

RHISCO Project

Pickaway County Continuum of Care

Ten-Year Plan to end Homelessness

Introduction

The mission of the Pickaway County Continuum of Care Committee (PCCOC) is to end chronic homelessness through collaboration of services with other agencies, programs and faith based organizations to provide outreach, supportive housing programs and other resources to the homeless and at-risk homeless population of Pickaway County.

The ten-year plan was developed to provide a strategic method to end homelessness in Pickaway County by identifying and providing preventive services to at-risk individuals and families. This will be accomplished by providing housing first with wrap-around supportive services.

The plan focuses on providing long-term solutions with permanent affordable housing options.

Background

In 2001, Pickaway County formed a Continuum of Care Committee (CoC) to bring together service providers that specifically address the needs of the homeless population. The CoC identified the current resources available to the homeless and who provides those resources. The CoC identified gaps in services and what must be done to fill that gap. There are many reasons that people become homeless and the combination of factors that leads to homelessness is different for every person.

Homelessness

Twenty-five years ago there was not widespread homelessness in America. Tonight approximately 750,000 men, women and children will be homeless, despite a two billion dollar a year infrastructure designed to deal with the problem.

While the seeds of homelessness were planted in the 1960s and 1970s with deinstitutionalization of people living with mental illness and loss of affordable housing stock, widespread homelessness did not emerge until the 1980s. Several factors have affected its growth over the last two decades. Housing has become scarcer for those with little money. Earnings from employment and from benefits have not kept pace with the cost of housing for low income and poor people. Services that every family needs for support and stability have become harder for very poor people to afford or find.

In addition to these systemic causes, social changes have exacerbated the personal problems of many poor Americans, leading them to be more vulnerable to homelessness. These social trends have included new kinds of illegal drugs and more single parent and teen-headed households with low earning power and thinning support networks. These causes of homelessness must be addressed. People who are homeless must be helped. The current system does this reasonably well for many of

those who become homeless. But the homeless assistance system can neither prevent people from becoming homeless nor change the overall availability of housing, income and services that will truly end homelessness.

Many people think of homelessness as strictly an urban phenomenon because homeless people are greater in number and are more visible in urban areas, but homelessness, including people who live in housing not meant for habitation, is pervasive in rural areas. The number of people who experience rural homelessness is unknown, but the last national count of homeless people found that 9 percent live in rural areas. In actual raw numbers, this translates into roughly 67,000 people on any given night. (Burt, 1996) Evidence suggests that if the number of people who experience homelessness in rural areas was viewed and counted more accurately, the number would be far greater.

Rural Homelessness

Advocates and researchers often refer to people who experience rural homelessness as the “hidden homeless.” Many people who experience housing instability in rural areas go unnoticed and uncouned because rural homelessness takes shape differently than urban homelessness. Most rural homeless people live in doubled up situations with friends or family or in motels, in cars, campgrounds and other places not intended for habitation. This is largely because most rural areas do not have large emergency shelters systems.

While those doubled up households do not meet HUD’s definition of homelessness, people living temporarily with friends and family are essentially homeless and they experience similar problems with housing instability. Many researchers and advocates argue for expanding this view of homelessness to capture the unique situations rural homeless people face. If the view of homelessness included households who double up, the numbers of people who experience homelessness in rural areas would increase exponentially.

The same structural factors that contribute to urban homelessness, such as a lack of affordable housing and inadequate income to pay for housing, cause rural homelessness. Other predictors of homelessness, such as mental illness and drug abuse, while still present among the rural homeless, are not pervasive. However, people who experience rural homelessness do report higher rates of alcohol abuse and domestic violence than their urban counterparts.

Rural Poverty

Rural poverty has some unique characteristics. Areas concentrated with rural poverty can be identified throughout the South, West and the Midwest of the United States. The scarcity of jobs, goods, and services has caused an outward migration of rural populations to places with more opportunities. As a consequence, the rural communities with high rates of poverty are sparsely populated and their poverty populations are severely impoverished.

