



A PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

April 18th, 2013

Executive Summary

Our Challenge

Homelessness only ends when people are in permanent housing that they can afford. Anything else is just making homelessness a little more comfortable.

~ Tanya Tull

History

A Jefferson County networking group that had been meeting for years to share resources decided, in 2006 to change focus and work toward ending homelessness in Jefferson County. Initial steps to the development of a plan to address homelessness were created and committees were formed. This group is now known as Heading Home: Jeffco Community Steps to Housing and is comprised of non-profit and government agencies, faith based community members, law enforcement, school district personnel, city/county representatives, private citizens (including persons who have experienced homelessness).

As the group charged with the development and writing of The Plan to End Homelessness in Jefferson County (here after called The Plan), in June 2010, The Leadership Committee of Heading Home was given the endorsement of the Jefferson County Child and Youth Leadership Commission to write this plan. The Plan shifts our paradigm from one that reacts to homelessness to one that prevents and ends homelessness. The Plan identifies long-term, sustainable strategies to utilize the existing system of resources and services more effectively through collaboration, implement a holistic approach to recovery and stability, and support people along the continuum of self-sufficiency. We invite the Jefferson County Community to join this partnership in ending homelessness and commit to addressing the social conditions which create homelessness.

Why is a plan important?

The National Alliance to End Homelessness and the US Interagency Council on Homelessness has advocated for local communities to develop ten year plans to end homelessness. Other communities have seen significant savings in the areas of public systems, (including: reduced use of emergency medical systems, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, and acute psychiatric services), enhancement of the quality of life for both the housed and the homeless, an increase in supported housing retention rates when a formalized, shared plan to address homeless has been established. This plan follows suit with the redevelopment and revitalization approach that is being implemented throughout the cities of our county.

The number of homeless people in Colorado more than tripled between 1988 and 2006 with most being families with children (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006).

The situation in Jefferson County

Although Jefferson County is the “Gateway to the Colorado Rockies,” home of beautiful mountain vistas, elk and buffalo herds, it does present some challenges. Jefferson County is one of the largest counties in Colorado, with over 550,000 residents. The entire geographic area of Jefferson County is 773 square miles. 75.8% of Jefferson County is considered “non-urban” and 24.2% is considered “urban.” Thus the county presents some unique challenges with small mountain communities and larger metro-area municipalities, all with its share of homeless. Challenges include public transportation, affordable housing and jobs paying a living wage.

It has the largest school district with approximately 85,000 students, of which 2,812 were counted as homeless the 2011/2012 school year (Colorado Department of Education). It also has one of the largest homeless populations in metro Denver.

According to the 2012 Point in Time count:

1435 people were counted as homeless in Jefferson County,

72% of those households were families with children,

41% of these households were employed, and

Over 50% reported being homeless for the first time.

“It’s just a sign of the times,” says Lynnae Flora, Community Assistance Director for Jefferson County Human Services. “People used to be living pay check to pay check. Well, they’re not anymore, because there isn’t any pay check.”

Colorado ranks 4th in the U.S. for the number of children living in rent-burdened households and 15th in the nation for the worst rate of child homelessness (The National Center on Family Homelessness, State Report Card on Child Homelessness, 2008).

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki, and Labor Secretary Hilda Solis declared the vision of The Plan to be centered on the belief that “no one should experience homelessness—no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.”

The themes of the federal strategic plan are:

Increase leadership, collaboration, and civic engagement

Increase access to stable and affordable housing

Increase economic security

Improve health and stability

Retool the homeless crisis response system

Principles

This plan is built on the following principles:

- To end homelessness in Jefferson County we must first prevent it utilizing intervention with services and financial support. Emergency shelter must also be available to assist people experiencing a temporary housing crisis.
- Affordable housing must be developed to meet the needs of households at all income levels.
- Systems change must occur to eliminate policies that are ineffective and hinder the stability of people in need.
- Services that enhance and support the independence of people are readily available and coordinated.

