

Heading Home Hennepin:
The Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in
Minneapolis and Hennepin County

Presented by the Hennepin County and City of
Minneapolis Commission to End Homelessness

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Introduction/Summary

To see the face of hopelessness, drive Currie Avenue at the northern edge of downtown Minneapolis just before the doors of Secure Waiting open at 8:30 PM. You'll see men pushed to the edges of our community, disenfranchised from society, immobilized by feelings of despair - men who have been marginalized, criminalized, and stigmatized. They are the homeless of Hennepin County.

Across town, People Serving People, one of the largest family shelters, is teeming with activity. Between sixty and one hundred families sleep there every night. There the face of homelessness is increasingly that of a child. Wilder Research Center found that 80 percent of homeless children in Minnesota are twelve years of age and younger. They suffer developmentally, academically, physically, and emotionally. This is the price the children pay for being homeless.

Throughout the county, runaway and homeless youth compete for the few available youth shelter beds, hoping both to flee abuse at home and to avoid the violence of the streets. More than 70 percent of unaccompanied homeless youth under the age of 21 have been in out-of-home placements: foster care, residential treatment, or correctional facilities. Our systems have failed them.

Our community over the years has responded with compassion, wisdom, action, and resources to the plight of the homeless. We have built shelters and drop-in centers, started treatment programs, and invested in transitional and permanent supportive housing for families, single adults, and unaccompanied youth. We have created innovative public/non-profit partnerships that prevent homelessness for at-risk families, and we have implemented rapid exit programs to reduce shelter stays. We have begun state and regional partnerships to address homelessness, implemented Project Homeless Connect (a one-stop shop for services), and increased street outreach. Talented and dedicated people have brought institutional knowledge, new money, and ideas to the table, from the McKnight Foundation and the Family Housing Fund to the Shelter Providers Action Association, Homeless Against Homelessness and a myriad of corporate, governmental, philanthropic, nonprofit and faith-based organizations too numerous to mention here.

These efforts have made a difference: creating housing, jobs, and services; building self-reliance; and successfully bringing people out of the isolation of homelessness into safe and stable housing and productive community life. But it hasn't been enough.

Progress made over the years has not been enough to end the cycle of homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County.

The empty shelter bed fills immediately. People experiencing homelessness die on the streets of Minneapolis during our winter months. Too many people continue to cycle through the doors of our public institutions, from shelter to hospital to jail and back again. While we are ending homelessness for some, we are only managing it for others, offering band-aid solutions at great cost to the taxpayers, to our community, and in the loss of human dignity.

The problem of homelessness is complex, but thanks to the knowledge, expertise, and resolve of many people from across our community, a solution is now at hand.

Vision for a better future: Ending homelessness for all

In March of 2006, nearly seventy leaders of our community came together, resolved to end homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County. We became part of a national movement to expand what works and take bold new action to change the paradigm from managing homelessness to ending homelessness in our community.

Representing the federal, state, and local governments, business, non-profit, faith, and philanthropic communities, along with homeless and formerly homeless citizens, the members of the Commission to End Homelessness vowed to develop (**within 100 days**) a plan to end homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County by the year 2016. With broad support from the community and key input from local and national experts and from people experiencing homelessness, we completed our task on schedule.

The result is this report: **Heading Home Hennepin: The Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County**. The following principles guided our thinking:

- All people deserve safe, decent, and affordable housing.
- Shelter is not housing.
- Providing services without housing does not end homelessness.
- Homelessness costs more than housing.
- Data is important.
- Prevention is the best solution.
- Ending homelessness requires a community-wide response.
- Ending homelessness is attainable.

*Our **vision** is that by the year 2016, all people facing homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County will have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing and the resources and supports needed to sustain it.*
*Our **mission** is to effectively end homelessness over the next decade.*

This report contains six broad goals, thirty recommendations, and over fifty concrete actions steps. Successful implementation of our Ten Year Plan will prevent homelessness whenever possible; expand outreach to get people off the streets; and provide stable housing for men, women, and children and the support services they need to succeed.

Goals and recommendations:

1. Prevent Homelessness

- *Expand Hennepin County's Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program for single adults, youth, and families with children.*
- *Adopt a zero tolerance policy for discharging people from public systems into homelessness by coordinating access to housing and services.*
- *Increase conflict resolution and other services for at-risk youth and their families.*
- *Prevent and end homelessness for refugee individuals and families.*

2. Provide Coordinated Outreach

- *Develop a 24/7, coordinated system of outreach to those on the streets in Minneapolis.*
- *Increase medical outreach and access to primary care and mental health services.*
- *Increase number of youth outreach workers to suburban-area alternative schools.*

3. Develop Housing Opportunities

- *Preserve current stock of affordable and supportive housing, create 5,000 new "housing opportunities" for youth, singles, and families with children over the 10-year implementation period of the plan, and provide the support services people need to maintain housing stability.*

- *Promote housing opportunities that create more locational choice and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) for homeless singles, families, and youth.*
- *Develop and maintain good landlord relationships to enhance capacity for utilizing existing private housing market.*
- *Increase the support that homeless families receive from the neighborhoods/communities to which they are moving.*
- *Increase the number of homeless and at-risk youth receiving housing assistance and supports.*
- *Expand ability to rapidly re-house more single adults, underserved families, and youth.*
- *Track and effectively communicate vacancies in existing affordable and supportive housing for youth, singles, and families with children in Hennepin County.*
- *Reduce regulatory barriers to developing a variety of housing options.*

4. Improve Service Delivery

- *Connect people to the services they need to escape homelessness.*

5. Build Capacity for Self Support

- *Connect homeless adults with living wage jobs.*
- *Connect homeless and at-risk youth, ages 16-21, with education, job training, and employment.*
- *Enhance the “financial literacy” of singles, families, and youth.*
- *Ensure that eligible individuals and families apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Working Family Credit.*
- *Increase access to transportation for youth, families with children, and single adults so they can keep appointments, maintain or find employment, and get to school.*

6. Implement System Improvements

- *Improve effectiveness of current shelter system.*
- *Improve collaboration among family providers throughout Hennepin County.*
- *Enhance truancy interventions for at-risk and homeless youth.*
- *Enhance cultural competency across the system to ensure access to quality services for all groups.*
- *Offer increased access to financial assistance for youth.*

- *Support state and metro-wide efforts to end homelessness.*
- *Recommend to the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County an annual state and federal legislative agenda that supports the goals of this plan.*
- *Develop a system to track and evaluate progress on the Ten –Year Plan.*

With respect to each of these recommendations, the Commission calls for specific action steps to be taken by a variety of partners and cites annual benchmarks that will be used to gauge progress. These actions, partners, and benchmarks are set forth in the body of the report. The report also contains a finance and implementation plan, as well as information about homelessness in our community and examples of best practices nationwide.

While all of the recommendations in the report are critical, preventing homelessness and developing new housing opportunities are the overarching goals of our Ten Year Plan. They will be the focus of Phase 1 implementation, 2007-2009. In addition, the Commission has recommended immediate action on several items, including the establishment of an outreach pilot to work with the police department, the development of a one-stop shop “Opportunity Center,” and increased access to employment.

Successful implementation of our Ten Year Plan will:

- ❖ Change the paradigm from *managing* homelessness to *ending* it, from *funding* programs to *investing* in the community, from *servicing* people to *partnering* with people to achieve self-sufficiency.
- ❖ Drastically reduce the number of shelter beds in our community, requiring only a few small shelters to address emergencies that cannot be resolved through prevention. People will be rapidly re-housed within two weeks.
- ❖ Eliminate panhandling and other livability issues through providing prevention and outreach services. Downtown businesses and neighborhoods will thrive as more people both move downtown and come downtown to shop, play, and attend a Twins game.
- ❖ Lead to safer streets, since less police time will be spent dealing with issues of homelessness. Non-criminal issues will be handled by trained outreach workers, so law enforcement personnel can attend to more pressing community safety issues.

- ❖ Greatly reduce recidivism rates as effective discharge planning will ease the transition of people back into our communities and housing plus services will reduce the revolving door of expensive institutional placements.
- ❖ Result in all-time low rates of youth prostitution and teen pregnancy due to increased family supports, extended drop-in hours and additional outreach workers in our schools.
- ❖ Ensure that no children in our public schools are homeless.

Ending homelessness is an ambitious goal, but an attainable goal that is beneficial for the community as a whole. It is good for the person or family in need, good for business and neighborhoods, good for law enforcement and good for taxpayers. We believe that Heading Home Hennepin is the road map to a healthier future for everyone in our community.

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Commission members express their deep appreciation to Reverend James Gertmenian and the Plymouth Church Congregation for the generous accommodations provided throughout the 100 days. The church was a beautiful and inspiring environment for the multiple Commission, committee, and workgroup meetings. The Commission also thanks the many members of our community who dedicated themselves to the development of this plan, offering their considerable knowledge and countless volunteer hours. Particular thanks goes to the workgroup leaders who did much of the research, analysis, and writing that went into

this report, Alison Legler for her writing and technical assistance, and to people who have experienced homelessness, whose input was critical to developing a plan that guarantees real results. Philip Mangano, Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, was with us from beginning to end, challenging us to develop the best plan in the Nation. Lastly, the Commission acknowledges that this plan would likely never have come to fruition without the leadership, guidance, and perseverance of Cathy ten Broeke, the City/County Coordinator to End Homelessness.

Recommendations

GOAL ONE: PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

No efforts at ending homelessness for youth, families and singles will ultimately be successful until the flow of people becoming homeless in our community is stopped. Keeping people in the housing they have is the most cost-effective solution to ending homelessness. While the cost of one episode of family homelessness is estimated at \$4,970, the cost of prevention is as little as \$472 - \$750 per family. From 2003-2005, 458 single adults received prevention assistance at an average cost of \$374 per person, with a 95 percent success rate and 2,758 families were served at an average of \$425 with a 98 person success rate.

Public institutions, such as jails, hospitals, treatment facilities, and foster care homes, often discharge clients without adequately linking them to the services and housing they need to remain stable in the community. Effective discharge is critical to preventing homelessness and stopping the cycling of people through expensive public institutions.

These prevention recommendations will keep more families, youth, and single adults from losing the housing they have and prevent the discharge of homeless individuals to the streets by providing linkages to appropriate services and housing,

Recommendation One: Expand Hennepin County's Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program for single adults, youth, and families with children.

The State of Minnesota and Hennepin County's Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) is a nationally recognized best practice for preventing homelessness. Hennepin County currently serves approximately 1600 households per year. The intent of this recommendation is to build upon this successful model so that it can prevent homelessness for many more single adults, youth, and families with children.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Expand Hennepin County FHPAP to serve 3600 households/year.*</i></p> <p><i>(2500 families and teen parents - double current service)</i></p> <p><i>(1100 single adults, including unaccompanied youth ages 18-21 - four times current service)</i></p>	State	2007: Expand service by 540 households.
	County	2008: Expand service by 730 households.
	Suburban Human Service Boards	2009: Expand service by 730 households.
	Providers	2010-2016: Maintain service level of 3600 total households/year.
<p><i>Expand the network of community providers to assist in the cash distribution of prevention assistance and ensure that adequate outreach is done to serve communities of color, immigrants, and others in need of services.</i></p>	County	2007: Identify culturally competent community providers to assist in distribution.
	Providers Suburban Human Service Boards Faith community	2008: Train and bring on additional providers.

* The recommended increases are based on a portion of the turnaways due to lack of funding reported by the single adults, families, and youth providers.

Recommendation Two: Adopt a zero tolerance policy for discharging people from public systems into homelessness by coordinating access to housing and services.

A large percent of homelessness is due to a failure of public institutions to adequately plan for discharge.

- 46 percent of homeless youth had some previous out-of-home placement with corrections
- 41 percent of homeless youth had some previous out-of-home placement with foster care
- 13 percent of homeless youth had some previous out-of-home placement with chemical or alcohol dependency treatment centers
- Approximately 10-20 percent of adults discharged from correctional institutions exit to homelessness.
- Each year, approximately 1000 adults lack housing when they are released to Hennepin County communities from the county's adult correctional facility or state prison.ⁱ

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Improve the discharging of youth exiting foster care, juvenile corrections, child protection, and in-patient treatment.</i></p>	County Attorney's Office	<p>2007: Develop improved discharge planning policy and procedures and identify a Youth Discharge Coordinator.</p>
	County Social Services	<p>2008: Implement plan -15% reduction in youth exiting system to homelessness.</p>
	Community Corrections	<p>All youth receiving services in multiple child welfare systems shall receive a consolidated case management plan outlining outcome goals and coordination of services between multiple systems.</p>
	Community Providers	<p>All youth in corrections shall receive a bi-annual review by Hennepin County District Court to evaluate progress.</p>
	County District Court – Children's Justice Initiative.	<p>Establish cross-training on new discharge system for public and private providers.</p>
		<p>2009: 30% reduction in youth exiting system to homelessness. 2010-2016: Continued reductions until no more discharges to homelessness (Zero Tolerance Policy).</p>

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Improve the discharging of adults exiting public institutions including corrections, hospitals, in-patient treatment, and the military.</i></p>	County Departments	2007: Develop improved discharge planning policy and procedures and identify an Adult Discharge Coordinator.
	Community Corrections	Develop procedure to share information between the criminal justice and social service systems.
	Community Providers	2008: Implement plan -15% reduction in adults exiting system to involuntary homelessness.
	Faith Community	2009: 30% reduction in adults exiting system to involuntary homelessness.
	Veterans Organizations	
	State Corrections	2010-2016: Continued reductions until no more discharges to involuntary homelessness (Zero Tolerance Policy).
	Corporation for Supportive Housing	

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Provide assistance to help maintain and stabilize family relationships to support the offender upon release and/or create a network of support for ex-offenders without a supportive family structure.</i></p>	<p>Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches – Community Justice Project</p> <p>Council on Crime and Justice</p> <p>Corrections</p>	<p>2007: Identify existing resources and do a needs assessment about gaps in resources.</p> <p>Assess ways current practices support and hinder healthy family/offender relationships while someone is on correctional supervision.</p>
	<p>AMICUS</p> <p>Women Planting Seeds</p> <p>Men’s Center</p> <p>Al Furqan Educational Institute</p>	<p>2008: Facilitate network of reentry support resources.</p> <p>Implement pilot project with Hennepin County Community Corrections to cultivate healthy family/offender relationships.</p>

Recommendation Three: Increase conflict resolution and other services for at-risk youth and their families.