High rates of poverty and unemployment in rural areas also drive homelessness. Rural homelessness is most dramatic in areas that experience high rates of unemployment because of declining industries, for example farming, timber, mining, or fishing. (Aron and Fitchen, 1996) The lack of available jobs and steady incomes means that poverty rates are higher in rural areas; the poverty rate in non-metropolitan areas is 14 percent, almost 11.6 percent less than in metropolitan areas. It is not surprising that one in five children living in rural areas is below the poverty line. (USDA Economic Research Service, 2004)

The RHISCO Project area

Counting and estimating the number of people who experience homelessness is extremely difficult and costly, and even more so in rural areas. Statewide estimates from the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio report that 179,718 people experience homelessness in Ohio over the course of a year and 27,867 Ohioans are homeless on any given night. At this time, estimates from the seventeen rural counties that comprise the RHISCO Project area, the Rural Homeless Initiative of Southeast and Central Ohio, are becoming available.

Counts of homeless people in Southeastern and Central Ohio are being planned and executed presently. The poverty and unemployment rates in these areas suggest that homelessness is prevalent. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (See Table 1, below), poverty rates in the counties of Southeastern and Central Ohio range from 3.8 percent in Delaware County to as high as 27 percent in Athens County. The poverty rates in Appalachian counties tend to be higher than other counties. About half are higher than the national poverty rate of 14 percent. Unemployment rates in rural Ohio counties are also high, ranging from 7 percent to 20 percent. In Meigs and Morgan Counties, the unemployment rates reach 20 percent, 15 percentage points higher than the national average of 5 percent. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005) People who live in poverty are at higher risk of homelessness. Although relatively few people of the region are homeless, the problem affects the entire community as a persistent and debilitating social issue.

Pickaway County has a population of 53,437 of which 10.9% are over 65 and 9.60% live at or below 100% of federal poverty guidelines. The median income for Pickaway County is \$42,832. The unemployment rate of 15% is reflected by recent industrial plant closings and workforce reductions which have left many long-term employees unemployed or underemployed, earning less than the living wage for our area.

Pickaway County began counting the homeless semi-annually in 2001. The most recent count, held on July 26, 2006 found 11 unsheltered individuals, all men. The sheltered count for the same date totaled 66, (21 men, 26 women and 19 children).

Needs statement

Pickaway County has worked diligently to build strong collaborations with all agencies, community groups and the Faith-Based community. To end homelessness in Pickaway County, these resources need to be combined to provide more supportive housing

options, with intense case management, to serve chronic homeless individuals and families. Public transportation needs to be expanded to serve those working jobs after normal business hours and weekends.

Pickaway County Homeless are not unlike most rural area homeless. These families are living in shelters, in cars, in motels, at the local parks when it is warm enough, and with family members who are in jeopardy of losing their own housing if they are caught with additional people living with them.

There are many contributing factors to homelessness and each family and/or individual has a story to tell. They usually know what actions they did that contributed to their homelessness or what crisis caused their homelessness. Regardless, how they became homeless, everyone deserves to have a warm place to call home.

Lack of decent, safe, affordable housing is one cause of homelessness in Pickaway County. A family pays rent to a landlord, who does nothing to improve the housing structure, and it becomes deemed unsafe and they have to move. Where do they move to? Where do they find a home that will hold their family that they can afford? How do they get enough money for first months rent and deposit? One solution for this issue would be more affordable housing units and more oversight of the conditions of the existing housing stock.

Mental illness is a cause of homelessness. Many individuals who have mental illness have a difficult time managing what is going on their minds making it impossible to manage their own money and living arrangements. There are no group homes or supportive housing units in Pickaway County who care for the mentally ill to assure they have adequate and safe housing.

Drug and alcohol abuse and addiction are causes of homelessness. We have for years, tried to fix people before we provide them housing. However, if you have no home, you often have no hope. Without hope, drugs and alcohol becomes the mainstay. We must provide housing first and supportive wrap-around services second. With housing we provide hope and with hope we provide a brighter future.

Domestic Violence is a cause of homelessness. When domestic violence takes place within a household, often the only way to be safe is to leave. Where do they go? If they go back home, they are no longer homeless, but they are no longer safe. If they leave, they are homeless. The CoC must ensure the continued operation of the current domestic violence shelter in Pickaway County.

