Community Survey on Homelessness Needs and Resources

Responses

Service providers, public officials, civic and business leaders, and other community organizations are undertaking a strategic planning process, called the continuum of care, to develop long range plans to better meet the needs of homeless people. The purpose of this survey is to obtain information on the needs of homeless people in our community and to determine existing resources. This information will help the continuum make informed decisions.

1. Which part of the existing system serving homeless people works best?

- Permanent supportive housing (2)
- Supportive services (8)
  - if clients are assisted with navigating through the system of the clients take advantage of the multiple services
  - however since they work independently, services are duplicated and there are gaps
  - when they are administered thoroughly
- Emergency shelter (4)
- Outreach and Assessment (2)
- I think that the relationship that the providers serving the homeless have is great. Each agency understands what the others do and what resources are available. The providers work well together and can offer and provide the resources that the homeless population need.
- Prevention (3)
- Transitional housing (2)
- Services for women are more varied and accessible than for men (good for women, “less good” for the men.)
- Affordable housing
- I feel like there are many people focused on feeding the homeless
- Ministry aspects- feeding and clothing

2. Which parts of the existing system have the greatest need for expansion?

- Permanent supportive housing (7)
- Supportive services (9)
  - mental health/substance abuse with follow-up services and immediate access for stabilization/detox
- Affordable housing (11)
- Emergency shelters (3)
- Outreach and Assessment (2)
- Transitional housing (2)
- Mental health providers and availability of treatment (2)
- Addiction rehab options for homeless population (2)
- Triage
Community Survey on Homelessness Needs and Resources

Responses

- HMIS
- Prevention (2)
  - with wrap around services

3. Which parts of the existing system have the greatest need for improvement?

- Supportive services (4)
- Prevention programs (5)
- Affordable housing (9)
- Transitional housing (3)
- Coordinated assessment
- Triage
- Housing for ex-offenders
- Permanent supportive housing (3)
- Emergency shelter (2)
- Outreach and Assessment (4)
- Permanent housing
- Addiction /rehab
- Mental health
- Coordinated case management for all
- Referral system (for immediate shelter)

4. What actions would you take to expand or improve these two parts of the system?

- More partnerships/grant writing/increased case management to prevent people from falling through the cracks
- Try to bring in more funds for prevention programs. That will decrease some of the homelessness part.
- Outreach and Assessment are limited. Need more effective outreach programs.
- Work with community landlords
- Work with community services
- Providing housing has to become the priority for those working to end homelessness
- Work to develop a unified homeless and housing placement system
- Prioritize housing for chronically homeless and medically vulnerable
- As for expansion of Outreach and Assessment, the direction of automation is trying to be implemented. I think committing to this as a community would be very beneficial.
- As for Permanent Supportive Housing...more individual housing units should be established
- As for improving Emergency Shelter, we need one that other providers of Transitional Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing can “pull” from.
- As for improving Affordable Housing, I really do not know enough to comment.
Community Survey on Homelessness Needs and Resources

Responses

- Mental health providers that have the availability to see clients sooner and to house clients that have an immediate need, also ongoing management of the mental illness with an understanding of homelessness.
- Addiction and rehabilitation services are not an option around here. The clients do not have this service available to them when they are ready to get treatment. This needs to be provided immediately.
- Team training with specific assignments
- More collaboration with existing programs
- Better assessment and referral system
- Work with local and private real estate companies to develop greater housing pool for reasonable rent
- I would work closer with existing organizations that also provide outreach and assessment to create a continuum of care within this area to better assist the shared client base.
- Same as part A - a continuum of care of different permanent supportive housing providers.
- Coordination of all parts of the continuum of care. Better data sharing and understanding of all involved what services are available. Tracking of success to figure out what parts of the continuum are working.
- Increasing availability of supportive services and active job placement with companies to hire directly out of training programs.
- Access a person’s situation and don’t give funds just because the money is there. Try to ensure the person is going to be able to remain housed.
- Offer more vouchers, use existing properties for affordable housing.
- Increase the number of individuals who offer outreach and linkage to appropriate services
- Partner with local property owners who are willing to provide housing opportunities for low-moderate income individuals
- Dedicate an organization for outreach
- Expand the prevention funds
- I’m not sure how to improve the affordable housing issue
- Triage to diagnose potentially chronic individuals
- Laws that make it difficult for ex-offenders to acquire housing
- Educating the public on what “homelessness” is to include causes, effects and definitions
- Show the financial impact/benefit of investing in housing for this population
- Provide housing at affordable price
- Provide affordable daycare
Community Survey on Homelessness Needs and Resources Responses

5. What two actions would you take to meet the most pressing needs of the subpopulation that you serve, or are most knowledgeable about?