Most homeless youth experience some level of severe family conflict, often related to mental health issues or chemical addictions, lack of emotional bonding, or lack of parenting skills. Many youth could be diverted from running away or being “thrown away” by family members if parents were given options. Family conflict resolution, family counseling, case management services, parenting skills training, and assistance in finding family-centered, informal respite care should be offered by trained staff in local communities. These kinds of services will keep youth with their families of origin whenever possible.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Identify new conflict resolution and service sites.</i></p>	County	2007: Explore potential sites, service models, and cost.
	HMO's	2008: Identify a community site in Minneapolis and implement pilot.
	Faith Community	2009: Identify a community site in suburban Hennepin.
	Philanthropy	2010-2016: Implement additional urban and suburban services as needed (recommendation calls for the identification of six total community sites – 3 in Minneapolis and 3 in Suburbs).
	Homeless Youth Action Group	
<p><i>Expand the Parent Support Outreach Project to families with adolescent children at risk of child protection.</i></p>	Youth Services Network	
	Community Providers	
	Minneapolis and suburban schools	
<p><i>Expand the Parent Support Outreach Project to families with adolescent children at risk of child protection.</i></p>	Hennepin County	2007: Design expanded program.
	Community Providers	2008: Implementation.
		2009: Reduction in avoidable child protection cases.

Recommendation Four: Prevent and end homelessness for refugee individuals and families.

Newly arriving refugees and asylees live with their “anchor” relatives after their arrival to Minnesota. Although resettlement agencies and other social services agencies provide services to locate stable housing, large families who have limited income or are on public assistance are often unable to afford stable housing. Over the past year, Mary’s Place family shelter in Minneapolis accommodated 52 Hmong refugee families. Partnerships between Hennepin County, resettlement agencies, and other providers are needed to address these emerging issues.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Develop community partnerships to ensure that recently resettled refugees and asylees do not become homeless and those that are currently homeless attain stable housing.</i></p>	Government	2007: Establish partnership and identify funding.
	Resettlement agencies	2008: 15% decline in number of homeless refugees.
	Providers	2009: 30% decline in number of homeless refugees.
	Faith communities	2010-2016: Steady decline continues until homeless refugees are re-housed immediately, similar to other individuals, youth and families that become homeless.

GOAL TWO: **PROVIDE COORDINATED OUTREACH**

Currently, the primary form of outreach to people experiencing homelessness on our streets is the police department. While excellent homeless outreach workers are on the streets daily, there are too few of them to adequately reduce the amount of time police spend attempting to address these issues. Further, both local and national data show that addressing street homelessness with a criminal justice response is both costly and ineffective. According to a report done by the Decriminalization of Homelessness Work Group of the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness (June, 2005), the estimated costs in 2003-2004 for arrests of people without permanent addresses were \$1,440,807. A recent study of the Safe Zone Collaborative revealed that of the 33 top “livability” offenders downtown, 85 percent of them gave a shelter as their address. These 33 offenders cost the system \$3.7 million dollars over the years they were engaged with the system. Approximately 70 percent of these arrests lead to dismissals and do nothing to address the root causes of the problem. These recommendations call for a 24/7 coordinated and cost-effective outreach system to respond to the needs of people on the streets, reduce the negative impact of homelessness on the community, decriminalize homelessness, and enable police officers to focus on community safety.

Recommendation One: Develop a 24/7, coordinated system of outreach to those on the streets.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Develop a Hennepin County Outreach Collaborative to design, implement, track and evaluate the 24/7 dispatch/outreach system.</i></p>	Outreach workers	<p>2007: Develop the collaborative and design 24/7 system and protocols. Establish a pilot to focus year one efforts around “hot spots” established in collaboration with the Minneapolis Police Department to respond to non-criminal activity.</p>
	Law enforcement	
	City of Minneapolis	<p>2008: Bring implementation of the 24/7 dispatch system to scale. 15% reduction in street homelessness; 25 % reduction in police time and unnecessary arrests; 25% reduction in homeless victims of crime. Increase number of cases diverted to Restorative Justice by 10%. Reduction in tab charges that bring cases directly to court. Charges for misdemeanor offenses are reviewed by a prosecutor prior to initiating court processes.</p>
	County	
	State	
United Way	<p>2009: 30% reduction in street homelessness; 50% reduction in police time and unnecessary arrests; 50% reduction in homeless victims of crime. Increase in number of cases diverted to Restorative Justice by 10%.</p>	
Business owners		
Faith Communities	<p>2010-2016: Continued reductions until no involuntary street homelessness and no unnecessary arrests due to lack of alternatives.</p>	
Philanthropy		
<p><i>Support continued funding of Assertive Community Treatment teams and add additional teams based on determined need for singles, families, and youth.</i></p>	Neighborhoods	<p>2007: Conduct needs assessment.</p>
	Council on Crime and Justice	
	<p><i>(Cont. on next page)</i></p>	<p>2008: Make recommendations.</p>

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Request that cities examine local ordinances to ensure that they are not criminalizing homelessness (outreach will reduce need/use of such ordinances).</i></p>	Barbara Schneider Foundation Decriminalization Work Group People experiencing homelessness	<p>2007: Identify appropriate city staff throughout the metro area to work with partners on this issue. Evaluation of ordinances previously identified by community partners (Decriminalization Work Group and others) as criminalizing homelessness.</p>
	Advocates Service providers Restorative Justice Community Volunteers HCMC	<p>2008: Recommend changes to ordinances that are determined to discriminate against or criminalize homelessness.</p>

Recommendation Two: Increase medical outreach and access to primary care and mental health services.

People experiencing homelessness often use emergency rooms as their primary care facility. In addition, lack of regular medical care increases their likelihood for serious illness, making them harder to house, and prolonging their life on the streets. Medical outreach greatly reduces the likelihood that people will use the emergency room.

Twenty-three percent of American Indians experiencing homelessness are living on the street rather than in shelters or transitional housing. This is compared to 1%-7% for all other races. In a survey of American Indian single adult homeless, 87 percent had multiple Detox admits and 41 percent listed the emergency department as the primary place they received medical care. 92 percent had received medical care in the last year.

- The cost to walk in the door of HCMC Emergency Department is \$516.
- Cost for a six hour stay for intoxication or treatment of minor wounds ranges from \$800 to \$2,500.ⁱⁱ

Many people experiencing homelessness need respite after leaving the hospital. They may be recovering from illness or surgery and being discharged to the streets or shelter can worsen their condition. Medical Respite is a program that can assist with temporary care in a secure environment. Hennepin County currently runs a small medical respite program at the Salvation Army.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<i>Strengthen the current Medical Respite Program.</i>	County MESH Community Providers Health care Organizations	2007: Create a Medical Respite Program Advisory Committee to design improved respite system and develop benchmarks.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Strengthen mental health services for people experiencing homelessness.</i></p>	<p>Judge Hopper's Mental Health Work Group</p>	<p>2007: Build stronger collaborative among mental health providers both public and private. Assess needs and gaps.</p>
	<p>County Mental Health Center</p>	<p>2008: Develop recommendations to address service gaps.</p>
	<p>Community Providers</p>	
	<p>Barbara Schneider Foundation</p>	<p>2009: Implement service improvements.</p>
	<p>ACT teams</p> <p>County Mental Health Court</p> <p>Hennepin County Mental Health Advisory Council</p>	<p>2010-2016: All people experiencing homelessness will have access to an integrated system of care.</p>

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Expand Native American medical outreach program and coordinate it with housing and “housing first” services.</i></p>	County	<p>2007: Support street case management and physician care for outreach to Native Americans and coordinate efforts with housing organizations. Target efforts at highest users of emergency systems. House 10 LTH Native Americans.</p>
	State	<p>2008: House 10 LTH Native Americans. Reductions in inappropriate use of emergency room.</p>
	Community Providers	<p>2009: House 10 LTH Native Americans. Reductions in inappropriate use of emergency room.</p>
	Philanthropy	<p>2010-2016: Ongoing reductions in inappropriate use of emergency room. Better housing and health care outcomes for Native Americans.</p>

Recommendation Three: Increase number of youth outreach workers to suburban-area schools.

Many urban neighborhoods have access to street outreach workers, but suburban schools report a high demand for services to homeless youth. Increased outreach to these youth would improve outcomes in school, housing, and positive youth development. An outreach worker is a walking resource to assist youth in finding housing, connecting to employment, or returning home.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Create suburban youth outreach teams to serve 300 youth.</i></p>	<p>County</p> <p>State</p> <p>Community Providers</p>	<p>2007- 2009: Establish outreach workers in Northern, Western, and Southern suburban Hennepin to serve 300 youth.</p>
	<p>Suburban school districts</p> <p>Suburban Human Service Boards</p>	<p>2010-2016: Maintain outreach as needed.</p>

GOAL THREE: DEVELOP HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

The most critical issue facing all people experiencing homelessness is the lack of safe and stable housing. Many people experiencing homelessness will also need support services to maintain housing. Permanent supportive housing is, by all accounts, one of the most effective tools for ending homelessness, for those who have been homeless for a long period of time or have multiple barriers to housing. Through supportive housing, affordable housing is linked with services that help people live more stable, productive lives. It can be either project-based or scattered-site housing. It is permanent because it does not limit the tenant's stay; rather, the individual household decides when to leave.

Recommendation One: Preserve current stock of affordable and supportive housing, create 5,000 new “housing opportunities” for youth, singles, and families with children over the 10-year implementation period of the plan, and provide the support services people need to maintain housing stability.

To achieve housing stability and prevent further homelessness, it is critical that we preserve the affordable and supportive housing that we have. This will take strong commitment from all partners, especially the federal government. The preservation of federal funding for both housing and services will be essential for the success of this plan.

New “housing opportunities” refers to both the production of new units and access to units in the existing market. 2,000 of these housing opportunities will be new units. New units includes acquisition/rehab, mixed-income developments, and set asides for people experiencing homelessness. The rest of the opportunities will rely on the existing housing market through the strategic use of tenant-based rental assistance (TBR) and mobile support services. Most of the housing opportunities will be linked to support services, consistent with the State plan. Efforts will be made to increase housing accessibility to households with significant housing barriers. The State Business Plan calls for the creation of 4,000 housing opportunities for long-term homeless individuals and families by 2010.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Produce 910 supportive housing opportunities and 60 shelter beds for youth. 40% of the housing opportunities will be new units, 60% will be achieved through “Host Homes” and Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBR). 30% of total opportunities will be targeted to long-term homeless youth.</i></p>	Federal Government	<p>2007: 90 housing opportunities (new units and TBR), 10 host homes, 30 shelter beds (Mpls).</p>
	State	
	County	
	Cities	<p>2008: 90 housing opportunities (new units and TBR), 10 host homes, 15 shelter beds (Suburbs).</p>
	Philanthropy	
	Business Community	
	Faith Community	<p>2009: 90 housing opportunities (new units and TBR), 10 host homes, 15 shelter beds (Suburbs).</p>
	Landlords	
	Non-profit Developers	<p>2010-2016: 580 housing opportunities and 30 host homes.</p>
	Providers	
MCAN		
Homeless Youth Action Group		

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Produce 2,000 new housing opportunities for single adults. 40% will be new units. 60% of these opportunities will be developed through the use of existing housing stock and rental subsidies. Expanded use of the “housing first” model will also be applied. 50 % of total opportunities will be targeted to long-term homeless.</i></p>	Federal Government	2007: 75 new units and 175 TBR for Long-Term Homeless.
	State	
	County	2008: 75 new units and 175 TBR for Long-Term Homeless.
	Cities	
	Philanthropy	2009: 75 new units and 175 TBR for Long-Term Homeless.
Business Community		
Faith Community		
Landlords	2010-2016: 1,250 housing opportunities for all single adults.	
Non-profit Developers		
Providers		

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Produce 2,090 new housing opportunities for families. 40% of these will be new units and 60% will be scattered site apartments with tenant based rental assistance. 30% of total opportunities will be targeted to long-term homeless families.</i></p> <p><i>Housing and service opportunities should also address the needs of families in diverse family structures, including extended families living together and teen mothers.</i></p>	Federal Government	2007: 90 new units and 300 TBR for both LTH and STH.
	State	2008: 90 new units and 300 TBR for both LTH and STH.
	County	2009: 90 new units and 300 TBR for both LTH and STH.
	Cities	2010-2016: 920 housing opportunities for all families.
	Philanthropy	
	Business Community	
	Faith Community	
	Landlords	
	Non-profit Developers	
	Providers	

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Ensure the preservation of current affordable and supportive housing, including public housing.</i></p>	<p>Public/Private Community Land Trusts</p>	<p>2007-2016: Track the gain and loss of affordable and supportive housing.</p> <p>Support the work of the Stewardship Council.</p> <p>Identify funding sources to preserve current affordable and supportive housing.</p> <p>Identify barriers/obstacles that impede the production of or sustainability of affordable and supportive housing.</p>

Recommendation Two: Promote housing opportunities that create more locational choice and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) for homeless singles, families, and youth.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Work with cities to identify housing opportunity sites in Hennepin County.</i></p>	<p>Municipalities</p> <p>County</p> <p>Met Council</p> <p>MN Department of Transportation</p>	<p>2007: Establish a partnership with municipalities to develop procedures to identify housing opportunities. Engage suburban staff and mayors in dialogue about opportunity sites.</p>
	<p>Land Trusts</p> <p>Developers</p>	<p>2008: Encourage partnerships between municipalities, developers and providers to create mixed-income housing opportunities.</p>
<p><i>Encourage municipalities to promote higher density affordable and mixed-income housing along their transit corridors.</i></p>	<p>Municipalities</p> <p>County</p>	<p>2007 - 2008: County will collaborate with municipalities to hold Transit Oriented Development forums. Funders will consider amending their criteria to give priority to development close to transit.</p>

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Change state and county program criteria to award additional points in competitive funding processes for homeless projects in non-impacted areas (Minneapolis funding resources are already targeted to non-impacted areas.)</i></p>	<p>Municipalities</p> <p>County</p> <p>State</p> <p>Northwest Hennepin Human Services Council (NWHHSC)</p>	<p>2007: Review criteria for allocation of housing funds.</p>
	<p>Hennepin South Services Collaborative (HSSC)</p>	<p>2008: Amend criteria to support goals of the ten year plan.</p>

Recommendation Three: Develop and maintain good landlord relationships to enhance capacity for utilizing existing private housing market.

Private landlords are more likely to house people experiencing homelessness with additional barriers, such as unlawful detainers or criminal histories, if there is some assurance that there is someone who will intervene if necessary and that potential costs, such as apartment repairs and evictions, will be covered.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Develop a \$1 million annual Housing Risk Pool and a “point of contact” for landlords.</i></p>	County	<p>2007: Explore funding sources.</p>
	State	
	Business	<p>2008: Establish fund and develop “points of contact” (designated people) for landlords to call to receive assistance (tenancy supports).</p>
Philanthropy		
Realtor Associations		
<p><i>Coordinate efforts with existing tenant education providers to reduce utilization of risk pool.</i></p>	Landlords	<p>2009: Increase in numbers of people experiencing homelessness accessing the private housing market.</p>
	Police Dept’s Rental Owner Virtual Block Club	
<p><i>Coordinate efforts with existing tenant education providers to reduce utilization of risk pool.</i></p>	Providers	<p>2008: Mandatory tenant training for all tenants potentially supported by this fund.</p>
	County	

Recommendation Four: Increase the support that homeless families receive from the neighborhoods/communities to which they are moving.