Poverty is a cause of homelessness. Many of the families who seek assistance or who are near homelessness are from generational poverty. They have never learned the rules of the other classes. They do not know the rules in the world. Their main objective is survival. Whatever it takes to make it in the only world they know. They often do not understand the concept of holding money, once in their hand it is used to make life easier temporarily, and for the immediate need, not saved for future needs.

Maybe no one in their household has ever worked for a living but has relied on the government for their income. Maybe they have no family member that has ever finished high school, much less college. Until families in poverty are taught the rules of the middle class, they will remain in poverty. As well, until those in middle class understand what rules families in poverty live with, it will not be possible to assist them into a different way of life without judgment. The CoC will continue to support delivering the “Bridges Out Of Poverty” model to our community.

Unemployment and lack of living wage jobs is a cause of homelessness. Pickaway County has suffered the loss of thousands of higher paying manufacturing jobs in the last 6 years. Economic Development needs to play a vital role in seeking living wage jobs for the homeless or at-risk homeless population.

Prevention

- In order to assure that all families in Pickaway County have a home, we must first and foremost prevent those who have homes from losing them. We currently provide assistance to families in danger of losing their homes through several programs by paying past due rent and utilities. These programs are provided through the Pickaway County Jobs & Family Services, Prevention, Retention and Contingency funds; Pickaway Metropolitan Housing Authority and the City of Circleville’s CHIP Grant funds; Pickaway County Community Action (PICCA) Homeless Prevention and Emergency Food & Shelter funds; and Pickaway County Veteran Services Office funds.
- Southeastern Ohio Legal Services (SEOLS) provides free civil legal services to senior citizens and low income individuals in Pickaway County. Services in the housing area include help with eviction defenses, lock outs, utility shut-offs, or housing conditions in private, public or subsidized housing. The office also handles home ownership issues, including foreclosures, land contract problems, and housing discrimination referrals. Other services provided by the office include representation in public benefits, unemployment compensation, SSI or social security benefits, custody cases, child support matters, divorce matters (either by referral or representation), Medicaid or Medicare problems, consumer issues, problems with utility companies and education cases. SEOLS has a variety of brochures and pamphlets available for clients or social service agencies. Pickaway County Community Action Organization (PICCA) provides office space for SEOLS to meet and interview clients in Pickaway County.
- Ohio State Legal Services (OSLSA) is a statewide support center for legal services programs in Ohio and the home office of Southeastern Ohio Legal Services. OSLSA has an Equal Justice Works Fellow working under a two-year contract to create and present legal resource workshops for shelter case managers and employees of organizations that serve the at risk homeless population. The project also includes setting up a website dedicated to identifying legal resources available for the homeless population.

- Supportive services are provided that assist individuals and families in meeting other basic living needs freeing funds in their households to be used to pay rent and mortgages. These programs include faith based food pantries and clothing center; prescription payment assistance; and home repair and weatherization. Local churches also provide emergency assistance when all other resources have been spent and referral is provided by Community Action as a clearinghouse.
- PICCA offers Representative Payee Services for families and individuals who need assistance managing and budgeting their income. This service has helped several homeless individuals gain and maintain permanent housing. Landlords are more comfortable renting to someone who uses this Payee Service.
- Haven House of Pickaway County Inc. and Pickaway County Community Action (PICCA) provide services and shelter to the homeless and to prevent homelessness as well as provide case management, working individually by case planning and goal setting to assist in obtaining permanent housing and prevention of losing existing housing. Pickaway County Jobs & Family Services provide case management as well.
- PICCA also, through their Pickaway Area Rural Transit (PART) provides local transportation. A Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) has been formed to further discuss and plan for transportation needs in Pickaway County.
- Pickaway Area Recovery Services (PARS) and Scioto Paint Valley Mental Health (SPVMH) provide drug and alcohol recovery services as well as mental health services. The area hospitals and prison systems provide discharge planning as well.
- The Pickaway County Continuum of Care is constantly seeking additional funding for homeless prevention programs and services through Federal Grants, (HUD) and Foundations. A planning committee has been formed and will discuss funding opportunities and they will explore current programs and ensure the needs of the homeless population are being met.

