



Heading Home
*Minnesota's Roadmap
for Ending Homelessness*



NOTE: This printed copy is taken from the report, *Heading Home: Minnesota's Roadmap for Ending Homelessness*. It includes the Introduction, Executive Summary, and Chapter 3: The Roadmap. The document can be found in its entirety at: www.mnhousing.gov/news/reports/index.aspx.

The Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness developed this Roadmap to share with the next administration the tremendous body of work that has been done and the recommended next steps to continue our work together to end homelessness. The Council is grateful to all who contributed to the Roadmap, with special thanks to those who provided ideas and feedback through community meetings, emails and phone conversations and to the dedicated staff at Minnesota Housing who provided editorial assistance.

We are grateful every day to providers that both serve individuals, youth and families who have been homeless and share the realities of their lives with the greater community, always hoping and trusting that the stories will inspire and motivate change. And we honor those who are or have been homeless in Minnesota: we pledge to be guided by your reality and your choices as we work together to build a stronger community where all have a home.

Cover and interior photos used with permission from:

Homeless is My Address, Not My Name. An Oral History of Homelessness in Minnesota

(Additional photos and stories can be found in the entire report at, www.mnhousing.gov/news/reports/index.aspx.)

Created from nearly 500 conversations with people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota, these stories and portraits depict the daily lives, suffering, and successes of people living under the most extreme form of poverty. The noise and the priorities of our culture drown out the voices of its most marginalized people. This project brings those voices and the stories they tell to the surface. Materials were collected at Project Homeless Connect events and at social service organizations throughout the state.

With the support of over fifty volunteers, Project Director Margaret Miles coordinated this effort on behalf of St. Stephen's Human Services, Family Housing Fund, Heading Home Minnesota and its regional partners, and the Minnesota Historical Society. For details visit www.OralHistoryOfHomelessness.org.

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The Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness would like to thank the photographers who generously donated the use of their work for this publication.

INTRODUCTION

“This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in . . .”

Theodore Roosevelt

We Create Home

We create home
 A place we live
 Where we
 Center our lives
 Our dreams for ourselves
 and those around us
 Find fertile ground
 Safe walls, strong floors,
 warmth
 And this idea of a good
 life unfolds here
 Has the space to grow
 And maybe from alone
 and without
 We become connected
 Find the love of ourselves
 And the love of others
 Build this vision of home
 Together
 In the very center of our
 being
 In the one place we carry
 with us
 We create home

by LeAnn Littlewolf

As printed in *Heading Home*
 St. Louis County

Homelessness has many faces in Minnesota: the face of a child, of a veteran, of a youth without family. The faces are on the streets of the Twin Cities and in makeshift camps in rural areas. The faces are African-American, they are American Indian, they are white. The faces are alone and in families. There is no one profile. They have in common only the fact that they have no place to call home.

Over the past thirty years—since people began turning up homeless on the streets and in the shelters of our nation’s cities—there have been many attempts to address the ever-present issue of homelessness. These efforts, usually in the form of shelter and temporary housing, have worked for some. Homelessness, however, has continued to grow. Wilder Research reports that the one-night count of people homeless in Minnesota more than doubled in the 15 years between 1991 and 2006 (before the downturn in the economy). Even more alarming is the fact that, once homeless, many people remain homeless: more than half of those homeless at the time of the 2009 count had not had a home for more than a year.¹

Why care about homelessness?

There are a number of reasons why the average Minnesota citizen should care about growing homelessness. The first is that people without homes cannot build productive lives. Physical and mental health deteriorate and it is difficult (if not impossible) to find and keep a job. Without income and a place to sleep at night, people are more likely to turn to crime. Children cannot move forward with their education and they cannot develop healthy, sustainable relationships with their peers. Youth without family turn to dangerous behaviors simply to survive on the streets. The deterioration in well-being and fraying of relationships threatens the health and well-being of Minnesota’s families and communities both now and for the future.

Homelessness is also expensive. Looking at a subgroup of offenders who were homeless and on probation in Hennepin County in 2007, the County found that over a five year period, 266 offenders spent 68,566 days in the County’s Adult Correctional Facility, Adult Detention center, emergency shelters or detoxification facilities – at a cost to the County of more than \$4.2 million. In Hennepin County, for a single person,

- A day at the Work House costs \$72 (2008)
- A day at an emergency shelter costs \$34.44
- A day in detox costs \$164-\$192 (the average stay is three days)

For a family of three (parent and two children), a month in shelter costs \$2,696.70 (the average shelter stay for a family is 38 days).²

The important fact about these expenditures is that they don't change people's lives. While emergency shelter, detox and correctional placements provide an immediate response to a crisis, they can't provide a long-term, permanent solution. The family that comes to the shelter today will likely need to spend tomorrow night and the next night there as well. The person who is treated at the Emergency Room and returned to the streets will be back at the Emergency Room when he or she gets sick the next time.

A third reason to care is that homelessness falls disproportionately on people of color. While American Indian adults are about 1% of the total adult population in Minnesota, they are 11% of the adult population that is homeless. While 4% of all adults in Minnesota are black, 41% of homeless adults are black.³ These statistics are similar to those in housing, education and employment: the Economic Policy Institute recently reported that Minneapolis has one of the two biggest disparities in the nation with an unemployment rate for blacks three times that for whites.⁴ Addressing homelessness among people of color is critical to addressing similar disparities in employment and education and will require targeted solutions.

Children who are homeless today are at great risk of being homeless—with their children—15 or 20 years from now.

Homelessness also diminishes us as a people. In June of this year, when the federal government released its plan to prevent and end homelessness in our nation, the Secretaries of Housing, Human Services, Labor and Veterans Affairs spoke about the significance of the plan. Eric Shinseki, the Secretary for Veterans Affairs told about his experience of seeing newly minted recruits, some fresh out of high school, entering the armed forces full of patriotism, enthusiasm and commitment – and then seeing veterans broken and defeated, living on the streets of our big cities. The Secretary noted the responsibility of the citizenry for understanding and addressing this tragedy: “It is for us to understand what happened,” he said, “It’s not about them – it’s about us.”⁵ The same questions can be asked with regard to all who find themselves homeless: “What happened? How did the hope with which we all enter the world come to this? And how can we – as a society – address the underlying issues?”

Perhaps most important is the fact that children who are homeless today are at great risk of being homeless – with their children – 15 or 20 years from now. Almost one-half (45%) of all homeless adults experienced homelessness before they were 21, and one quarter (26%) before they were 18, indicating the cyclical nature of homelessness, according to Wilder Research.⁶ The goal of this plan and others throughout the nation is to break that cycle, both restoring lives and spending public funds more wisely in the future.

What does it mean to “end homelessness”?

First, ending homelessness does not mean that no one will ever be homeless again. There will always be people who lose their housing because of a change in circumstances: loss of a job or change in family support, as examples. The question is what happens next. During the past 25 years, the individual or family that found itself homeless went to a shelter and stayed – often for months. In fact, many singles cycled between shelter and the streets for years, becoming more isolated and less able to recover from homelessness.

Ending homelessness means preventing the entry into shelter if possible and shortening shelter stays that do occur.

Ending homelessness means preventing the entry into shelter if possible and shortening shelter stays that do occur. A system focused on ending homelessness would have sufficient resources to match the person or family to appropriate housing and, if needed, services, rather than allowing them to remain in shelter.

Over the past several years, Minnesota has been moving toward this model, beginning in 1993 with the Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program, focused both on preventing homelessness and “rapidly rehousing” those that become homeless. In 2004, the state then turned to the “backlog” of people who had languished on the streets and in shelters for years, committing to end long-term homelessness by 2010.

This report tells the story of what has happened in Minnesota over the past 15 years to change the state’s approach to homelessness and set a course for the future. The report also sets out a roadmap for policy makers who will make choices about where to go next.

Framework for the Roadmap

The roadmap is developed in the context of existing federal, state and local plans to end homelessness. Many local communities in Minnesota followed on the heels of the state’s commitment to end long-term homelessness by creating plans to end homelessness in their communities. The federal government then developed and released a strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness in the nation. Released in June 2010, the federal plan sets out a vision for the country, a set of assumptions on which the plan is based, and goals for ending homelessness for specific populations. Minnesota has adapted the values and assumptions to the work being done in our community and set out a plan that will direct the state toward accomplishing the federal goals in Minnesota.

The values, assumptions and goals of the Minnesota Roadmap are:

VALUES

- Homelessness is expensive; it is better to invest in solutions.
- A variety of housing options is important for addressing unique needs and individual preferences
- Trusting relationships are the building blocks for moving from homelessness to housing
- Partnerships and collaborations are fundamental to ending homelessness

ASSUMPTIONS

- Homelessness is solvable; we have learned a lot about what works.
- Homelessness can be prevented
- Government cannot address the issue of homelessness alone; the nonprofit, faith and business communities are part of the solution
- Solutions to homelessness are not found solely in a “homelessness system”: jobs, income supports, and health care are fundamental to addressing homelessness

GOALS (FROM THE FEDERAL PLAN)⁷

- Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in five years (this equates to ending long-term homelessness in Minnesota)
- Prevent and end homelessness among veterans in five years
- Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children in 10 years
- Set a path to ending all types of homelessness

Homeless Poem

by Katherine Greene Lewis

I had a room once high in the sky
with stars on the wall and a bright
globe of light over the bed and doors
everywhere and nothing to fear.

The hand I love carried me
up the long stairs that echoed
with every step and voices grew
like vines in the stairwell.

Now with sky for a roof and street for a floor
and bent walls of air and no door

I wake to sirens like copper wire
forced through my head
and cold flows through
the river of my body.

When I was born clean and new
I came through a door
into life. I was home.
Now home is the hand
between me and fear.

*“I just need someone to
give me a chance and
help until I get on
my feet again.”*

Survey of homeless persons by
Northwest Minnesota
Continuum of Care,
November 2008

Process for Creating the Roadmap

The Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, a council of nine state agencies whose work impacts homelessness in the state, spearheaded the development of this Roadmap. The Council combined member agencies’ experience and knowledge with information and ideas solicited from:

- Existing plans to prevent and end homelessness in communities around the state—the plans are the most important resource for the state roadmap because one of the primary goals of the roadmap is to support communities in carrying on the work they have undertaken to end homelessness
- The federal strategic plan—the process for developing the federal plan used five workgroups (primarily focused on specific populations) and obtained input from more than 750 leaders of regional and state interagency councils and stakeholders, as well as 2,318 individual comments that came into an interactive website
- Ongoing conversations with coordinators of local plans to end homelessness
- An open meeting attended by approximately 100 providers, developers, and other stakeholders in the Twin Cities Metro area
- An interactive video-conference attended by approximately 140 people at 16 sites around the state

The voices of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness came into the plan from communities throughout the state. In the West Central region, for example, coordinators organized focus groups of current or formerly homeless individuals at several shelters in the area. They also hosted a community forum that was attended by people who were homeless in Otter Tail County. In some communities, people who are homeless attend regular meetings of the Continuum of Care planning groups to address homelessness in local areas. In Hennepin County, people who were homeless sat on the Commission that developed the plan to end homelessness. Hennepin County also hosted focus groups of singles, youth, and families when they developed their plan and have repeated the focus groups as they update and revise the plan. Ramsey County is now conducting focus groups with single adults, unaccompanied youth, families and various communities of color to gain input into the revision of their plan. The Office of Economic Opportunity conducted 18 focus groups throughout the state with 144 runaway and homeless youth.

Using the Roadmap

Good roadmaps come in many forms – the tried-and-true that gets folded and unfolded until it wears out, the tri-fold laminated version that fits in a pocket or purse, and the electronic map – zooming in on just the place one is looking for. They show the freeways and toll roads, the city streets and gravel by-ways (though some need to come with a magnifier) and they are all needed as we navigate the increasingly complex terrain.

