



**May, 2010
Strategic Plan
Annual Review**

The mission of the strategic plan of the City of Rockford Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness is "To significantly reduce chronic homelessness in Winnebago and Boone Counties. We envision our communities to have a significantly low rate of persons without housing and an organized collaborative system to prevent and mitigate homelessness when it does occur."

Attached is a 2010 revision of the Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness Strategic Plan, originally drafted in 2008. This 2010 revision resulted from meetings on February 3 and February 12, 2010 at the City of Rockford Human Services Dept.

The 2010 Annual Review committee included:

Sheryl Head, Chair, Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness

Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness Executive Board Members

Renade Cossey, Director of Women's Programs/Community Outreach, Rockford Rescue Mission

Vikki Noe-Eltvedt , Executive Director, Rockford MELD

Michael English, Community Member

Dave Gomel, Vice President of Adolescent Services, Rosecrance Health Network

Shelton Kay, Director of Community Services, Crusader Community Health

Thomas Jakeway, Deputy Court Administrator, 17th Judicial Court

Cathy Johnson, Housing Director, Shelter Care Ministries

Todd Kisner, Supervisor, Winnebago County Health Dept.

Kay Larrick, Executive Director, The Carpenter's Place

Jon Malone, Director of Student Support, Rockford School District #205

Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness Task Force Members

Cathy Barsema, Director of Guest Services, The Carpenter's Place

Brad Gilbaugh, Shelter Plus Care Program Coordinator, Janet Wattles Health Center

Steve Haight, Executive Director, Careers, etc.

Eugene Lawson, Faith Walkers Assembly

Danice Loveridge, Boone County Homeless Project

Connie Marquis, Social Service Director, Salvation Army

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City of Rockford Staff

Owen Carter, CSBG Program Coordinator, Human Services Dept.

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Contents

Data sources

Point in Time (PIT) count 2010

Demographic Profile of Persons who are homeless

The Plan

Prevention

- Safety Net

- Landlord/Tenant Education

Outreach

- Educate Community Leaders about the impact of homelessness

- Educate staff of non-continuum agencies, community organizations and faith based organizations about homelessness

- Engage persons who are chronically homeless into services and housing

Rapid Rehousing/Shorten Homelessness

- Identification of affordable housing options and creation of a plan for and adequate number of units

Systems Prevention

- Prevent patients of health care facilities from being discharged into homelessness

- Ensure no individuals released from the Winnebago County or BooneCounty jails are discharged into homelessness

- Establish a point of referral and screening for individuals being released from the IL Dept. of Corrections

- Ensure that no one is discharged into homelessness from Singer Mental Health Center

- Prevent foster youth aging out of foster care from entering homelessness

Supportive Services

- Identify current services in community for persons who are homeless

- Identifying service gaps

- Filling service gaps

- Increase the awareness of post high school education systems in our target communities

- Increase access to federal, state and local benefits by persons who are homeless to meet cost of living level

Housing

- Expedite entry processes for housing options

- Develop 750 new affordable permanent housing units over the next ten years

- Develop a safe haven housing facility for persons who are chronically homeless with ten units and expanding to 120

- Increase the number of Shelter Plus Care units by 3 to 5 per year

- Develop at least 250 permanent and transitional housing units for families with children over the next ten years

- Reduce barriers to housing for persons with specialized housing needs

Plan implementation

Additional Comments

I. Data Sources

Data on homelessness in Winnebago County and Boone County are derived primarily from the Winnebago/Boone County Homeless 2010 Point in Time (PIT). The PIT census of individuals who are homeless was conducted, including a street count in January 2010 plus head-counts from all shelters, transitional housing and other relevant institutions that housed persons who are homeless. The count was coordinated by efforts of the Human Services Department, which enlisted community and agency volunteers.