Goals at a Glance

Goal #1

Prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless

No efforts at ending homelessness will be successful until the flow of people becoming homeless is stopped. The central challenge of prevention is targeting our efforts toward those who will become homeless without an intervention. The most economically efficient and humane way to end homelessness is to prevent its happening in the first place. Affordable housing that meets the needs of all income levels is the ultimate prevention tactic. Until enough affordable housing is available other strategies are critical to “closing the front door,” or eliminating the possibility of youth, adults and families who may fall into homelessness. This plan seeks to increase housing stability for youth, individuals and families at risk of homelessness by working collaboratively and supporting and expanding programs that provide short-term rental assistance, utility assistance, eviction prevention services and other supportive services. This plan will work to increase the economic security of low-income people by improving access to mainstream benefits (TANF, Medicaid, SSI) and job readiness services, as well as develop new systems to improve and better track the efficiency of the program and the dollars spent. Lastly, this plan will work to improve prevention services including case management, and working with the schools and landlords.

The cost of being homeless can be quite high. Because homeless people have no regular place to stay, people who are homeless use a variety of public systems in an inefficient and costly way. It often seems that placing homeless people in shelters, while not the most desirable course is at least the most inexpensive way of meeting basic needs this is deceptive. While emergency shelter care is sometimes necessary for short-term crisis, it is a costly alternative to permanent housing. The cost of an emergency shelter bed funded by HUD's Emergency Shelter Grants program is approximately \$8,067, which is more than the average annual cost of a federal housing subsidy (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006).

Goal #2

Provide temporary shelter, alternative housing and supportive services for those who are temporarily homeless until permanent housing is available

The temporarily homeless are those who experience an acute homeless episode or have intermittent periods in which they need housing assistance and/or supportive services. With support, these individuals and families are often able to move back quickly to a stable and self-supported living arrangement. Given the critical nature of their need, the temporarily homeless may also need short-term shelter services. This goal also focuses on the strategic management of shelter beds along with the development of overflow resources to ensure that emergency shelter services are available when they are most needed, including during severe weather.

When immediate permanent housing is not available, a need for interim housing options is essential. An increase in the number of interim housing beds is needed for individuals and families and could include the utilization of hotels and/or motels, particularly for homeless families. Additionally, interim housing should include comprehensive case management and supportive services.

Goal #3

Provide permanent housing with supportive services to meet the long-term needs of homeless individuals

This plan seeks to move homeless individuals and families into permanent supportive housing as quickly as possible. Permanent housing is a critical component to ensure stability and ready access to services, transportation, employment and education. The supportive component seeks to better align services with housing, currently two functions that are often separate. Aligning services with housing will not recreate existing services furthering the strain on resources but rather partner them together more efficiently through collaboration with faith based, nonprofit, public and business organizations. The Jefferson County Plan has a three part strategy for impacting homelessness which includes the provision of permanent housing, responsive wrap-around services with case management, and effective outreach that is aimed at helping to identify and connect these individuals with needed services and housing.

Goal #4

Increase Economic Opportunities for Homeless People

Caught in the cycle of poverty, Jefferson County's unemployed and underemployed homeless citizens are struggling. Many have multiple barriers that make it difficult to find or keep a job. They may be coping with past or present addictions, mental health issues, and physical disabilities in addition to a lack of stable housing. They may also begin their search for employment with low skill levels, low education attainment, poor work history and for many, a criminal record. Unfortunately securing a job may not mean the end to their homelessness. Many homeless citizens of Jefferson County are working. According the 2012 Point in Time (PIT) survey, 41% of Jefferson County homeless households were working. They just do not make enough money to afford housing. We must provide job training, educational opportunities and support services that lead to "living wage" jobs which are essential to moving families out of homelessness.

Goal #5

Implement effective governance and staffing structure

Plans of this nature are difficult to implement and require support from a number of people and institutions in order to be successful. Implementation of Jefferson County's Plan requires the development of a governance structure that will ensure the successful implementation of the various strategic efforts outlined in the plan. This includes coordination and oversight of plan efforts, the strategic allocation of resources, review and refinement of plan contents, implementation of a project evaluation, and the development of resources needed for plan activities.