So it is with this roadmap. The hope is that it will provide guidance and inspiration in the coming years as Minnesota continues and expands its efforts to end homelessness. There will be potholes, detours, diversions and road construction. There will be new roads to construct and some that must be abandoned (perhaps to accommodate light rail). The road will lead to homes for all as long as the community is willing to continue the journey.

There is no GPS.



SARA

My name is Sara. I'm twenty-six years old. Last night I stayed at In-house Treatment Center.

I ran away at fourteen and I was pretty much homeless, for years I stayed with friends, or um you know I had a boyfriend for a while that I stayed with. Um, and then I got on meth. Um, and I was, then I was pretty much in the gutter. I was more than just homeless, I was homeless and helpless.

This is my daughter Carissa. I was sober for three years. I lost my sobriety somewhere after I had

Carissa. My children were taken from me because the drugs were in my system. And that was hell, that was...no words can describe what that was. It was a nightmare.

I really started working my program. I just saw it in a whole new light, you know, a whole new light. It was no longer about me.

I guess what keeps me strong is knowing that I'm strong. I go back to my life and the things that I've been through, and I've made it this far. I think I pretty much have...you know, I don't have it all up there, but you know I've still got a shine inside of me. I've got a long way to go and I'm gonna be somebody.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness has developed this Roadmap for Ending Homelessness at a time when the state is on the brink of electing new leaders to both the executive and legislative branches of state government. The primary purpose of the Roadmap is to educate new leaders on the importance of ending homelessness – and the potential for achieving this goal – and to articulate a set of strategies for moving toward that goal. The Roadmap also provides local communities with “next steps” for their work to prevent and end homelessness.

The Roadmap begins with a discussion of homelessness in Minnesota. Who is homeless? What are characteristics of people who are homeless? The document then discusses what the community has done to address homelessness over the past 25 years – and where we are now. The Roadmap itself follows with a discussion of five objectives that are at the heart of all strategies to end homelessness in Minnesota:

- Educate, engage, collaborate
- Increase access to stable housing
- Reach out to people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness
- Improve well-being
- Transform the housing crisis response system

The Roadmap sets out strategies for each objective – strategies that provide the incoming administration with a menu of activities that will move the work forward. The key strategies endorsed by the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness are:

To educate, engage, and collaborate

- Strengthen all relationships and partnerships that underlie the state’s work to end homelessness and specifically the Interagency Council itself
- Educate state legislators and all policy makers about populations that are homeless and strategies for addressing homelessness, with a focus on leaders new to office
- Advance the state’s ability to collect and analyze data on the characteristics of homeless people and solutions to homelessness by strengthening the statewide Homeless Management Information System and programs’ ability to share data between and among agencies

To increase access to stable housing

- Continue implementing Minnesota’s Business Plan to End Long-term Homelessness
- Work with public housing agencies to expand eligibility for individuals, youth and families that have experienced homelessness

To reach out to people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness

- Develop and promote population-specific best practices for assisting people leaving institutions
- Assist communities in developing information and referral materials for judges and court personnel who interact with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

To improve well-being

- Build on current efforts to assist people with Social Security Disability applications

To transform the housing crisis response system

- Work with the federal government and with Minnesota communities to develop and promote a tool for assessing the needs of individuals, youth, and families that are homeless or at high risk of becoming homeless

SHAWNA AND ADRIAN

SHAWNA: My name is Shawna, I'm thirty-nine years old, last night I stayed at my daughter's house. I been homeless about, maybe, three, four years. I became homeless because of my drinking. I was a really bad alcoholic. And about twenty-one months ago I started sobering up, and with me becoming sober it became a lot harder for me to find housing. But with the help of Adrian here, he helps me stay sober and helps me keep my spirits up so that I don't get depressed and try to go drink again.



ADRIAN: My name is Adrian and I'm fifty years old, last night I stayed at Harbor Lights. And I became sober 'cause I was like, I was a criminal, you know. I was an outlaw, you know. I'm tired of being an outlaw so I came to be sober. On January first it'll be ten years, of this year. And I'm waiting; I'm proud.

SHAWNA: My dream is to get a place so I could visit with my grandchildren. And just not to be homeless anymore and that's what I want. I mean, it's hard out here, but that's what I wanna do. I wanna get myself up on my feet so I can say, "I did it, myself."

ADRIAN: You okay?

SHAWNA: Yeah.

ADRIAN: Why you crying? Mm?

SHAWNA: I'm just emotional, leave me alone! (Laughs)

ADRIAN: My dream is being like...education. I wish I got some education, 'cause I'm a high school graduate and I don't even know how to read and write. But my dream is I wish I could be a chef, you know, so I can go out there and help people, cook for them, you know, stuff like that. And, you know, be a helper. That's the way I am.

CHAPTER 3

The Roadmap to End Homelessness in Minnesota

*Act as if
what you do
makes a difference.*

It does.

William James

Ending homelessness is a long-term goal for Minnesota—a goal that will not be reached in one year nor, especially given the general economy and state budget, in five. It is, however, an achievable goal — and one that will enhance the well-being of our people, strengthen our economic competitiveness, and, over the long haul, prove to be a wise investment of state resources. This Roadmap lays out a path for Minnesota to reach a new level of effectiveness in preventing and ending homelessness.

Now is the hour to address this issue and maintain momentum. The state has made significant progress in implementing a plan to end long-term homelessness, 85 of Minnesota’s 87 counties are included in Heading Home plans in their communities, seven tribes are developing plans, and the federal government has announced its commitment to lead, to collaborate and to contribute. From the private sector, faith, philanthropic and business leaders are joining the cause, often leading the way.

Summary of the Roadmap

This chapter outlines action steps for the state. It builds on four sources of information, feedback, and ideas:

- Local plans
- Federal plan; the roadmap brings ideas from the federal plan to the state level
- Lessons learned from implementing state programs, including the Business Plan to End Long-Term Homelessness
- Input from stakeholders, including attendees at a community meeting in the metro area and a video-conference attended at 16 sites throughout the state

Five objectives are at the heart of the roadmap for preventing and ending homelessness in Minnesota.

- Educate, engage, collaborate
- Increase access to stable housing
- Reach out to people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness
- Improve well-being
- Transform the housing crisis response system

*A more livable
community; where
shelters are used
only for emergency
transitions
and every family
and individual has a
permanent place to live.*

Heading Home Ramsey
Vision Statement

Each objective is discussed in terms of five dimensions.

Importance of the objective to ending and preventing homelessness.

This section shows the relationship between the specific objective and the overall goal of ending homelessness.

Federal view of this objective. The federal plan provides both guidance and commitment. As states and localities develop and refine their plans to prevent and end homelessness, they will align as closely as possible with the federal plan in order to describe their efforts and accomplishments in a common language—and to place themselves in a position to access maximum federal funding for local efforts. As Minnesota leaders implement recommendations in this Roadmap, it is important to pay careful attention to the federal direction and emphases.

Local plans' work on this objective. This section describes work already underway on the objective, leading local efforts, and best practices. Minnesota provides this Roadmap as both a response to existing local plans and a statement of direction for the state, which local plans can draw on for subsequent direction and alignment.

State role in achieving this objective. This section sets out current and potential state activities to advance the objective. Because leadership will be changing in both the executive and legislative branches of state government, it is impossible to say at this time which of the suggested activities may take priority in the coming years. Many of the suggested activities for the state were suggested by the community. A summary of community suggestions is at Appendix B.

Measuring success for this objective. The ultimate goal of all work to end and prevent homelessness is a decline in the number of people experiencing homelessness. The state will be monitoring all available information from Wilder Research and other surveys and counts to determine trends in this measure. Ending homelessness is, however, an ambitious, long-term goal that ultimately is influenced by many factors. There are milestones along the path to the ultimate goal that the state will also monitor by tracking program effectiveness, system changes, and activity counts.

Measures of program effectiveness assess the impact of program activities. The best measures of program effectiveness tell us what happened to people themselves: Are people experiencing homelessness better off because of plans to end homelessness? For example, how many people accessed and maintained housing? How many improved their well-being as a result of being in housing? These measures can be quantified, and there are systems to capture useful data.

Another milestone we will track is *change in the systems serving people*. Have new partnerships been created and existing partnerships strength-

ened? Are people better able to access the services they need? There are no data collection systems for “system change” but it is possible to assess systems change qualitatively by interviewing people served and those serving them. Coordinators of plans to end homelessness in Minnesota have agreed to schedule subjective reviews of systems measures as implementation progresses.

A third but less satisfactory way to measure progress is to *count “inputs” and “outputs”*: the activities that have been implemented because of plans to end homelessness. Examples include housing opportunities created or persons attending a Project Homeless Connect event. While these do not directly measure improvements in people’s lives, the hope is that these activities ultimately lead to better outcomes.

Indicators of Progress

The state will track two types of indicators to monitor progress.

POPULATION MEASURES

The state will track the following population measures on an annual basis to follow Minnesota’s progress toward the federal goals:

Table 1: Measuring Progress on Ending Homelessness

Federal Goal	Population	Source
Ending chronic homelessness in 5 years	Long-term homeless	Wilder survey Tribal survey
	Chronic homeless count	HUD Point-in-Time (PIT) Count
Ending veterans homelessness in 5 years	Homeless veterans	Wilder survey Tribal survey HUD PIT count
Ending family homelessness in 10 years	Homeless families	Wilder survey Tribal survey HUD PIT count
Ending youth homelessness in 10 years	Youth	Wilder survey Tribal survey HUD PIT count
Making progress toward ending all homelessness	Total and count of special populations: •% African-American •% Native American • Single adults	Wilder survey Tribal survey HUD PIT count

We seek to prevent and end long-term homelessness in Rochester and Olmsted County by developing local housing and supportive services that use evidence-based models and combine public and private resources. Our vision is a community where all persons have options for safe temporary or emergency housing and choices for a permanent place to live.

Heading Home Olmsted County

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES

The following program effectiveness measures will track progress on each objective in the roadmap:

Table 2: Measuring Progress on Specific Objectives in the Roadmap

Objective	Measure	Impact on People	Systems Change	Activity Counts	Collection tool
Educate, engage and collaborate	Community events			X	Coordinators
	Partnerships created			X	Coordinators
	Number of people with raised awareness about homelessness		X		Coordinators - Survey
Increase access to stable housing	Supportive housing opportunities created			X	MHFA & HUD, CDAs, HRAs
	Affordable housing opportunities created			X	MHFA & HUD, CDAs, HRAs
	Households in housing	X			HMIS
	Households remaining in permanent supportive housing for ≥ 12 months	X			HMIS
	Households with a “positive exit” from housing	X			HMIS
Reach out	Communities with effective discharge planning processes		X		Coordinators
	Number of people attending Project Homeless Connect/ Community Connect Events		X		Coordinators
	Integrated access points to services		X		Coordinators
Improve well-being	Increase in earned income	X			HMIS
	Increase in unearned income	X			HMIS
Reform crisis response system	Households in housing at program exit (FHPAP, HPRP, transitional housing)	X			HMIS
	Households returning to FHPAP/shelter	X			HMIS

Note: State and local leaders will track all above measures except the awareness measure, which requires a survey. This is a recommended practice that may not be possible in all communities.

State and local leaders will work together to develop targeted studies on measures that may be difficult to track with current systems: e.g., households connected through outreach to services and/or housing, trends in emergency room and police interventions with people who are homeless. They will also develop and track further measures as information becomes available, such as health outcomes that may be available through HMIS in the future as well as connections to veterans that may be available from county veterans services officers.



AMANDA

“My name is Amanda. I’m 20 years old and last night I stayed at the Care and Share in Crookston.