The purpose of providing data on persons who are homeless and their needs is to provide a factual basis upon which to determine priorities in taking action to reduce homelessness and provide stable housing. It should be understood, however, that there can be no hard and fast proclamation about the profile of the homeless population or their needs based upon the available data. This is so for several reasons. Fundamentally, counting persons who are homeless is difficult. In the PIT census, significant barriers were encountered in enumerating certain subpopulations:

- Youth who are homeless due to their inherent elusiveness as well as privacy issues that protect them,
- Families who are homeless are often out of public view, doubled up with friends,
- Some homeless who are employed who do not get counted because they are at work,
- Those who live in rural areas, and
- Those who live in places not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation because of access barriers (i.e. camps, abandoned buildings, parks, etc.)

The needs assessment was given primarily but not limited to those who access homeless services. But homeless research indicates that many persons who are homeless in the service areas cannot easily be recognized as such; many are employed, many stay with family or friends, many are functioning members of society who have not been able to secure affordable housing. Consequently, the PIT count does not totally represent all homeless experiences but tends to represent the abjectly poor or street homeless that access services, resulting in under-representation of a potentially large segment with unique needs.

A further difficulty is that the situations of those who are homeless are in flux. Service needs change; one week a person may be living in a vehicle, the next in a shelter, then with a friend, and back to a vehicle. Also, the homeless population in Winnebago County and Boone County is transient.

What can be said is that the data and survey results provide a well-defined shadow of the homeless population; the outline is clear, but not the figures casting it.

In addition to relying on local data to develop this plan, the task force accessed ten-year plans created by other communities, recommendations and data from the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the Interagency Council on Homelessness.

II. PIT Summary 2010

As part of the requirements for receiving federal grants through HUD, communities throughout the country are required to provide a reliable and realistic count of the number of homeless people in their service areas. The count helps communities, including ours, in the following areas:

- Provide an unduplicated count of homeless persons in our community
- Identify characteristics of the homeless
- Identify services needed by homeless persons
- Provide data to identify gaps in programs and services for homeless persons
- Provide demographic information
- Provide a means for evaluating the progress made by our community in its response to homelessness
- Obtain new data for strategic planning to reduce and eventually eliminate homelessness

On January 27, 2010, during a 24-hour period, the City of Rockford, in conjunction with the Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness, conducted a Point in Time count of homeless individuals and families in our community. Participating agencies conduct a brief paper survey with consenting homeless persons to capture data such as basic demographics, characteristics, and length of homelessness. The following chart estimates the number of homeless persons per category gathered from the count and compared with prior counts.

	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
Families	125	14	139
Individuals in Families	237	26	263
Individuals	168	162	330

Counting the homeless in our community is a very complex task. Unfortunately, the count encompasses a count of those who are homeless and who sought assistance on the day selected to conduct the Point in Time Count. We expect future counts to be nearer to the actual number of homeless as those who are "active" in the system and who are not housed will be included in our HMIS. That data will then be drawn to illustrate the problem of homelessness in Winnebago and Boone Counties. While we did count 469 persons who were homeless on that day, we estimate the number to be near 2000 on any given day. Of those who were counted, 264 individuals were identified as chronically homeless.

III. Demographic Profile of Persons Who Are Homeless

The Point in Time Count of 2010 gives the community an idea of the demographics and characteristics of persons who are homeless in our community. The majority of persons who are homeless are male (59%). The same percentage (39%) of persons who are homeless report having a high school education. Eleven percent (11%) of persons who are homeless in our community are currently employed. Approximately 60% of the homeless who were counted have an annual income of \$5000 or less.

Not surprisingly, persons who are homeless in our community face some serious issues on a daily basis. 39% of persons who are homeless reported being diagnosed with a mental illness while 52% have been diagnosed with a substance abuse disorder. Veterans make up 9% of persons who are homeless while 26% report being a victim of domestic violence.

