

First-ever homeless shelter for transgender Americans set to open in New Orleans

Vic Parsons July 20, 2020

A house for homeless transgender people is set to open in New Orleans – and will be the first shelter of its kind in the US.

The House of Tulip, a community land trust, has been [fundraising](#) to buy property in Louisiana that can be converted into safe housing for homeless transgender and gender non-conforming people.

Over \$280,000 has been raised, of a target of \$400,000, and the founders told local media over the weekend that they've placed a bid on some housing in New Orleans.

“Imagine if you had your own small safe place, surrounded by people who are there to protect you,” [said](#) Mariah Moore, co-founder of the House of Tulip and an organiser with the Transgender Law Centre.

Moore added that something like the House of Tulip could have changed her life when she was a young trans woman without a permanent home, doing sex work to survive.

The House of Tulip – which stands for “Trans United Leading Intersectional Progress” – is “a multicultural and multigenerational leadership body of 11 individuals in the New Orleans area” that is “majority-Black and majority-women”.

According to the fundraiser, the plan “isn't an emergency shelter or a transitional living house. It's a long-term investment in housing solutions. As members of our community gain stability through housing, they'll have a path to homeownership”.

Ultimately, the project hopes that the occupants will be able to rent and then buy the houses. The House of Tulip is also thinking about other ways of investing in housing for the trans community, inspired by Tennessee grassroots organisation My Sistah's House, which is [fundraising](#) to build “tiny homes” for Black trans women and non-binary people in Memphis.

“There is no model for what we're doing,” said Dylan Waguespack, 28, the House of Tulip's treasurer and one of 10 founders. “This is something brand new.”

Waguespack has also experienced homelessness, and said that as a young trans man staying in public homelessness shelters he would have welcomed “anything that said ‘Trans kids are safe here’.”

“It's sometimes important just to be in a room with other people that look like you and feel like you do,” he said.

He added that surveys had found that one in three trans people in Louisiana will experience homelessness in their lives.