I became homeless because I didn’t have the best life at home. So the day I turned 18 I left home and was sleeping in parks and all those places and then I’d pick up a boyfriend and go live there. After things went sour with that I was still in the same predicament back out on the streets. Before I came here I was sleeping in a tent in Thief River. I had it hidden in the woods. I

got sick. They don’t know what happened I was in so much pain I couldn’t move, a temperature of 106 and pregnant. They had to take my baby at 5 1/2 months in order for me to survive what was making me so sick. My case worker had me brought up here so that way I wasn’t sleeping outside anymore.

Honestly, if I could have anything right now it would be just even a little shack to live in and to not worry about losing my job or being evicted.”

OBJECTIVE 1: Educate, Engage, Collaborate

“Jacie” and her two small children, John and Lucy, lived at East Metro Place II, a permanent supportive housing community in White Bear Lake, for four years. Jacie has struggled with methamphetamine addiction for many years and is currently in recovery.

East Metro Women’s Council (EMWC) staff eventually placed Jacie on a sobriety contract because she paid little attention her children and didn’t seem to care. Jacie was faced with getting clean or leaving East Metro Place. Since she wanted a stable home for her kids, she agreed to outpatient treatment for her addiction. While the Family Advocate worked with Jacie on her recovery, the Parenting & Youth Coordinator worked with her on parenting issues. John was in the Learning & Enrichment Program, an after-school tutoring program at East Metro Place.

When Jacie started showing interest in John’s education, he really began to flourish. The family now reads together every night, and John is often the one reading to little Lucy. Jacie, John and Lucy moved out of East Metro Place in July 2010, into a small house nearby so that John can stay in the White Bear Lake school district.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS OBJECTIVE TO PREVENTING AND ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Many people in Minnesota—from those in big metropolitan areas to those in smaller towns and rural communities—are aware of people in their communities who are homeless. The most common image is that of an adult in a city with a sign—an image that, while real, is hardly complete. In towns and suburbs, homelessness may be a family living in a car parked overnight at a shopping center or a youth couch-hopping from one friend’s home to another. In rural areas, homelessness may be single adults camped in tents outside of town.

As people expand their understanding of who may be homeless, few—including many who care deeply about what they perceive as injustice -- know what to do about it. And to know “what to do” it is important to understand how people become homeless. How did this person or that family end up in a shelter or on the streets? Are they homeless because they don’t have enough money for housing? Or is something else going on? If something else, what is it? The answers to these questions provide the beginning of community awareness and appropriate action.

Ending homelessness is a long-term goal that will require consistent aligned actions in communities throughout Minnesota. If we are to make progress, people must be aware of the many dimensions of homelessness in their communities. For example:

- What does homelessness look like in our community?
- How does our community respond to homelessness? What is working?
- What more is needed to end homelessness in the community?
- Who are our leaders on this issue? How can we reach them?
- What can I—and the organizations I belong to—do?

Finding the answers to these and similar questions is the first step for community members to mobilize to address homelessness locally.

Our statewide community has many resources helpful to educating people about homelessness. First and foremost is the Wilder Research Center which has been providing information about homelessness in Minnesota for more than 20 years. Thanks to Wilder, Minnesota has data on a number of characteristics describing people who are homeless, as well as trend data showing changes in certain population groups and presenting problems. The depth and specificity of this information point the way to solutions.

- A second resource available to communities is the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managed by Wilder Research. HMIS is a crucial source for information on participants in many of Minnesota’s homeless programs and services. Unlike point-in-time

“And if I know anything from working with so many of you over these many years, it’s that the experience of homeless housing and service providers is not only ready for prime-time in the greatest public policy debate of our generation—it is absolutely essential to making sure that debate reaches its right and just conclusion.”

Shaun Donovan,
Secretary of Housing
and Urban Development
at the National Alliance to End
Homelessness Annual Conference
Thursday, July 30th, 2009

studies such as the Wilder Survey, HMIS is able to provide data on the characteristics, service use, and outcomes for persons experiencing homelessness over an extended period of time. HMIS data have limitations, however: they are not used by all homeless service providers, such as some major emergency shelters, and they do not capture information about people who are homeless and not participating in any homeless program or service.

Wilder provides aggregate HMIS data to state agencies and provider-specific data to each provider using the system. Minnesota Housing and the Department of Human Services use HMIS data to report on a number of programs, including the long-term homeless programs, Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program, and Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program, as well as the transitional housing and shelter programs.

FEDERAL VIEW OF THIS OBJECTIVE.

The federal plan stresses the importance of collaboration at every level. Collaboration is particularly important to ending homelessness because there is no one reason that a person or family is homeless—and there is no one “fix.” A veteran who is homeless may be suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder—and be eligible for treatment funded through the Veterans Administration. A child who is homeless may be part of a family that simply needs a housing voucher. Those responding to homelessness need to be able to guide individuals, youth, and families to the right resources. This is possible only when there is complete and open communication and cooperation at the local level.

The federal plan specifically calls for:

- Educating the public
- Engaging state/local/tribal leaders
- Updating and implementing state and local plans to end homelessness
- Involving citizens and the private sector
- Testing and modeling interagency collaboration
- Rewarding collaborating communities
- Recognizing savings across partners
- Engaging Congressional committees

LOCAL PLANS’ WORK ON THIS OBJECTIVE

CURRENT PLANS

All but one of the local plans to end homelessness in Minnesota include some aspect of community engagement, with strategies ranging from public education to advocacy to forming new partnerships. Plans include:

- Many ideas for educating the public, including forums and seminars, newsletters, videos, sleep-outs and public education campaigns.
- Many ideas for engaging state, local, and tribal leaders, including:
 - Educating public officials;
 - Evaluating housing priorities for people who are homeless;
 - Advocating for state and federal legislation, including legislation

After spending 12 years homeless, Dan moved in 2006 to a one-bedroom apartment with rental assistance and services provided by Simpson Housing Services. Dan faced many challenges to remaining housed, which included his own disruptive and sometimes violent behavior, as well as that of friends who would visit.

Eventually, he built enough trust with a psychologist to agree to take a sleep aid which has helped him stabilize his life. Dan moved into a new apartment this year and is now careful about who he lets in. He knows he needs to maintain his equilibrium. His new place is always clean and he's been in touch with Volunteers of America to do some volunteer work in a community kitchen. He feels like he has turned the corner and the evidence supports him—he's smiling and happy much of the time.

- about issues that significantly affect homelessness, such as mass transit and health care;
 - Coordinating policy platforms among groups concerned about housing and homelessness; and
 - Examining zoning codes that restrict flexibility of housing options.
- A focus on involving consumers in planning

Local plans also include many strategies for building collaborations among agencies whose work touches people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. These collaborations are the foundation for building a more comprehensive system of service at all levels.

BEST PRACTICES IN CURRENT PLANS

- Securing endorsement from local leaders: county boards, city councils, county human services directors.
 - Heading Home Central Minnesota covers 14 counties in the central part of the state. The Heading Home Coordinator in Central, along with local homeless service providers in each county, gave formal presentations to all 14 county boards of commissioners. All 14 signed off on an official resolution of support for the ten-year plan for the region.
 - Heading Home Southeast Minnesota secured the formal endorsement of all county human services directors, mental health providers, and Housing and Redevelopment Authorities in the 20 counties covered by the plan, as well as the Regional Housing Academy, a network of developers, providers, funders and government agencies. A representative of each group served on the committee that drafted the plan, communicated with the group throughout development, and secured endorsement when the plan was completed.

These endorsements pave the way for strong community support as plan leaders develop and implement local strategies.

- Building community awareness.
 - The Heading Home Anoka Education Committee carried out a broad variety of activities to educate their community, including:
 - Sponsoring sleep-outs at local churches
 - Holding a contest with local YMCA summer camps to develop bookmarks with facts about homelessness
 - Partnering with the public libraries to distribute the bookmarks during Homeless Awareness Month
 - Sending speakers to local groups to educate the community about homelessness
 - Obtaining proclamations from every city in Anoka County and the County Board declaring November to be Homeless Awareness Month

We are a wealthy community and fortunate to have a myriad of resources; yet we are still challenged with the same barriers to ending homelessness as exist in other communities in Minnesota and across the nation.

Heading Home
Steele County

- Heading Home West Central conducted two Homeless Simulations to improve community members' understanding of the chaos, cracks in the system, and loss of control that people who are homeless face in their daily lives. The simulations are two hours long and include four homeless or formerly homeless people acting as "service providers."
- Collaborating for success.
 - One of the most inspiring projects in Minnesota to date is the Currie Avenue Housing Partnership, a collaboration of HeadingHome Hennepin with the downtown Minneapolis business and faith communities. The goal of the project is to house 150 of the 600-700 people sleeping on mats on the floor at Hennepin County's two publicly-funded shelters on Currie Avenue. Businesses and congregations raised \$350,000 to fund ten case managers to connect homeless people with disabilities with housing and supports. Once people are housed, the state's GRH program assumes some of the ongoing costs of the initiative.

MOVING MINNESOTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

County and regional plans to end homelessness should include strategies to:

- Develop partnerships among local agencies that serve people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Secure support for the plan from local county and city officials
- Educate the community about solutions to homelessness and the work of other partners – including state and federal governments – on preventing and ending homelessness

STATE ROLE IN ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE

CURRENT LEADERSHIP

The state led the development (in partnership with a broad group of stakeholders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors) and continues to lead the implementation of the Business Plan to End Long-term Homelessness. The Plan is the launching pad for state leadership in engaging the broader community through education, coordination, and funding.

- Education
 - Educating the public, primarily through the media
 - Educating legislators and local and tribal leaders on homelessness and solutions to homelessness
- Coordination
 - Guiding the formation of the Heading Home Minnesota Steering Committee, a group of philanthropic, business and faith leaders com-

- mitted to ending homelessness in Minnesota
- Leading regular meetings of local Heading Home coordinators
- Strengthening the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, a Council of nine state agencies
- Funding
 - Providing or funding technical assistance to local communities to update and implement plans to end homelessness
 - Providing technical assistance to all Continua of Care and funding for planning to the Greater Minnesota Continua of Care.
 - Providing partial funding for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

MOVING MINNESOTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

As implementation of this roadmap moves forward, the state can and should do more to boost local leaders' efforts to educate, engage, and collaborate to prevent and end homelessness and align Minnesota with the federal plan. Specifically, the state should lead by collaborating, raising awareness, building local capacity, and committing to data collection and analysis.

- Lead by collaborating
 - Build the goal of housing stability into the policies and plans of all state and local agencies whose work touches the target population
 - Strengthen the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness by:
 - Including more agencies whose work touches the lives of people who are or have been homeless
 - Placing high on its agenda the development and implementation of policies and strategies for preventing and ending homelessness that respond to the needs of communities of color, Native Americans, and rural and suburban communities
 - Identifying actions that agency leaders can take to implement the policies and strategies developed by the Council.
 - Strengthen relationships and partnerships
 - With local leaders and agencies, including Public Housing Agencies and Housing and Redevelopment Authorities
 - Between state and federal agencies whose work affects people who are homeless and at high risk of homelessness
 - Define levels of accountability for implementing strategies to prevent and end homelessness, working with Heading Home leaders and others in the community.
 - Work with the Congressional delegation to support federal legislation and funding that affects Minnesota's ability to address homelessness at the state and local levels.

“Technical and hands-on support is incredibly helpful at the State level.”