IV. The Plan

1. PREVENTION - The focus of prevention is those actions that keep people from entering the homeless population

1.a. Strategy: Safety Net

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion /Comments
Utilize financial assistance to stabilize housing	Financial assistance alleviates crisis resulting in housing stability	100% of homeless prevention funds are utilized to stabilize housing for six months or greater. Reportable through Rockstat and Human Services Dept.	June, 2009 2010	Chair, Homeless Provider's Group	What programs other than HPRP can stabilize clients for more than 6 months that are long term, which HPRP is not?
Provide training about trauma and informed services such as domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and mental health issues to CoC agencies.	Persons experiencing trauma are linked with organizations that can provide ongoing counseling support to address issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, etc. to enhance stability.	Completion of an annual training on trauma and informed services with at least 80% participation from CoC members.	June, 2009 Dec. 2010 Training to be provide on an annual basis by the end of May Dec. 2010.	Chair, Homeless provider's Committee Chair, Member Services Committee.	
Refer to job readiness training, and resources.	Increased # of clients employed	Annual Progress Report	Dec. 2011	Chair, Homeless Providers Group	
Increase childcare options for homeless families	Increase number of homeless children 0-5yrs in childcare	Full enrollments in Early Head Start and Head Start	June 2011	Chair, Homeless Providers Group	
Increase transportation options - Assure Task Force representation on the RMAP	A minimum of 3 reps from the task force	At least 3 people attending and engaged	March 2010	Homeless Task Force	

1.b. Strategy: Landlord/Tenant Education

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Encourage and promote awareness of landlord eviction and foreclosure issues.	Community members are better prepared to deal with potential housing loss by being aware of their rights	First media outreach Plan and timeline for other media	Completed by July, 2009 Sept. 2010 Developed by March, 2009 2010	Chair, Public Relations Committee	
Explore pro-bono legal opportunities.	Providers are better prepared to address concerns of citizens who request assistance with these issues	Service providers complete training.	Bi-annually beginning in March, 2009	Chair, Member Services Committee and Prairie State Legal Services	
In order to make appropriate referrals, educate, etc. law enforcement authorities about landlord/tenant and foreclosure laws.	Law enforcement authorities are more knowledgeable about these civil laws and are better prepared to address concerns of citizens who request assistance with these issues	Law Enforcement agencies complete training.	Bi-annually beginning in March, 2009	Chair, Member Services Committee & Prairie State Legal Services	Fair Housing Board is addressing?

2. OUTREACH - Means by which to engage the homeless into entering services

2.a. Strategy: Educate community leaders about the impact of homelessness

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Marketing campaign is implemented that communicates homeless facts	Community demonstrates better understanding of homelessness	Campaign implemented and continued quarterly - saturation	June 2009 and ongoing	TF Chair, PR Committee	
Hold roundtable with community leaders to educate them on the cost of street/shelter homelessness vs. permanent housing	Community leaders have better understanding of homelessness	Forums Held	Annually when legislature is out of session	TF Chair, PR Committee and MHTF Executive Board	

2.b. Strategy: Educate Staff of non-continuum agencies, community organizations and faith based organizations about homelessness

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Hold education sessions with the goal of dispelling myths about the homeless	Promote better understanding of homelessness	Presentations occur	2 nd quarter, 2009 2010	TF Chair PR Committee	

2.c. Strategy: Engage persons who are chronically homeless into services and housing

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Obtain accurate data on number of chronic homeless not linked to services	Accurate number of chronically homeless is obtained	Data/count is completed annually	Quarterly, starting 2010	TF Chair Homeless Providers	
Identify and study other communities best outreach practices	Outreach plan is developed	Appropriate materials are researched, obtained and shared. Method is determined	By June 2010	TF Chair, Homeless Providers	
Increase and improve housing options in historically low-income neighborhoods. Look at housing reclamation programs in other cities such as Detroit (Blight Busters, etc.)	Existing housing that is substandard but salvageable is brought back to standards and rented at more affordable rates	Compare blighted housing pre and post implementation. Track demos, board-ups, reports to neighborhood standards etc.	November, 2009 2010	Community Housing Development Entities	