Gaps or Unmet Prevention Needs

- Though we have prevention services available, much of the funding is restricted to providing funding after an eviction is in affect. By this time the past due rent and court costs exceed the limit that the grants are able to pay. If a family has an emergency situation, loses a job, becomes ill or is in an accident and unable to pay their rent or mortgage for a short period they must wait until their circumstances are beyond the ability for the existing programs to help.
- Permanent housing assistance funding (rental assistance and Section 8 housing) provided by the Pickaway Metropolitan Housing Authority is currently at a minimum waiting period of two years unless the family or individual falls under preference status (Veteran or Domestic Violence Victims (5 per year.)
- Due to recent closures and downsizing of manufacturing plants in Pickaway County, many individuals have been forced to work for far less than they have been accustomed to. These closures have limited the living wage jobs available in our community. There are limited service jobs open. However the jobs

available pay close to minimum wage and this is not enough to maintain a household.

- Often transportation is an impediment to maintaining housing. Job & Family Services' PRC Program is the only funding in our community for car repairs. Tags, license and insurance is required on all vehicles and often families are forced to let their vehicle insurance lapse in order to meet their living expenses. If they are caught, they are fined or their vehicle is impounded. Fines are placed to get the vehicle, and reinstatement fees are expensive. If you take transportation away, employment is near impossible. If employment is lost, homelessness is inevitable.
- Many households are uneducated in balancing their budgets to assure that what they have coming in is set aside to pay the essential needs of that household. Without training in the area of budgeting, too often the money that was available has been spent and is not available when the housing expenses are inevitable.
- The Continuum of Care Planning Committee is discussing the feasibility of a single point of access person or agency, where homeless individuals and families can be connected with mainstream services and programs and rapid re-housing.

Strategies to Fill Gaps in Prevention

- In order to meet the gaps of prevention we must first limit the restrictions on the existing grants when rewritten to assure that we are assisting individuals and families prior to crisis. We must allow the use of the funds available prior to court evictions in order to prevent homelessness. Funds must be made available to pay rent or mortgage to assist households when the emergency first comes and we must write the grants to allow for more than one month when emergency conditions exist.
- We will seek funding that assists low to moderate income households in paying for rent and mortgage on a monthly, regular basis to enable permanent housing. Many households living on Social Security, Disability, or minimum wage jobs are living on limited resources without the probability of increase. Unless we as a community can assist them they will inevitably become homeless. We must investigate the funding available through local, state, and federal government and faith based organizations that will assure long term retention of housing.
- As a community, we will collaborate with city and county government to further economic development. It is imperative that we bring manufacturing, warehouse and service jobs that pay a living wage into the community in order to provide employment to those able to work. Households cannot maintain their basic needs if their income does not exceed their needs. In order to prevent homelessness, we must assure that there are jobs available in our community that will enable households to maintain their expenses.
- Transportation to and from jobs is essential to getting and keeping a job that pays a living wage. Repairs and maintenance on existing vehicles is very expensive. Insurance, license and registration are mandated by law though nowhere are funds available to assist households in paying for these expenses. Many households make the choice of feeding their families or paying these required expenses and when this choice is made, insurance, license or

registration is not a priority. When these items are not paid, arrests are made, vehicles are towed and stored until fines are paid and then jobs are lost. We must seek funding to assist household in maintaining transportation.

- The Continuum of Care must seek funding to expand the existing public transportation to include taxi and carpool for all shifts and to and from places of employment outside of the direct area of the city and into other communities where jobs are available.
- Partnering with major employers within the contiguous counties to employ participants in our homeless shelters is a top priority for 2007.
- The Pickaway County Community Action (PICCA) has in place a Strategic Plan which includes several workforce development activities. For instance, PICCA is exploring the possibility of establishing private enterprise for the agency as a means of training and developing skills of participants in the homeless shelters for a day care center, home repair business, home cleaning services and maintenance services.
- Many households with fixed income receive that income during the first week of the month. Households, through case management and training, and possibly with a payee to assist, must be provided information on budgeting to assure that what income they have is used to pay for the essentials before it is spent on non-essentials. Training on budgeting and assistance in money saving tips to help households to stretch the money they have coming in to last throughout the entire month should be provided.