When homeless families move into a new neighborhood, they are often isolated from the community, especially if they have chosen a location with which they are not very familiar. This recommendation aims to build better connections for these families by engaging diverse faith communities throughout Hennepin County for support. Faith communities would not be asked to provide social services or to move families into their homes. They would, however, assist in some of the “start-up” costs for a family, including damage deposits, furnishings, and supplies. More importantly, they would provide the kinds of community supports that help welcome the family into the community, such as invitations to activities and meals, etc. This kind of connection would, of course, depend on the family’s desires.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Pilot a family community support program that will provide a family with the support of a local faith community when they move into a neighborhood.</i></p>	United Way	<p>2007: Identify a community lead for this project and identify diverse faith communities throughout Hennepin County interested in participating. The focus will be on communities where families are being placed into scattered or single-site housing within that community.</p>
	Faith Communities	
	Providers	<p>2008: Implement Pilot with two or three faith communities.</p>
		<p>2009: Expand based on pilot evaluation.</p>
		<p>2010-2016: Increase in faith community involvement. Increase in locational choice for families. Increase in housing stability and satisfaction for families.</p>

Recommendation Five: Increase the number of homeless and at-risk youth receiving housing assistance and supports.

Many homeless youth do not have the option of reunifying with family members due to the threat of continued abuse, neglect, or severe conflict. Youth often need assistance in locating housing and developing skills in order to obtain and maintain housing. Community programs offering supportive or transitional housing often have long waiting lists for youth to obtain a housing case manager.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Increase case management to serve an additional 90 youth per year.</i></p>	Government	2007: Serve 90 additional youth through case management.
	Community Providers	2008: Serve 90 additional youth through case management.
	Philanthropy	2009: Serve 90 additional youth through case management.
		2010-2016: Case management sufficient to meet need.

Recommendation Six: Expand ability to rapidly re-house more single adults, underserved families, and youth.

Hennepin County’s Rapid Exit program is nationally recognized for its effectiveness in rapidly re-housing families and singles in shelter. The program focuses services by client need (those with the highest needs get the most services) and currently serves 600 families and about 45 long-term homeless singles adults. The average cost for a family is \$900, and the average cost per single is \$500. Costs include some minimal rental assistance and supports to assist the family or single adult in maintaining their housing. Staff and providers have identified the need to expand this model to serve more single adults and older youth, as well as families not currently served. It is important to note that Supportive Housing Program (SHP) funding from the federal government is at risk. This is the funding that pays for the services and placement connected to Rapid Exit. If HUD moves away from funding services, the federal government must identify how these critical costs will be covered.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<i>Expand Hennepin County's Rapid Exit Program.</i>	HUD	2007: Expand screening and referral process for singles and high-needs families. 50 additional high-needs families served. 125 additional singles and older youth served.
	State	
	County	2008: Expand screening and referral process for singles and high-needs families. 50 additional high-needs families served. 125 additional singles and older youth served.
	Providers	2009: Maintain new service levels.
		2010-2016: Gradually reduce with reduction in shelter use.

Recommendation Seven: Track and effectively communicate vacancies in existing affordable and supportive housing for youth, singles, and families with children in Hennepin County.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<i>Expand on existing housing inventory models to develop the most effective tool for connecting people experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County to appropriate housing.</i>	County	2007: Identify lead entities, secure funding, and design Hennepin County model.
	United Way	2008: Pilot new model.
	Housing Link	
	Housing Resource Centers	2009: Evaluation and implementation of new model.
	HMIS administrators	2010-2016: People experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County and providers working with them have immediate access to vacancy information for affordable and supportive housing throughout the county.

Recommendation Eight: Reduce regulatory barriers to developing a variety of housing options.

Current municipal zoning codes throughout Hennepin County create barriers to the development of a variety of housing opportunities. For example, cities do not allow for the development of smaller units with shared kitchens and/or bathrooms. Many people experiencing homelessness prefer these smaller, cost-effective units with on-site services. Permanent supportive housing may be further restricted by spacing rules and unit limits. Cities are encouraged to seek ways to eliminate these barriers.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Request that municipalities reflect in their Comprehensive Plans a commitment to examine their zoning codes and ordinances concerning small units, supportive housing restrictions, SRO housing, etc. to ensure a higher flexibility of housing options.</i></p>	<p>Cities County Developers</p>	<p>2007: Coordinate Comprehensive Plan efforts to include commitments to reduce regulatory barriers. Provide technical assistance to cities as needed.</p>
	<p>2008: Seek regulatory changes.</p>	

GOAL FOUR: IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY

While the State of Minnesota, Hennepin County and Minneapolis have a wide array of services available to people experiencing homelessness, increasing the accessibility of these services would go a long way in assisting people to escape homelessness and maintain housing. These recommendations will improve access to mainstream resources and the efficiency of current service delivery, as well as the quantity and quality of available services.

Recommendation One: Connect people to the services they need to escape homelessness.

The action steps under this recommendation include proven strategies that connect people experiencing homelessness to the services they need through centralized access, comprehensive service mapping, and effective delivery. This year, Hennepin County and Minneapolis launched Project Homeless Connect, a “one-stop-shop” event to connect people experiencing homelessness to the variety of services they need. The first two events were highly successful, proving that greater efficiency is gained for both the guest and the provider by co-locating multiple services in one location. These events connected dozens of people to housing and employment, as well as hundreds to benefits, services, and medical care. Focus groups with people experiencing homelessness revealed the need for a place to go to get connected to employment and other services that could help them escape homelessness, essentially Project Homeless Connect, on a daily basis.

People experiencing homelessness with severe and persistent mental illness, brain injury, or other special needs are often reluctant or unable to seek out the services they need. They are often eligible for public benefits that they are either unaware of or uncertain of how to pursue. In addition, homeless veterans are not always identified and connected to the veteran specific providers that could ensure they get the services they are eligible for. Providers have identified the need for “System Navigators” to assist individuals in connecting to services, obtaining the public benefits they are eligible for, and finding alternative housing, if necessary. Compared with county case managers, these individuals would have lower “case loads,” thorough knowledge of both public and private services available, and would be able to spend more time literally walking people through the system. Culturally competent System Navigators would provide educational outreach to communities of color and immigrants to ensure they know of the services available to them.

Drop-in services offer youth a safe space to find clothing, food, health care, and referrals to community services. Recent cuts in federal, state, and county services have negatively impacted the availability of drop-in services for youth. There is currently one major drop-in center in Minneapolis, and it offers services for only five hours each day. A best practice for ending youth homelessness is for providers to develop trusting relationships with youth. Drop-in staff offer connections to resources and build trusting relationships with youth. Expanding current drop-in hours will connect more youth to the services they need.

Finally, no child care options currently exist for parents who need in-patient treatment (medical, mental health, chemical health) but lack a viable alternative for their children. Providing this service will benefit both the parents and the children. If a non-punitive child care option exists, parents will be more likely to seek the help that they need, and in turn be able to provide better care for their children.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Open a daytime “Opportunity Center” where people experiencing homelessness can connect with multiple services in one location.</i></p>	Government	2007: Identify location.
	Providers	2008: Identify resources.
	Suburban Human Service Boards	2009: Open center.
	People experiencing homelessness Private Sector	2010-2016: People connecting to services to escape homelessness. Reduction in people experiencing homelessness on the streets during the day.
<p><i>Develop an inventory or “map” of all services available to families with children, unaccompanied youth, and single adults. There should be “no wrong door” to accessing services.</i></p>	United Way	2007: Identify lead entities, begin planning process, and access resources needed.
	County	2008: Secure resources and begin “mapping.”
	Providers	2009: Cross-train providers, county staff, and system navigators to use map.
		2010-2016: People are connected to the services they need to escape homelessness.
<p><i>Identify “System Navigators” to assist families, individuals and youth to obtain appropriate services and benefits and provide ongoing support.</i></p>	Providers	2007: Define and establish System Navigator positions; Determine how to integrate Navigators into the service system; Develop procedures and protocols to connect people experiencing homelessness to System Navigators.
	County	
		2008: Launch pilot with 4-6 service navigators. 2009: Evaluate/potential expansion.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Increase the availability of drop-in services for homeless youth.</i></p>	Youth Providers	2007: Identify funding.
	County	2008: Expand drop-in service hours to 1PM-10PM daily (a 38 hour per week increase from current system).
	City of Minneapolis	2009: More youth accessing services.
	Philanthropy Business	2010-2016: Reduction of youth on the streets. Reduction of youth homelessness.
<p><i>Increase access to chemical dependency assessments and treatment for youth, singles, and parents with children.</i></p>	Federal Government	2007: Increase pool of staff in non-profits trained to do Rule 25 assessments on site. Develop training for staff at treatment programs (particularly youth suburban programs) to work more effectively with people who are experiencing homelessness.
	County	2008: More people able to access CD treatment. Certified CD counselors in homeless youth serving agencies.
	State	2009: Decreases in drug overdoses, ER visits for drug related emergencies, and incarceration rates for people experiencing homelessness. Increase in successful completion of drug and alcohol treatment. Decrease in number of homeless youth entering adulthood identified as chemically dependent.
	Faith communities	2010-2016: Reductions in length and frequency of chemical dependency among people experiencing homelessness.
	Community-based Organizations	

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Identify veterans at all homeless service and mainstream health locations in order to connect them to veteran specific services. There should be no “wrong door.”</i></p> <p><i>Increase collaboration between the Veterans Administration and community-based agencies to ensure full utilization of federal VA resources.</i></p>	Providers Vets organizations Veterans Administration	2007: Training system in place to assist providers in identifying veterans and connecting them to veteran specific providers.
	Community-based agencies Government	2008: All homeless veterans will be aware of the benefits and services available to them.
<p><i>Encourage early intervention by providing the option of care for children whose parents need in-patient treatment by developing models for non-punitive options for interim child care.</i></p>	County Community Organizations Faith Community	2007: Develop models. 2008: Begin implementation. 2009: More parents accessing the care they need.

GOAL FIVE: BUILD CAPACITY FOR SELF-SUPPORT

People experiencing homelessness are often isolated from mainstream resources, jobs, and education. Employment, along with housing, is essential to building stability. These recommendations focus on employment and educational services for youth, families with children, and single adults and increase access to mainstream resources and transportation.

Recommendation One: Connect homeless adults with living wage jobs, education and job-training.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Employment specialists will match more homeless adults to jobs through the establishment of employer networks.</i></p>	City of Minneapolis	<p>2007: 200 adults experiencing homelessness will find employment paying \$10 or more.</p>
	Workforce centers	<p>2008: 200 adults experiencing homelessness will find employment paying \$10 or more.</p>
	Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)	<p>2009: 200 adults experiencing homelessness will find employment paying \$10 or more.</p>
	Employers	
<p><i>City and County support a model hiring process to continue their commitment to prevent any discrimination against job applicants with a criminal record (according to state law).</i></p>	Providers	
	United Way	
	African American Mens Project	
	Suburban Human Service Boards	
<p><i>City and County support a model hiring process to continue their commitment to prevent any discrimination against job applicants with a criminal record (according to state law).</i></p>	City	<p>2007: City and County support model hiring process.</p>
	County	<p>2008: Increase in public employment for people experiencing homelessness.</p>
	State	<p>2009: Increase in public employment for people experiencing homelessness.</p>
	Council on Crime and Justice	

Recommendation Two: Connect homeless and at-risk youth, ages 16-21, with education, job training, and employment.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Identify existing or additional education/employment specialists to increase focus on employment and schooling for homeless youth.</i></p>	City of Minneapolis	<p>2007: Engage 150 homeless, unaccompanied youth with education or employment opportunities.</p>
	County Social Services	<p>2008: Engage 150 homeless, unaccompanied youth with education or employment opportunities.</p>
	Nonprofit Community	<p>2009: Engage 150 homeless, unaccompanied youth with education or employment opportunities. Increased number of youth who have the skills to live independently.</p>
	Urban and Suburban School Counselors	<p>2010-2016: Reduction in length of stay in shelters and transitional living programs. Greater ability for youth to stabilize in independent living.</p>
	United Way Philanthropy	
<p><i>Develop a pilot youth employment program with private sector employers in Hennepin County, such as the hospitality industry.</i></p>	Employers	<p>2007: Design the pilot.</p>
	Youth providers	<p>2008: Pilot with three sites.</p>
	HIRED	<p>2009: Evaluate pilot.</p>
	City of Minneapolis	<p>2010-2016: Add additional sites.</p>

Recommendation Three: Enhance the “financial literacy” of singles, families, and youth.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Offer budgeting and money management education to people experiencing homelessness.</i></p>	Financial institutions	<p>2007: Identify partners.</p>
	Lutheran Social Services	<p>2008: Increased financial education opportunities for people experiencing homelessness.</p>
	Providers Volunteers	<p>2009: Increased financial education opportunities for people experiencing homelessness.</p>

Recommendation Four: Ensure that eligible individuals and families apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Working Family Credit.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Increase education and outreach/awareness.</i></p>	United Way	<p>2007: Partners promote EITC and free tax-site services. Provide services at Project Homeless Connect.</p>
	Children’s Defense Fund	<p>2008: Increase in applications for EITC. Increased capacity of free tax-site services.</p>
	IRS	<p>2009: Increase in applications for EITC. Increased capacity of free tax-site services.</p>

Recommendation Five: Increase access to transportation for youth, families with children, and single adults so they can keep appointments, maintain or find employment, and get to school.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Develop transportation subsidies or discounts from Metro Transit.</i></p>	County	<p>2007: Explore funding sources. Provide increased transportation assistance at Project Homeless Connect.</p>
	City of Minneapolis	
	Nonprofit Community	<p>2008: Develop subsidies or discounts.</p>
	Suburban Human Service Boards	<p>2009: Reduction in frequency of “transportation” named as major barrier to employment in surveys (Wilder, Project Homeless Connect, etc.)</p>
State-Met Council		
Faith Communities		
	Private Sector	
	Metro Transit	
	Bike Programs	

GOAL SIX: IMPLEMENT SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

Many recommendations emerging from this community process were aimed at improving the efficacy of our current system, collaboration throughout the system, and establishing policies and procedures that would increase the ability for people to escape homelessness.

Recommendation One: Improve effectiveness of current shelter system.

There is great variability in use of space and delivery of service within our current shelter network. While one shelter is underutilized, other shelters are overflowing. While family shelters offer a comprehensive continuum of care from intake to rapid exit, single adult shelters and secure waiting areas typically do not.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Ensure efficient use of current shelter capacity.</i></p>	Providers	<p>2007: Planning group developed to design/recommend more efficient system.</p>
	County	
	Shelter Providers	
	Action Association	<p>Creation of a dedicated space at underutilized family shelter for homeless youth with youth appropriate services (would reduce the need for additional shelter beds for youth).</p>
	Homeless Against Homelessness	<p>Make no county referrals to adult shelters for anyone 21 years or younger unless youth self-refers.</p>
People Experiencing Homelessness	<p>2008: Recommendations for more efficient system implemented.</p>	

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<i>Provide uniform, quality service delivery to all guests in shelters.</i>	County	2007: Design a central shelter intake and triage system for single adults with rapid exit screener.
	Community Providers	2008: Implement system.
		2009: More single adults accessing services, including rapid exit.