3. RAPID REHOUSING/SHORTEN HOMELESSNESS – Processes and resources that shorten the amount of time an individual or family is homeless

3.a. Strategy: Identification of Affordable Housing Options and Creation of a Plan for an Adequate Number of Units

Action Step:	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Convene all entities working with local housing service programs	Assess all local housing options available and affordable to households at low and very low incomes, based on household size	Production of documentation of all housing options for households at low and very low income levels and how to access	January, 2009 Complete?	TF Chair, Housing Committee	
Create a standing committee to develop materials to educate public on housing needs and options	Public demonstrates knowledge by accessing affordable housing identified by committee. Fewer calls are placed to crisis or emergency housing services	Compare number of calls to housing assistance agencies (Rkfd Area Affordable Housing Coalition, City of Rkfd Dept. of Human Services, Rockford Housing Authority, Shelter Care etc.) prior to establishing information with numbers post implementation	May, 2009 Aug. 2010	Chair, Housing Committee PR committee	
Apply for Rapid Rehousing funds when available	Funding obtained	Application completed	August, 2009 Completed	Chair, Housing Committee, Applying Agency, City staff	

4. SYSTEMS PREVENTION - Identifies changes needed in systems to address homelessness

4.a. Strategy: Prevent patients of health care facilities from being discharged into homelessness

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Establish contacts with healthcare facilities leadership to clarify issue	Hospitals are aware and buy into plan	Leadership at all area hospitals commits to process	March 2010	Task Force Chair	
Utilize and improve Crusader Health Care for the Homeless discharge planning	Model implemented for each hospital	Process in place for inpatient / ER	January, 2010 2010	Discharge Committee, TF Chair, Crusader rep	
Provide health care facilities the information necessary to ensure patients are discharged to housing	Patients are no longer discharged into homelessness	100% of at risk patients at area hospitals are discharged to housing	January, 2012	Discharge Committee	

4.b. Strategy: Ensure no individuals released from the Winnebago County or Boone County jails are discharged into homelessness

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Utilize Alternative Program Model as a model for other individuals to identify intervention strategies to assess the risk of homelessness	All jailed persons at risk of homelessness receive intervention services prior to release	Homeless prevention services offered to 100% of persons identified as at risk for homelessness	July, 2010	Exec Com	
Assist jail to develop a program to identify homelessness in individual entering the jail	Jail staff are trained in assessing homelessness	Policies and Procedures regarding release of inmates is implemented.	July, 2009	Exec Committee and Jail staff	
Establish a link within the homeless task force to allow for referrals of persons being released from jail who are at risk of homelessness to the appropriate agency for assistance	Jail staff have single point of contact regarding the release of inmates at risk of homelessness	Contact agency/person identified and jail informed	July, 2009	Exec Com	Identify agency?

4.c. Strategy: Establish a point of referral and screening for individuals being released from the Illinois Department of Corrections (DOC)

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Advocate with DOC for improved communication between DOC and homeless prevention programs	Fewer DOC parolees who enter the community homeless	Criterion established for community acceptance of homeless DOC release	August, 2009	TF Chair, Systems Prevention Committee	
Establish expedited method of obtaining identification and benefits for persons released from DOC	Parolees remain homeless for less time due to identification and benefits issues	Obtain baseline Time spent homeless decreased by 50% as reported on the point in time	February, 2009 February, 2010	TF Chair, Systems Prevention Committee	
Determine status of DOC transition workgroup and contact person from DOC for linkage	DOC contacts are integrated into system	DOC linkage identified and protocol established	November, 2008 July, 2009	TF Chair, Systems Prevention Committee	
Ensure DOC identifies needs for linkage with health care providers and include treatment facility in prison as part of the linkage process	DOC treatment centers provide information to community healthcare providers	95% of persons have information provided to community healthcare provider	July, 2009	TF Chair, Systems Prevention Committee	