Coordination of services

- Pickaway County has had a working Continuum of Care in existence for over seven years. The continuum meets at least quarterly and coordinates services for the prevention of homelessness and for those who are homeless. The following entities are represented by this collaborative: Government (City of Circleville and County Commissioners; Pickaway County Jobs & Family Services; Pickaway County MMRD; Haven House of Pickaway County, Inc.; Pickaway County Community Action; Berger Hospital; Veteran's Administration; Schools; Legal Aid, Faith Based Organizations; Pickaway Metropolitan Housing Authority; Family & Children First Council.
- Pickaway County Jobs & Family Services provides a quarterly resource workshop where entities providing services present information about their particular agencies and where other agencies come to learn about those resources in order to provide that information to their clients.
- A universal referral system is used between Job and Family Services, Pickaway County Community Action and the Emergency Clearing House.

Gaps or Unmet Needs in Coordination of Services

- We currently have less than desired participation in our Continuum by government, law enforcement, mental health professionals, and recovery services. There are faith based organizations and churches involved. However we must eliminate the territorial overlap of services to assure that what dollars

are available are helping those who have exhausted other avenues or assistance prior to seeking resources within the faith based services available.

- Invite other agencies and Faith-Based groups to utilize the Universal Referral Form.
- It is estimated that a third of people living on streets and in shelters have a severe and persistent mental illness. Our local mental health service agency is shared with other counties, their time is limited and the wait list for appointments is long.
- The Continuum of Care has a desire to build collaborations at a regional level. We will discuss the possibility of Continuums from contiguous counties organizing a summit to discuss programs for homeless, trends in services, ways we can collaborate to best serve the homeless population.

Strategies to Fill Gaps in Coordination of Services

- In order to fill the gaps of coordination we will call and invite government and law enforcement and members of Ministerial Association to our quarterly meetings of the Continuum. We will provide time during these meetings for input from all entities for information of what services they offer and what needs they see that are not being met.
- The Faith Based Summit, a semi annual meeting brings together service and faith based organizations. With collaboration to seek funding to fill the gaps of services we can further assist those in need in our community. Faith based agencies are eligible for funding but generally do not have staff available with grant knowledge. Service agencies have staff capable of writing grants but have depleted resources for these grants. With a stronger collaboration, service agencies can assist faith based organizations in obtaining these grants and bringing more funding to Pickaway County to assist in prevention of homelessness and in providing supportive housing for those who are homeless.
- Have a signed MOU with local mental health service agencies to provide additional support to agencies providing supportive services to those homeless with mental illnesses.
- Formalize a single entity process that oversees homelessness. Develop a single universal form utilized by all agencies to obtain information on homeless family/individual to include resources available and what resources were provided. Develop a screening tool where we categorize example Veteran, TANF, etc.

Outreach

- The CoC currently performs semi-annual homeless counts. The counts involve many CoC member agencies. The homeless who are found on the day of the count receive a package of food, blankets or coats, and a packet of information on available services.
- A community volunteer who attends the PIT counts is also a reporter for the local newspaper. Our PIT counts receive great coverage from the media.
- Pickaway County provides outreach through our Community Kitchen which is open for an evening meal on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

- The Homeless Coordinator from the Chillicothe VA Medical Center is constantly checking out leads for homeless veterans in Pickaway County.
- Many agency representatives speak about the homeless issues at community meetings such as Sertoma, Rotary, Kiwanis and other events.

Outreach Activity Gaps

- Activities that include public awareness events for the entire community.
- Activities on weekends

The Pickaway County Continuum of Care will perform the following activities to fill outreach gaps.

- Annual Homeless Awareness event in the spring each year to raise public awareness of homelessness and housing issues in our community. Involve church youth groups, local newspaper and television coverage, students from the Ohio Christian College and community agencies to plan and carry out the event.
- Expand Community Kitchen to include weekends. Ministerial Association can coordinate volunteers to operate the kitchen.