Response from
Grand Rapids community
input meeting

- Raise awareness
 - Create information about homelessness and solutions for it, in collaboration with local communities, including communities of color, people who have been homeless, victims of domestic violence, and other affected populations that
 - Highlights the differing needs of various populations, including people of color, Native Americans, victims of domestic violence, and populations with special needs
 - Uses data to emphasize that solving homelessness is a more productive use of resources than managing it.
 - Explore ways to communicate to various audiences and work with local communities to communicate effectively
 - Focus education and awareness efforts on leaders new to public office

- Build local capacity
 - Reach out to local leaders to develop, review, refine, support, and implement plans to prevent and end homelessness in their communities
 - Share best practices for building community will to prevent and end homelessness
 - Position ending homelessness as a community development strategy
 - Help rural communities explore and coordinate funding streams in their areas
 - Connect domestic violence service providers with housing providers

- Commit to data collection and analysis
 - Strengthen the statewide HMIS system:
 - Consider state funding for the system
 - Work with providers to improve HMIS for use as a program management tool
 - Develop and implement common definitions and measures of success
 - Use HMIS at the provider, program and state levels to track and measure changes in the status of individuals, youth, and families who have experienced homelessness.
 - Develop common outcomes and measures of income, health, and housing status across programs to be adopted by state agencies, in collaboration with the funding community and other stakeholders focused on client outcomes.
 - Explore strategies for making better use of HMIS data to describe and analyze program outcomes by type of program and participant characteristics

- Share data among state agencies to create a more comprehensive picture of the characteristics and situations of all Minnesotans experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- Develop protocols and guidelines the state and local communities can use to measure cost savings across programs
- Compile and disseminate relevant research on topics such as:
 - Supports needed to stabilize individuals and families, including the length of time needed for direct assistance and other services
 - Brain development and stress in young children who are homeless
 - Preventing domestic violence and developing a safety plan
 - Appropriate services for youth

MEASURING SUCCESS IN REACHING THIS OBJECTIVE

Heading Home coordinators will track community events and partnerships created. They will also consider conducting surveys to assess the effectiveness of their strategies in raising awareness. There are no client-based measures for gauging the success of awareness, engagement, and collaboration strategies.

Measuring Progress on Specific Objectives in the Roadmap

Objective	Measure	Impact on People	Systems Change	Activity Counts	Collection tool
Educate, engage and collaborate	Community events			X	Coordinators
	Partnerships created			X	Coordinators
	Number of people with raised awareness about homelessness		X		Coordinators - Survey

As compared with people who are homeless throughout the state, those in Northeast Minnesota are more likely to:

- Be younger (average of 34 years versus 38)
- Be white (86% versus 41%)
- Have lived in Minnesota over 20 years (67% versus 41%)
- Be prevented from getting housing now by lack of job or income (43% versus 36%)
- To have lived in foster care (28% versus 19%)
- To have income from steady employment (42% versus 21%)

From Heading Home Northeast Minnesota

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase Access to Stable Housing

IMPORTANCE OF THIS OBJECTIVE TO ENDING AND PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

Stable housing is the foundation upon which people build their lives—absent a safe, decent, affordable place to live, it is next to impossible to achieve good health, positive educational outcomes, or reach one’s economic potential.

Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness:2010 – Overview

Without stable housing, ending homelessness will remain an elusive goal. People who can stay in their current housing do not become homeless. Those without housing who can access and maintain housing do not remain homeless. Minnesota’s continued progress in preventing and ending homelessness depends on ensuring that housing that is affordable and suitable for particular populations is available where it is needed.

For many individuals and families, affordability is the only barrier to securing and maintaining housing. In 2008, more than one-third of the households in Minnesota were housing cost burdened—nearly 50 percent of all renters and 30 percent of all homeowners were paying 30 percent or more of their income for housing. For low income households the problem is even greater; more than half of all low income households were cost burdened. As discussed in Chapter 2, the number of rental assistance vouchers available to these households meet less than half of the statewide need.

Others have additional barriers to securing and maintaining housing and require supportive services as well as help paying rent. Landlords are often unwilling to rent to people with a criminal background or history of evictions, for example, and people with a mental illness or chemical dependency may be unable to sustain housing without treatment. Permanent supportive housing—housing with the services that people need to remain housed for as long as they wish—is often the most suitable option for people with significant barriers to maintaining their housing. Nationally and in Minnesota, there is a decade or more of evidence that permanent supportive housing improves lives and uses public resources productively.

FEDERAL VIEW OF THIS OBJECTIVE

The federal plan calls for increasing access to stable and affordable housing by providing affordable housing to people experiencing or most at-risk of homelessness and providing permanent supportive housing to prevent and end chronic homelessness. Specific strategies include:

For affordable housing:

- Support additional rental housing subsidies through federal, state, local, and private resources
- Expand the supply of affordable rental homes targeted for households earning significantly less than 30 percent of the Area Median Income. (One tool for this strategy is to fund the National Housing Trust Fund)
- Encourage preferences in the awarding of Low Income Housing Tax Credits to target households experiencing or most at risk of homelessness
- Link developments to project-based vouchers and other subsidies

The Francis is a historic building in downtown Rochester that was recently renovated to provide permanent supportive housing for seventeen chronically homeless individuals. There was opposition to locating the Francis close to an “urban village” that was being developed in the downtown area. The tenants who eventually moved into the development were aware of that fact and set out to create a sense of community within the building and within the neighborhood itself.

As a sign of gratitude and appreciation to the community, the tenants decided to clean up a vacant lot near the building that had for many years been a dump site for trash and junk. On a lovely June afternoon, Francis tenants, support staff, and a nearby business owner cleaned up the lot. A picnic followed and fellowship bloomed. As evening settled in, a tenant took his guitar to lot and began playing the blues. Soon, he was joined by a musician visiting a nearby business. It wasn't long before a number of folks gathered to listen, reminding both residents and neighbors that they were all one community.

For permanent supportive housing:

- Target use of supportive housing to people who need this level of support to prevent or escape homelessness
- Create protocols and consider incentives to help people who have achieved stability in supportive housing—and who no longer desire to live there—to move into affordable housing
- Expand the supply of permanent supportive housing, specifically for individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness and vulnerable individuals—including youth—experiencing homelessness who have disabling conditions and multiple barriers to housing stability
- Assess options for more coordinated, sustainable, and dependable sources of supportive housing service funding

LOCAL PLANS' WORK ON THIS OBJECTIVE

Current Plans

Local Minnesota plans call for more affordable and supportive housing (permanent and, in some cases, transitional). Some housing would require a capital investment; other housing opportunities would be scattered-site using existing rental housing. Local plans also include a focus on preserving existing units as well as creating “host homes” for youth.

Funding for both affordable and supportive housing comes primarily from the state and federal governments. The primary role for local plans and their advocates, therefore, is to garner resources and pave the way for the development of the housing that local communities need.

Local plans include the following activities to increase housing supply:

- Pursue funding
 - Seek additional and ongoing public and private investment.
 - Coordinate and pool funding
 - Apply for funding through the Continuum of Care
- Pursue alternative models
 - Create opportunities for developing housing using a Housing First approach
 - Expand use of congregate and shared housing when and if appropriate
 - Recruit landlords to create housing opportunities in the rental market
- Build relationships among local leaders, developers, and providers to identify and develop housing opportunities

“The solution to homelessness isn’t just about putting a roof over someone’s head. As with any human being, our lives are complicated and the process of transforming a roof or a house into a home takes more than bricks and mortar.”

“But without the bricks and mortar, healthy human development is all but impossible.”

Rev. Harry J. Flynn,
Former Archbishop of
St Paul and Minneapolis,
The Catholic Spirit

BEST PRACTICES IN CURRENT PLANS

- Creating relationships with landlords
 - Landlords are often reluctant to rent to people with histories of homelessness who also have criminal backgrounds, history of evictions, and other challenges. Outreach workers and service providers in several Heading Home communities are building trusting relationships with landlords to open more housing opportunities for this population. These efforts are successful, especially when there is a designated resource or liaison to turn to if issues arise during the tenancy
 - In Mora and St. Cloud, both part of Heading Home Central, Community Action Agencies offer training to landlords on their rights and responsibilities. The training includes information that will help landlords recognize the early signs of a tenant’s need for increased mental health support and refer the person to mental health services
- Creating housing to meet the needs of specific populations
 - *Chronic inebriates*—Midway Residence in St. Paul, the New San Marco in Duluth, and RiverCrest in St. Cloud are all site-based housing with low entry requirements, open to people who are chemically dependent. Residents may continue to consume alcohol as long as the drinking does not interfere with the well-being of others. This model has contributed to the safety of both the residents and the greater community. The City of Rochester will soon be home to a similar development.
 - *Refugees*—A partnership of Heading Home Hennepin and the University of Minnesota School of Social work surveyed refugee families to develop strategies to help this population secure and maintain housing. The Minnesota Council of Churches led implementation of a pilot project (funded by Hennepin County and The McKnight Foundation) that provided short-term rent subsidies and case management to refugee families to stabilize housing, increase income, and keep families engaged in school. In the initial two years of the program, 83% of families served increased their income from employment. 97% of families with school-age children showed positive engagement in their children’s school. The program has been re-funded with federal stimulus dollars

Josephine is a 61 year-old mother and grandmother to her own family and to many women who are out on the streets—women she grew close to while she herself was homeless. “The homeless community is like a family. We help each other,” she says.

Josie, a former Simpson Women’s Shelter guest is now in housing and loves her clean, bright one-bedroom, but she admits: “I sometimes miss my friends and the staff at the shelter.” When not at her job as a Personal Care Assistant, Josie spends much of her day checking on friends who are still without a home. “So many of these women have no one. They feel like no one cares. They need something to live for. I am fortunate. I have gardening, my volunteering and my 13-year-old granddaughter.”

Simpson Housing works to help frequent guests from the women’s shelter to find not only a permanent home, but also whatever it will take to help them keep their housing. “I tell my friends to not give up and to not be afraid to ask for help.”

MOVING MINNESOTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

County and regional plans to end homelessness should include strategies for:

- Expanding the rental assistance market by identifying appropriate housing and working with landlords to rent to households that have experienced homelessness
- Building collaborations among developers, providers and local leaders with the goal of developing creative solutions for housing populations that have experienced homelessness
- Strengthening McKinney-Vento applications for continued federal funding

STATE ROLE IN ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE

Current Funding

Creating and maintaining supportive housing requires funding for services as well as for capital and operating support or rental assistance. The State’s significant role in financing affordable and supportive housing for more than a decade is detailed in Chapter 2. Funding for supportive services, however, especially for people with long histories of homelessness and multiple challenges, meets only a fraction of the need.

MOVING MINNESOTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

The state should continue successful programs, make existing programs work smarter, and explore promising opportunities to increase access to stable housing. The following state activities would respond to the federal plan and assist local leaders in engaging their communities in the work of ending homelessness:

- Continue successful programs
 - Continue administering the annual Minnesota Housing Request for Proposals that funds development and maintenance of affordable housing for low-income populations
 - Continue implementing Minnesota’s Business Plan to End Long-term Homelessness with the goal of creating 4,000 additional opportunities over 12 years (2004-2015)
 - Continue providing rental assistance to low-income households, with a priority on sustaining housing opportunities already funded
 - Continue the priority on preserving existing housing
- Improve programs to work smarter
 - Work with public housing agencies to expand eligibility for individuals, youth, and families that have experienced homelessness: for example, creating a priority for people who are homeless (or long-term homeless) and expanding eligibility for people with criminal records or other barriers

“Providing more permanent supportive housing ... frees up emergency shelter and transitional housing beds that could otherwise be used for homeless persons that experience less severe forms of homelessness.”