4.d. Strategy: Ensure that no one is discharged to homelessness from Singer Mental Health Center

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Implement pilot program with DHS/Singer/RHA and City of Rockford Human Services to ensure housing for persons being discharged	Bridge subsidy program funded and implemented	Access to funds for 1 st person on list	January, 2009	Janet Wattles	
Strengthen pre discharge linkage with persons at risk of homelessness and mental health provider	Formal agreement between Janet Wattles and Singer Mental Health Center	Agreement established and operational	December , 2008	Designated Singer rep Janet Wattles	
Establish housing resource for persons discharged on short notice (i.e. discharged by civil court, don't meet criteria for certification)	Mental health patients discharged on short notice are provided temporary housing	Decrease homeless discharges by 10% per year	July, 2009	Designated Singer rep Janet Wattles	
Obtain state identification prior to discharge, initiate benefit application prior to discharge	DMH Continuum of Care functions appropriately	State ID obtained and benefits application complete 90%	July, 2010	Designated Singer rep Janet Wattles	

4.e. Strategy: Prevent foster youth aging out of foster care from entering homelessness

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Establish baseline number of foster youth aging out and number already linked to transitional programs	Better understanding of issue	Baseline protocol agreed with DCFS Baseline complete	January, 2009 July, 2009	DCFS YAP Program	
Provide support and resources to DCFS transitional agencies with housing options and homeless education	Youth in transitional programs enter appropriate housing	95% of youth in transitional programs enter appropriate housing	July, 2011	DCFS YAP Program	

5. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES - Focuses on the provision of a broad range of support services, all of which are key to reducing the incidence of homelessness.

5.a. Strategy: Identify Current Services in Community for Persons who are Homeless

Action Step	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion Comments
Inventory support services currently available through agency questionnaire	Survey completed	100% of agencies surveyed respond	Dec, 2008	MHTF Supportive Services Com and agency execs	Completed?
Compile survey results	Survey compiled	All results compiled into one document	June, 2009	MHTF Supportive Services Committee	Completed?
Create and produce comprehensive supportive services document	Document produced	Document available to all agencies either paper or electronic	July, 2009	MHTF Supportive Services Committee	Completed?
Maintain and update document	Updated bi-annually	Document will be updated every January and June	Annually, beginning July, 2009	MHTF Ad Hoc Committee	

5.b. Strategy: Identifying Service Gaps

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Develop and complete questionnaire to be given to all agencies to identify service gaps	Survey completed	At least 10 surveys will be completed per agency surveyed	Dec, 2008	TF Chair, Supportive Services Committee	Completed?
Compile survey results and identify gaps	Gaps analysis completed	All surveys compiled into one document	June, 2009	TF Chair, MHTF Supportive Services Committee	Completed?
Make results public and work with public resources to fill gaps	New services developed as needed	At least 2 of the 3 media (radio, TV, newspaper) would carry a story	July, 2009	TF Chair, Supportive Services Committee	
survey clients about gaps in services	Expected 40% of agency clients surveyed	100% of the expected surveyed	July 2010	Supportive Services Committee	

5.c. Strategy: Filling Service Gaps

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Identify organizations as identified in gap analysis	Organizations identified	Appropriate organizations contacted participation gained	January 2011 and ongoing	Supportive Services Committee	
Seek funding as gap analysis indicates funding	Alternative funding resources secured	5 other CoC in Illinois will be contacted Internet Search Completed	April 2011	Supportive Services Committee	

5.d. Strategy: Increase the awareness of post high school education systems in our target communities

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
<p>Educating the Task Force members regarding the educational opportunities available in the community. Executive Committee meets with those identified educational institutions to determine their resources to address the needs of our population</p> <p>Develop a datgbase of organizations available to address these education needs.</p>					PLAN?