Workforce development

- The workforce development and training currently available in our community include: JOBS One-Stop; administering WIA funds, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Veteran's Administration Vocational Rehabilitation, ABLE, Youth Build, Pickaway-Ross Career & Technology Center, Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools, Mature Works, Columbus State Community College and Ohio University future meeting site at Teays Valley High School, Ohio University Chillicothe and Lancaster branches, Ohio Christian University, Diversified Industries, PMHA Family Self-Sufficiency Program, Pickaway Co. Library computer classes, Pickaway Co. Office of Economic Development Office and local employment/contracting temporary agencies.
- PICCA has the Youth Build program which helps young people who have dropped out of high school, study for and obtain their GED while learning construction skills. The Youth Build program purchases a piece of property to build or purchases a house that is in need of rehabilitation. Once the property is completed by the program, it is sold to a low income family in Pickaway County. Students must be between 16 and 24 years of age.
- The Pickaway Ross Joint Vocational School offers adult education and training in the trades industry.

Gaps or Unmet Needs in Workforce Development

- There is a need in our community to foster an understanding that homeless people want and need to work. Loss of several manufacturing employers over the past few years has led to a lack of living wage jobs. The PCCOC needs to collaborate with local employers to form an understanding of the employment needs of the low-income population.

- Limited public transportation does not address a fundamental barrier to employment which is reliable and affordable transportation. Location of the local JOBS One-Stop, providing employment services, is not accessible for most homeless and at-risk clients.
- There is a need for appropriate, relevant service program models; accountable universal access to WIA funding to provide case management and training to homeless population, emphasis currently on the “dislocated worker”.
- A gap exists in case management dealing with the special employment need of the homeless population as well as funding for such coordination. Once working, clients still need support services.
- Programming to assist with purchase and or repair of a reliable vehicle.

Strategies to Fill Unmet Needs in Workforce Development

- The PCCOC will invite the local Economic Development director to be a part of the CoC within the next quarter.
- Foster a positive relation with the local JOBS One-Stop and Jobs and Family Services agencies. On-going communication, via case management, is crucial to achieving employment placement.
- Development of a jobs training program within the transitional housing system.
- Explore possibility of TANF funding available for transportation/vehicle purchase program.
- Referral/MOU with JOBS One-Stop established to provide case management employment services.
- Employer incentives.....

Building support and liaison strategizing

- Currently, our community holds a semi-annual Community Agency and Faith-Based Summit to strengthen collaborations between agencies and the Faith-Based Community working towards the same goals. Our “It Only Takes A Spark” Summit is held semi-annually with two goals. We recognize and celebrate the common mission of faith-based and community groups in servicing adults, children, and families and we review and celebrate the progress made by each of the Summit workgroups. The Summit attendees conduct a community needs assessment and divide into workgroups to work on projects that address those identified needs.
- The “Bridges out of Poverty” seminar was presented to the public in March of 2006. Over 300 members of the community attended the training session. We plan to continue offering this seminar to the public once yearly.
- The PCCOC will work with Marci McCauley, RHISCO Project liaison consultant to build relationships with state and federal funders, the office of the Governors Faith-Based Initiative, the NAEH and contiguous counties Continuum of Care committees.
- The PCCOC needs to appoint a representative to be the liaison between the Continuum and the educators and employers in the community.

- The PCCOC also needs to appoint a representative to liaison between the courts and prison release officials and parole officers.
- All members of the PCCOC are encouraged to serve on local boards, provide speakers for organization and club meetings and to invite community leaders to the Continuums meetings.
- The PCCOC Planning Committee is organizing a Stakeholders Breakfast to present our 10-year plan and to gain buy-in from attendees.

Data collection

Pickaway County has been very successful with the point-in-time survey using a public places physical count with an interview and survey of each unsheltered homeless person found during the count period. We also utilize administrative data to complete client populations and subpopulations for sheltered homeless persons. The count teams are trained prior to the count. The teams cover the county as well as visit known locations of homeless persons. Law enforcement, service providers, community volunteers and media volunteers all partner to complete the semi-annual homeless count.

