

Urbana-Champaign Continuum of Care Ten-year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness

Vision

Within ten years (2014), all individuals and families facing homelessness in Champaign County will have access to a coordinated array of housing options and supports that will enable them to sustain safe and decent shelter.

Executive Summary

Through a process of strategic planning and goal-setting, the Urbana-Champaign Continuum of Care (UCCoC) and endorsing organizations have committed to address issues that have a significant impact on homelessness of persons in Champaign County. This plan outlines focused efforts that will be spearheaded during the next ten years by members of the UCCoC to address the prevention of homelessness and improve services to chronically homeless persons that will result in outcomes of stable housing. A process for continuous evaluation will guide program and system development.

Ten-year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness

Introduction

In 2001, in response to a mandate from Congress, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued direction for continuums of care nationwide to develop a local plan to end chronic homelessness. The *Urbana-Champaign Continuum of Care Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness* is based on principles similar to the National Alliance to End Homelessness *Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness* that has received widespread support from cities throughout the United States. The Urbana-Champaign Continuum plan includes prevention of circumstances that lead to homelessness, efficient service provision to move homeless individuals and families into stable housing options, coordination of efforts for strengthening supports to keep people housed and evaluation of services to produce effective outcomes.

The Urbana-Champaign Continuum of Care (UCCoC) has made a commitment to address the issues of homelessness in such a way as to make a significant impact on the number of homeless persons and families in Champaign County. This strategic plan outlines initiatives to provide, coordinate and allocate resources to streamline services and to fill in service gaps in ways that provide effective results in maintaining safe and decent shelter for all residents of the county. In a series of facilitated meetings during 2003, UCCoC drafted a set of strategic initiatives to develop a community response to end chronic homelessness. These initiatives are categorized into those that address prevention, coordination, maintenance and evaluation.

Chronic Homelessness Defined

Homelessness is a complex issue, and its resolution invites a proactive approach from a variety of community interests: housing, public health, mental health, economic development, social services, domestic violence, education, public safety, and others. In order to address the various aspects of homelessness, it is necessary to define terms for common understanding.

In the most recent survey of homeless persons in Champaign County (November 2003), 39% of the respondents had been homeless for less than one year. Transitional homelessness occurs when a housing crisis (*i.e.*, loss of job, domestic violence) temporarily renders an individual or family homeless. When homeless services are provided, these persons usually are able to locate and obtain another stable housing situation. In Champaign County, 14% of homeless persons would fall into this category based on the most recent survey.

Episodic homelessness refers to circumstances in which persons have recurrent problems with housing. Often these persons have substance addictions, seasonal/minimum wage income or sporadic domestic situations that affect stable housing. In Champaign County, approximately 20% of homeless persons would be episodic users of homeless services.

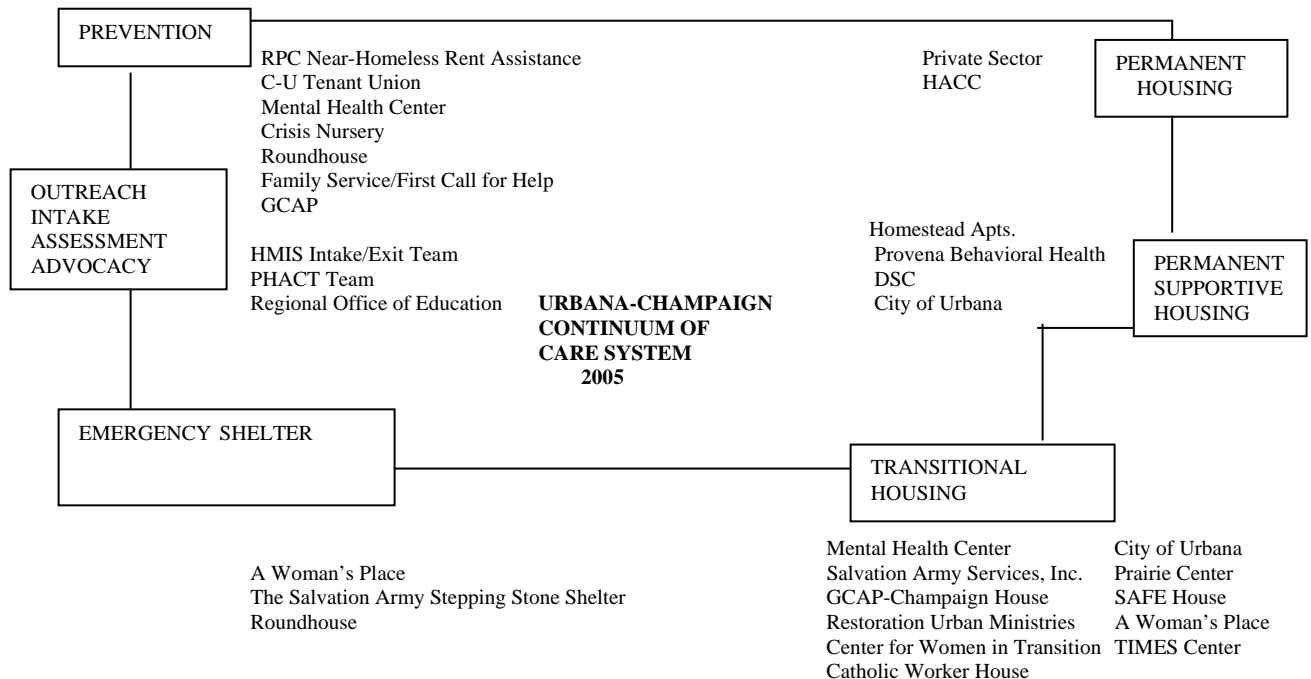
Approximately 61% of the homeless respondents recently surveyed had been homeless for more than one year or for four or more times during the past three years. However, chronic homelessness is defined by HUD as a situation in which a single person has been without a

