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June 30, 2015

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**ONE SINGLE HOTLINE NUMBER DESIGNATED FOR ALL  
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**  
*HandsOn Central Ohio to answer calls  
from both families and single adults in need*

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – Community Shelter Board is centralizing how men, women and children experiencing homelessness find shelter through a partnership with HandsOn Central Ohio. Beginning July 1, HandsOn will begin triaging all people who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless through its 211 hotline or by calling 1-888-4-SHELTR (1-888-474-3587). Calls will be answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Currently HandsOn only serves single adults and fielded over 95,000 calls last year.

“We believe that creating a single point of access strengthens the system” said Michelle Heritage, executive director of the Community Shelter Board.

“HandsOn will link people to immediate help so they don't become homeless. If that is not possible, they can refer them to the shelter that best suits their needs. And if they've been homeless before, HandsOn is the first stop in linking clients to their navigator, the case worker, who knows and helped them in the past.”

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Elfi Di Bella, president and CEO of YWCA Columbus which runs the YWCA Family Center said “With the community moving to a single point of access, it is important to help families understand that calling the hotline is the first step to get help. We appreciate the community spreading the word to help us make this transition a smooth one for families.”

Family homelessness has increased 79% since 2011, prompting the need for a second family shelter that will open this fall. HandsOn will also refer to the new family shelter when it opens in fall 2015.

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Columbus Chamber  
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of Commissioners  
Metropolitan Area Church Council  
United Way of Central Ohio

Ernest Perry, president and CEO of HandsOn Central Ohio, said “We are proud to expand our operations to be the critical, first link between individuals and families, and our community's shelter system and support services.”

Community Shelter Board, established in 1986, is a collective impact organization that creates collaborations, innovates solutions, and invests in quality programs to end homelessness in Columbus and Franklin County. Community Shelter Board oversees an annual budget of \$31 million to support homeless programs and services. Last year, these programs served 12,000 people. Community Shelter Board is funded by the City of Columbus, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, the United Way of Central Ohio, The Columbus Foundation, Nationwide Foundation, American Electric Power Foundation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the State of Ohio, and many other public and private investors.

**community shelter board**  
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**Hands On**  
CENTRAL OHIO

# Homeless? Need shelter?

Starting July 1, 2015

Single adults **AND** families should call

Toll-Free

**Homeless Hotline**

**1-888-4-SHELTR**

**(1-888-474-3587)**

Open 24 hours, 7 days a week