Goal #6

Promote public awareness and advocacy

It is critical that the citizens of Jefferson County stay fully informed about the changing nature of homelessness in Jefferson County as well as efforts and successes related to the implementation of this plan. This helps to maintain public confidence in the use of plan resources and provides avenues for greater public participation. The plan developers recognize that they cannot fully solve the problem of homelessness on their own and that success requires participation from a variety of sectors including nonprofits, faith-based organizations, businesses, the larger community, and the homeless population. The community awareness and advocacy efforts outlined in this goal are designed to galvanize relevant sectors in Jefferson County to ensure the plan receives ongoing community support. It is the intent of this plan to create ongoing community support through public engagement with creative and innovative new partnerships.

Goal #7

Develop systems to support efficient and effective plan implementation

The plan will build upon past planning efforts, as well as new partnerships, to significantly decrease homelessness in Jefferson County and all encompassing cities. Implementation of this plan will require the creation of new strategies focusing on a holistic approach to address the needs of the whole individual as well as the family. Addressing homelessness in Jefferson County will require support from human service agencies, county and city officials, faith-based organizations, the business community, and private citizens. There is much that can be done through existing resources and collaboration by enacting improvements in their efficiency, effectiveness, and coordination. Improvement will be accomplished through streamlining and increasing access to public benefits, education, behavioral health system, affordable housing, transportation, needed services and job training. Key objectives under this goal are to support better information exchange, improve the collaborative efforts to coordinate services, and to develop and implement a prevention and tracking model in order to provide real opportunities for self-sufficiency among our homeless population.

Objectives and Strategies

Goal #1

Prevent people from becoming homeless

Until enough affordable housing is available other strategies are critical to “closing the front door,” or eliminating the possibility of youth, adults and families who may fall into homelessness. The approach to prevention is three pronged:

- Emergency financial assistance
- Service interventions
- Systems coordination

Objective 1 - Provide immediate financial interventions to avoid eviction/foreclosure.

Strategy 1.1.1 Increase funding available in the county for emergency rental/mortgage/utility and other financial assistance by \$1.1 million* (based on 2011 PIT count, number of people who indicated they were homeless because they could not pay their rent multiplied by the total household assistance needed to prevent eviction under government funded programs).

Action step 1: Identify amount of emergency financial assistance currently available.

Action step 2: Identify and apply for additional resources.

Strategy 1.1.2 Provide rent/mortgage/utility and other financial assistance to prevent eviction for those at 0-50% of Area Median Income

Action step 1: Strengthen the coordination and referral process between agencies serving those at-risk of homelessness.

Action step 2: Develop and formalize a coordinated assessment process.

Strategy 1.1.3 Improve access to all public benefits for at-risk households.

Action step 1: Work with key players in the public and private sector to ensure there is “No Wrong Door” to gain access to benefits/ services.

Action step 2: Ensure coordinated assessment process identifies the need for public benefits.

Action step 3: Provide community-based services sites to access public benefits.

Action step 4: Develop a working group of local service providers and public benefits programs to work toward eliminating barriers to accessing benefits/services for those at-risk of homelessness including victims of domestic violence, youth aging out of foster care and individuals being released from correctional facilities.

Action step 5: Work to eliminate the “cliff effect” where by mainstream benefits are eliminated prior to households reaching financial stability.

Children experiencing homelessness are sick 4 times more often than other children and go hungry at twice the rate of other children. By age 12, 83% have been exposed to at least one serious violent event. Nationally 75% of homeless children perform below grade level in reading, 72% perform below grade level in spelling, and 54% perform below grade level in math (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006).

Strategy 1.1.4 Research the feasibility of a One Stop Resource Center.

Action step 1: Explore each option for possible One Stop:

- Kiosk-staffed or virtual, representing all services.
- Co-located agencies providing services in the same location, such as Metro Community Provider Network and Jefferson Center for Mental Health.

- A self-sustaining donated space that houses multiple agencies, such as a shelter that also serves as a One Stop.