Recommendation Two: Improve collaboration among family providers throughout Hennepin County.

Public and non-profit providers have expressed the need to convene on a regular basis to collaborate and address issues of family homelessness.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<i>Establish a “Family Housing and Services Network.”</i>	Providers	2007: Establish network.
	County	
	Family Housing Fund	2008: Enhanced collaboration and effectiveness of family system.

Recommendation Three: Enhance truancy interventions for at-risk and homeless youth.

Youth identified as truant and homeless should be offered supportive services through Hennepin County and community-based organizations. This recommendation builds upon current truancy efforts to better identify homeless youth, increase their school stability, coordinate education with community-based programs, provide cross-training, develop protocols requiring referrals when necessary, and decriminalize truancy when due to family emergency.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Develop better collaborations and protocols to intervene with truant homeless youth.</i></p>	<p>County Attorney’s Office</p> <p>Minneapolis and Suburban School Districts</p>	<p>2007: Develop new collaboration with the County Attorney’s Office and assess best way to enhance current activities to better reach homeless or at-risk youth.</p>
	<p>Community Providers</p> <p>Criminal Justice Coordinating Council</p>	<p>2008: Implementation.</p>
	<p>Hennepin County Community Corrections</p> <p>Hennepin County Strategic Initiative for Community Engagement – School Success Program</p>	<p>2009: Reductions in truancy among homeless youth and better access to services.</p>
	<p>Cities</p> <p>Urban League</p>	<p>2010-2016: Data collection system in place for truancy information. Decrease in number of school days missed by highly mobile or homeless youth.</p>

Recommendation Four: Enhance cultural competency across the system to ensure access to quality services for all groups. Communities of color, immigrants, GLBT individuals, and people with a variety of physical and mental health barriers are overrepresented in the homeless community. Housing and services must be appropriate to adequately address their needs.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Develop a “Cultural Competency Advisory Board.”</i></p>	<p>Community experts on cultural competency</p>	<p>2007: Seek advice from communities of color and other disenfranchised groups on how best to develop cultural competency within the initiative to end homelessness. Establish structure that responds to their advice.</p>
		<p>2008: Evaluation of current system.</p>
		<p>2009: Recommendations and training of providers.</p>
		<p>2010-2016: Improved services and outcomes for communities of color and other disenfranchised groups.</p>

Recommendation Five: Offer increased access to financial assistance for youth.

Many homeless youth have experienced abuse and neglect and distrust adult systems. Additionally, youth lack experience in how to seek public assistance. These factors make referrals to Hennepin County Economic Assistance daunting for most youth. Community-based programs that youth trust, could offer immediate access to applications for public assistance. Immediate needs of youth can be met with Emergency Assistance in the form of rental assistance or food. Some youth do not meet current eligibility criteria and this prolongs their homeless episode. Others use their three months of eligibility for food before stabilizing in permanent housing and their stability in that housing can be threatened when basic needs can't be met. Expanding the ability for homeless youth to use EA will further assist in homeless prevention and reduced length of stay in the system.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<i>Extend food stamps past 3 months for youth from 18 years through their 21st year if the youth is employed or going to school part-time.</i>	Lobbyists Legislators County	TBD
<i>Create flexible eligibility criteria for Emergency Assistance for youth by allowing youth advocates and case workers an opportunity to document their informal emancipation from parents or other guardians.</i>	Lobbyists Legislators County	TBD
<i>Allow non-profit shelter, housing, and drop-in personnel to “fast-track” the application process for public assistance benefits.</i>	County Providers	TBD
<i>Allow minors to keep first 30 days of public assistance while in shelter.</i>		TBD

Recommendation Six: Collaborate with federal, state and metro-wide efforts to end homelessness.

The State of Minnesota has developed a Business Plan to End Long-Term Homelessness. Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul have developed both a plan to end long-term homelessness and, more recently, a plan to end homelessness. Southeastern Minnesota has a plan to address long-term homelessness, Duluth/St. Louis County is in the process of developing a plan, and other regions of the state will likely follow suit. In order to raise public awareness of the issue and solutions and to call forth the maximum response to these efforts from the public and from decision-makers in the private, public and nonprofit communities, the plans must be aligned and those working on the plans must collaborate and reinforce each other's work. Over the past year, great strides have been made to collaborate across the seven-county metro region and with the State of Minnesota. Continued collaboration will enhance everyone's efforts and ensure that people who are homeless receive the attention and resources they need.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<i>Align policies and goals of local, state and federal plans.</i>	State Metro counties MESH	2007-2009: Maintain existing avenues for regional communication and collaboration. Cities and county participate in regional efforts.

Recommendation Seven: Recommend to the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County an annual state and federal legislative agenda that supports the goals of this plan.

Heading Home Hennepin's Executive Committee will annually recommend a comprehensive legislative agenda.

Since the 2007 legislative session will focus on the state budget for the coming biennium, the Commission has highlighted several funding priorities:

- Expansion of Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program
- Outreach funding
- Supportive housing, support services, and rental assistance

The Commission also identified a series of policy priorities, including:

- Waive GED testing fees for homeless individuals
- Ensure quality child care support for families exiting homelessness
- Classify arrest records not leading to conviction as private information, not accessible to third parties except law enforcement and criminal justice agencies
- Support Runaway and Homeless Youth Act
- Improve discharge planning from state corrections
- Expand public assistance eligibility for homeless unaccompanied youth

Recommendation Eight: Develop a system to track and evaluate progress on the Ten –Year Plan.

The ability to gather accurate data to assess current baseline information and evaluate the benchmarks in this plan will be critical.

Action	Partners	Benchmarks
<p><i>Develop baseline data and evaluation measures.</i></p> <p><i>Prepare annual evaluation.</i></p>	<p>County and City</p> <p>University of MN</p> <p>Wilder</p> <p>Philanthropy</p>	<p>2007 – 2009: Develop process for collecting baseline data. Evaluate benchmarks and report progress.</p>

Financing the Plan

The Finance Committee of the Commission was chaired by Mike Ciresi and consisted of finance professionals from the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Minnesota Housing, Minnesota Department of Human Services, as well as the Minnesota Director for Ending Long Term Homelessness, community service providers, housing developers, and leaders from the philanthropic sector.

While it is clear that ending homelessness will result in a declining need for spending on shelters, detox facilities, and other services now consumed by people who are homeless, the Commission recognizes that the strategies outlined in its report will require increased funding, especially in the first few years as the plan is launched. The Commission estimated the likely cost of each proposed activity and then reviewed current resources available for funding. The following table shows the resulting Financing Plan, by strategy, for the first three years of implementation:

Financing Plan Phase I: 2007-2009			
Strategies	Costs	Existing and Projected Resources	Gap
Prevention	\$5,600,000	\$2,100,000	\$3,500,000
Outreach	\$1,760,000	\$260,000	\$1,500,000
Housing and Support Services	\$135,000,000	\$100,000,000*	\$35,000,000
Service Delivery	\$2,500,000	-	\$2,500,000
Self-Support	\$1,500,000	-	\$1,500,000
System Improvements	\$1,000,000	-	\$1,000,000
Total	\$147,100,000	\$102,100,000	\$45,000,000

Notes

* These resources include \$7.8 million annually from the City of Minneapolis (AHTF and Tax Credits), \$1.25 million annually from Hennepin County (HOME and AHIF), \$11.6 million annually from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (GO bonds, operating and rental assistance, Housing Trust Fund, and ELHIF), \$0.5 million annually from HUD Continuum of Care (bonus funding only), \$7.5 million dollars annually from private and philanthropy organizations, and \$14 million for projected pipeline projects.

- The funding gap is calculated by comparing existing and projected resources with projected costs.
- Existing public and private resources are assumed to remain at current funding levels plus the cost of inflation (2 percent to 5 percent annually).
- Existing and projected resources include federal, state, county, city, private, and philanthropic sources.
- Projections to be reviewed and revised during implementation to reflect results from prevention efforts and changing economic, funding, and market conditions.
- For additional assumptions and background for the financing plan, see Appendix B.

Financing Strategies

The Commission reviewed potential sources of additional funding for the activities recommended in this report. The following suggestions are intended to provide an initial framework for possible financing strategies to be pursued as the plan is implemented. These strategies are subject to further analysis and examination, and are intended to reflect a wide-ranging list of creative financing opportunities.

The financing plan assumes that all existing sources will continue at current funding levels and that there are ongoing efforts to preserve those funding levels. It is expected that additional funding will include a wide array of federal, state, county, local, and private funds from both the philanthropic and business communities.

The Commission suggests exploring the following potential sources for additional funding:

- An ongoing, dedicated revenue source for a Hennepin County *Homeless Trust Fund (HTF) program concept for capital and operating/rental assistance funding*. Potential strategies (subject to further evaluation) could include: County and/or City levy funds, document recording fees, condo conversion fees, hotel/motel tax, real estate transfer tax, parking revenues, surcharge on tickets for sporting events, developer impact fees, demolition permit fees, licensing or franchise surcharges, assessments on General Obligation (GO) Bonds, housing re-inspection fees, and/or entertainment (convention center) tax. Levy funds may be pursued as a stand-alone funding source, separate from the trust fund concept.

- State funds for capital costs, operating support, rental assistance and services. The state administration and legislature have supported affordable housing initiatives for many years and, as part of the initiative to end long-term homelessness, have allocated bonding dollars for capital costs of supportive housing and appropriated funds specifically for services to people experiencing long-term homelessness. The Commission recommends working with the Hennepin County legislative delegation and others to develop a variety of ways to increase state funding to support the Plan.
- Policies to *capture surplus Tax Increment Financing (TIF)*. As provided in Minnesota statutes Section 469.176, Subd. 4k and 469.1763 Subd 2, a portion of tax increment from TIF districts (up to 35%) may be used to assist qualified low income housing throughout the city or suburb.
- *Non-financial strategies/approaches*, including, for example, a set-aside of public housing units and vouchers (HUD, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) and Met Council), expanded public housing move-up programs to free up public housing units for homeless, donation of public land (County tax forfeit, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRRA), County Housing Community Works parcels, City, Minnesota Department of Transportation), donation of vacated schools and school sites, and acquisition of closed nursing homes (County and City) for conversion to new housing or shelter.
- *Underutilized federal funding* and advocate for new/increased federal funding, including both HUD public housing and affordable/homeless housing sources, as well as from other federal agencies (Veteran Affairs (VA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), etc.).
- Increased investment of private funds from both the philanthropic and business sectors. Create and maximize opportunities for private funding.
- An appropriate working group structure to *conduct the financial analysis and fully develop the detailed financing strategies* outlined in recommendations 1-6 above. The working group should include the appropriate mix of city and county housing, service and finance staff, plus a new County administrator staff position.

Implementing the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness

The Ten Year Plan provides goals, recommendations, and action steps to end homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County within a specific and phased timeframe. It is a call-to-action to a broad group of community stakeholders, where each will have a role to play in the successful implementation of the Plan. The following structure is recommended to maintain oversight and accountability, to provide the flexibility to respond to changing environments, to build in critical community feedback at every stage, to identify and help garner the resources required, and to evaluate and report progress on an annual basis. The goal is to establish a workable structure that provides clear division of responsibilities and keeps Plan implementation on schedule. The recommended implementation team structure is as follows:

- Executive Committee: Will provide overall management of Plan implementation, ensuring timely implementation of action steps, holding partners accountable, making course corrections when necessary (consistent with policy goals), and reporting progress annually to the public and elected officials.
- City/County Coordinator to End Homelessness: Will lead implementation efforts, working with city and county staff and community partners, developing implementation strategies for each Plan recommendation, and ensuring that action steps move forward according to benchmarks. This position will also lead efforts to increase public education and awareness around issues relating to homelessness. The City/County Coordinator will report to the Executive Committee.
- Commission Work Groups: Will involve the energy, time and skills of community members and appropriate public and private partners to move commission recommendations forward. There will be work groups formed for each major goal area: Prevention, Outreach, Housing, Service Delivery, Self-Support, and Systems Improvements. The purpose of each working group will be to guide and integrate planning to ensure coordinated efforts to reach annual benchmarks. Chairs of each working group will report to the Coordinator to End Homelessness and the Executive Committee.
- Cultural Competency/Consumer Feedback Team: Will conduct focus groups with people experiencing homelessness to develop greater awareness and understanding of the barriers to housing and services faced by singles adults,

families with children, and youth. Particular attention will focus on people of color who are disproportionately represented within the homeless community. This team will include community experts on cultural competency and will work closely with the other teams on strategies and evaluation and report to the City/County Coordinator and to the Executive Committee.

- Finance Committee: Will identify financial needs and strategies to fund Plan implementation. Will work to align funding with other metro plans, the state plan, and federal resources and will coordinate and leverage additional public, private, and philanthropic support. This team will provide regular progress reports to the City/County Coordinator and to the Executive Committee.
- Evaluation Team: Will collect data, measure feedback, and assess overall progress on meeting the Plan recommendations and benchmarks. This team will report their findings to the City/County Coordinator and to the Executive Committee and will coordinate evaluation with metro local plans and the state plan.

Background

History of homelessness

Twenty-five years ago, homelessness in the United States was not wide-spread. Today, over two million Americans are homeless. The early 1980s saw the beginning of this new wave of homelessness, perpetuated by a number of systemic and social factors, including:

- Rising housing costs;
- Growing poverty;
- Decline in federal housing supports;
- Deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill;
- Lack of adequate supports for returning Vietnam veterans;
- Increased use of illegal drugs; and
- More single parent households.

Our nation has experienced episodic homelessness in the past, such as during the Great Depression. However, these periods of increased homelessness were generally connected to massive social or economic upheavals that uprooted large numbers of poor people. The current wave of homelessness is different because it seems to be resistant to economic trends. In the words of Nan Roman, President of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, “today’s homelessness is not caused by a particular social or economic cataclysm, but by the basic day-to-day economic challenges faced by those living in the bottom tier of the economy.”ⁱⁱⁱ Furthermore, the face of homelessness has changed drastically, as children are now the fastest growing portion of the homeless population.

Past efforts to address homelessness in Hennepin County

Multiple efforts to combat homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County over the past 25 years have been very fruitful, resulting in new policies and procedures and producing thousands of units of housing. Most notably, the development of supportive housing in this community has ended homelessness for hundreds of individuals and families. This plan seeks to build on these efforts and to take them one step further. While previous efforts ended homelessness for some, they did not result in a decrease in the total homeless population. Although hundreds of people were exiting homelessness into new housing opportunities, many more were falling into homelessness behind them. In addition, many people experiencing homelessness, especially those who had been on the streets for many years or were particularly “hard-to-serve,” were not able to access the housing that was available.