Identify subpopulations:
- People with a diagnosable mental illness
- Elderly
- The working poor
- Ex-offenders
- Children and families
- Veterans
- Low income
- Homeless woman
- Set income clients
- Homeless men/woman
- Victims of domestic violence
- Homeless that are disabled
- Chronically homeless
- Substance abuse/mental illness
- Single moms with children
- Individuals with low-income that find themselves eligible for energy assistance, commodities, food vouchers, etc. year after year after year
- We serve many homeless that avoid shelters and are not connected to services to have left programs and now are living in one house to the next. They are basically living on the gratitude of others, and eventually end up back on the street.

What two actions would you take to meet the most pressing needs?

- Provide avenues for assistance through DHR (SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, and childcare)
- Education classes on how to manage their (mental) illness
- Support groups which allows free peer advice
- Prevention
- Emergency shelter
- Find employers willing to hire and pay a living wage
- Talk to someone about the opportunity to open a dual diagnosis treatment facility
- Assist with funding livable wage employment/apply for SSI/SSDI
- Locate affordable housing
- Work to create supportive housing for women with children
- Identify transitional housing for women with children
- Find more affordable housing - something realistic for someone who is homeless
- Supportive services - having the availability to provide resources for the barriers the clients face
- Meet with community service providers
Community Survey on Homelessness Needs and Resources

Responses

- Meet with established landlords
- Immediate access to safe housing options
- Assessment and triage (assuming referrals are a viable option)
- Create more opportunities for low barrier housing and shelter
- Work to streamline the number of steps/processes it takes for someone to become housed (i.e. lease up time)
- Build a partnership with a detox facility
- Build a partnership with an emergency shelter
- Seek immediate services for stabilization/detox especially for the most vulnerable clients
- Identify appropriate housing
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Seek more volunteers/allies for Circles of Columbus
- Job enhancement/micro-business/ask new questions - “what are your plans for becoming financially secure with your family?”
- Create doable self-sufficiency plans for the families to follow
- Provide ongoing, tangible case management activities that move the family from poverty to self-sufficiency in a sustainable way that leads to permanent well-being
- Would like to evaluate why individuals leave trainings and supportive programs and return to homeless status. For example, have heard reports from individuals that they were in a program but became frustrated with lack of progress or requirements so they left and are trying to make it on their own. Or that they had some funding for education and something happened that they got behind on bills and couldn’t continue their training. Would like to see funding to help do more follow-up with participants of programs and to provide these participants with resources to help success.
- Would like to provide rental assistance to individuals but would like it to be connected with them receiving other services to enhance their success.

6. What would you not do?

- Not including enough peer advice/services
- I would want to see more getting done to prevent homelessness
- I want to actually see progress in a decrease of the homeless rate
- Support the “as is” mentality
- Ignore the problem
- Enable clients
- Provide services without continued support for the client
- Provide services without client accountability
- Put everything in one place. There is a safety concern for this.
- Require a central intake - each person dealing with homelessness has different barriers and there will not be anything that is “one size fits all”
- Spend a bunch of money on one-stop shop
- Deliberately foster dependence
Community Survey on Homelessness Needs and Resources

Responses

- House with no supportive services
- Assume that housing will “work” for all
- I would not continue to be a part of the duplication of services for our shared client base. I would work very hard to become a part of creating a sustainable community-wide continuum of care for our clients.
- I would not be territorial with information or ideas. I would open up and share even if it means our organization does not get the lion’s share of the grant money or even if it means our organization does not get any additional funds. As long as I am a vital part of the solution, I am okay with being the value added part of the equation for optimal client benefit.
- Discontinue funding for the Homeless Resource Network
- I feel like there are a lot of resources but they are segmented - so I would not like to see more and more programs developed that are not coordinated with what is already available.
- Focus on making homeless individuals “more comfortable” instead of addressing the causes of homelessness - mental illness, unemployment, etc.
- Continue assisting people with HPRP funds when they do not have the funds to sustain housing. Our program has worked with numerous families who received HPRP funding in the past and were not able to sustain housing after the funds ended.
- Duplicate services (4)
- Assist clients that don’t have sustainable income
- Place a client in an unsuitable environment

Thank you to the following agencies for participating:

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