Objective 2 - Provide immediate service interventions to avoid eviction/foreclosure.

Strategy 1.2.1 Provide necessary and comprehensive case management services to those at-risk of homelessness.

Strategy 1.2.2 Develop landlord relationships

Action step 1: Develop effective tenant/landlord collaboration including educational programs, mediation options including early lease termination, and waivers for rental applications, deposits and move in fees.

Action step 2: Identify and recruit client/community minded landlords. Work with them to accept tenants with criminal and poor credit backgrounds.

Strategy 1.2.3 Partner with school system to identify those families that are at-risk of homelessness.

Action step 1: Coordinate services with Homeless Liaisons.

Objective 3- Increase the supply of affordable housing:

Strategy 1.3.1 Educate funders, local government (zoning) and the community about the need for affordable housing.

Strategy 1.3.2 Work closely with developers to ensure the availability of supportive services for clients housed in their completed projects.

Strategy 1.3.3 Seek and support additional rental housing subsidies through federal, state, local, and private sources.

Strategy 1.3.4 Work with regional, state and local government to expand low-cost capital for new construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing

Strategy 1.3.5 Develop a list of affordable housing stock throughout the county.
-Location, 30-50% AMI, Bedrooms, etc.

Strategy 1.3.6 Increase service-enriched housing by co-locating or connecting services with affordable housing.

Goal #2

Provide temporary shelter, alternative housing, and supportive services for those who are temporarily homeless until permanent housing is available

This goal focuses on the provision of appropriate housing and supportive services to temporarily homeless individuals and families with an eye toward self-sufficiency and long-term sustainability. The county currently has in place a very limited supply of housing options for the homeless (see table below), but these are not adequate to meet current needs. As determined in the 2012 Point in Time, on any given night in Jefferson County there are over 1,400 homeless individuals.

It is recognized that many temporary homeless individuals and families experience an acute episode of homelessness due to major life events, such as a loss of job or a change in a significant relationship. Emergency shelter services are effective in meeting these short-term needs, but it is also critical that other, more permanent options, as well as social and economic services, are made available to help these individuals and families become self-sufficient.

Homeless Shelters

Agency	Location	Program	Population	Beds/Units
Family Tree	Lakewood	Gemini	Teens	2
Family Tree	Jefferson County- Undisclosed Address	Women in Crisis	Victims of Domestic Violence	30
The Action Center	Lakewood	Shelter Program	Families, Couples, Individuals	22
Family Promise of Greater Denver	Jefferson County – Scattered Site using area churches	Shelter Program	Families	15

Note: Many homeless people use motels along West Colfax Avenue as temporary shelter in Jefferson County due to the lack of shelter beds.

Transitional Housing

Agency	Location	Population	Beds/Units
Colorado Homeless Families	Arvada	Families	42
Stride	Scattered Sites	Families	26

Transitional housing is time-limited housing provided for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Case management and rental subsidies are provided to assist households to move from shelter to transitional housing to permanent housing.

Because of the limited funding for transitional housing and HUD’s funding focuses have changed significantly, this plan will emphasize emergency shelter and permanent housing.

Severe Weather Motel Voucher Program

Agency	Location	Program	Population	Beds/Units
Heading Home	Various Non-Profit, County Government and Faith-Based Partners	Severe Weather Voucher Program	Single Individuals, Couples and Families	Motel rooms as available

Currently, Jefferson County relies upon congregations’ and citizens’ donations of funding to the Severe Weather Fund through Heading Home. Community providers, local law enforcement and other selected sites are asked to distribute the severe weather vouchers during inclement weather. It is necessary to mobilize a more effective and fiscally responsible plan to better utilize existing community resources to address this community emergency.

Objective 1 - Create an Emergency Response to those who are temporarily homeless in Jefferson County

Strategy 2.1.1 Continue to provide the existing 69 shelter beds within the 3 agencies already providing housing in the county.

Action Step 1: Assess if any of the existing shelter beds are at-risk and know the status of each program.

Action: Step 2: Determine what future plans exist for each program (i.e.do they have any plans to change, upcoming program development).