Heading Home Southeast Minnesota

- Provide technical assistance to counties and others seeking to create housing using the Group Residential Housing program
- Consider incentives for local communities to take proactive steps to locate and support housing for people who have been homeless (including changes to local building codes)
- Continue to improve programs to simplify access and streamline eligibility for mainstream and other supportive programs (see discussion in Chapter 2 of DHS’s At-Risk Adults Initiative as a focal point for this work)
- Coordinate the state funding of supportive housing through DHS and Minnesota Housing
- Pursue promising opportunities
 - Increase development of workforce housing.
 - Use foreclosed properties for affordable rental units.
 - Explore ways to increase funding for both capital and rental assistance. Specific suggestions received at community meetings include a dedicated fund for rental subsidies and/or for developing affordable housing for special needs populations and a check-off on tax returns for affordable housing.
 - Explore ways to increase funding for supportive services, focusing on both mainstream programs (e.g. Medicaid) and more flexible sources.
 - Explore ways to minimize the number of capital funding sources needed to develop and rehabilitate housing.
 - Assist public housing agencies to apply for federal vouchers as they become available.
 - As part of implementing federal health care reform, identify new methods for linking health care with housing to create stability for individuals and families that are homeless.

MEASURING SUCCESS FOR THIS OBJECTIVE

There are three client-based measures to track success in achieving the objective of creating housing:

- Households in housing
- Households remaining in permanent supportive housing for ≥ 12 months, and
- Households with a “positive exit” from housing

These data are all available from the HMIS system.

There are two additional outcome measures for the objective of creating housing:

- Number of supportive housing opportunities created
- Number of affordable housing opportunities created

Measuring Progress on Specific Objectives in the Roadmap

Objective	Measure	Impact on People	Systems Change	Activity Counts	Collection tool
Increase access to stable housing	Supportive housing opportunities created			X	MHFA & HUD, CDAs, HRAs
	Affordable housing opportunities created			X	MHFA & HUD, CDAs, HRAs
	Households in housing	X			HMIS
	Households remaining in permanent supportive housing for ≥ 12 months	X			HMIS
	Households with a “positive exit” from housing	X			HMIS



JOHN

*My name is John and my age is 49, soon to be 50 in ten days.
And last night I stayed in detox.*

I’ve had apartments, you know, and for one reason or the other, things just didn’t go right and... I guess I could blame a lot of it on drinking. It has probably been one of the major reasons I am homeless.

I sit down on the avenues and play guitar and, you know, I divide my time between Uptown and sometimes I try to come downtown here and try to play, although it is getting harder and harder. The police just try to run you out. I don’t know why.

I’m just trying to do something, so I don’t really understand it. Sometimes you just close your eyes and feel your way through this world.

You have to have faith, that is one thing. I have faith in my creator, my God who created me. I believe in Him, I believe that He didn’t put me on this earth just to perish in the wilderness.

I try to encourage everybody I meet. You know, I try to encourage every single person I meet to be strong and be bold and be brave and be beautiful.

This is a Neil Young song:

*I’m like an eagle I like to fly
I’m like a snake I like to lay low
I’m just a black man
Maybe a white man*

*Maybe a red man, I don’t know
I’m just a passenger on a slow freight train
I ride a boxcar through the night
It doesn’t matter where I might get off
It doesn’t matter where I lie.*

OBJECTIVE 3: Reach Out to People Who are Homeless and at High Risk of Becoming Homeless

IMPORTANCE OF THIS OBJECTIVE TO ENDING AND PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

Reaching out to people in shelters and on the streets is important to ending homelessness and reaching in to people leaving institutions is important to preventing it.

“Paul,” who has schizophrenia and an IQ below 70, was arrested 103 times in five years for a combination of offenses that included writing on walls in downtown Minneapolis. He would be arrested, go to court, be arrested, go to court, and repeat the unending cycle. The Police Department asked that St. Stephen’s outreach team work with Paul because they no longer knew what to do. St. Stephen’s worked with Paul and got him into housing. In his first year of housing he was arrested once. When he appeared in court, the Hennepin County judge asked, “Where have you been?” When he said he was in housing and working with outreach, the judge diverted him from jail on the condition that he continue to work with St. Stephen’s. He is still housed and is arrested about two times a year—a result that saves dollars in the correctional system, provides a safe home for Paul, and contributes to better public health for all.

Reaching Out to People in Shelters and on the Streets

Many who are homeless—especially those with long histories of homelessness and those with mental illness, traumatic brain injury and other challenges—have burned their bridges with family and friends. They are living in shelter or on the streets, with little thought of a future anywhere else. They are distrustful of people who want to “help” and see little or no reason to hope that life can be different or better.

A major question, then, for communities trying to end homelessness is how to reach people who, for good reason, no longer trust the system that now wants to serve them. The answer is in developing relationships, which means consistent and respectful outreach to people in shelter and on the streets.

Street outreach is a tool for ending homelessness primarily in cities. Major cities in Minnesota have developed street outreach teams: people who spend their working hours meeting folks on the streets and in shelters, doing what’s necessary to keep people safe, and developing relationships that, it is hoped, will eventually lead to housing. In Minneapolis, for example, St. Stephen’s Outreach Team made 806 contacts with folks who were homeless between July and December 2009, of which they were able to house 40. Since the St. Stephen’s Program began, over 200 people have been housed.

Reaching in to People Leaving Institutions

People being discharged from institutions—jails, prisons, inpatient hospital settings, or foster care—are at high risk for homelessness at this critical transition point in their lives. If the person has tenuous ties to friends and families and little or no prospects of an immediate job, he or she may end up homeless.

Close to half of homeless adults surveyed by Wilder Research in 2009 had spent time in such facilities. The survey found that 47% of homeless adults had been in correctional facilities and 58% had been in at least one of the following social services placements: drug or alcohol treatment facility, foster home or group home, halfway house, or facility for people with emotional, behavioral, or mental health problems.

To address this often preventable cause of homelessness, communities are beginning to focus on “in-reach” and discharge planning as tools for preventing homelessness.

“It is simply unacceptable for individuals, children, families and our nation’s Veterans to be faced with homelessness in this country.

President Obama
June 18, 2009

FEDERAL VIEW OF THIS OBJECTIVE

The federal plan includes outreach in its objective addressing the crisis response system and discharge planning as a separate objective to improve health and stability. Regarding outreach, the plan endorses promoting collaborative street outreach efforts that help people living on the streets directly access housing.

The federal plan places a special focus on discharge planning for youth in foster care, through the following two strategies:

- Improve discharge planning from foster care and juvenile justice to connect youth to education, housing, health and behavioral health support, income supports, and health coverage prior to discharge
- Promote targeted outreach strategies to identify youth experiencing homelessness who are most likely to end up in an emergency room, hospital, jail, or prison, and connect them to the housing and support they need

The plan recommends similar strategies for adults in institutional settings.

- Improve discharge planning from hospitals, VA medical centers, psychiatric facilities, jails, and prisons to connect people to housing, health and behavioral health support, income and work supports, and health coverage prior to discharge
- Promote targeted outreach strategies to identify people experiencing homelessness who are most likely to end up in an emergency room, hospital, jail, or prison, and connect them to the housing and support they need

Meet Lynn, a single mother with three children who has struggled with chemical dependency and homelessness. Her children have been in and out of the foster care system, and Lynn has been in and out of the criminal justice system. Supportive housing provided a safe home for Lynn and enabled her family to gain the stability they so desperately needed. Working together we can stabilize lives and save scarce public resources in the process.

Cost of Life on the Street:

Emergency Shelter Stays
Jail Stays
Case Management
Emergency Room Visits
Foster Care
AFDC Payments

\$695,200

Cost of Supportive Housing:

Supportive Housing
Employment Services
Transportation
Child Care
Addiction Treatment
Mental Health Care

\$337,100

From the report “Financial implications of Public Interventions on Behalf of a Chronically Homeless Family” by the Family Housing Fund

Paula loves putting the key in her front door. She loves doing the laundry, washing the dishes and getting the groceries. These are things many people complain about, but Paula says they make her day. One of the first participants in the Women’s Housing Partnership (WHP), she is settled into her apartment near downtown Minneapolis. She recently completed treatment and is currently attending after-care. Things are pretty sunny on her side of the street.

The road to finding a stable home wasn’t easy. After getting laid off, losing her house, battling drugs and alcohol, and spending many nights on “the island,” just north of downtown, she found her way to the Simpson Women’s Shelter. A shelter advocate connected her to WHP and things started coming together.

Diagnosed with bi-polar disorder and depression, she is getting the help she needs; help that would be hard to take if she didn’t have a home to go to at night. Next on her list is getting her G.E.D. and spending time with her grown children.

You don’t need to speak with Paula very long to see she is happy. Determination got her where she is. She plans on staying there.

LOCAL PLANS’ WORK ON THIS OBJECTIVE

Current Plans

Direct Engagement and Outreach--Local Minnesota plans incorporate a wide spectrum of strategies and activities for reaching out to people who are homeless or at high risk of becoming homeless.

- Direct engagement strategies
 - One-day events such as Project Homeless Connect, Operation Community Connect, and Stand Down (an event for veterans similar to Homeless Connect)
 - Street outreach and institutional in-reach
 - Resource centers for people who are homeless (opportunity centers, Homeless Resource Center)
 - Discharge planning protocols
 - Outreach teams for specific populations, especially youth
- Outreach tools
 - Awareness and education about housing resources to outreach workers and others working with people who are homeless (including using HousingLink)
 - Training for staff on outreach best practices
 - Review of ordinances that criminalize homelessness
 - Strategies to avoid evicting victims of domestic violence

Discharge Planning—Many local Heading Home plans emphasize the opportunity for action at the point of discharge from institutions. Specific strategies include:

- Hiring a designated discharge planner
- Focusing discharge planning on specific institutional settings such as jails, foster care, or hospitals

BEST PRACTICES IN CURRENT PLANS

- Direct Engagement and Outreach
 - Drop-in centers for youth
 - Several cities (Duluth, St. Paul, Bemidji, Minneapolis, Shakopee, Bloomington and Fargo, serving Moorhead youth also) have outreach centers for youth. Centers provide a safe place where youth have access to such services as employment search, teen parenting support, independent living skills classes, and on-site health care. One program, YouthLink, offers a chef training program
 - “One-stop” services for specific populations
 - Heading Home Hennepin is creating two “opportunity centers”—one for single adults and another for youth. Service providers, county staff, and others will be available at the centers on an ongoing basis to provide information and services to people who are homeless
 - Project Homeless/Community Connect Events (discussed in Chapter 2)

Terry is an Air Force veteran living in Itasca County in northern Minnesota. He suffers from service-related hearing problems as well as depression, and for a time was homeless, living at Grace House, an emergency homeless shelter in Grand Rapids.

Through the collaborative efforts of many agencies, Terry is now stably housed in his own place. Terry was first referred by the Itasca County Veteran's Service Office (CVSO) to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV), a nonprofit veterans advocacy agency. MACV was able to connect Terry with a rental subsidy through the Itasca County Housing and Redevelopment Authority. However, Terry did not have the one-time money he needed to move into his new apartment, so MACV collaborated with the Itasca County Sharing Fund to split the cost of a security deposit and the first month's rent. Once Terry moved into his own housing, he was able to begin addressing his health needs.

The CVSO has filed a claim on behalf of Terry for his depression, and he regularly visits the local VA medical facilities.

