

12/02/2008 Annual Homeless Initiative Stakeholders' Meeting Discussion Summary:

Successes:

- People experiencing homelessness are getting connected with services
- Defining the problem has helped promote creative solutions
- Diverse participation, more players getting involved
- Improved communication, collaboration & networking between agencies
- Increasing awareness & understanding of services offered
- Regular meetings to plan & discuss
- City/County formally recognized the Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee
- City/County have coordinated with each other,
- City has recognized need for affordable housing
- Increased housing & services have become available

Challenges

- Project heavily dependent on volunteer time
- Lack of resources for: housing, supportive services, cost of moving into new home
- More community support needed, participation by people experiencing homelessness needed
- Laws negatively affect people experiencing homelessness
- Negative public perception, blaming of people who are experiencing homelessness
- Background checks, low wages limit housing options
- Lack of mental health support/services
- Lack of substance abuse services
- Transportation
- Services, housing for special populations like families or veterans needed
- More support for education (including life skills), employment needed
- Current national economic issues
- Lack of safe affordable housing
- System isn't seamless, complex system requires constant education & reeducation
- A detailed plan/organizational chart with action steps needed

Suggested Goals for 2009

- Reduce homelessness by 10%
- Improve communication w/public and communication within homeless service system
- Clearly define homelessness
- Decriminalize homelessness
- Have clear, specific, measurable goals
- Increase participation by wide range of people/agencies/groups
- Maintain existing funding and increase funding for 10YP projects
- Increase availability of affordable housing
- Continue focus on Housing First
- Address issues w/background checks (criminal and credit issues)
- Refer people to appropriate services, create services to fill gaps
- Agencies successes should be defined and prioritized to support the homeless initiative
- Review city/county policies that inhibit/support affordable housing