5.e. Strategy: Increase access to federal, state and local benefits by persons who are homeless to meet cost of living level.

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Increase engagement in benefits counseling through outreach efforts	30% more homeless are enrolled in public benefits	Annual report to the task force	Next PIT	Funded CoC Agencies through APRs	

6. HOUSING - Strategies to maintain and expand a full continuum of affordable housing options

6.a. Strategy: Expedite entry processes for housing options

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Create ombudsmen/advocates who can assist in completing paperwork	Paperwork is processed in a timely manner	Maintain stats on time of application process those applicants using this assistance and success rate of accessing housing	October, 2009	Housing Authorities	
Streamline application process using HMIS	Paperwork is processed in a timely manner	Monitor and track use of HMIS tool for housing applications	March, 2009	Agency Representatives	
Explore lowering barriers for specialized housing needs including ex-offenders	Specialized populations have housing needs met	Track outcome of applications of special populations	October, 2009	TF Chair, Systems Prevention Committee	

6.b. Strategy: Develop 750 New Affordable Permanent Housing units over the next ten years

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion Comments
Promote concept to elected officials	Committee meets with appropriate officials and obtains support	Support increased	Annually, beginning 2010	Chair, Housing Committee	
Develop Location(s)	Location(s) secured	Locations selected	0-24 months	Developer and MHTF	
Determine partners and target population	Partners and population selected	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	0-24 months	Developer and MHTF	
Apply for funding	Funding secured	Grant awarded	24-36 months	Developer	

6.c. Strategy: Develop a Safe Haven housing facility for persons who are chronically homeless with ten units and expanding to 120.

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Research the Safe Haven concepts where successful.		Present analysis to ?		Executive committee	

6.d. Strategy: Increase the number of Shelter Plus Care units by 3 to 5 per year

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Include 10 units per year in CoC application	Units awarded	Units awarded	Annually	Janet Wattles	
Promote program to agencies serving disabled populations	Increased use of Shelter Plus Care by other populations	Increased use of Shelter plus Care by other populations	2010	MTFH	

6.e. Strategy: Develop at least 250 permanent and transitional housing units for families with children over the next ten years

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Determine applicant agency(s)	Agency(s) identified	Agency(s) identified	June, 2010	Exec Board	
Select sites	Sites selected	Sites selected	May, 2010	Exec Board	
Secure funding	Funding secured	Funding secured	January, 2011	Exec Board	
Implement program(s)	Programs implemented	Programs implemented	30 days after funding announcement	Exec Board	

6.f. Strategy: Reduce barriers to housing for persons with specialized housing needs

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Identify populations with special housing needs	Special populations identified	At least three special populations identified	February 2010	Systems prevention committee	
Identify barriers	Barriers identified	Barrier report created	February 2010	TF Chair, Housing Committee	
Create plan to address barriers	Recommendations to MTFH executive board	Plan approved	Presented March, 2010	TF Chair, Housing Committee	

V. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter and its recommended action steps focus on ensuring the work of the ten-year plan progresses.

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Analyze performance of outcomes and determine cost of performing this function	Analysis of performance and of system completed	Written document produced annually outlining performance of each initiative	Annually	HS	

Strategy: Create Stakeholders Group for annual review of progress, outcomes, and to amend plan as needed

Action Steps	Outcome	Measurement	Timeline	Responsible	Completion/Comments
Convene initial/launch meeting and press conference	Mtg held, press generated	Meeting scheduled, held and press generated	3-6 months	HS	

IV. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

In discussions, safety of persons who are homeless and the safety of those who serve them were raised as an issue. Ideas were suggested such as creating a “safe zone”, working with law enforcement on crimes against persons who are homeless, and training providers of services on personal safety. While recognizing this as an issue, it is not comprehensive enough to qualify as a strategic focus area. It is the recommendation of the ten-year plan committee that this issue be sent to the Homeless Providers Committee for review and action.