- Discharge Planning
 - Hiring a designated discharge planner. Both St. Louis and Hennepin Counties have hired discharge planners
 - In St. Louis County, a county Discharge Planning Coordinator is stationed at the jail, connecting inmates to services in the community. If the inmate is interested in a supportive service plan, case management is available for up to nine months as the person transitions back into the community
 - In Hennepin County, the Minneapolis Foundation provided start-up funding for a discharge planner. The work of the planner has been primarily focused on discharge from HCMC, the safety net hospital in Minneapolis, to ensure that patients are discharged to appropriate aftercare
 - Focusing on a specific institutional setting
 - Foster Care—Hennepin County also initiated “On-Ramp to Independence,” an initiative supporting youth transitioning from “systems care” to independence and adulthood. On-Ramp prepares youth for adulthood by creating a more intentional and comprehensive set of supportive services and policies
 - Hospitals—Six individuals experiencing long-term homelessness and multiple chronic health conditions now have permanent supportive housing and are getting the health care and support services they need without relying on frequent, high-cost, emergency room care. Regions Hospital, Guild Incorporated, and Hearth Connection, are partners in this “Hospital to Home” demonstration and the Department of Human Services is providing system-wide data so that, over time, changes in use of resources can be determined. Hospital to Home takes an innovative and collaborative approach to assist individuals to meet their daily living and healthcare needs through alternate means, thus improving health and stability while also reducing avoidable emergency department visits
 - Jails—With the goal of reducing recidivism, Stearns and Steele County jails committed to changing the service delivery system to better serve inmates with mental illness. Sixty percent of those incarcerated in Minnesota have a mental illness. These county jails brought the individual together with a combination of professionals, including jail administration, nurse, county financial worker, mental health worker, and child support worker, to assist in developing a release plan based on issues identified by the inmate. The result of this collaborative effort has been a 76% decrease in recidivism of program participants in Stearns County alone (2003-2007). 10,278 jail beds days have been

Medicaid is the largest mainstream program that can serve persons experiencing homelessness. Improving access to Medicaid and other important mainstream resources such as TANF and Head Start can help prevent many vulnerable individuals, families and children from becoming homeless.

Kathleen Sebelius,
Secretary, U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services, USICH
Q & A with Secretary Sebelius,
August 3, 2009.

saved totaling \$1,079,240 (2003-2009 Stearns County) and individuals have found meaningful ways to participate and be successful in society.³⁸

MOVING MINNESOTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

County and regional plans to end homelessness should include strategies to:

- Reach out to people who are living on the streets, in homeless camps, or other places where they are not safely housed; strategies should be population-specific, especially for youth, veterans, and victims of domestic violence
- Transition people from institutions to the community; these strategies should be institution- and population-specific

STATE ROLE IN ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE

Current Activities

The state's role in outreach has been primarily as a funding resource. An example of programs funded in part by the state include PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) grants that provide support services for homeless individuals who have serious mental illness or serious mental illness and substance abuse. PATH grants are jointly funded by the federal and state governments. The state has also funded outreach through the Department of Public Safety, though those grants are no longer available.

The state's work on discharge planning has been largely through the Department of Corrections' Re-entry projects. (See discussion in Chapter 2.)

MOVING MINNESOTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

As implementation moves forward, the following activities on the part of the state would respond to the federal plan and assist local leaders in reaching out to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness on discharge from institutions.

- In-reach and discharge planning
 - Expand in-reach to more people in correctional institutions.
 - Develop and promote population-specific best practices for assisting people leaving institutions, including:
 - Youth aging out of foster care
 - People who are without homes when they leave hospitals and chemical and mental health treatment centers
 - People leaving correctional institutions.
 - Assist communities to identify housing for people exiting institutions

“Ending homelessness is not just the right think to do, it’s the smart thing to do.”

Governor Tim Pawlenty

- Fund more extensive discharge planning capacity for state prisons
- Collaborate with local and federal agencies to remove and reduce barriers to affordable housing for those with criminal history, including sex offenders
- Outreach
 - Develop and promote best practices for reaching out to youth and families that are doubled up
 - Develop and promote best practices in outreach, including support for the individual or family from the point of engagement to the point of housing
 - Assist communities in developing information and referral materials for judges and court personnel who interact with people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness
 - Train housing providers to help households plan for changes in their lives, including changes in income (e.g. expiration of MFIP benefits), and changes in housing and services
 - Encourage—through rule waivers and similar options—creation of “one-stop” integrated access points to services

MEASURING SUCCESS FOR THIS OBJECTIVE

Three measures will be used to gauge success in the area of outreach:

- Communities and public systems with effective discharge planning processes that address housing
- Number of people attending Project Homeless Connect and Community Connect events
- Development of integrated “one-stop” access points to services

Table 2: Measuring Progress on Specific Objectives in the Roadmap

Objective	Measure	Impact on People	Systems Change	Activity Counts	Collection tool
Reach out	Communities with effective discharge planning processes		X		Coordinators
	Number of people attending Project Homeless Connect/ Community Connect Events		X		Coordinators
	Integrated access points to services		X		Coordinators

“The real catalyst for change will be found through using mainstream resources—so that when the Federal government provides funding for housing or job training, to prevent domestic violence or to provide health care for our nation’s veterans, it is also working to prevent and end homelessness.”

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan at the National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference, July 13, 2010

OBJECTIVE 4: Improve Well-Being

IMPORTANCE OF THIS OBJECTIVE TO ENDING AND PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

Insufficient income to pay for housing is the single characteristic common to all households experiencing or at high risk of experiencing homelessness. For some, lack of income is solely a function of inability to get a job sufficient to pay the rent. Others may have a disability that prevents them from securing and maintaining housing, such as an untreated mental illness that makes carrying out the most basic tasks of daily living all but impossible.

Improving the well-being of people who have been or are at high risk of becoming homeless is a prerequisite to ending and preventing it. Without housing, it is almost impossible to attend to education, employment, health problems, child development, and be part of a supportive community. When people begin to see their lives and their children’s lives can be better, they begin to have hope for the future and are more likely to remain housed, thus breaking the cycle of homelessness.

The Minnesota Legislature recognized this when it passed the legislation calling for a plan to end long-term homelessness. After setting out housing and cost-saving goals, the Legislature enunciated a third goal: to “Increase the employability, self-sufficiency, and other social outcomes for individuals and families experiencing long-term homelessness.”³²

The challenge of improving social outcomes is one of availability and adequacy of and access to services, beginning with jobs and employment services. Minnesota has a variety of programs designed to address basic needs. Unfortunately, these programs do not use the same rules and definitions, are not available through the same agency, and often do not fully address the purpose for which they are intended. Consequently, many households do not access the benefits to which they are entitled.

FEDERAL VIEW OF THIS OBJECTIVE

The federal plan is organized around five main themes. Two of these themes have to do with well-being: increase economic security and improve health and stability. Within the strategy to increase economic security, the federal plan addresses both employment and access to income and job supports for people who cannot secure employment. To increase employment, the plan includes among its recommendations:

- Focus on job development in programs addressing homelessness
- Coordinate and integrate employment programs with programs assisting people who are homeless, including permanent supportive housing

In “Ann’s” short life, she had experienced a long litany of maladies. Asthma compounded by pneumonia meant frequent hospitalizations and doctor visits – and many missed days of school. At one point her mother was told she could die within a few hours.

Six months after moving into Viking Terrace Apartments, neither Ann nor any of her five siblings got sick once, according to her mother, though in the past each had had bouts of asthma that often required nebulizer treatments. Today, the family is enjoying life in their new apartment and 14-year-old Ann plays basketball, volleyball and soccer without any shortness of breath.

Viking Terrace is a 60-unit apartment complex that is now a “green building” with four units of permanent supportive housing. The National Center for Healthy Housing, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, and the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership participated in designing the improvements and conducting a health education campaign at the complex.

In the view of Ann’s mother, the building is accomplishing its objective: “This has made me so excited,” she says. “I am so happy to see that my kids are not sick the way they used to be.”

Strategies to reduce financial vulnerability of those with barriers to employment include:

- Improved access to both income supports and job supports
- Enhanced public information and call center for veterans
- Creating pathways to financial independence

The federal plan also stresses the importance of health to housing stability, recommending strategies that:

- Encourage partnerships between housing providers and health and behavioral health care providers to co-locate or coordinate health, behavioral health, safety and wellness services with housing
- Provide services in the homes of people who have experienced homelessness
- Seek opportunities to establish medical respite programs that combine a place to recuperate with nursing and other medical services needed by people who are homeless when they leave a hospital

The plan also recommends that health be a focus of planning and resourcing when youth and adults leave institutional settings.

LOCAL PLANS’ WORK ON THIS OBJECTIVE

Current Plans

Strategies to increase employment, decrease financial vulnerability, and address health and behavioral health needs are included in local plans in Minnesota.

- Increase employability and employment opportunities
 - Build relationships with employers
 - Build relationships with workforce centers to better serve people who have been homeless
 - Coordinate employment services and housing access
 - Provide skills training, including training in independent living skills, financial literacy, and budgeting
 - Assist in applying for financial aid for education
 - Increase availability of child care
- Decrease financial vulnerability
 - Provide assistance in navigating the services system
 - Increase access to income assistance (e.g. SSI, SSDI)
- Address health and behavioral health
 - Increase access to medical services, including mental and chemical health services

In Northwestern Minnesota, we don't see the obvious signs of homelessness—cardboard shelters in alleys, ever-present panhandlers on main streets, crowds of the needy outside emergency shelters. The homeless of rural areas such as ours are called the “hidden homeless.” They move from one unstable, sub-standard or cost-burdened situation to another, hidden from the eyes of the wider community.

Heading Home
Northwest Minnesota

BEST PRACTICES IN CURRENT PLANS

- Increasing employment and potential for employment
 - Ramsey County Workforce Solutions has joined with homeless services providers to start a pilot using the WorkKeys assessment tool at Dorothy Day Center. WorkKeys, standardized testing software developed by ACT (the college entrance testing firm,) will provide documentation of skill level on key skills needed in the work environment. Interested shelter residents can have their skill levels assessed and certified, providing additional information to use in job interviews.
 - In Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, the Network for Better Futures reduces the economic and social costs of high-risk adults, primarily African American men, with histories of incarceration, substance abuse, mental illness, chronic unemployment, and homelessness. While enrolled, all participants are working toward self-sufficiency, initially with job training and health stabilization, and then through employment, either in the private sector or Better Futures Enterprises. Better Futures created 25 jobs that provide short term work in ventures such as waste diversion and recycling. All participants live either in the NetWork guest house or in private apartments.
 - Two supportive housing developments in St. Paul, Delancey Street and Mental Health Resources/Project Homeward, offer employment specialists as part of their services teams. The employment specialists use an evidence-based model to provide integrated and seamless supported employment services to people with mental illness and other chronic disabilities who have experienced long-term homelessness.
 - Funding from the City of Minneapolis and the Greater Twin Cities United Way will leverage federal FSET (Food Support Employment and Training) program dollars to create a pilot project at the Adult Opportunity Center in Hennepin County. The project will provide job counseling, training and after-placement support to people experiencing homelessness, noting and addressing the unique barriers that come with not having a stable place to live.

- Increasing income
 - Claim It! is a statewide partnership led by the Greater Twin Cities United Way to maximize low-income Minnesotans' access to the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and state Working Family Credit. Key strategies for increasing utilization of these tax credits and high quality free tax preparation services include providing information to people attending Project Homeless Connect, distributing and using the Claim It! EITC Tool Kit to government and nonprofits, and incorporating the use of Bridge to Benefits and Claim It! materials in grantee requirements (See Bridge to Benefits discussion in

Many people in northern Minnesota think that homelessness is not an issue in their community. While it is not as obvious as it can be in downtown Minneapolis, homelessness still exists. “Fred” is an example of this. Suffering from severe mental illness, Fred was homeless for several years, living outside and doing his best to hide his situation. He even slept for a time in the cab of an old locomotive that is on display in Cloquet. Luckily an outreach worker connected with him and ultimately helped him apply for housing at the Outreach Center Apartments. He has successfully lived in his apartment for two years now.