The movement to end homelessness across the nation

Hennepin County and Minneapolis are not alone in their effort to end homelessness. Two influential organizations, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and the nonprofit National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) have been at the forefront of this national movement. USICH, headed by Philip Mangano, coordinates the federal response to homelessness with state and local government, creating a partnership to reduce and end homelessness across this country.^{iv} The NAEH works to mobilize the nonprofit, public and private sectors of society through their own “Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.”^v

Thus far, over 200 states, counties, and cities nationwide have committed to ending homelessness by developing their own ten-year plans. In the short amount of time since these plans have been developed, these communities have found remarkable success in decreasing levels of homelessness. This year, Denver reported an 11% decline, New York City a 13% decline, Miami a 39% decline, San Francisco a 41% decline, and Philadelphia a 50% decline. All of these cities are in various stages of implementation of their 10-year plans. All report that reductions have occurred as a result of their efforts.

On the state level, Minnesota has shown its commitment by developing its own plan. Through its Business Plan to End Long-Term Homelessness, the State of Minnesota has already committed new resources to develop supportive housing for the long-term homeless population over the next several years.^{vi} These resources, which include funds for capital, operating and services costs, will create at least 4,000 additional supportive housing units. The plan will contribute significantly to Minneapolis and Hennepin County’s efforts to end homelessness, as about 47 percent of these units are expected to be funded in Minneapolis and Hennepin County.

On the local level, St. Paul and Ramsey County are currently the only communities in Minnesota to have begun implementation of a ten-year plan to end homelessness. Initially focusing on ending *long-term* homelessness, St. Paul and Ramsey County plan to dedicate substantial resources to develop over 900 units of additional supportive housing in the next ten years. Duluth and St. Louis County are also involved in the initial stages of developing and implementing their own plan to end homelessness.

Cost effectiveness of ending homelessness

Homelessness is not simply a moral issue in our society, it also represents a significant financial burden. Homeless people disproportionately use costly crisis services like emergency shelter, hospitals, mental health institutions, child protection, foster care, jails and prisons. Without stable housing, single adults and families struggling with issues such as mental illness and chemical dependency cost taxpayers a tremendous amount of money while ultimately not getting the help they need to become stable and self-sufficient.

- An extensive cost evaluation of the supportive housing program in New York City conducted by a research team at the University of Pennsylvania found that the average homeless mentally ill person cost about \$40,449 per year in emergency interventions. For every unit of supportive housing the public ***saved* approximately \$16,282 in reduced services per year.**
- Experts in Denver found that **providing housing and support services** for a chronically homeless person **costs about one third** of the cost of providing emergency services to a person living on the street.
- A study by the Corporation for Supportive Housing of two supportive housing projects in San Francisco found that following entry into the program, participants' **use of emergency room services fell 58 percent**, their **use of inpatient beds fell 57 percent**, and their **hospital emergency costs fell 47 percent.**
- According to the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), the annual cost of keeping a child in foster care is approximately \$45,000. The CWLA estimates the cost of preserving a family in permanent supportive housing averages \$9,000 per year, for a **savings of over \$30,000 a year.**
- A study of 43 families in two supportive housing projects in Hennepin County found that costs to Child, Family and Adult Services after entering supportive housing the **cost of providing six months of crisis services went down by \$6,200 per family.**

Research has found that providing persons experiencing homelessness with stable housing and support services greatly reduces the need for costly crisis care.

SOURCES: Catholic Charities, *Testimony on Homeless Families Before House Committee on Financial Services' Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity*, July 13, 2004.

Culhane, Dennis P., Stephen Metraux, and Trevor Hadley, *The Impact of Supportive Housing for Homeless People with Severe Mental Illness on the Utilization of the Public Health, Corrections, and Emergency Shelter Systems: The New York-New York Initiative*. Center for Mental Health Policy and Services Research, University of Pennsylvania, Housing Policy Debate, Fannie Mae Foundation. May, 2001.

Hennepin County, "Summary of Key Research Findings on Cost-Effectiveness of Two Supportive Housing Programs for Families," April 2003.

Pruscio, Tony for Corporation for Supportive Housing, *Supportive Housing and its Impact on the Public Health Crisis of Homelessness*, 2000.

Hennepin County's community planning process

In March, 2006 the Minneapolis/Hennepin County Commission to End Homelessness began its work. Made up of 70 community leaders representing faith communities, business, government, philanthropy, nonprofit service providers, advocates, and people experiencing homelessness, the group was charged with developing a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in 100 days.

The Commission to End Homelessness was co-chaired by Minneapolis Mayor RT Rybak, Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman, City Council Member Gary Schiff, Reverend James Gertmenian of Plymouth Congregational Church, and Attorney Mike Ciresi.

The Commission broke into four committees: Single Adults, Families with Children, Unaccompanied Youth, and Finance. The committees and subsequent work groups that were established engaged an even greater number of community stakeholders in the process. All told, nearly 200 community members participated in the process. Most importantly, people experiencing homelessness were involved at every level, serving on the Commission, participating in the work groups, and giving feedback through one-one-one interviews and focus groups. Their input was a key factor in the shaping of these recommendations.

Challenges and Opportunities

While homelessness is a complex problem, the goal of ending homelessness in Hennepin County *is* attainable. The success of the Minneapolis/Hennepin County plan will depend upon the serious commitment and coordination of all agencies and organizations involved in serving the homeless as well as the broader community. Furthermore, our ability to achieve the goals set forth in this plan is contingent on the continued and additional support of mainstream programs, such as housing vouchers and income supports. Gaining access to these programs is essential for most individuals and families who want to end the cycle of homelessness.

Understanding homelessness in Hennepin County

Estimating the number of homeless households

In order to be able to serve homeless singles, families, and youth most efficiently, and to eventually end homelessness, it is important to develop a comprehensive understanding of how many households are homeless. Counting the homeless can be difficult as many do not access the shelter system or government services. However, experts across the country and in Minnesota have developed several effective methods of measuring homelessness and have been able to calculate fairly reliable estimates.

The last national homeless count, conducted in 1996, estimated that between 2.3 and 3.5 million people experienced homelessness over the course of that year.^{vii} In Minnesota, a 2003 survey conducted by the Wilder Foundation found that there were approximately 8,800 homeless Minnesotans on one given night.

In Hennepin County, organizations such as the Wilder Foundation, the Minnesota State Department of Human Services, Hennepin County Human Services Department, Minneapolis Public Schools, and others all collect data on homeless households in Hennepin through a variety of methods.* One concern is that these surveys are likely to miss persons who do not access public systems, potentially undercounting the true number of homeless families and individuals. They are, however, the most reliable information available and can give us the best approximation of the scope of homelessness in Hennepin County. They are also regularly and uniformly measured. Therefore, the success of this plan can be captured, in part, by assessing whether or not these numbers significantly decrease by 2016.

Singles

- *Wilder survey.* Data from the Wilder survey suggests that there are approximately **1,410 single adults**[”] in Hennepin County who are homeless **on any given night**.
- *State quarterly shelter survey.* The Minnesota Department of Human Services collects data by surveying shelters across the state on the number of homeless persons they serve each quarter. The data collected in February 2006 suggests that approximately **1,636 single adults seek shelter on any given night**.

* For more information on the methodology of these surveys, refer to Appendix E.

” Single adult refers to anyone over the age of 18 who does not have any children or currently does not have custody of their children.

- *Outside street count.* In 2005, Catholic Charities developed a methodology and conducted an unduplicated point-in-time count of people on the streets. On one night in January, 2005, **304 unsheltered single adults** and 53 youth were sleeping outside in Minneapolis.

Families

- *Wilder Survey.* Wilder found that approximately **511 homeless families**, including **1,145 children** are homeless in Hennepin County **on one night**.
- *State Quarterly Shelter Survey.* The data from February 2006 suggests that approximately **662 homeless families** including **1,250 children** in Hennepin County **seek shelter on any given night**.
- *Emergency shelters in Hennepin County.* Data collected from emergency shelters indicates that approximately **967-1,303 homeless families were sheltered in one year** in 2005.
- *Minneapolis Public Schools.* Data gathered from Minneapolis and St. Louis Park schools suggests that there are approximately **1,993 homeless or highly mobile families** including **4,620 children and youth** in Hennepin County **in one year, 2004-05**.

50 percent of adults with children under 17 do not have any of their children living with them.

(Statistics courtesy Wilder Research Foundation, 2003.)

Youth

The youth community estimates that approximately **3,500 youth** in Hennepin County **experience homelessness each year** to such a degree that they either seek support or warrant community intervention. This estimate is based on the following data:

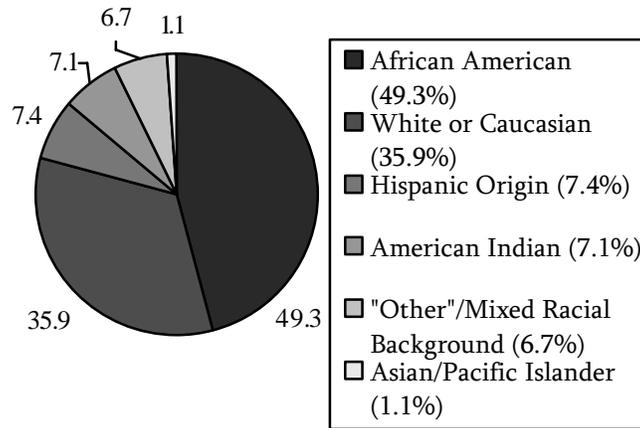
- *Nonprofits serving youth.* The largest nonprofit organizations that have a specific focus on homeless youth report serving **3,649 homeless youth in one year** in 2003, up 8 percent from 2002.

One in six homeless youth have a child of their own. This is up significantly from 2000 (16% in 2003, compared to 8% in 2000). Twenty-nine percent of young adults age 18 to 20 have children. Compared to the youth in the general population, homeless girls are twenty times more likely to become pregnant.

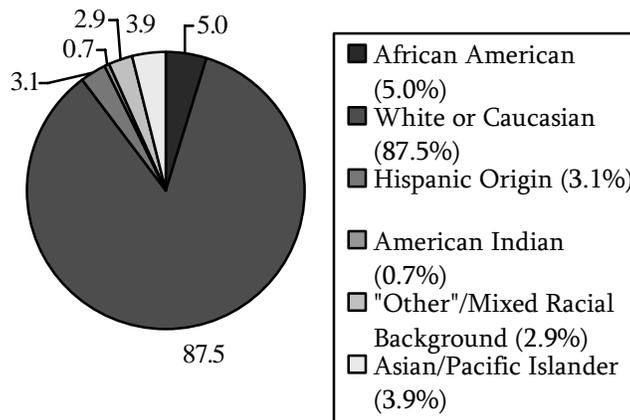
- *2000 Census.* Data from the 2000 census, combined with a formula developed by the Triangle Institute, suggests that there are approximately **5,330 homeless youth and young adults** (aged 10 to 21 years) in Hennepin County **in one year.**
- *The Minneapolis Curfew Center.* **In one year, 152 youth,** 14 percent of all youth served by the curfew center, **were not picked up by a parent and returned home.**
- *Runaway Statistics.* At least **1,800 youth** in Hennepin County **run away each year.**

Race and Homelessness

Race/Ethnicity of Homeless Adults in Minnesota



Race/Ethnicity of All Adults in Minnesota



Why are people of color more likely to become homeless?

Experts do not have a clear explanation for the fact that people of color, particularly African Americans and American Indians, are overrepresented among the homeless. The overrepresentation of people of color is most likely linked to several factors, including:

- Underemployment due to racial discrimination in the job market
- Lack of access to affordable housing due to racial discrimination in the housing market
- Overrepresentation of people of color in the criminal justice system
- Disparity in poverty rates

Gaining a better understanding of racial disparity among the homeless will ultimately lead to a better understanding of homelessness overall.

The Effects of Family Homelessness on Children

The saddest, most-prolonged aspect of homelessness is the effect it has on children. The experiences children face growing up in homeless families are traumatic—moving around, switching schools, social isolation, living in shelters—and can mean that they are more likely to become homeless themselves later in life. For this reason, the effects of family homelessness are multi-generational and long-lasting.

Most homeless children are relatively young; of those surveyed in the metro area, 41 percent of homeless children with their parents were age 5 or younger.

Fundamentally, homeless children need to be housed, but they often also have a myriad of other issues due to poverty, homelessness and instability that need to be addressed.

- 25 percent of homeless children have witnessed acts of violence within their family.^{viii}
- 62 percent of formerly homeless, extremely low-income children (ages 8 to 17 years old) have been exposed to violence. For children over 12, the rate of exposure to violence climbs to 83 percent.^{ix}
- 34 percent of school aged children who have been homeless have lived apart from their families.^x
- Homeless children aged 6 to 17 years struggle with high rates of mental health problems. For example, 47 percent have problems such as anxiety, depression, or withdrawal compared to 18 percent of other school-age children.^{xi}
- Homeless children are more likely than housed children to score highly on “internalizing problem behaviors” when assessed: anxiety, depression, withdrawn behavior, and somatic complaints (unexplained physical complaints).^{xii}
- Homeless children are physically abused at twice the rate of other children, and are three times as likely to be sexually abused.^{xiii}
- Homeless children usually do not have the same kinds of social opportunities as other children, and are often limited in their ability to make friends, to interact with others in a positive way, and to comprehend their role in the world. This fact inhibits their ability to become productive adults, impacting their education, employment prospects and parental potential.

Homeless children also have difficulty performing well in school— nationally, they are twice as likely to have to repeat a grade and only 77 percent attend school on a regular basis.^{xiv} They also suffer from emotional and behavioral problems that interfere with learning at almost three times the rate of other children.^{xv} Homeless children in Minnesota do have a higher rate of attending school, but a significant percentage display below grade-level academic performance. Of the homeless children and youth identified by the Minneapolis Public Schools, 11.5 percent were English Language Learners and 22.3 percent had an existing IEP for Special Education services, 10 percent higher than the district average.

Root causes of homelessness

- *Poverty.* One of the biggest risk factors for becoming homeless is being poor. Very poor people—those at lower than 50 percent of the poverty line—are at the greatest risk of becoming homeless.^{xvi} Furthermore, the gap between the rich and the poor in the United States continues to grow. A 2000 study found that the United States had the most unequal distribution of household income among 21 industrialized countries.^{xvii} Although minimum wage in Minnesota was recently increased to \$6.15/hour, it still has not kept up with inflation: Adjusting for inflation, a minimum wage worker who was earning \$1.60/hour in 1968 would be making \$9.09/hr in 2005.^{xviii} As real wages have diminished, homelessness has increased.