Strategy 2.1.2 Increase the number of emergency shelter and/or transitional housing beds by a minimum of 50 (based on need shown in most recent PIT) in order to meet the demand in our county.

Action Step 1: Begin exploratory discussions about a temporary day shelter

Action Step 2: Determine demographics of who is actually on the streets (this may require additional funding for additional research).

Action Step 3: Determine through Heading Home what the priority subsets are within the homeless population.

Action Step 4: Consider approaching faith based partnerships about opening up emergency shelter for those who are temporarily homeless.

Objective 2 - Ensure effective use of shelter services

Strategy 2.2.1 Utilize data and streamline reporting methods to monitor shelter availability county-wide.

Strategy 2.2.2 Formalize a process for agencies to utilize to share accurate and current information regarding shelter programming, to ensure quality referrals.

Strategy 2.2.3 Shorten the length of time people have to stay in shelters.

Action 1: Develop baseline in Jefferson County to determine the average length of time people stay in shelter currently.

Objective 3 - Severe Weather Response

Strategy 2.3.1 Continue to provide temporary motel vouchers for individuals not otherwise sheltered on severe weather nights.

Action Step 1: Develop a school-based community project to provide voucher recipients with food and hygiene kits.

Action Step 2: Utilize and maintain a community resource brochure to be given out with vouchers to better connect individuals with area services.

Action Step 3: Seek out alternatives to the Severe Weather voucher system that would utilize existing community resources more effectively.

Strategy 2.3.2 Provide case management and referrals to recipients of motel vouchers.

Objective 4 - To Develop a Severe Weather Solution

Strategies 2.4.1 Create an Emergency Response System in Jefferson County.

Action step 1: Locate a severe weather motel in South Jefferson County.

Action step 2: Develop our Faith Based partners to provide shelter, volunteers and participate in the Severe Weather program across the entire county.

Action step 3: Create more relationships with other motels for severe weather.

Action step 4: Combine efforts of the community, businesses and civic leaders to partner with faith community for an emergency response.

Action step 5: Look into permanent day shelter sites.

Action step 6: Develop case manager job description.

According to a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (2006) homeless people spent an average of four days longer per hospital visit than did comparable non-homeless people. This extra cost, approximately \$2,414 per hospitalization, is attributable to homelessness.

Objective 5 - Enhance supportive services provided within temporary housing and permanent housing programs

Strategy 2.5.1 Provide intensive case management, supportive emergency services, and follow-up care to individuals as they move from immediate crisis to self-sufficiency.

Strategy 2.5.2 Secure funding to support supportive wrap-around services.

Strategy 2.5.3 Work collaboratively to ensure that there is full knowledge and utilization of emergency and supportive services throughout the community.

Action Step 1: Develop a formalized intake process and community partner agreement to support the wrap-around services provided through the pilot project of the Community Collaboration Committee.

Goal #3

Provide permanent housing with supportive services to meet the long-term needs of homeless individuals

To effectively address permanent housing needs, Jefferson County will adopt and support the Housing First model which places emphasis on providing homeless people with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. By embracing the Housing First model, the County hopes to achieve a more lasting impact on the homeless population, leading to greater stability and a more appropriate use of County services. This movement toward a Housing First model, however, will not occur quickly. Without immediate access to financing required for the development of additional Housing First units, the County will need to slowly transition over to the model as resources become available. As with other housing programs the County will need to strategically increase the available inventory for workforce/affordable housing to support the Housing First model.

Objective 1 - Provide effective outreach to those living on the streets

Strategy 3.1.1 Provide street outreach services in the cities during the winter months

Action Step 1: Examine the capacity needs for outreach efforts and expand the number of workers to meet this demand

Action Step 2: Create and deliver basic training for outreach volunteers, library employees, law enforcement, and other frontline service providers and provide information to the business and broader communities about outreach efforts and ways to access services

Action Step 3: Increase collaboration with public safety officials and first responders, including the provision of education and training services, to increase coordination of outreach efforts

According to a University of Texas (2006) two-year survey of homeless individuals, the cost of each person to the taxpayers is \$14,480 per year, primarily for overnight jail incarceration.