Chapter2). Claim It! materials, best practices and research can be found at www.unitedfrontmn.org/united-front-communities/financial-stability

- Hennepin County negotiated an agreement with the Minnesota Departments of Human Services and Revenue to do a data match of MFIP participants with qualifying W-2 earnings. The match identified over 12,000 participants who were eligible but not claiming their tax credits. In 2009, this generated over \$5.8 million in state and federal tax credits to families. This same matching service is available to all Minnesota counties.
- Addressing health concerns
 - First Lutheran Church, east of downtown Saint Paul, hosts a wellness center one night a week, reaching out especially to recently re-housed individuals and providing ongoing connection points within their new community to help them maintain stability and stay out of the street life. The Wellness Center is a collaborative among the nursing program at Metro State, alternative medicine providers, numerous volunteers, and the local block nursing program. Anyone from the community can attend and receive free services (blood sugar checks, blood pressure, foot care, massage, and acupuncture). The evening concludes with a meal together
 - Many communities use ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) teams to address the mental health needs of people living in the community who demonstrate a need for intensive services. The teams are multidisciplinary and focus on helping people to resolve practical problems of daily living while making progress toward recovery goals. They are also available 24-hours/day for crisis intervention.

MOVING MINNESOTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

County and regional plans to end homelessness should include strategies to:

- Create relationships between local employers, workforce centers, and providers of services to people who have been homeless; learn what skills are needed and assist in developing appropriate training programs for people who have been homeless
- Map the local services system from the point of view of people seeking services
 - Create collaborations among providers to bridge gaps in the system
 - Develop services not currently provided.

“Transportation remains a significant difficulty for Southwest Minnesota families, especially those with low incomes or experiencing homelessness. As in most of greater Minnesota, public transit options are severely limited, making vehicle ownership essential to accessing medical care, employment, and community amenities.”

Heading Home
Southwest Minnesota

STATE ROLE IN ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE

Current Efforts

To date, the work of the state in the area of income supports and employment has been primarily in funding programs that serve basic needs (MFIP, GA) and linking people to sources of federally-funded assistance (such as the SOAR program discussed in Chapter 2). The state also funds workforce centers although little work has been done to increase the effectiveness of the centers for people with multiple barriers to employment.

The state funds programs providing basic health care to individuals and families. Unfortunately, these programs were cut back in recent years as part of the strategy for balancing the state budget.

The Long-Term Homeless Supportive Services Fund, created in 2005 specifically to support the Business Plan, provides flexible funding that is not time-limited for a wide spectrum of services not funded by more mainstream programs. Unfortunately the Fund reaches individuals and families in fewer than half of Minnesota counties and was cut slightly in 2008. (See Chapter 2 for more discussion of this fund.)

MOVING MINNESOTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

As implementation moves forward, the following activities on the part of the state would respond to the federal plan and assist local leaders to improve well-being and social outcomes for people who have experienced homelessness:

- Overall wellness
 - Train supportive housing case managers (initially and ongoing) about strategies to improve well-being in multiple dimensions.
- Goal-setting
 - Include family safety as a goal of supportive housing
 - Include developing relationships as a goal of supportive housing
- Employment
 - Develop and promote best practices in incorporating an employment focus into housing programs
 - Strengthen collaboration among Minnesota Housing, Department of Human Services, and Department of Employment and Economic Development to help local workforce centers address employment needs of people who have been homeless
 - Advocate for changes to federal Workforce Investment Act policy and funding
- Reducing financial vulnerability
 - Build on current efforts to assist people with Social Security disability applications, including SOAR, to increase the number of successful applications for eligible people experiencing homelessness, including veterans

- Explore ways to promote housing stability and incent work by closing the income gap for individuals and families, including potential changes to rental assistance, income assistance, and child care assistance
- Review program rules to identify those that conflict or are unnecessary to effective, efficient, and integrated administration of and access to programs
- Work with the community to develop a simplified application that could be used across programs and/or be a portal to benefits
- Work with the community to develop community-based access points to benefits and services
- Encourage coordination between county veterans service officers and local agencies providing housing and services
- Health care
 - Develop and promote best practices for integrating physical and behavioral health services into supportive housing
 - Develop and promote best practices for addressing children’s mental health within a supportive housing environment

MEASURING SUCCESS FOR THIS OBJECTIVE

There are two client-based outcomes for improving well-being:

- Increase in earned income
- Increase in unearned income

With anticipated changes to HMIS, it may be possible to track improvements in health.

Measuring Progress on Specific Objectives in the Roadmap

Objective	Measure	Impact on People	Systems Change	Activity Counts	Collection tool
Improve well-being	Increase in earned income	X			HMIS
	Increase in unearned income	X			HMIS

Heading Home Scott-Carver has been created in the belief that no person—man, woman, or child should have to sleep in a car, in the woods, under a bridge, in an abandoned building or in a place not meant for human habitation. This plan recognizes housing as a basic human right and ending homelessness as an achievable goal in the next ten years. Heading Home Scott-Carver serves as a blueprint and a call to action for these two suburban and rural counties.

Heading Home Scott-Carver

OBJECTIVE 5: Transform the Housing Crisis Response System

IMPORTANCE OF THIS OBJECTIVE TO ENDING AND PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

Reforming the housing crisis response system is critical to preventing and ending homelessness. People who are at high risk of homelessness and those who are already homeless need to know and be able to access the resources available to them, but doing so is more difficult than it needs to be in Minnesota.

Most Minnesota communities address immediate housing crises using some combination of:

- Emergency Assistance (EA), Emergency General Assistance, FHPAP (Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program) and HPRP (Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program;); and
- Shelter or motel vouchers

The assistance programs seem to be successful at enabling households to retain their current housing or secure a new place to live; shelter and motel vouchers have provided a stop-gap when a temporary place to live is needed.

This crisis response process, however, has a number of deficiencies.

- *Inadequate coordination of assistance programs.* Each program addresses a certain population with specific needs. If there were a single point at which assessment were done, it might be possible to figure out the best fit for a particular household at a given point of time. As it is, however, most communities do not have a single point of entry and, for a variety of reasons, many community agencies don't know what other agencies can offer.
- *Inadequate assessment of needs.* While there is an emerging interest across the country in figuring out how to assess what a household needs, adequate tools are not yet available. Does an individual need housing only or also services? If the person needs services, which services and for how long? If housing, how deep a subsidy is needed and for how long?
- *Shortage of funding.* The FHPAP program serves approximately 5% of low-income rental households that pay more than 30% of their income for housing. This is an indication of need but is not the complete story as (a) many households paying more than 30% are able to make ends meet using other resources and (b) programs such as Emergency Assistance and Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing are available to some households in need. Local administrators report, however, that the need for assistance from all prevention programs regularly exceeds the funding available.

Too often the result of this hodge-podge of services is that people spend more time in shelter where—because of inadequate staffing at most shelters—they do not learn about resources that may be available to them and that would also shift some costs from counties and the state to the federal government..

“Even in these difficult economic times, this is still the wealthiest, most powerful country in the world. We all agree that no child or youth should be living on the streets without care and without hope. Each of them deserves a home.”

Barbara Poppe,
Executive Director,
United States Interagency
Council on Homelessness,
speaking at annual meeting
for homeless state
education coordinators,
March 24, 2010

FEDERAL VIEW OF THIS OBJECTIVE

The focus of the federal plan is to move from a shelter-based system to a system focused on keeping people in their homes and rapidly re-housing those who become homeless. This transformation rests on the kinds of tools being developed in Minnesota now, especially developing single points of entry and coordinating resources—including mainstream resources -- across the community. Such an approach requires a high level of cooperation, collaboration, and coordination among both government and provider agencies.

Specific strategies discussed in the federal plan include:

- Developing and promoting best practices in crisis prevention, including
 - Improving access to crisis programs by simplifying entry requirements and removing barriers to entry
 - Encouraging existing temporary residential programs to set aside beds for a safe haven model. Save Haven is a secure, non-threatening supportive environment for people with mental illness who are reluctant to give any information about themselves, often even a name
 - Encouraging communities to transform transitional housing to permanent supportive housing or transition-in-place models.
 - Addressing barriers to successful re-housing, such as fear of violence and criminal justice history
 - Promoting collaboration between local school districts and crisis programs
- Using mainstream resources for housing stability
- Ensuring continuity in providing homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing services to families, youth, and individuals—including veterans and their families

LOCAL PLANS' WORK ON THIS OBJECTIVE

Current Plans

Current local plans include several strategies for strengthening the crisis response system.

- Modifying the current shelter system by:
 - Ensuring efficient use of shelter capacity and services
 - Creating and expanding emergency shelter options (including engaging faith communities to develop temporary shelter)
- Reforming the intake process by centralizing intake or coordinating access points (e.g. “No Wrong Door”)
- Increasing funding for prevention programs such as FHPAP and HPRP
- Improving services available prior to eviction, to include
 - Working with landlords to negotiate solutions for tenants about to lose their housing
 - Providing information (including rights and responsibilities) for households faced with eviction
- Preventing youth homelessness
 - Providing parent education/support
 - Providing conflict resolution for families

The following principles guided our thinking:

- All people deserve safe, decent, and affordable housing.
- Shelter is not housing.
- Providing services without housing does not end homelessness.
- Homelessness costs more than housing.
- Data is important.
- Prevention is the best solution.
- Ending homelessness requires a community-wide response.
- Ending homelessness is attainable.

Heading Home
Hennepin

BEST PRACTICES IN CURRENT PLANS

Ramsey County created Housing Crisis Teams – single points of contact for prevention and intervention services for those experiencing housing instability. Three centers have been established – for families, youth, and single adults, with most funding for services and direct assistance coming from the FHPAP and HPRP programs. The St. Paul Foundation provided two-year funding for a staff person in the family program.

- Hennepin County Single Adult Shelter Network—in Hennepin County, shelter guests sign releases that allow shelter providers to talk with each other to ensure the best and quickest response to each person; this process is easier on shelter guests who no longer need to seek services separately from each provider and more efficient for providers who no longer need to duplicate application processes with the same client
- The Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis and St. Stephen’s have formed a partnership using federal Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing funds to work with tenants facing eviction when a property is foreclosed; Legal Aid ensures that tenants know their rights and St. Stephen’s helps to find an affordable relation, thus avoiding shelter entirely

MOVING MINNESOTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

The next stage of local work may be government and nonprofit providers learning about available community resources, developing collaborative relationships between and among providers to maximize the resources of all, or developing a common method of assessing and providing services to the client population. The response will vary according to each community’s readiness.

STATE ROLE IN ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE

Current Role

The state has historically played a significant role in homelessness prevention and rapid response, as earlier sections of this report have demonstrated. The state funds and oversees both mainstream income support and other programs that play a role in preventing homelessness as well as programs directed specifically to households at high risk of homelessness or newly homeless. The design of local systems, however, has been left to individual communities.

Although local agencies designing their own systems that work best in their communities is valuable, the state also has an interest in promoting collaboration and cooperation among community agencies serving people who are homeless or at high risk. The Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance

Program, for example, requires that each community receiving FHPAP funding establish an advisory committee to design and implement the program based on local community need. The Long-Term Homeless Supportive Services funding has prioritized projects that are multi-county and take a regional approach to delivering services.

Why End Homelessness?

1. To create more stable citizens and a stronger community.
2. It's cost effective.
3. It is ethically and morally "the right thing to do"
4. It's practical.
5. It is a religious imperative to help those less fortunate.

Heading Home
West Central Minnesota

MOVING MINNESOTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL

As implementation moves forward, the following additional activities on the part of the state would respond to the federal plan and assist local leaders in transforming their homelessness crisis response systems.