- *Shortage of affordable housing.* Affordable housing means that the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities. Currently in Hennepin County, over 85,000 households are paying more than they can afford for housing, and an additional 21,000 new

Of homeless adults working full time in Minnesota in 2003, 59 percent earned less than \$10 an hour, while 26 percent earned less than \$8 an hour.

low-income families are expected to be searching for housing in the next ten years. The private market can be expected to fill only 37 percent of this need.^{xix} The supply of public housing is also inadequate to meet the current need and is severely underfunded by HUD. Due to lack of funds and a limited stock of public housing, the Section 8, Family Affordable Housing list, and Public Housing waiting lists are all closed in the Metro area.^{xx} Those who are currently on the waiting list may wait up to two years for public housing.^{xxi}

The Facts: Affordable Housing and Wages

- ✓ Average annual cost of meeting basic needs for a single person with 2 children in the Twin Cities metro area: **\$43,800.**
Working full time, hourly wage needed to cover these costs: **\$21.07.**
Percent of the jobs in the metro area that pay less: **62**
- ✓ Fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Minnesota: **\$788 per month.**
Hours a person working full time at minimum wage would need to work per week to afford it: **118.**
Working full-time, wage needed to afford it: more than **\$15 per hour.**
- ✓ Income level at which a family of two stops receiving MFIP cash and food assistance: **\$1,185.**
Portion of monthly budget that a FMR two bedroom apartment would cost: **75 percent.**

SOURCES: *Metro Region Findings and Analysis from JOBS NOW's Cost of Living in Minnesota 2005 Research*, JOBS Now Coalition, April 2006, www.jobsnowcoalition.org.
Housing in Minnesota: The Overview, HousingMinnesota, August 2004.

61 percent of homeless families are living with either chronic physical or mental health problems or substance abuse disorders

- *Lack of affordable health care.* For families and individuals struggling to pay the rent, a serious illness or disability can start a downward spiral into homelessness, beginning with a lost job, depletion of savings to pay for care, and eventual eviction. Nearly a third of persons living in poverty had no health insurance of any kind.^{xxiii}

- *Limited transportation options.* For homeless people to be connected with jobs, they need to be able to reach them. Lack of transportation is cited by homeless adults as the major barrier to employment.^{xxiii}

- *Mental illness.* The closing of state mental health institutions, without adequate community-based housing alternatives, has increased homelessness for the mentally ill. The longer someone is homeless the more exacerbated their MI symptoms become and the more difficult it becomes to move them into permanent housing.^{xxiv}

Almost half (47 percent) of homeless report a significant mental health problem. This proportion is up from 25 percent in 1991 and 36 percent in 2000. Major depression was the most common diagnoses.

- *History of out-of-home placement.* About 25

Seven out of 10 homeless youth (71%) have experienced an out-of-home placement. Nearly one out of two homeless youth has been physically or sexually mistreated, nearly 4 out of 10 have been physically abused, and nearly 3 out of 10 have been sexually abused.

percent of all those who experience homelessness have spent some time in foster care or other out-of-home placements.^{xxv} Examining the causes of youth homelessness can highlight risk factors for chronic homelessness in adults. Youth who are unaccompanied and homeless often start off life being abused, sexually assaulted, neglected, or abandoned.

- *Domestic violence.* The link between homelessness and domestic violence is undeniable. Nationally, approximately half of all women and children experiencing homelessness are fleeing

domestic violence.^{xxvi} 92 percent of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives. Of all homeless women and children, 60 percent have been abused by age 12, and 63 percent have been victims of intimate partner violence as adults.^{xxvii}

- *Brain injury.* 29.4 percent of homeless persons surveyed by the Wilder Foundation in 2003 reported having sustained a severe blow to the head, and subsequently having problems with concentration, memory, understanding, sleeping, excessive worry and getting along with people, all symptoms of brain injury. More than half of those with brain injuries reported additional chronic health problems.^{xxviii}
- *Criminal justice system involvement.* For some, even a living wage would not guarantee being able to find independent housing. Major barriers to obtaining housing and employment are the presence of a criminal record or a negative rental history. Property owners and perspective employers screen applicants based on public information, which is difficult to correct or expunge.

The Correlation between Homelessness and Involvement in the Criminal Justice System

- In 2005, over 7,100 people were released from State prisons and about 35% of those released settled in Hennepin County. An estimated 10% of these individuals were homeless upon their release.
- The County's Adult Corrections Facility released 4000 men in 2004 and an estimated 20% of these men lacked adequate housing upon their release.
- Over the course of a year, there are about 9,000 individuals with felony convictions on probation in Hennepin County. Roughly 20% of these probationers either lack housing or are in some state of housing crisis.
- In the fall of 2005, a one-day "snap-shot" was conducted by the Minnesota Department of Corrections examining 2,208 offenders who were on supervised release. Nearly half (46%) of those offenders were initially released to Hennepin or Ramsey County. 11% of these individuals were released to two major area shelters.

Data courtesy of Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections

Homeless Veterans

According to the Wilder Foundation's December, 2004 *Homeless Veterans in Minnesota: Statewide Survey of Veterans Without Shelter*, at least 25 percent of the adult male homeless population in Minnesota are veterans. The October 2003 survey found a total of 652 men with past military service who were homeless, representing 26% of the composite. In addition 2% of the homeless women recorded past military service. In addition:

- Nearly half (48 percent) of homeless veterans are people of color.
- 36 percent of veterans are employed, 20 percent full time.
- 56 percent cited "no housing they could afford" as a barrier to re-gaining housing.
- 47 percent have been diagnosed with a mental illness.
- 48 percent reported having a problem with substance abuse or addiction and/or alcohol.
- Over 41 percent of homeless veterans reported service during the conflict in Vietnam.

A number of agencies provide service specifically to veterans in Hennepin County, including Minneapolis Veteran's Home, Minneapolis Assistance Council for Veterans, and Salvation Army Grant and Per Diem Program (Harbor Lights). These agencies provide transitional and permanent housing, many with services particularly focused on addressing the unique needs of homeless veterans. Other programs are aimed at providing outreach services to homeless veterans in order to ensure that they receive the help they need. Overall, however, the level of outreach available to homeless veterans is currently inadequate.

During the course of the next 12 months over 3,500 reservists will be returning to Minnesota from service in Iraq or Afghanistan. In addition, 1,500 National Guardsmen will also be returning, as well as an unknown number of active duty personnel. As Minneapolis is the hub of veteran's services in the State and, in fact, for the region, it is reasonable to assume that a disproportionately large number of veterans in need of medical or psychological services will gravitate to the Metropolitan area. Veterans returning from the current conflicts are experiencing a higher incidence of combat stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, and homelessness than in the wake of the First Gulf War.

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary

Affordable housing: Housing for which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities.

Family: At least one adult with custody or guardianship of at least one dependent child.

Homelessness: Based on the definition established by the U.S. Congress in the McKinney-Vento legislation, someone is homeless if they (1) lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; or (2) has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised, publicly or privately operated temporary living accommodation, including shelters, transitional housing, and battered women's shelters or (3) has a nighttime residence in any place not meant for human habitation, such as under bridges or in cars.

For children and youth, this definition is extended to also include children and youth under 18 who are (1) sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as "doubled-up"); or (2) living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or (3) camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; abandoned in hospitals; or awaiting foster care placement.

Housing opportunities: Refers to both the production of new units and access to units in the existing market.

Impacted areas: Census tracts with minority population of greater than 35.3 percent and poverty population of greater than 16.9 percent; OR census tracts with poverty population of greater than 31.9 percent.

Long-term homelessness: Lacking a permanent place to live continuously for a year or more or at least four times in the last three years.

MFIP: The Minnesota Family Investment Program, or MFIP, is the state's welfare reform program for low-income families with children. MFIP helps families move to work and includes both cash and food assistance.

Permanent supportive housing: Supportive housing is affordable housing linked with services that help people live more stable, productive lives. It can be either project-

based or scattered-site housing. It is permanent because it does not limit the tenant's stay; rather, the individual household decides when to leave. (Corporation for Supportive Housing)

Single adult: An individual age 18 or older who does not have any children or currently does not have custody of their children.

TBR: Tenant-based rental assistance programs provide households with portable vouchers they can use to access existing housing units.

Transitional Housing: Time-limited supportive housing designed to help those experiencing homelessness to obtain and maintain long term housing. Programs serve participants for a minimum of 30 days and agree to provide a private space with a locked door, housing subsidies, and access to services. Participants agree to comply with program rules and expectations which at minimum include an initial assessment, the development of a service plan, and work on plan goals which always includes the goal of transitioning to housing that is not time limited.

Youth: An individual under the age of eighteen. Homeless youth are addressed separately from adults as they usually become homeless for different reasons, face different issues once they become homeless, and require different programs and services.

Appendix B: Financing Plan Assumptions and Notes

The Finance Committee of the Commission was chaired by Mike Ciresi and consisted of finance professionals from the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Minnesota Department of Human Services, the Minnesota Director of the State Plan to End Long Term Homelessness, community service providers, housing developers, and the philanthropic sector.

The funding gap is calculated by comparing existing and projected resources with projected costs. Existing public and private resources are assumed to remain at current funding levels plus the cost of inflation (2%-5% annually). The assumptions recognize that significant city, county, state and private resources are currently directed to housing production and services. The Plan includes a list of potential new financing and implementation strategies for meeting the Gap.

The financial assumptions are based on historical averages from existing programs and projects. However, many of the Commission recommendations include new programs and approaches. The Plan projections will be monitored and revised throughout Plan implementation based on actual experience. Other factors that are expected to impact actual implementation costs include: positive results from the prevention efforts and system improvements; changing economic conditions impacting employment opportunities; changing market conditions impacting housing affordability and availability; and changing public and private funding priorities.

Prevention and Outreach:

Prevention costs consist primarily of the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance and Program (FHPAP) and are based on historical averages. Outreach includes a variety of programs, such as a 24/7 coordinated system, medical outreach, and youth specific outreach programs. Costs are based on historical averages for these and similar programs.

Housing Opportunities:

- Development and operating costs for new housing units are based on per units estimates used in the Minnesota Business Plan to End Long Term Homelessness*.

* Year 2007 capital costs for units serving singles and youth estimated at \$120,750 per unit and for units serving families estimated at \$171,150. Tenant Based Rental assistance (TBR) for singles and youth estimated at \$5400 annually and for families estimated at \$10,480 annually. Operating subsidies for singles and youth estimated at \$5040 annually and for families estimated at \$5,670. Inflation projected at 5 percent annually.

Existing and projected resources include a combination of federal, state and local public funding as well as private resources.

- Service costs are based on estimates used in the Metro Long-Term Homelessness Initiative. The recommendations, such as the risk pool for expenses for youth, singles and families with tenant based rental assistance, are funded in the first year and will be replenished as needed.

Service Delivery, Self Support, and Systems Improvement:

The costs projected for new approaches, such as the Opportunity Center, employment training, transportation subsidies, child care subsidies, and evaluation, are based on historical averages of similar programs.

The following funding ideas are subject to further analysis and examination, and are intended to reflect a wide-ranging list of creative financing opportunities:

- Developer impact fees – city or suburb assesses an impact fee on new development through a city “linkage” ordinance. Used in San Francisco, Boston, San Diego and other cities.
- Assessment on G.O. bond sales – county or city adds, for instance, 1% to every G.O. bond sale. The additional bond proceeds would be available up front for affordable housing.
- Entertainment tax – a portion of the city’s current Entertainment Tax is currently allocated to the Convention Center and a portion is allocated to the city’s General Fund. A portion could be allocated to affordable housing.
- Housing re-inspection fees – charged to property owners by the city when three or more inspections are needed to remedy housing maintenance code violations.
- Licensing or franchise surcharge – city or suburb could charge an affordable housing linkage surcharge on business licenses or franchises.
- Condo conversion fees – city or suburb could impose a fee on the conversion of rental property to condominiums. Used in Santa Monica and other cities.
- Demolition fees – city or suburb could impose a fee on demolition permits. Used in Highland Park IL.
- Parking fees – city or suburb could add a parking surcharge on city ramps. In addition, the city could allocate a percentage of the sales revenue from the sale of city parking ramps to affordable housing.
- Hotel/motel tax – potential city tax; used in Columbus OH, San Francisco.
- Transfer tax or document recording fees – most common source for county trust funds.
- Levy – county or city property tax levy.
- Surcharge on tickets for sporting events

- Underused federal sources – HUD section 202 and 811 loans, VA capital grant funds, Housing for Persons With Aids funds (HOPWA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration funds (SAMHSA), Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness funds (PATH), etc.

Appendix C: Proven strategies for reducing homelessness

Communities here in Minnesota and across the country have demonstrated success in reducing homelessness. Following are key examples of best practices:

Prevention

- *One-time cash assistance for rent or mortgage arrears.* Providing financial assistance to families facing emergency housing situations can prevent homelessness and save money in the long-run.

The Minnesota state **Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program** (FHPAP) provides the financing for homelessness prevention activities in Hennepin County. The county sub-contracts with eighteen non-profit agencies to deliver services that include financial assistance, case management and other assistance to eligible families to prevent the loss of housing. Studies conducted in communities such as Hennepin County and Montgomery County, Maryland show that only 2-5 percent of assisted families return to the shelter system in the year after receiving prevention assistance, as compared to 20 percent who become homeless without assistance.^{xxix} This program is also cost efficient: the cost of one episode of family homelessness is estimated at \$4,970 for shelter and re-housing. On the other hand, family homelessness prevention through FHPAP costs as little as \$472-\$750 per family.

- *“One-stop shop” prevention services.* Providing an array of services for homeless and at-risk singles, families, and youth in one place is not only convenient for the clients themselves, it allows for better coordination among the various agencies and programs serving the homeless.

The **ROCK**, located in downtown Atlanta, serves as an ideal “first stop” for any homeless individual or family seeking services. The ROCK offers a wide range of services, facilitated by 12 partnering agencies that focus on the increased self-sufficiency of clients. In 2004, the ROCK assisted 702 clients into addiction treatment, provided over 9,000 bed nights in 36 housing units, placed 120 persons into permanent housing, assisted over 500 clients to re-enter the workforce, and has provided over 3,000 GA ID cards to clients since the inception of their ID program in 2001.^{xxx}

- *Transition Planning.* When someone is released from an institution, there needs to be adequate planning for their re-entry into society. Those leaving corrections and mental health facilities are the most likely to become homeless and remain homeless for a long period of time.^{xxxi} Since 1995, counties have

had the option to provide youth leaving foster care with independent living courses, case management services, as well as rental subsidies. The county may also provide youth with a rental subsidy or living allowance and an independent agency may provide support through independent living skills courses. These services are essential in preventing homelessness for youth who are exiting foster care. Unfortunately, counties often experience difficulty in locating resources for older teens exiting foster care, juvenile delinquency, or other treatment centers.

Lighthouse Youth Services, located in Cincinnati, Ohio, prevents youth in child welfare from becoming homeless and prevents young adults in the adult shelter system from remaining homeless through their Independent Living and Transitional Living Programs. In 1981, Lighthouse developed a semi-supervised scattered-site apartment model based on the philosophy that young people learn best by "doing" and that youth should have opportunities to live on their own and develop self-sufficiency skills prior to discharge from care. The agency has served over 1000 youth in its model and averages around 80 youth a day living in their own apartments.