Objective 2 - Address existing permanent housing inventory as a means to move individuals out of temporary shelter

Strategy 3.2.1 Expand permanent supportive housing by 1000 units/vouchers over 10 years to meet the needs of the homeless

Action Step 1: Annually conduct a resources and gaps analysis to determine the availability of existing permanent and affordable housing

Action Step 2: Annually identify funding and finance sources as well as developers that can assist with the needed inventory expansion

Objective 3 - Provide supportive services to increase stability of homeless individuals and families through use of the Jefferson County case management networks

Strategy 3.3.1 Develop and utilize various benefit acquisition efforts to ensure that homeless individuals and families are enrolled and receiving all entitlements for which they are eligible.

Action Step 1: Assist homeless individuals and families not eligible for public benefits in accessing mental health, substance abuse, and medical treatment (including dental) services and secure needed resources to support the provision of these services.

Action Step 2: Expand mental health and substance abuse treatment services in conjunction with housing services as reflected in the Housing First model.

Less than one-third of adults and half of children with a diagnosable mental disorder receive any level of treatment in any one year-and the lack of treatment is costly. The annual economic, indirect cost of mental illnesses is estimated to be \$79 billion (Healthcare in America, 2003).

Action Step 3: Collaborate with the various employment agencies to develop an effective referral system targeted to homeless individuals and families. Emphasis should be placed on employment training that aligns with local employment needs and job opportunities.

Action Step 4: Transportation needs should also be considered given the broad geographic nature of Jefferson County and the lack of adequate public transportation in many areas.

Objective 4 - Provide wrap-around services through a collaborative effort for homeless families and individuals with a focus on people who are chronically homeless

Strategy 3.4.1 Develop the current services and process of the Community Collaboration.

Action Step 1: Seek out additional necessary collaborative partners.

Action Step 2: Identify those most in need of services through the severe weather program.

Action Step 3: Provide outreach, assessment and supportive services through the Community Collaboration for chronically homeless families and individuals.

Action Step 4: Seek out funding source to provide additional supportive services to participants in the Community Collaboration.

Action Step 5: Seek out funding source to compensate for coordination and staff time of the Community Collaboration.

Strategy 3.4.2 Expand the Community Collaboration model to all chronically homeless people.

Action Step 1: Develop a referral process to be utilized by agencies and organizations who work with people who are chronically homeless.

Action Step 2: Provide outreach to agencies and organizations who work with people who are chronically homeless.

Action Step 3: Utilize Community Collaboration model developed in Strategy 3.4.1 to serve those referred.

Action Step 4: Expand funding for supportive services.

Action Step 5: Expand funding for Coordination and staff time.

Strategy 3.4.3 Develop a collaborative effort for all people who are homeless.

Action Step 1: Utilize HMIS to share information regarding people who are homeless.

Action Step 2: Replicate Community Collaboration model for all homeless.

GOAL #4

Increase economic opportunity for homeless people

Employment and housing status are critically linked to one another. It is difficult to maintain a steady work schedule without stable housing, and it impossible to achieve stable housing without having regular, adequate income. Providing education, training and jobs for very low income populations is an important component to addressing poverty in general and is essential to enabling them to live independently. The following objectives will address strategies to increase employment opportunities and provide access to educational and training programs.

In Colorado, the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$940. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities-without paying more than 30% of income on housing- a household must earn \$3,200 monthly or \$38,400 annually. A minimum wage worker would need to work 102 hours per week to afford rent (Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013).

Objective 1 - Provide employment, job training and educational assistance to at-risk and homeless individuals

Strategy 4.1.1 Work with Jefferson County Workforce Center, Chambers of Commerce and employers to develop targeted strategies for employment and training for the homeless

Action Step 1: Provide cross-training between housing programs and workforce staff.

Action Step 2: Develop internships/transitional jobs, in partnership with the workforce center, that aligns with local employment needs and opportunities.

