

**Homeless Provider Forum
May 1, 2008
Meeting Minutes**

Dawn Lee, OC Partnership

- **Point In Time Count** – Initial planning is underway. OCP will be handling project communication, volunteer recruitment and other logistics. Orange County Community Services, Homeless Prevention will serve as the overall project manager. Negotiating with an outside vendor to conduct the survey and count.
- **10 Year Plan** – OC Partnership has signed on to play a larger role in its development. Will complete plan as a joint effort with Homeless Prevention. Our goal is to have a draft of the plan before the end of the year. We've been gathering information on best practices, implementation strategies and plan elements and learning from other communities. Development will be a collaborative community effort.
- **Attended the Third Annual National Summit for Jurisdictional Leaders: America's Road Home: Partnering for Results Future Directions for Policy and Investment in Abolishing Homelessness in Washington, DC April 9th and 10th.** An inventory of federal programs that may assist homeless families was unveiled. Please see http://www.usich.gov/library/publications/FamilyInventory_Mar2008.pdf for the inventory and <http://www.usich.gov/> for general information on the U.S. Interagency Council the End Homelessness and summit information. Key messages from the summit.
 - Dr. James Peake, Secretary of US Dept of Veterans Affairs. The VA has identified 155,000 chronically homeless veterans. The number of homeless vets is decreasing. There is a new HUD VA Supportive Housing Program that will create 10,000 housing units and access to healthcare. Of the 1.5 million veterans deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, 800,000 have returned. Only 300,000 have come to the VA for Mental health, housing benefits. The VA has begun an aggressive outreach to reach the other 500K. The VA will sell VA foreclosed homes to nonprofits to be used as shelters.
 - New homeless research data from Dennis Culhane was provided that indicates that 75% of families are homeless for 60 to 90 days and don't come back for housing. 20% stay in shelters and use significant resources. This is driving funding priorities that encourage reserving high cost services for the small percentage that needs it and focus on homeless prevention and supportive housing at the front and back door. HUD is providing funding this year for a homeless families prevention demonstration project. If all goes well additional funding will follow.
 - The Second Chance Act was signed two weeks ago by the President. This provides \$326 mil to local communities targeted to meet the housing, medical and employment needs of parolees.
 - Examples of Best Practices from around the country:
 1. Political Will - The state of Washington has mandated a 50% reduction in homelessness within the next 5 years through its state legislature. One of the ways that they measure progress is by looking at recidivism, the number of times that a person comes back through the system. This is accomplished through HMIS. Mayors and city council members are a must as visible champions. \$15 -20 million in new funding is generated annually to address the mandate.

2. Atlanta has been successful in implementing strategies that have brought in the business community resources to their 10 year plan activities. They were brought in at the very beginning, their input listened to, and they are kept engaged with results and by showing economic benefits of plan activities.
3. Many regions have staffed a resource to oversee the implementation of 10 year plan strategies.
4. Denver implemented a program to address aggressive panhandling through a community education campaign and the use of parking meters. They estimated that \$4.5 million was given to panhandlers each year. Panhandling has decreased 92% in the target area and the funds are now going to outreach and chronically homeless programs.
5. In New York, Ready Willing and Able has implemented successful strategies for employing homeless men with substance abuse and/or prison backgrounds. Typically 45% of parolees return to jail within 1 year, under this program the recidivism rate is 5%. Key components are permanent supportive housing and weekly drug testing. Employment typically is the cleanup and rehab of apartments for the homeless.
6. In Seattle, scattered site housing has been the most successful strategy for housing chronically homeless and mentally ill residents. Such programs need intensive case management and a process for rapidly resolving issues.
7. Good intake and assessment is critical in identifying housing barriers at the very beginning. Seattle uses a regional vulnerability index to determine who's next up for housing.
8. St. Louis is generating homeless funds through the implementation of a use tax on business purchases over \$2,000. \$6 million per year is generated for affordable housing and healthcare initiatives and has led to the creation of 500 units of supportive housing.
9. Boise, ID providers partner with the faith based community and use private funding to bridge the timing gap between rehousing clients and the arrival of their housing vouchers.
10. Messaging – redefine homelessness as a public health and economic issue that can be solved. Use the word 'home' rather than 'housing' as it creates more of an emotional tie.

➤ **Attended Riverside County's Continuum of Care Annual Homeless Conference on April 30th**. Several hundred service providers, city and county representatives and other stakeholders gathered to review progress on the County's activities to reduce homelessness through increasing permanent housing opportunities and most efficiently partnering to provide shelter beds and services. A review of the implementation at the 6 month mark of their 10 year plan shows that goals have and are being met. Key messages:

- Riverside County counted 4508 homeless on their Point In Time night in January 2007. 26% are members of families. The county gets about half of what Orange County receives in HUD funding through the SuperNOFA process.
- Their goal is to hold each city within the county accountable for buying in to and acting on the regional 10 year plan. The Homeless Task Force is advocating for each jurisdiction to adopt an inclusionary housing policy that requires affordable housing units.