permanent residence for a period of more than one year or for more than 4 times in the last 3 years and suffers from a substance abuse or mental health issue that is contributing to his/her homelessness. Approximately 23% of persons accessing homeless services in Champaign County would be classified as chronically homeless. (Note: One reason families are not considered for this designation is that if homeless for an extended period of time, children may be considered at risk of neglect and taken under the care of DCFS until stable housing can be obtained.)

UCCoC has surveyed homeless persons in Champaign County several times during the past decade in an effort to accurately count the number of homeless individuals and families, to better understand the causes of homelessness and to plan services that will effectively address the needs of this population. In summary, the 2003 survey reported that Champaign County has approximately 315 homeless persons, of which 204 are adults, 109 are children, two are minors not with adults, and 16 are veterans. Of the 191 surveyed households, five are still in permanent housing pending eviction; 70 have been homeless for less than one year (27 temporarily/38 episodically/5 did not answer); 116 have been homeless for more than a year or more than four times in the past three years. Of those 116 households, 2 are minors, 89 are single persons and 25 are families.

The Urbana-Champaign Continuum of Care (UCCoC)

Agencies providing services to the homeless population in Champaign County have joined forces with other interested community agencies through UCCoC to seek Federal resources and coordinate activities to address issues of chronic homelessness. UCCoC meets regularly to assess community needs, exchange planning information, apply for grants, and evaluate service effectiveness. UCCoC invites participation from other community interests affected by homelessness to encourage the widest possible input to and impact of its activities.



Prevention Initiatives to End Chronic Homelessness

Prevention of the causes of initial, prolonged or repetitive homelessness will make a significant impact on ending chronic homelessness. Prevention often can be achieved through social service intervention or some form of immediate financial help to serve as a safety net for individual or family resources. Preventive and crisis intervention services can assist individuals and families address crisis housing issues in ways that will prevent homelessness. Local agencies provide a wide range of services that are available to persons at risk of homelessness, including:

- Emergency rent assistance
- Financial literacy/debt management
- Employment assistance
- Legal assistance
- Home repair/rehabilitation
- Utility assistance
- Homeowner education
- Substance abuse/mental health treatment
- Domestic violence education/assistance
- Information & referral services

While these services do provide assistance, improvements can be made to access them. The strategic planning goals to prevent homelessness in Champaign County are:

- Through training and networking, all agency staff will be aware of and refer to available services in the community by 2006 (UCCoC- facilitator). MET by adding other agencies to join Continuum, agency orientation and in-service events
- Through publicity and education, all county residents will be aware of and have access to available services in the community by 2006.
 - Expand information about eligibility criteria in agency directories (i.e., www.helpsource.org) (Family Service - facilitator). MET by request for agencies to include eligibility on HelpBook database
 - Establish agency best practice policies/procedures to document disability status to facilitate eligibility for services and have HMIS system w/ability to track past services received (Shelter Plus Care Coordinating Committee - facilitator). MET by Kelly Hartford updating policies and Patti/Kelly training on HMIS capability, continue into 2006 for all participant pilot agencies and as new agencies are added to the system

Coordination Initiatives to End Chronic Homelessness

Coordination of services provided to homeless persons facilitates efficient response, eliminates duplication of activities, highlights gaps in services, and identifies effective outcomes. Although the existing system of coordination among agencies is congenial, service gaps have been problematic and a more seamless approach from a person-served perspective is needed.