How was the methodology developed?

The Pickaway County Continuum of Care decided a physical count would offer the greatest success for our homeless count. With help from local law enforcement, prior to the count, we know areas where homeless people congregate.

Enhanced Methodology

- Currently, the PCCOC only has one formally homeless individual who volunteers for the homeless count. We could enhance our process by adding at least one formally homeless individual to each of the four teams. PICCA will seek volunteers from their transitional housing programs to help with future counts.

Sustainability planning

- PCCOC member agencies currently received funding from the Ohio Department of Development, JFS PRC Program and the Emergency Food & Shelter Board to provide rent, deposit and utility assistance to prevent homelessness. The PCCOC also receive funding from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide transitional housing to women and children who are homeless or victims of domestic violence. The PCCOC will continue to seek funding from these entities to continue these services.
- The PCCOC will seek funding from the Housing and Urban Development to increase the number of Shelter Plus Care vouchers available for our county and to develop a Single Room Occupancy project.

Permanent Housing

Pickaway Metropolitan Housing Authority (PMHA) has requested 10 S+C TRA vouchers to use as a permanent housing option for chronically homeless men and women coming from any phase in the Continuum of Care, providing they meet the eligibility criteria of the

project. The funding (\$299,400) for the 10 Shelter+Care S+C vouchers have been requested through HUD. To be eligible for the S+C vouchers, individuals may be mentally ill, developmentally disabled or have a diagnosis of chronic substance abuse or a combination of these diagnoses. PMHA currently has a waiting list of over 800 households and an 18-24 month estimated waiting period for those households to receive Section 8 assistance. First priority for the S+C vouchers will be given to those individuals who fit HUD's definition of Chronically Homeless. Continuum member agencies will assist participants in obtaining and maintaining mainstream services. The Continuum will also provide supportive services to participants for the duration of the project and beyond to ensure participants remain in permanent housing.

This Shelter+Care Project will address the average number (10) of chronically homeless individuals in Pickaway County.

The Veterans Administration could be a source of funding for homeless veterans through the Grant Per Diem program.