- Riverside County's 10 Year plan Steering Committee and their Homelessness Committees are well represented with mayors and city council members themselves as direct members.
- Major focuses in the region are 1) preventing new episodes of homelessness 2) ending chronic and episodic homelessness 3) focusing on housing placement and stabilization
- Plan elements include increasing emergency beds by 150, transitional beds by 225, 500 new permanent supportive beds and 1,500 new units of permanent affordable housing within 5 years, and reducing the 7,000 new incidents of homelessness that occur annually by 50% through prevention activities.
- Efforts are focused on creating a Housing Trust Fund as a flexible source to support those efforts that other sources do not. The Fund was mentioned as a potential source to satisfy the 20 - 25% match for HUD SHP funding.
- The County has been successful in aggressively uniting and mobilizing the faith based community in collaboratively working together to provide monetary and manpower resources in the Continuum. All agree that a number of programs would not exist had it not been for the support of this group.
- Riverside County says it sees the writing on the wall that government funding is moving toward perm supportive housing solutions and they are actively adjusting their housing stock accordingly. They retain a commitment to transitional shelter beds and are shifting funding from other sources.
- The County has several hundred year round emergency shelter beds and many are for families.
- They report that 67% of all shelter beds are in their HMIS. They estimate that their per night cost for emergency shelter to be about \$30.00.
- Providers report that they are beginning to see a fall out from the mortgage crisis and many precariously housed renters are now being evicted from foreclosed homes. They realize that these clients are working individuals that find themselves situationally homeless and don't need the services of a full transitional shelter program. They are focusing efforts and fund development in building up their homeless prevention capabilities.
- The Continuum has developed a series of compelling print ads to show the faces of homelessness based on their homeless demographics (they highlight seniors, workers, mentally ill and families) to make the issue more tangible to the general population.
- Responsibility for homeless services in Riverside County falls under the auspices of the County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)
- The keynote speaker, Debra Stein from GCA Strategies shared strategies for building community relations to combat nimbyism. Contact OCP for a copy of her presentation and/or visit her website at www.gcastrategies.com for more information.

Kelly Lupro, Office on Aging and Homeless Prevention

Local SuperNOFA applications were due of April 23rd, 24 renewal and 10 new applications were submitted. The next several weeks will be spent in threshold review. This will give us time to have the applications review ready and pending HUD's SuperNOFA release. Applications will not go to reviewers until after HUD's RFP, so that we can ensure that there are no new priorities that would affect the proposals. The CoC (not individual applicants) are required to register with the new online registration within the next two weeks. We'll pass on information as we get it from HUD.

Shelter Information & Openings

Sharon Halsey-Hoover with Bethany will have one or possibly two openings for single women in May.

Bob Schuster with the County of Orange Medical Services Initiative Program (MSI) – MSI provide medical services for uninsured permanent legal residents of Orange County, ages 21 through 64, who are equal to or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) The scope of services is no longer limited to just urgent and emergent services, but has been expanded to include primary and preventative care as well as dental services. Recently, MSI staff has done outreach to shelters to assist homeless residents apply for the program. This resulted in taking approximately 25 new MSI applications. At the present time, current members who are U.S. citizens are required to provide original documentation such as a birth certificate or passport by June 30th to maintain their eligibility.

Mariposa Women and Family Center's Women Only Recovery Program has a SuperNOFA community partnership grant allowing them to provide housing for chronically homeless addicted women who have a desire to stop drinking or using substances. To qualify for beds, women must agree to complete treatment at Mariposa's Women-Only Recovery Program. Please call Linda Savidge at Mariposa for more info at 714-547-6494 ext. 412.

Colleen Smagala with Anaheim Interfaith Shelter has openings for two infants (6 weeks to 2 years) in their Childcare Center. You can contact them directly at 714-774-5330.

Je'net Kreitner with Grandma's House of Hope has five beds available for single women, 17 years and older (including seniors), who have survived domestic violence and/or homelessness and who may suffer an aftermath of addictive behavior and mental health issues. Clients maybe on some medications and must be willing/able to work. Seniors must have a funding source. Program fee is \$125 a week, which includes non-perishable foods, group and individual counseling, legal clinics, wardrobe assistance and an on-site job search center. You can reach Je'net directly at 714-457-3187.

Allen Baldwin with Orange County Community Housing Corporation – The continuum of care is not complete without ways in which to move our clients to permanent housing. With very rare exception, moving clients to permanent housing is not occurring and that results in much of our great emergency and transitional work failing. Permanent affordable housing providers DO NOT have an access point for clients coming from transitional housing. So, all we need to do is create that access point. Thus far, most affordable housing providers require excellent credit history and the great majority of our clients do not have excellent credit. Also, the waiting list requirements for those governments' regulated affordable housing projects must have a way in which transitional housing clients have a better place in line. Permanent housing providers have VERY FEW apartments affordable to our clients who earn less than 30% of the median income. We need to work on changing that before the continuum of care is truly working. With the support of the shelter provider community, I am offering to facilitate discussion with key stakeholders including affordable housing developers and government representatives and expect to quantify opportunities and challenges that will be developed into a white paper directed to those in the field and requesting that certain actions be taken that will result in our clients moving to affordable housing without adversely impacting the viability of affordable housing development. I welcome your feedback. I can be reached at allen@occhc.org.

Cassie Eidem with South County Outreach has two openings for a family of 4 to 5.

Jean Watkins with Salvation Army has openings for singles in their Transitional Housing Program. The client/person would need to be working full time in some kind of job and be able to pay \$200 per month program fee. Applications go through the Emergency Shelter Manager at 714-542-9576.

Grandma's House of Hope has a position open for a Live-in Manager. The ideal candidate would be an intern who is a full-time student or working a day job-seeking certification hours. Qualifications are strong organizational skills and knowledge of domestic violence, drug and alcohol related issues. Free private room and partial board plus a small monthly allowance. Please call Je'net Kreitner at 714-457-3187.

Featured Topic:

Mainstream Resources

Amy Childers and Elena Sanchez, County of Orange Social Services CalWorks

Amy and Elena shared information on the eligibility, requirements, rules and services available through CalWorks, which included the Welfare to Work Program, the Diversion Program, Prevention Services and Homeless Assistance.

We are still in need of five agencies to sign up for refreshments for four of the 2008 meetings. Please contact Sharon McKeag to sign up.

**Next Homeless Provider Forum is scheduled for
June 5, 2008 - 9:00 am – 11:00 am
Topic: Challenging Family Placements**