The strategic planning goals to coordinate services for temporarily homeless persons in Champaign County are:

- Develop a centralized intake and assessment system w/ability to obtain application information/releases for all participant agencies to assist homeless persons in accessing available shelter space and other services in a coordinated manner by 2005 (CCRPC – facilitator) ELIMINATE THIS GOAL (2006)
- Inventory & maintain existing system of emergency and transitional shelter options (in place, updated annually by UCCoC). MET during preparation of 2005 HUD NOFA application, MHC spearheading better coordination of men’s emergency/transitional shelter locations for overflow during winter months at 1st Pres. Church Champaign
- Develop a SafeHaven option for emergency shelter with 24-hour availability by 2014 (Mental Health Center- facilitator).
- Use a multi-disciplinary team model of outreach to homeless persons by 2005 (Prairie Center – facilitator). – MET through PHACT team in 2005
- Develop a UCCoC agreement with DOC regarding return/release of inmates to the county by 2007 (MET by A Woman’s Fund – 2006). Continue to expand.
- Develop a UCCoC agreement with VA regarding veterans needing housing services by end of 2006 (Homestead - facilitator) – continue to expand.
- Offer transportation to areas outside of the county when an individual’s natural network of resources indicates a reason to do so by 2005 (Salvation Army - facilitator). MET by Salvation Army.
- Develop a UCCoC purchase of care agreement regarding homeless services provided by Champaign County to residents of other counties (or the reverse) by 2007 (Prairie Center and GCAP - facilitators) – MET w/Vermilion Co in 2005

In addition, for non-chronically homeless:

- Expand emergency shelter and transitional shelter beds for two-parent households and female-headed families by 2008 (Center for Women in Transition - facilitator). MET with additional beds for female-headed households added at CWIT in 2006; two-parent households – continue to expand.

Maintenance Initiatives to End Chronic Homelessness

Strengthening supports for permanent housing enables persons who have weathered temporary homelessness to maintain a permanent residence. While supportive services exist in Champaign County, specific gaps have been identified as barriers to a complete continuum of supports.

The strategic planning goals to assist persons having experienced temporary or sporadic homelessness in Champaign County to maintain permanent housing are:

- Inventory & maintain existing supportive housing options (in place, updated annually by UCCoC). MET during preparation of annual HUD NOFA application
- Develop additional rental subsidy program(s) to provide permanent and permanent supportive housing opportunities for extremely low- and very low-income persons by

2014 (UCCoC - facilitator – CCRPC applied for 1 S+C bed in 2007; Housing Authority expanded capacity) – continue to expand.

- Develop 50 SRO bed spaces for single persons to incorporate housing options with less restrictive felony restrictions (esp. sex offenses) by 2009 (Met by Homestead reducing restrictions on SRO in 2006).
- Create a linkage with nursing homes for homeless persons who are aging or have temporary/permanent medical needs by 2006 (Mental Health Center-facilitator). MET using routine process of hospital admission for acute treatment with discharge to nursing home for continued care.
- Create a network of foster families to mentor homeless persons by 2008 (Salvation Army - facilitator).
- Develop a transitional step for homeless persons to learn pre-vocational skills prior to employment training by 2006 (HUD goal to increase employment by 11%)(TIMES Center Advisory Committee - facilitator). MET through TIMES Center car wash project in 2004 and cookie-baking project in 2006.

Add for non-chronically homeless:

- Develop residential options for homeless teens with children by 2010 (Mental Health Center applied for DHS/DCFS grant 2007; added extended transitional housing).
- Provide through non-profit developers more units of multi-family rental housing affordable to extremely low- and very low-income households with children by 2010 (Lakeside Terrace added units; Champaign applied for Rental Subsidy Housing Program in 2007).

Evaluation Initiatives to End Chronic Homelessness

Regular assessment of the needs of homeless persons and services will improve the ability of service providers to impact homelessness in Champaign County. The existing system of data collection by individual service provider and the periodic Homelessness Survey have proven lacking in generating a complete picture of the homeless population we serve and the relative success of various agency interventions in meeting their need for permanent shelter.

The strategic planning goals to evaluate and continually improve homelessness and service provision for homeless persons in Champaign County are:

- Use a shared Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to collect centralized client service data that can be used for program planning and reporting by Oct.2004 and increase HMIS use by one agency per year to total of 9 by mid-2009 (CCRPC – facilitator). MET by system purchase and customization by Oct.2004; ?
- Use information generated from all available county needs assessment and planning resources in evaluation of homelessness services – MET process in place, updated annually by UCCoC.
- Partner with University of Illinois experts to design and perform program evaluation tools as system components are implemented and to provide technical assistance on aspects of program planning as needed (Prairie Center and A Woman’s Fund/Professor Nicole Allen – facilitators) – ELIMINATE THIS GOAL (2006)

- Develop an annual review of programs and goals of the UCCoC, to include a public participation component by 2005 (UCCoC – facilitator). MET through questions included in point in time survey; participation of clients/agency staff in 2006 big.small.all community visioning focus groups

Through the achievement of these goals, the Urbana-Champaign Continuum of Care is committed to making a significant impact on eradicating chronic homelessness in Champaign County.