- Education
 - Educate policy makers, including state legislators, about programs available to individuals, youth and families newly homeless and at risk of losing housing
 - Refine the degree and level of information available to policy makers on the successes of prevention programs, including FHPAP and HPRP
 - Develop tools for local communities to use to educate housing providers about availability of and access to mainstream resources
- Collaboration
 - Build on programs that are multi-county or regional such as the Mental Health Initiatives and Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program in Greater Minnesota and the Long-Term Homeless Supportive services Fund. These programs also include tribes in their regional service delivery
- Services
 - Promote tested methods for resolving family conflict and reunifying families
 - Assist communities to develop single points of entry to housing and services for people who are homeless. The point of entry can be a single physical location where practical or a virtual location. Where a single point of entry is not practical, assist communities and providers to develop processes for sharing and coordinating resources
 - Work with the federal government and with Minnesota communities to develop and promote a tool for assessing the needs of individuals, youth, and families that are homeless or at high risk of becoming homeless

MEASURING SUCCESS OF THIS OBJECTIVE

Two client-based measures will be used to assess progress on this objective:

- Households in housing when exiting a crisis or transitional program (FHPAP, HPRP, transitional housing)
- Households returning to shelter or FHPAP after leaving the FHPAP program

Measuring Progress on Specific Objectives in the Roadmap

Objective	Measure	Impact on People	Systems Change	Activity Counts	Collection tool
Reform crisis response system	Households in housing at program exit (FHPAP, HPRP, transitional housing)	X			HMIS
	Households returning to FHPAP/shelter	X			HMIS



MARIA

“My name is Maria. I am 49 years old and last night I stayed at SEMCAC.

I became homeless because I lost my apartment in Glenville. My husband had beat me a lot, he left me with no money for groceries, nothing. He turned my kids against me after they were grown. My oldest son called me and said, Mama, I’m taking you outta Oklahoma, cuz there’s too much drama there. I came here in 2008. It’s an old motel and the landlord didn’t want to fix hardly anything. The rent was \$525 for the month, and I was struggling, I

didn’t have enough money and my son wasn’t working. He’s handicapped—spina bifida and club feet—and he was depressed, too. So he came into town one day and he didn’t go back home. He’s here in Albert Lea. After he left I got so depressed I couldn’t do anything. I called the crisis center. I landed in the hospital a week, lost my apartment. Luckily I found this place. I walked in one day and they had a room open. I can stay three months while I look for a place I can afford on social security.

“I’ve always been independent, but I shut myself in and they tell me it’s not good to shut myself in. I get isolated. Sometimes I look back and I say, Wow, I’m a strong woman, raised all those kids and one with a disability, and now I can’t do all the stuff that I used to do years ago. I’m responsible, but it’s harder now than it used to be.”

Endnotes

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- 4 - Algernon Austin, Uneven Pain: Unemployment by metropolitan area and race, Economic Policy Institute: Issue Brief 278, June 8, 2010.
- 5 – Secretary Shinseki, speaking at the release of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, June 22, 2010
- 6 – Wilder Research, op. cit. , pp. 4, 6.
- 7 – *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2010 at www.usich.gov.
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- 9 – Wilder Research, Homeless and near-homeless people on northern Minnesota Indian reservations, November 2007, <http://www.wilder.org/download.0.html?report=2018>. The 2006 survey that forms the basis for this report was repeated in 2009 but has not yet been released.
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- 12 – Ibid., p. 6.
- 13 – Wilder Research Center, *Homeless Veterans in Minnesota: Statewide survey of veterans without permanent shelter*, November 2007
- 14 – Washington, Yano, McGuire, Hines, Lee, and Gelberg, *Risk Factors for Homelessness among Women Veterans*, *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 21 (2010): 81–91.
- 15 – Wilder Research, survey of veterans, op. cit.
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- 17 – Wilder children stats in Fact Sheet <http://www.wilder.org/download.0.html?report=2293>, p. 1
- 18 – Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis Commission to End Homelessness (2006, December). *Heading Home Hennepin: The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County*. Retrieved at http://www.co.hennepin.mn.us/files/HennepinUS/Research%20Planning%20and%20Development/Projects%20and%20Initiatives/Homelessness/HHHReport_web.pdf
- 19 – Ibid., p. 68.
- 20 – Ibid. , p. 69.
- 21 – Shinn, M.B., Rog, D., & Culhane, D. (2005, May). Family Homelessness: Background Research Findings and Policy Options, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, May 2005, p. 4. http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1085&context=spp_papers
- 22 – Wilder Research, 2009 statewide survey, op. cit.
- 23 – The Business Plan addresses long-term homelessness of youth and families as well as that of single adults. Unless noted, the remainder of this section of the report concerns only the single adult portion of the population.

- 24 – Wilder Research, *Homelessness in Minnesota: Key findings from the 2009 statewide survey* (May 2009), retrieved at <http://www.wilder.org/download.0.html?report=2300>
- 25 – Wilder Research, 2009 statewide survey, p. 3.
- 26 – Ending Long-Term Homelessness in Minnesota: Report and Business Plan of the Working Group on Long-Term Homelessness, prepared for the Minnesota Legislature, March 2004, http://www.mnhousing.gov/idc/groups/secure/documents/admin/mhfa_004304.pdf
- 27 – 2007 Recalibration of the Business Plan for Ending Long-Term Homelessness in Minnesota, June 2007, http://www.mnhousing.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/document/mhfa_006244.pdf
- 28 – Link to all Community Plans to End Homelessness in Minnesota: <http://www.mnhousing.gov/initiatives/housing-assistance/community/index.aspx>
- 29 – In February 2009, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that about 93,000 Minnesota housing units had a federal subsidy (including public housing and project-based Section 8 as well as tenant-based vouchers). This compared with 203,504 low-income households paying more than 30% of their income for housing. <http://www.cbpp.org/files/2-24-09house-app-a.pdf>
- 30 – Opening Doors, op., cit.
- 31 – For more detail, see 2007 Recalibration, op., cit. p. 45.
- 32– The most recent Frey contribution (\$1.25 million over 5 years) is not included in this total.
- 33 – Hearth Connection, *The Minnesota Supportive Housing and Managed Care Pilot: Evaluation Summary*, Prepared for Hearth Connection by The National Center on Family Homelessness, March 2009. <http://www.hearthconnection.org/results>.
- 34 – Cost of Rural Homelessness: Rural Permanent Supportive Housing Cost Analysis, State of Maine (May 2009), <http://www.mainehousing.org/Documents/HousingReports/CostOfHomelessnessRural.pdf>.
- 35 – Larimer, Mary E. and others, Health Care and Public Service Use and Costs Before and After Provision of Housing for Chronically Homeless Persons With Severe Alcohol Problems, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, April 1, 2009, <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/301/13/1349>
- 36 – Children’s Defense Fund: Bridge to Benefits at http://mn.bridgetobenefits.org/About_Us2.htm
- 37 – *Heading Home Hennepin: An Analysis of Shelter Use and Intervention Points*, University of Minnesota, May 2010.
- 38 – Laws of Minnesota 2010, Chapter 200, Article 1, and DHS Bulletin #10-21-07, May 17, 2010, Legislative Changes to GAMC effective June 1, 2010.
- 39 – 42 U.S.C. 5701, sec. 3887(3). Note that for purposes of staying in a youth shelter, the maximum age is 18.
- 40 - NAMI - Jail Discharge Planning: Ending the Cycle of Recidivism (2010) video, <http://www.namihelps.org/publications/nami-minnesota-dvds.html>
- 41 - Laws of Minnesota 2003, Chapter 128, Article 15, Section 9.

NOTE: These endnotes are applicable to the entire document: *Heading Home: Minnesota’s Roadmap for Ending Homelessness*, while this printed version includes only the Introduction, Executive Summary and Chapter 3. The document in its entirety can be found at: <http://www.mnhousing.gov/news/reports/index.aspx>.

Glossary of Terms

Continuum of Care: A community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to address homelessness. Funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Continuum of Care includes prevention, outreach and assessment, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing.

<http://www.hudhre.info/documents/CoC101.pdf>

<http://www.mnhousing.gov/initiatives/housing-assistance/continuum/index.aspx>

Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP): Provides direct services, training and case management to prevent homelessness and rapidly rehouse families with children, youth and single adults who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. Administered by Minnesota Housing, grants are awarded biennially to counties or community-based nonprofit organizations on a competitive basis.

<http://www.mnhousing.gov/initiatives/housing-assistance/prevention/index.aspx>

Group Residential Housing (GRH): State-funded income supplement program that pays for room-and-board costs for low-income adults who have been placed in a licensed or registered setting with which a county human service agency has negotiated a monthly rate.

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id_002549

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP): Established by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), HPRP provides temporary funding for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing assistance. Financial assistance and services are intended to assist people who are homeless or would be homeless but for this assistance. Funds can be used for payment for back rent, current and back utilities, moving costs, security deposits, rental assistance and case management.

<http://www.hudhre.info/hprp/index.cfm>

Housing First: An approach to homelessness that allows an individual or family to move directly from the streets or shelter to their own apartment. Services are available once the household is in housing. The idea behind Housing First is to minimize the time homeless and maximize the value of services such as linkage to benefits, mental and physical health care, and training.

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/1425>

Medical Respite: Acute and post-acute medical care for homeless people who are too ill or frail to recover from a physical illness or injury on the streets, but who are not ill enough to be in a hospital. Unlike “respite” for caregivers, “medical respite” is short-term residential care that allows homeless individuals the opportunity to rest in a safe environment while accessing medical care and other supportive services.

<http://www.nhchc.org/Respite/>

Operating Costs: Costs associated with the physical, day-to-day operations of a housing residence such as maintenance and repair, operations staff, utilities, equipment, supplies, insurance, food, relocation, and furnishings.

<http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewSupportiveHousingProgram>

http://www.mnhousing.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/document/mhfa_003854.pdf for description of operating costs eligible for funding by Minnesota Housing

Partners Fund: Flexible pool of private funds to support implementation of Minnesota’s Business Plan to End Long-Term Homelessness. Funds are used to test creative ideas for providing services and to fill gaps in services funding necessary to preserve and create supportive housing for singles, youth and families experiencing long-term homelessness. The Family Housing Fund is the fiscal agent for the Metro Partners Fund; the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund is the fiscal agent for the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund. http://www.fhfund.org/_dnld/PartnersFundWebSite.pdf

Permanent Supportive Housing: Housing and related supportive services for people moving from homelessness to independent living. Program funds help homeless people live in a stable place, increase their skills and their income, and gain more control over the decisions that affect their lives.

Rental Assistance: Payment to a landlord of a portion of a low-income family or individual’s rent. Most commonly, the tenant pays rent equal to 30% of income and rental assistance pays the difference between the tenant’s payment and the cost of rent. Rental assistance programs vary in length and eligibility criteria. <http://www.mnhousing.gov/initiatives/housing-assistance/rental/index.aspx>

Safe Haven: A form of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach homeless persons with severe mental illness and other debilitating behavioral conditions who are on the street and have been unable or unwilling to participate in housing or supportive services. <http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewSupportiveHousingProgram>

Services: Social services needed to assist people who have been homeless—individuals, youth, and families—to remain in housing and improve their lives. Services can cover a broad spectrum of needs ranging from medication management to assistance in applying for benefits. Services differ from operating costs in that they are not needed to operate a building but to assist residents to remain in housing and improve their well-being.

Transitional Housing: Housing with supportive services that is available for a limited time, generally 24 months. Services, including child care and job training, are generally focused on the skills needed for the individual or family to become more independent. Some transitional housing programs allow the individual or family to “transition in place” so they do not need to move when the program ends. <http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewSupportiveHousingProgram>

“When asked if I am pessimistic or optimistic about the future, my answer is always the same: If you look at the science about what is happening on earth and aren’t pessimistic, you don’t understand the data. But if you meet the people who are working to restore this earth and the lives of the poor, and you aren’t optimistic, you haven’t got a pulse. What I see everywhere in the world are ordinary people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world. The poet Adrienne Rich wrote, ‘So much has been destroyed I have cast my lot with those who, age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world.’ There could be no better description. Humanity is coalescing. It is reconstituting the world, and the action is taking place in schoolrooms, farms, jungles, villages, campuses, companies, refuge camps, deserts, fisheries, and slums.”

Paul Hawken,
environmentalist, entrepreneur, journalist, and author;
in an address to the graduating class of the
University of Portland, May 3, 2009