Implementation strategy

| Objectives to End Chronic Homelessness and Move Families and Individuals to Permanent Housing | Local Action Steps | Measurable Achievement in 12 months | Measurable Achievement in 10 years | Lead Person (Who is responsible for accomplishing CoC Objectives?) |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1. Create new PH beds for chronically homeless persons. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a strategy and planning committee to increase the number of permanent housing units. 2. Use strategies developed by the committee to determine the component program that best fits our CoC and meets the needs of the chronically homeless in our community. 3. Select partner agencies to participate in the S+C project. 4. Apply for funding. | 10 Beds | 15 Beds | Lisa Robbins, Pickaway Metropolitan Housing Authority |
| 2. Increase percentage of homeless persons staying in PH over 6 months to 71%. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place eligible residents in S+C voucher program. 2. Develop Memorandum of Understanding to clarify responsibilities of CoC agencies stating their commitment of resources and client follow-up of the services provided. 3. Encourage clients to participate in Representative Payee Program | 55% | 71% | Tiffany Acord, Case Manager |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <p>3. Increase percentage of homeless persons moving from TH to PH to 61%.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a network of landlords to serve at-risk tenants. 2. Refer eligible clients to S+C TRA voucher program. 3. Encourage clients to participate in Representative Payee Program. 4. Collaborate with PMHA to provide 5 vouchers yearly for victims of DV. | 58% | 70% | <p>Lisa Johnson, Haven House Director</p> |
| <p>4. Increase percentage of homeless persons becoming employed by 11%.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure all S+C and TH participants that are not on disability income attend weekly meetings at the Jobs One Stop office and all local job fairs. 2. Any S+C and TH participants that meet the eligibility requirements for the PICCA Youthbuild Program will be required to apply for the program. 3. Plan an HR Forum with local HR Professionals and discuss possible job opportunities for participants and offer incentives or trial periods for employing a participant. | 5% | 11% | <p>Michelle Lane, Jobs One Stop</p> |
| <p>5. Ensure that the CoC has a functional HMIS system.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase CoC agencies entering data into HMIS system. 2. Develop protocol for all CoC members to collect completed information to be entered into the HMIS system by PICCA or Haven House. | 10% | 30% | <p>Becky Hammond, Chair, CoC</p> |
| <p>6. Participate in the Rural Homeless Initiative of Southeastern and Central Ohio (RHISCO) Capacity Building Project.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply for funding through the Osteopathic Heritage Foundations. 2. Partner with the National Alliance to End Homelessness to gather current Community Baseline Need, Affordable Housing Survey, Stakeholder Analysis, and Community Needs Assessment. 3. Participate in the Planning Summit for rural Ohio base on findings from the Alliance. 4. Plan at the county level. | Complete Phase 1 | Implement #2 Strategy | <p>Becky Hammond, Chair, CoC</p> |
| <p>7. Increase percentage Point-in-time volunteers to provide most accurate counts on a semi-annual basis.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase community awareness about homelessness in Pickaway County. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Newspaper article 2-weeks prior to counts. b. Attend Ministerial Meetings to solicit Church volunteers. c. Place count notices and call for volunteers in Church bulletins. 2. Involve participants in the transitional housing programs who were formally homeless. 3. Involve community in outreach | 10% | 30% | <p>Becky Hammond CoC Chair</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| | <p>activities prior to PIT.</p> <p>4. Provide tally sheets and instructions to hotels, hospitals, law enforcement, Churches and other community stakeholders one week prior to PIT.</p> | | | |
| 8. Improve information and accessibility to mainstream programs and services. | <p>1. Enhance the 211 system to include agencies providing mainstream programs and services.</p> <p>2. The CoC will participate in community meetings to educate the public on homeless needs and obtain valuable input from stakeholders on resource availability and innovative approaches to coordinate services for homeless individuals and families.</p> <p>3. Produce a pocket guide of agencies providing mainstream programs and services and place the guides in strategically located places. The guide will also serve as an outreach tool for all CoC agencies.</p> | Gather information & produce a pocket information guide | Update Pocket Guide | Rojanne Woodward, Summit Planning Committee |
| 9. Enhance transportation services. | <p>1. Build the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to include major employers, economic development and formally homeless persons.</p> <p>2. Solicit transportation subsidies from employers.</p> <p>3. Explore car repair programs and services for employed clients.</p> | Key stakeholders attend meetings | Transportation incentives received from employers | Andrew Binegar, Transportation Manager |
| 10. Build strong collaborations with contiguous CoC Committees, Agencies and Programs. | <p>1. Assign a single point of access agency in our community to connect the homeless to housing and mainstream services.</p> <p>2. Develop a universal form for homeless services.</p> <p>3. Seek funding to hire a Homeless Coordinator for the Continuum.</p> <p>4. If funding is secured, hire homeless coordinator.</p> | Single access assignment made | Full-time Homeless Coordinator hired. | CoC Planning Committee |

Regionalism

The PCCOC has a proximity advantage to serve homeless veterans as we are within 25 miles of the VA Medical Center in Chillicothe Ohio. The Homeless Coordinator for the Chillicothe VA is a very active member of our Continuum. The PCCOC will continue to utilize the strong collaboration we have with the VA Medical center to serve homeless veterans.

The PCCOC has also built strong relationships with neighboring Community Action Agencies such as Fayette County who has transitional housing for families.

Conclusion

It is hoped that our plan will help the participants end their homelessness; stay housed, and experience better health and well-being. It is expected that the overall cost of providing services to an individual or family in these types of "housing first" programs will be lower than the cost of providing the array of emergency services (emergency rooms, shelters, public facilities, day programs, etc.) that the people would use during that same time period.

Assigning a single-access agency to direct the homeless to housing and mainstream services will be a top priority in 2007. In the near future, the Continuum of Care will seek funding to hire a Homeless Coordinator for the Continuum.

Strengthening our collaborations within our county and building collaborations with contiguous counties will continue to be in the forefront of our plan to end homelessness.