESSMENT

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. July 7, 2023 – The City of Grand Junction is conducting an Unhoused Needs Assessment (UHNA) to identify collaborative strategies to address houselessness. The needs assessment is a multi-agency collaboration between the City of Grand Junction, Mesa County, and the Grand Junction Housing Authority. Components of the assessment include a community-level survey, focus groups, data from state and other local service agencies, as well as interviews to gather and aggregate data. In addition, the project team will engage houseless service providers, community leaders, social support systems, behavioral health providers, law enforcement, community members, and individuals who are or who have lived the experience of houselessness. These groups will help identify effective policy and program models that can be tailored to fit the unique needs in Grand Junction. [Link to survey and for more information](#) The results of the assessment and a strategy report will be presented to City Council in the fall.

The UHNA will examine current services to the unhoused, needed services, and how social services, law enforcement, behavioral health, and the local community can collaborate to provide recommendations for types of housing, future services, increasing community capacity, as well as suggestions for new policies, practices, and regulatory changes that should be implemented to address gaps in housing and related services.

Like many municipalities, the City of Grand Junction has experienced a recent rise in houselessness and the challenges that come with it. The Housing Needs Assessment conducted in 2021 was focused on available services and housing and found that the rising cost of housing created a significant gap in affordable housing. The median price of a home in Mesa County increased 20.5 percent between 2019 and 2021. The 2023 Point-In-Time count conducted of those experiencing houselessness found a nearly 43 percent rise in Grand Junction's houseless population. The 2023 UHNA will build upon the 2019 evaluation of housing needs and determine the services available and specific to those that are housing insecure as well as unhoused residents. Strategies will then be developed that coincide with a community-led action plan that will be designed to effectively meet current and future needs, fill key gaps, and overcome barriers within the community's housing stock and services.

"The city led a survey of People Experiencing Homelessness in December of 2002. That survey was a starting point in understanding the characteristics and experiences of individuals experiencing houselessness. The new Unhoused Needs Assessment will look more in depth at the systems, structures, data, and partnerships available to the community to ensure that houselessness is rare and when experienced, brief," stated Tamra Allen, Community Development director. "Ending houselessness is not the responsibility of any single organization; instead, it is the responsibility of the entire community to work together to end it. The UHNA will help the community identify the systemic issues and areas of strength in order to develop new strategies so our community can be assured that we are committing our time and resources to the strategies that are most impactful over time," Allen continued.

"We are excited for this multi-agency collaboration to understand homelessness in Mesa County. The assessment will inform a community-wide strategic plan for lasting change, uniting us in a truly collaborative effort to find solutions," said Lisa Mills, Mesa County Behavioral Health Strategies and Operations manager.

JG Research and Evaluation was contracted by Grand Junction to conduct the Unhoused Needs Assessment and Strategy Report. JG is an applied social science research firm based in Bozeman, Montana that utilizes a diverse suite of quantitative and qualitative methodological skills to complete community-wide needs assessments. The OMNI institute, based in Denver, CO, is a collaborator on this project with JG and city staff.

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