- *Providing housing subsidies to at-risk and previously homeless households.* For families and individuals with very low income, the high cost of most housing places an unmanageable burden on their budget. Providing housing subsidies to these people greatly reduces the chance that they will become homeless. The length of time that the household will require a subsidy depends on individual needs—some will only need a short-term subsidy that lasts for a few months while other families will only be able to transition from shelter with on-going assistance.

The Minnesota Legislature established the **Housing Trust Fund** in 1988 to support the development of affordable housing for low-income persons and families. This fund provides temporary rental assistance for households across Minnesota. When used as secondary and tertiary prevention, studies have shown that housing subsidies help 80-85 percent of homeless families to achieve housing stability.^{xxxii}

Outreach

One of the most successful models of outreach is from the City of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia provides a 24/7 dispatch system, works closely with the police department to avoid unnecessary arrests, and has issued numerous public service announcements to inform the community about the number they can

call if they see someone in need. In the first few years of operation, Philadelphia has experienced a 50% decline in street homelessness.

Housing

- *Creation of a spectrum of affordable housing options.* Ending homelessness requires that singles, families and youth have a choice when it comes to the type of housing they live in. There needs to be enough options to fit a variety of needs in terms of size, type (single home or multi-family), level of support services, and location. To further ensure that adequate affordable housing is provided, communities must also commit to the preservation of existing affordable housing, by working to avoid demolition or the conversion to market rate of current affordable housing.

The **City of Portland and Multnomah County** has found tremendous success in providing housing for the chronically homeless. Although their 10-year plan only called for 175 chronically homeless persons to be moved to permanent housing by the end of 2005, they exceeded their goal by 285 people. They were also able to move 407 families into permanent housing. These achievements were a result of increased funding for rental assistance, the dedicated work of service providers, and the “resilience and persistence” of homeless individuals and families. In addition, they dedicated \$1 million to a pilot project designed to study the effectiveness of Housing First.^{xxxiii}

- *Permanent supportive housing.* Supportive housing is a successful, cost-effective combination of affordable housing with services that helps people live more stable, productive lives. It can be either project-based or scattered-site housing.^{xxxiv} This type of housing is most appropriate for households experiencing long-term homelessness with multiple barriers to housing stability.

The **Connecticut Supportive Housing Demonstration Program** found supportive housing to be extremely cost efficient. Tenants decreased their use of inpatient medical health services (by 38 percent for tenants who made their Medicaid information available, by 58 percent for tenants who stayed in the housing for at least two years, and by 18 percent for tenants with more severe disabilities). Tenants also increased their utilization of necessary ongoing healthcare and support such as homecare, outpatient mental health and outpatient substance abuse treatment that enabled tenants to remain in the community.^{xxxv}

- *Rapid exit from shelter.* The goal of programs that provide rapid exit services is to move homeless families and adults who become homeless from shelter to housing as quickly as possible. The program works by identifying each individual family's "housing barriers" and then matching them with the appropriate subcontracting housing agent that will be able to help them meet their housing needs.^{xxxvi} Rapid re-housing is particularly crucial for families because it avoids the disruption caused by multiple moves within the housing system which can be particularly difficult for children.

The nationally-recognized **Hennepin County Rapid Exit Program** is funded primarily by the Federal Supportive Housing Grant. Only 12 percent of families in the Rapid Exit returned to shelter within 12 months of receiving service.^{xxxvii} Studies show that the average cost of keeping an adult in their housing was only \$374 in the 2003-2005 biennium and 95 percent of those receiving assistance remained out of shelter for at least one year.^{xxxviii}

- *Housing First.* This approach puts an immediate and primary focus on helping households quickly access and then sustain housing. It is designed to help the homeless transition more rapidly out of the shelter system or off the streets and includes crisis intervention, rapid re-housing, follow-up case management, and housing support services to prevent the reoccurrence of homelessness.^{xxxix} This approach assumes that the factors that have contributed to a household's homelessness can best be remedied once the person or family is housed. If implemented correctly, this strategy is designed to allow communities to transition their emergency shelter system to all interim and permanent housing.

Pathways to Housing in New York City offers scattered site permanent housing to homeless individuals with psychiatric disabilities and addictions. Despite the challenges this population presents, Pathways is unique in what it does not require of its residents: "graduation" from other transitional programs, sobriety, or acceptance of supportive services. The vast majority of clients are moved directly from the streets into permanent, private market housing. The program then uses Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams to deliver services to clients in their homes. The ACT teams help clients to meet basic needs, enhance quality of life, increase social skills, and increase employment opportunities. The program currently serves over 400 people.

Service delivery

- *“Every door is the right door” approach to services* Every door is the right door” means that services are available at any point of access and that everyone gets the same options for publicly funded services no matter where they go for them. This strategy requires an integrated approach to assessment and service delivery through multi-service centers.^{xi} In addition, there must be a wide range of services available to meet all needs.[†] Youth in particular often require a broad spectrum of services – a continuum of care – in order to meet the diverse needs of the population. Further, access to these programs means that an accurate, on-going inventory of available services should be accessible to all providers.

The **Chicago Homeless System Mapping Project** created an interactive map that provides visuals of all of Chicago's homeless service system, including over 300 programs. The map allows viewers to become familiar with each homeless program's location and its unique features. It also enables the city to keep track of its progress on its 10-year plan.^{xii}

- *Promoting family preservation and reunification.* Nationally, about 20 percent of homeless families have a child placed in foster care. Sometimes these placements are made simply because the family is homeless. Foster care placement, however, should always be a last resort. To prevent placements, agencies working with homeless families must be prepared to invest in families struggling with substance abuse, domestic violence, homelessness, or the challenges of teen parenting.^{xiii} This also requires better coordination among agencies.

Polk County, Minnesota reports that there is a “Family Preservation Unit” within its social services division. Youth are referred to Juvenile Detention if the child runs or is delinquent. The social workers work closely with the Probation Officers to find the least restrictive placement (utilizing family options first). The social worker also completes a 30-day assessment (similar to those used by child welfare assessment) to determine services and actions needed in the best interest of the child. This allows the team to identify youth earlier who may be exhibiting emotional or behavioral problems. They also receive referrals from the county who are working with families that have reached their 60 month limit on MFIP.

[†] For a complete list of services developed by the Work Groups, see Appendix F.

- *Wrap-around case management teams.* This strategy goes beyond traditional case management by providing high-need individuals and families with a team of support to help them negotiate the system and find the resources they need to achieve success. Effective case management occurs in home and utilizes trained helping professionals to ask people what they need, to listen and to provide help or services that are specifically requested. This model is about opening doors for families to truly direct their own lives, rather than assuming what is best for them, what they need, are ready for, care about or value.^{xliii}

Parent Works is an exciting new program in Brainerd and Crow Wing County. The program includes a team of professionals and family members (three psychologists, a family-based service worker, a social worker, an attorney, and family members). One psychologist works with the parents and one works with the youth. The team conducts “family group conferencing” to find family-centered and strength-based approaches to maintaining a youth’s welfare and development. The interdisciplinary approach allows for comprehensive planning and intervention to support teen parents.

Increasing capacity for self-support

- *Foster financial opportunities for individuals and families to increase income and assets.* To be able to afford housing and prevent future episodes of homelessness, homeless individuals and families need to be able to increase their financial health. Services should therefore include education, training, and access to jobs.

IMPACT is Greater Boston’s largest employment service for homeless individuals and families. IMPACT's professional staff of employment counselors, job developers and educational and training specialists speaks a variety of languages and represents diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. Through a variety of services, including outreach to shelters, individual employment counseling, and resources for job searching, the program has served over 630 homeless individuals each year, 65 percent of whom maintain employment for three months or more.^{xliv}

System improvements

- *Creating innovative partnerships.* This strategy requires not only recruiting new partners to the efforts to end homelessness, but also improving coordination among government agencies, nonprofits, the private sector, and

other institutions already working on homelessness. New partners will lead to more resources devoted to the plan, while improved coordination means that resources will be used more efficiently.

It's All About the Kids Collaborative (the Kids Collaborative) is a unique public/private collaborative, created in 2001 by the Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority and the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (now Community Planning and Economic Development CPED) and Lutheran Social Service. The Kids Collaborative mission is to improve the educational success of children whose housing instability places them at high risk of poor school outcomes. The Kids Collaborative identifies eligible families in unstable or inadequate housing in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty, and helps them seek and keep better housing in less poor neighborhoods while staying in the same Minneapolis Public School.^{xlv}

- *Addressing special needs.* Communities that end homelessness will be able to fulfill the housing and service needs of all homeless people including immigrants, teen, parents, extended families, people leaving the criminal justice system, etc. Plans should include measures to adapt programs to meet these needs.'

Anishinabe Wakiagun in Minneapolis targets late stage chronic inebriate Native American men and women, a population that is among the hardest to serve as they are long-term homeless and chronically addicted to alcohol. This program provides permanent supportive housing in a wet/dry facility to 40 men and women. The program is intended to "minimize the negative consequences of the residents' drinking patterns, while providing a stable, culturally appropriate living environment which encourages a reduction in alcohol consumption." The program also intends to reduce the public costs of providing services to their population.^{xlvi}

- *Data management.* Nearly every community with a 10-year plan recognizes the necessity of creating and managing data on people experiencing homelessness, their progress, and the services they are receiving. Efficient data management allows a community to accurately diagnose problems and thus develop the appropriate solutions. It also enables a community to measure the progress that is being made in their plans. The best data management systems are user friendly, economical, and track individuals and families across agencies in order to provide an unduplicated representation of the homeless population.

The **HomeBase** program in New York City provides grants to neighborhood organizations in the highest-need areas to provide comprehensive prevention services. A major accomplishment of the HomeBase program has been the development of a unique data sharing arrangement between the Department of Human Services and the community providers. DHS has developed a comprehensive database composed of standardized information that they are able to share with service providers. The data helps the service providers to better understand where homeless people are coming from and why they end up at shelters, enabling them to better target their services. In six months, HomeBase has served nearly 750 clients, with only seventeen entering shelter.^{xlvi}

- *Advocacy and leadership.* The success of a plan to end homelessness rests largely on the support of the community and its leaders. Ending homelessness will also require persistent advocacy at the legislative level on behalf of homeless families.

Hawaii's 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness has benefited tremendously from the work of Governor Linda Lingle, a recent recipient of a "Home for Every American" award given by the United States Interagency Council. Governor Lingle has reached out to tourism authorities, neighborhood boards, and business associations as partners who encounter homelessness and can collaborate to solve it. Earlier this year Governor Lingle submitted a 2007 budget proposal that included \$20 million for homelessness initiatives, three times more than what was allocated in 2005.^{xlvi}

- *Community Planning and Response.* The best model for community response to the needs of at-risk singles, families and youth involves professionals and community members conducting a thorough analysis of the resources and gaps and then coordinating a system of support and response. In order to evaluate a community's ability to meet the needs of the homeless communities must:
 - (1) review needs through discussion with providers and the homeless,
 - (2) network with community members who may offer resources,
 - (3) use existing resources,
 - (4) fundraise to fill gaps, and
 - (5) increase capacity by providing programs, volunteers, and intervention systems.

POINT Northwest of Hennepin County is a homeless youth service center in the YMCA in New Hope, Minnesota. It provides family mediation, crisis

intervention, host homes, and case management services. POINT Northwest is an example of a program that sought out a needs analysis and responded to changes in its community. A survey of community needs in Northwest Hennepin County revealed a large influx of diverse cultures and new immigrants (African and Somali). A report was issued calling for a focus on culturally oriented and culturally specific programs. POINT Northwest then used that report to secure funding for six transitional housing units for older teenagers and younger adults. The transitional housing program was designed to meet the needs of youth from immigrant families seeking independent living options and employment opportunities in Northwest Hennepin County.

Appendix D: Focus group reports

Singles

Focus groups were conducted at four area shelters and two drop in centers.

Many of the participants felt there should be further focus on job skills, GED classes and other supports.

It was noted that while Branch III offers GED classes they are only offered one time per week. The group felt it was unreasonable to try to get a GED done working on it only one time per week, or jumping between different places all over the city. They expressed a need for a common resource center, everything at one spot, with consistency and regularity.

“People are going into housing without permanent jobs. We’re just sneaking by, and it’s not going to last. This is the cycle of homelessness. Shelters should help you pursue full-time permanent employment before housing. I know the goal is to get people out but also needs to be to keep people out.”

“We need representatives from jobs to come to the shelter or drop-in centers.”

One man stressed the need for an education component, a financial aid/assistance plan. “I’m tired of getting trapped in dead-end jobs and you lose one and you’re right back here.”

12 of 13 guests at the Women’s Shelter participated. The first thing that came up was a need for computer access, help with job search and GED classes.

What services would you like see offered during the day?

All mentioned that they would like to see some form of a drop-in center so that they could receive services in the same place, including metro transit information and also an apartment liaison.

The biggest gap is job support – People feel that Mary Jo’s helps you get specific things you need but doesn’t do much to help you be independent.

Transportation to jobs is the most important thing.

A “working center” would be a very good idea. It should be all about jobs. That’s more important than anything else.

The center should be run by people who have experience homelessness, but with help from advocates and volunteers.

The center is a place of action. Note a place where people sit around looking for handouts or drink coffee all day. The center is about empowering people.

Families

The Family Work Group organized three focus groups, composed of residents of local shelters, to learn more about the lives and opinions of homeless family members themselves. The groups were formed to gain a better understanding of the personal struggles and challenges that homeless families face, as well as to solicit input from families about what it would take to end homelessness.

Participants

- *Mary's Place*: Two men and six women, all single heads of families. Participated. In general this was an older group (30 years of age to mid 50s) and several had adult children in addition to the children who were in the shelter with them. The number of children in these families ranged from one to six. Because of their age and previous homeless experience, they were eager to talk about the circumstances that precipitated this homeless episode. Three participants reported that this was their second episode of homelessness and four others said it was their first experience.
- *St. Anne's*: The nine focus group participants at St. Anne's shelter were all young women with children. They were approximately 17 to 22 years of age and two were pregnant with a second child. They all had one or two children and the children were with them. They were very discouraged about their living circumstances and saw little hope of getting a job and moving with their children into their own apartments. Several had been kicked out of their mother's house or else had been left homeless because of fights with other family members or with boyfriends. There were two instances of "drugs" mentioned as the precipitating factor in their homelessness.

"I was married for the first time at 16. Before that I had been sleeping under bridges and in cars. Then I got married again and had a home and I was a housewife for 20 years. Then it all fell apart."

"I first started cutting myself when I was living in Milwaukee. I was seeing a psychologist in Milwaukee and he said I was depressed. I was taking Prozac."

- *People Serving People*: The eleven focus group members at PSP were primarily individuals who had large families and were older. There were six two-parent families represented

in the group. The nine families represented in this focus group had a total of 31 children and only two of the 31 were adult children not living with the family. Half of the group members had arrived in Minneapolis in the last six months. Only four group members said that this was their first time being homeless. About half of the group members talked about their mental health problems and the difficulty obtaining prescription drugs. Depression was mentioned several times as was bi-polar disorder.