Action Step 3: Utilize the Chamber of Commerce to encourage its members to participate in job training and hiring of homeless persons.

Action Step 4: Target area corporations who hire temporary, seasonal employees.

Strategy 4.1.2 Establish partnerships with educational institutions to provide access to trade/vocational opportunities to homeless individuals.

Action Step 1: Provide thorough assessment of academic and vocational development and interests.

Action Step 2: Provide access to remedial or GED classes.

Action Step 3: Pursue work study options.

Action Step 4: Obtain the financial resources to pay for additional costs not covered by financial aid such as books, transportation, and child care.

Strategy 4.1.3 Provide employment focused case management and supportive services.

Action Step 1: Assess barriers to employment; substance abuse, mental health issues, criminal history, etc. and assist with addressing these issues.

Action Step 2: Provide assistance with resumes, job search, filling out applications and interviewing.

Action Step 3: Provide on-going job coaching to those employed.

Action Step 4: Provide employers with on-going access to case manager as situations arise.

Action Step 5: Provide supportive services associated with participant success; transportation, work clothes, counseling, financial/budgeting management.

Goal #5

Implement effective governance and staffing structure

Plans of this nature are difficult to implement and require support from a number of people and institutions in order to be successful. Implementation of Jefferson County's Plan requires the development of a governance structure that will ensure the successful implementation of the various strategic efforts outlined in The Plan. This includes coordination and oversight of plan efforts, the strategic allocation of resources, review and refinement of plan contents, implementation of a project evaluation, and the development of resources needed for plan activities. Given the comprehensiveness of

The Plan and the complex array of strategies, it will be necessary to put in place a multi-tiered governance structure to oversee and guide implementation efforts. In the early stages of implementation, the Children and Youth Leadership Commission will oversee and support the implementation of the prioritized areas in the plan. A Coordinator/Manager will be hired to provide direct management of the implementation strategies coordinating the public, private and community partners. These efforts will be further supported through the ongoing participation of Heading Home members, and expanded to ensure broader community participation. These group members will support ongoing exploration of financing opportunities that can be used to support higher cost items in The Plan, such as the creation of more permanent supportive housing, and addressing collaboration and service gaps. As the years progress, the governance structure will be expanded to include subcommittees that oversee resource allocation, public communications, and plan evaluation.

Objective 1 - Develop leadership groups and supportive committees to ensure effective plan implementation and the development of adaptive changes over time

Strategy 5.1.1 Identify a staff person to oversee the plan's implementation and determine which agency will operate as the lead.

Action Step 1: Utilize the existing Children and Youth Leadership Commission to support the implementation of The Plan.

Action Step 2: Expand the membership of the Heading Home subcommittee and have this group assist with plan implementation and oversight.

Action Step 3: Develop, as needed, sub-committees that focus on fundraising, fund allocation processes, community awareness and plan evaluation.

Goal #6 Promote public awareness and advocacy

The goal of the plan is to end homelessness in Jefferson County. In order to achieve that goal, we must implement this plan. Implementation involves public awareness, advocacy and community support. Public participation is vital.

Objective 1 - Community Awareness and Advocacy

Strategy 6.1.1 Educate the community at large to the needs and extent of the problem of homelessness in Jefferson County.

Action Step 1: Create presentation materials and distribute plan. Update these materials periodically as plan evolves.

Action Step 2: Create a speakers bureau.

Action Step 3: Develop brochures and other informational materials.

Action Step 4: Create and maintain a website.

Action Step 5: Utilize social media.

Action Step 6: Hold public meetings.

Action Step 7: Develop a strategy for media relations and identify a media liaison. Share good news and victories as they occur.

Objective 2 - Community Support and Public Engagement

Strategy 6.2.1 Identify potential partners necessary to implement each plan strategy.

Action Step 1: Ensure that every action step includes identification of needed partners such as business partners, elected officials, subject matter experts, community members, funders, service providers and others.

Strategy 6.2.2 Recruit identified partners necessary to implement each plan strategy.

Strategy 6.3.2 Impact public policy that supports the plan.