Plan Leadership

This plan was developed through a facilitated group process occurring over a period of several months and was adopted in October of 2003. Many thanks to the individuals who participated in the series of meetings to develop the *Urbana-Champaign Continuum of Care Ten-year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness*, including:

Mickie Bailot	Provena Behavioral Health
Lynne Barnes	Carle Foundation Hospital
Ray Bement	Greater Champaign Aids Project
Bruce Barnard	Prairie Center
Ron Bribriesco	Developmental Services Center
Danielle Chynoweth	Urbana City Council
Ginny Dewar	Crisis Nursery
Mark Driscoll	Champaign County Mental Health Board
Sheila Ferguson	Provena Behavioral Health
David Grove	A Woman's Place
Beth Hewing	Eastern Illinois Foodbank
Debora Jones	Family Service of Champaign County
Kathy Kessler	Provena Behavioral Health – AmeriCorps/CHART
Teri Killham	Urbana citizen (formerly homeless)
Darlene Kloeppe	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (facilitator)
Andy Kulczycki	Community Services Center of Northern Champaign County
Heidi Grove	Provena Behavioral Health – AmeriCorps/CHART
Larry Mann	University of Illinois – Office of the Chancellor
Kim McCloud-Burnett	Housing Authority of Champaign County
Jessica McMeyer	A Woman's Place
Jenny Messier	Provena Covenant Medical Center
Barbara Peckham	Peckham & Associates
Patti Peek	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (scribe)
Judy Phillippe	VA Illiana Health Care System
Karen Rasmussen	City of Urbana (chair, UCCoC)
Hadley Ravencroft	PACE, Inc.
Stephanie Record	Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education
Gretchen Robbins	Carle Foundation Hospital
Sarah Rosa	Citizen/AmeriCorps alumna (formerly homeless)
Jim Rose	Homestead Corporation
Andrea Rundell	United Way of Champaign County
Joyce Schmidt	TIMES Center/Provena Behavioral Health
Kathy Sims	Center for Women in Transition
Jodi Ward	Salvation Army
Mary Ellen Wuellner	City of Champaign

Endorsements of the Plan

We endorse the *Urbana-Champaign Continuum of Care Ten-year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness*:

Action plan for goals to be completed this year:

- Through training and networking, all agency staff will be aware of and refer to available services in the community by 2006 (UCCoC- facilitator)
- Through publicity and education, all county residents will be aware of and have access to available services in the community by 2006
 - Expand information about eligibility criteria in agency directories (i.e., www.helpsource.org) (Family Service - facilitator)
 - Establish agency best practice policies/procedures to document disability status to facilitate eligibility for services (Shelter Plus Care Coordinating Committee – facilitator)
- Develop a centralized intake and assessment program to assist homeless persons in accessing available shelter space and other services in a coordinated manner by 2005 (CCRPC – facilitator)
 - System w/ability to track past services received
 - System w/ability to obtain application information/releases for all participant agencies
- Inventory & maintain existing system of emergency and transitional shelter options (in place, updated annually by UCCoC)
- Develop a UCCoC agreement with DOC regarding return/release of inmates to the county by 2007 (A Woman’s Place – facilitator)
 - A Woman’s Place meet w/Decatur Women’s Prison officials re: arrangements for domestic violence victims –done
 - AWP/CWIT meet w/Decatur Women’s Prison officials to include return/release of other women by Fall 2005
 - AWP/TIMES Center/UL/other providers meet w/Decatur ATC officials to include return/release of men by Spring 2006
 - CoC Chair obtain agreement between DOC and U-C CoC by Fall 2006
 - Agencies implement agreed upon policy/procedures by Fall 2006
 - CoC Chair evaluate/revise policy/procedures w/agencies by Spring 2007
- Develop a UCCoC agreement with VA regarding veterans needing housing services by 2006 (Homestead - facilitator)
- Offer transportation to areas outside of the county when an individual’s natural network of resources indicates a reason to do so by 2005 (Salvation Army - facilitator)
- Inventory & maintain existing supportive housing options (in place, updated annually by UCCoC)
- Create a linkage with nursing homes for homeless persons who are aging or have temporary/permanent medical needs by 2006 (Mental Health Center-facilitator)

- Develop a transitional step for homeless persons to learn pre-vocational skills prior to employment training by 2006 (TIMES Center Advisory Committee - facilitator) MET through TIMES Center car wash project in 2004;
- Partner with University of Illinois experts to design and perform program evaluation tools as system components are implemented and to provide technical assistance on aspects of program planning as needed (Prairie Center and A Woman's Fund/Professor Nicole Allen – facilitators)
- Develop an annual review of programs and goals of the UCCoC, to include a public participation component by 2005 (UCCoC – facilitator)