Results

Although each focus group was very distinct, the issues were basically the same for the participants in each shelter. As expected, everyone wanted to exit the shelters, get a job and have a “home” of their own. Most participants named more than one reason for their homeless status—it appears that the convergence of multiple factors brought about this episode of homelessness.

The majority of the participants talked about their homelessness in the context of their relationships with spouses, significant others or family members. In these cases they had stayed in relationships too long after they knew the relationship was over.

For some of the focus group participants, there was embarrassment about their poor decision-making and their circumstances. These feelings affected how they framed their answers and how they perceived their opportunities to have a home of their own with their children. Many expressed a reluctance to acknowledge the full extent of their episodes of homelessness.

“Things go downhill so fast when you’re laid off. Then everything else happens, too. I lost my job, then I was evicted and then my car broke down.”

Reasons for current episode of homelessness

- Drug abuse/alcoholism (either own or partner)
- Loss of job
- Domestic violence and lack of restraining order enforcement
- Eviction and loss of Section 8 voucher
- Partner imprisoned
- Car inoperable and couldn’t get to work
- Lack of knowledge about safety net
- Mental health issues (either own or partner)
- Physical disability or illness or denied SSI (own or family member)
- Identity theft

Resources that may have prevented homelessness episode

- Knowing where resources are and how to ask for help
- Getting a better job sooner when it appeared job would be ending
- Having felony expunged
- Transition services end too soon
- Legal assistance
- A single person to help identify resources and access points
- An easier way to obtain a GED or vocational training (including child care)

Resources needed to prevent homelessness in the future

- Section 8 housing or affordable government housing
- Job skills and a way to learn about job search
- ESL classes
- Affordable child care
- Legal assistance
- Reliable car
- Tools to continue mechanics job and CNA license renewed

“When my car was stolen, the tools for my mechanics job were in the car. I can’t get a job without tools and I can’t buy new tools without a job.”

- Child care for child with ADHD
- A job that paid a living wage
- Shelter that you didn’t have to pay all of your resources to the shelter so that you could leave the shelter with a financial cushion
- Diapers and food for children

- A person that will be available to help (provide guidance for two months when exiting the shelter)
- God
- City to streamline the process so that Section 8 housing would be inspected sooner (had been waiting two weeks for the inspection)
- Budgeting assistance and classes
- Affordable medical and dental care

Families’ Stories of Homelessness*

- Derrick lived in a trailer on a reservation that had 70 percent unemployment. He had a \$6.75 job and worked nights in a convenience store. His wife wanted him to stay awake during the day and party with her. She eventually left him and he lost his job because he could not afford child care for his three

* All names have been changed.

children. He tried living with an older daughter but that didn't work. Eventually he moved to Minnesota and the shelter.

- Deborah rented an apartment for nine years from a landlord who did not make repairs. The landlord evicted the family when they were late with the rent.
- Lisa has a job at McDonald's and is moving into an apartment soon. She is adamant that she will never be homeless again and that this had been a "wake up call" for her.
- Jackie's mother had been homeless, and she had hated not having a home and having to live in a shelter. She feels it is impossible as a single mother with two children to live pay check to pay check, and she is pessimistic about her chances of having a legitimate job that would allow her to have her own home with her children.
- Katie was raped three times, the first time when she was 11 years old. She wonders if her homelessness and mental health problems are a result of rape.
- Sarah was in a coma for three months after her partner beat her.

Youth

Lindquist Apartments administered by Life's Missing Link held a youth focus group. The following are recommendations by the youth who reside in this supportive housing program:

- *What would you like to change about the system?* More independence', 'more access to services', 'more help = more money', 'for them to realize that we are kids', 'more help'
- *How did you become homeless?* I didn't', 'my mom put me out', 'my grandma and I used to get into it because she didn't like my friends', 'got out of jail', 'foster care'
- *What kind of housing do/did you want?* 'never really thought about it', 'my own apartment with help', 'my own place', 'anyplace but having to go to shelter', 'didn't really know'
- *What services do you need that you're not getting?* 'none, I feel I'm getting what I need', 'money and transportation', 'money', 'I need a job!', 'people who hire felons'

Youth Stories

- Dana is thrown out of her home when she becomes pregnant by a man her parents feel should be responsible;
- Paul ages out of foster care and loses his first apartment after he is terminated from his part-time job and can't pay the rent;
- Marissa is sexually harassed and inappropriately touched by her step-dad and leaves when she feels she can no longer take it;
- Ryan leaves his home to sleep in his car when his parents' meth addiction leads a lack of food in the refrigerator and a house full of other users;
- Ikati came to the U.S. with her aunt after her parents were killed in the civil war in Somalia. She lived with her aunt in public housing until her aunt died suddenly and public housing wasn't willing to rent to a minor;
- Jose was born in the U.S. but his parents are undocumented workers. At the age 17 his parents left the country but left Jose to fend for himself. He is now sleeping from place to place – including the park.
- Theresa is unable to protect herself from her mother during her mental health breakdowns and delusions. She leaves her mother's apartment to stay with a friend but the friend is unable to afford her food, clothing, and personal needs.
- Miaisha is a transgender youth whose parents ridicule because she continues to dress in female clothes and hangs out with other queer youth – constant arguing has erupted into physical assaults on more than one occasion.
- Brad has lived in three homeless shelters and three group homes in his childhood. His parents are back in a family shelter and Brad leaves searching for his own future – but for now sleeps in parking ramps or in abandoned buildings near the highway in Minneapolis.

Appendix E: Survey Methodology

2000 Census. Hennepin County has 118,461 youth between the ages of 10 and 17 years. Using a formula developed by the Triangle Institute, estimating conservatively that 3 percent of the youth will experience some form of crisis resulting in a displacement from their home, each year Hennepin County will have 3,554 homeless youth. Assuming there is an additional 59,228 youth between 18 and 21 years (14,807 youth in each year x 4 years – 18, 19, 20, and 21), the total number of homeless youth who are 18 through 21 years is be approximately 1,777.

Note that this estimate *does* include unaccompanied youth who do not seek shelter, but may be doubled up or living on the streets.

Emergency shelters in Hennepin County. The county collects data on the number of families that, over the course of a year, stay in emergency shelters that receive funding from Hennepin County. In 2004, 1,042 families were reported as accessing the shelter system. 2005 saw a decrease in homeless families in the shelter system when only 967 families were reported.

In addition, several shelters in Hennepin County serve homeless families but do not receive public funding and are not included in the Hennepin County Emergency Shelter data. For instance, in 2005, Mary's Place sheltered 275 families and Families Moving Forward sheltered 61 families. It is unknown whether these families also accessed Hennepin County funded shelters that year.

Note that these numbers do not include families that were turned away or did not seek shelter. Also, not all shelters serving families in Hennepin County are included in this data.

The Minneapolis Curfew Center. The Minneapolis Curfew Center often receives youth who are picked up by police officers for being out in the community after curfew hours. The youth's parents are contacted and arrangements are made to take the children home. However, some youth have circumstances where they cannot go home. In 2005 alone, 111 youth were referred to Child Protection for pick-up and 41 youth were transported directly to a youth shelter.

Minneapolis Public Schools. The Minnesota Department of Education reports that 4,620 homeless or precariously housed children and youth were served by Hennepin County school districts using McKinney-Vento grant funds during the 2004-2005 twelve-month period. Of those served, 35 children were in St. Louis Park, and 4,585 children were in Minneapolis. On any given day of the school year in Minneapolis, an average of 1,320 children and youth are identified as homeless or highly mobile.

The number of families was determined using the average number of children per family (2.3).

Note that this count does not include children and youth who attend school in any of the other 20 school districts or many children who were of pre-school age.

Nonprofits serving youth. The largest nonprofit organizations that have a specific focus on homeless youth include: Avenues for Homeless Youth, The Bridge, Freeport West – Project SOLO, Hope Street Shelter, Point Northwest, StreetWorks, YouthLink – Archdale and Project OffStreets. These seven agencies were surveyed as to the aggregate number of youth served in 2002 and 2003.

Runaway Statistics. As the largest city in Hennepin County, Minneapolis has the largest number of runaway youth. Youth who run away from their homes are at risk for violence and exploitation on the streets. Although Minneapolis has seen a decrease in the number of youth running from their homes, the bad news is that there are still hundreds of youth reported as runaway youth each year (502 in 2005). Suburban Hennepin communities also report a total of 1,070 runaways in 2005. Finally, an additional 230 youth run from a county out-of-home placement and are never found by the county workers.^{xlix}

State quarterly shelter survey. The Minnesota Department of Human Services collects data by surveying shelters across the state on the number of homeless persons they serve on a given night. The most recent data collected in February 2006 from Hennepin County shelters show a total of 3,337 people, including 1,090 men, 886 women and 1,250 children who were sheltered that night. About one-third of these shelters supplied data on the number of homeless persons who were turned away; these shelters reported turning away 583 persons, including 114 men and 189 women.

Findings from the Wilder survey on the proportion of adults without children were used to determine the numbers of single adults.

Note that this data is not unduplicated—the same person could have sought shelter at more than one provider that night. This data also does not include persons who did not seek shelter.

Wilder survey. The Wilder Foundation conducts a point-in-time survey of the homeless population in Minnesota every three years. The last survey was conducted on the night of October 23, 2003. That night they surveyed 1,072 men and 859 women in shelters in Hennepin County.

Wilder found that 47 percent of homeless women and 94 percent of homeless men do not have any children or are without custody of their children in Minnesota is. These proportions were used to determine the total number of homeless adults who have no children or are without custody of their children.

Note that this data includes primarily homeless adults, families and youth who were staying in shelter on this night.

Appendix F: Services



Appendix G: Public Comments

Following the hundred-day planning period, *Heading Home Hennepin* was made available for public comment. In addition to being posted on the city and county websites, the plan was presented at numerous events and community forums. During this public comment period, over twenty organizations and community members submitted formal comments on the plan. Respondents ranged from well-known nonprofits with long-time expertise in homelessness, to average citizens simply concerned with the issue. The overwhelming majority of the responses was in support of the plan, and most included thoughtful comments, concerns and suggestions that were incorporated into the document whenever possible.

Several important themes emerged during the public comment period. One encouraging theme was that, of those in support of the plan, nearly all expressed their desire to be involved in the implementation process. Some also suggested drawing on experts in the legal and business communities. Others felt that volunteers and faith communities were excellent resources and should not to be overlooked.

A number of respondents did express concerns regarding the overall implementation of the plan. Some were concerned that potential future cuts in federal funding streams might inhibit the success of the plan. Others felt that more focused attention needed to be paid to groups who are often overlooked, such as people with mental illness, victims of brain injury, ex-offenders, families without children, and victims of domestic abuse. Some wrote about gaps in current services and programs that need to be addressed. Many respondents also emphasized the importance of good public relations. They felt that there is a strong need to educate the broader community on homelessness. Some suggested an enhanced website that would encourage more public involvement.

Some respondents provided positive suggestions for additional recommendations they felt should be included. The following items, while not included in the final recommendations from the Commission, will be seriously considered as the implementation process progresses.

- *Prevention*
 - Educate children and youth about the perils of living on the street and ways they can initiate a conversation with a responsible adult about any abuse they may be experiencing.
 - Promote methods to enable singles, families and youth to remain in their current housing whenever possible.

- Educate homeowners about bad re-financing and avoiding foreclosure.
 - Encourage landlords to utilize mediation techniques as a first step before filing an eviction.
- *Outreach*
 - Increase efforts to diagnose traumatic brain injuries and ensure that victims receive the appropriate treatment.
- *Housing*
 - Develop a pilot project to address the supportive housing needs of persons with disabilities who are in the process of applying for mainstream benefits.
- *Service Delivery*
 - Develop measures to ensure continuity of service delivery and case management planning when singles, families, and youth transfer programs.
- *Systems Improvement*
 - Ensure that the particular needs of families without children are adequately addressed.

Sub-Committees and Work Group Members

Singles

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Matthew Ayres, Simpson Housing
Mikkel Beckmen (Work Group Co-Chair), St. Stephens
Tracy Berglund (Work Group Co-Chair), Catholic Charities
Sandy Delos, Salvation Army
Mary Gallini, Simpson Housing
Guy Gambill, Council on Crime and Justice
Rev. James Gertmenian (Committee Chair), Plymouth Congregational Church
Kelby Grovender, Anishinabe Wakiagun
Mark Hendrickson, Hennepin County
Deb Jans, Homeless Against Homelessness (HAH)
Brad Kaeter, Hennepin County
Thomas Karlstad, Hennepin County
Madeline Kastler, Hennepin County
Wade Keezer, Community Member/Shelter Guest
Markus Klimenko, Hennepin County
David Krall, Hennepin County
Luther Krueger, Minneapolis Police Department Precinct 1
Yolonde Lee, Hennepin Avenue United Methodist
Jesse Levine, Hearth Connection
Sharon Lubinski, Minneapolis Police Department
Mike Manhard, Metro Engagement on Shelter and Housing
Nick Olmsted, St. Stephen's Shelter
John Petroskas, Catholic Charities
Brian Reichert, St. Stephens
Matthew Specter, Community Member
Dale Thomas, Homeless Against Homelessness (HAH)
Steve Thomas, The Network
Liza Viktora, St. Stephens

Kathy Vitalis, MN Assistance Council for Veterans

Marge Wherley, Hennepin County

Patrick Wood, People Inc.

Families

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Gus Avenido, State of Minnesota, Refugee Services
Danita Banks, Hennepin County
Judy Brown, Tubman Family Alliance
Linda Bryant, CVI Collaborative Village
Mary Crowley, People Serving People
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Suzanne Koepplinger, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center
Janelle Leppa, Simpson Housing
Carole Martin, former Hennepin County employee, policy analyst
Sharon Moser, Minneapolis Public Schools
Chris Reller, Healthcare for the Homeless
Sue Roedl, St. Stephens
Jim Roth, Minneapolis Consortium of Community Developers
Deb Schlick, Affirmative Options
Jessica Simon, Hennepin County
Tamara Taylor, Tubman Family Alliance
Wendy Wiegmann, Simpson Housing
Pam Zagaria, Family Housing Fund

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Chester Cooper, Hennepin County

Pat Crosby, Hennepin County
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Heather Huseby, YouthLink
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Lydia Lee, Mpls. School Board
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Sandy Delos, Salvation Army
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Chip Halbach, Minnesota Housing Partnership
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Cynthia Lee, Minneapolis CPED
Mark Lindberg, Otto Bremer Foundation
Julie Manwarren, Simpson Housing
Mark Margolis, At Home Group
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Bob Odman, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
Anita Pampusch, Bush Foundation
Gary Reierson, Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches
Don Sabre, Hennepin County
Angie Skildum, Family Housing Fund
Joy Sorensen Navarre, MICA
George Stone, Corporation for Supportive Housing
Tom Streitz, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority
Missy Thompson, Fannie Mae
Sandy Vargas, Hennepin County
David Wiese, Wells Fargo
Paul Williams, Community Advisory Board on Homelessness

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