Action Step 1: Heading Home will form a position regarding relevant public policy and advocate for that position.

Action Step 2: Encourage citizen support of the plan by providing notification and information about public meetings or hearings related to housing and homelessness.

Goal #7

Develop systems to support efficient and effective plan implementation

The plan will build upon past planning efforts, as well as new partnerships, to significantly decrease homelessness in Jefferson County and encompassing cities. Implementation of this plan will require the creation of new strategies focusing on a holistic approach to address the needs of the whole individual as well as the family. Addressing homelessness in Jefferson County will require support from public family

service agencies; local, county and city officials; the business community and private citizens. There is much that can be done through existing resources by enacting improvements in their efficiency, effectiveness, and coordination. Improvement will be accomplished through streamlining and increasing access to public benefits, education, behavioral health system, affordable housing, transportation, and job training

Objective 1 - Develop a comprehensive and coordinated discharge planning process

Strategy 7.1.1 Develop template for shared release of information form to better serve mutual clients and allow for increased collaboration amongst community providers.

Action Step 1: Develop short-term housing, shelter or motel vouchers to “bridge the gap” between release and service engagement.

Action Step 2: Utilize youth-specific case management to support youth who are aging out of foster care.

Action Step 3: Utilize domestic violence advocates/case managers for individuals exiting domestic violence shelters

Action Step 4: Utilize social worker(s) at health care and correctional facilities to support those exiting the system.

Objective 2 - Develop shared MOU/Information sharing system.

Strategy 7.2.1 Develop a real-time database.

Objective 3 - Centralized intake, coordinated assessments

Strategy 7.3.1 Develop a strategy for service providers to share funding/programs.

Objective 4 - Develop public private partnerships to address employment issues

Conclusion

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

~Margaret Mead

There is a role in ending homelessness for everyone who lives in Jefferson County. Each of us can, and will, find a way, great or small, to contribute our time, money, or expertise over the next decade as we eliminate the need for people to live in cars, campgrounds, dilapidated motels in seedy areas, shelters or overcrowded, doubled up situations. We will work to provide safe, appropriate and affordable housing for every man, woman and child in Jefferson County. The Plan to End Homelessness in Jefferson County is calling for dramatic changes in our approach to preventing homelessness and delivering housing and services to those who experience homelessness. The Plan outlines specific actions that will enable our communities to:

- End homelessness, not manage it.
- Create a leadership structure that facilitates discussion and collaboration among funders, government agencies, housing and service providers, homeless persons, business and faith based leaders and community volunteers to help ensure a unified and targeted approach to ending homelessness.
- Implement practices that research has shown to be particularly effective and promising.
- Focus resources on preventing homelessness and immediately housing those who do experience homelessness prioritizing a Housing First approach that removes barriers to housing and provides on-site services that engage and support individuals and families to maintain their housing stability.
- Ensure a fully coordinated county-wide response at both the client and system level through networking, enhanced community based service sites that offer local access throughout the county to comprehensive assessment, referral and access to a range of culturally competent services.
- Increase housing options that are affordable, available and appropriate to meet the needs the homeless individuals, families and youth.
- Transform the myriad of publically funded programs that provide services, housing and income supports to poor people to make them more accessible, relevant and appropriate for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Bolster the capacity and the responsibility of these service systems for collaborative planning, financing and delivery of housing and support services for clients reentering the community from public institutions.
- Establish clear measures to continually identify needs and assure accountability for outcomes.

This plan is just a starting point. It is a community wide effort to organize our resources and direct them to implementing effective solutions. It is a housing and human services

undertaking of unprecedented proportions. As we learn more about the dynamics of homelessness today and implement successful strategies to meet the broad needs that have been identified, we will map our successes and chart new directions. This plan will be reviewed and revised Heading Home on an annual basis.

Like the abolitionist of old, we are faced with social evil: Our neighbor has no place to live. For how long can we resign ourselves to this disgrace before we stand as Americans to keep the promise-to draft the plans and get the job done: A Home for Every American?

~Philip Mangano