

**MISSION POSSIBLE:**  
**OAKLAND COUNTY'S COMMUNITY**  
**PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS**

*The mission of the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness & Affordable Housing is to bring together stakeholders from the private and public sectors to collectively determine a strategy to end homelessness and increase the supply of sustainable, affordable housing*

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## **Executive Summary**

In fall of 2004, the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness & Affordable Housing began the development of a plan to end homelessness in Oakland County. The plan would include ending chronic homelessness (individuals with a disability who have been homeless for more than one year or have had four or more episodes of homelessness in the last three years) as well as episodic periods of homelessness for families with children, single individuals, and youth.

On October 26, 2004, County Executive, L. Brooks Patterson, announced and pledged his support for the development of a Plan to End Homelessness in Oakland County. Representatives from the Board of Commissioners also pledged support.

Stakeholders from categories including elected officials; government departments and agencies (both at the local and state level); business and civic leaders; law enforcement; media; medical community; education; housing developers and service providers; individuals who are or have experienced homelessness; non-profits and foundations, faith based organizations; the mental health authority and its core providers; and the general public expressed commitment and participated in the planning process.

Working groups were convened. Initially, four groups were formed. These included an executive planning committee that coordinated general planning and insured that work groups were moving forward; a stakeholder committee to insure representation from a broad segment of the community; a committee that worked on identifying and defining who the homeless were in Oakland County; and finally a research and data collection committee. Research was conducted; community summits, focus groups and retreats were held to gather the needed information.

### **Oakland County Characteristics**

Oakland County is a large, diverse county located in southeastern Michigan with a 2000 population of 1.2 million (U S Census Bureau). The County contains 61 units of general local government, including cities, townships and villages. These communities vary in household characteristics, household incomes, housing types, housing conditions, housing cost, zoning requirements, ordinances, housing opportunities, population characteristics, educational levels, labor markets, major employers, etc., all of which affect and generate the need for comprehensive housing resources. Income levels and housing cost vary across the region and from community to community. Despite being a wealthy county, over 39 percent of the population is low-income and 23 percent of the population pays more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs (cost burdened). Due to the economy, foreclosures and evictions are increasing.

### **Characteristics of the Chronically Homeless**

HUD defines an unaccompanied individual who is disabled and who has been homeless for more than one year or have had four or more episodes of homelessness in the last three years as chronically homeless. The majority of these individuals suffer from some

sort of severe mental illness. In addition, many have co-occurring substance abuse disorders. This population is often difficult to engage in services. Due to limited incomes, they cannot find affordable housing in the community.

#### Characteristics of Homeless Families and Youth

Generally, homeless families are hidden from us, doubled up, staying with relatives or friends, living in cars, campgrounds, shelters, and motels. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, family homelessness is driven largely by the inability of very-low income families to afford housing. The first annual HMIS report in Michigan indicates that 70 percent of the homeless in Michigan are in families; 50 percent of the homeless are children; and the average age is just over 9 years old. Because of children, families rarely live on the streets. Once they enter the homeless system, 60 percent of families find housing within 6 months and do not become homeless again.

Characteristics of homeless families include single female head of household, extreme poverty, low educational levels, unemployment or underemployment, young children in the household, a lack of a support network, and a tendency to have poor housing histories.

Many studies indicate that children who age out of foster care are ill prepared to cope with the realities of the adult world. Many end up as teenage parents, in jail, or homeless. Wayne State University's Research Group on Homelessness and Poverty found that more than 49 percent of the youth who aged out in 2002 and 2003 in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb County were homeless at some point during their first three years of independence. The study further found that 25.4 percent were homeless immediately after aging out, while 36 percent had to return to the homes from which they were originally removed. Additionally, 16.7 percent lived on the streets, in cars, or in abandoned buildings.

#### Number of Homeless & Sub-Populations in Oakland County

Since 1997, it has been the policy of the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness & Affordable Housing to perform a point-in-time census of individuals who are staying in an emergency shelter or in transitional housing in January of each year. The first street count of the homeless was initiated in 2003, with a follow up count in January 2005.

The most recent complete count was performed manually on January 25, 2005, with 1,293 homeless persons located, 137 of whom were chronically homeless. With data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) since that date, we feel that our numbers are low (especially for the chronically homeless and the sub-populations). A full base-line count will be completed in January 2007 including a count of guests staying at our shelters and in transitional housing as well as a nook and cranny search of those who are staying in places not meant for human habitation.

In January 2006, a count was conducted using HMIS data on a sampling of emergency shelters only. The count revealed an 11 percent increase over 2005 data for the same shelters.

### Current Inventory of Beds in Oakland County

As of January 2006, Oakland County had 386 emergency shelter beds. Transitional beds are available for 338 persons. Twenty-eight units are under development. Oakland County has 375 permanent supportive housing units scattered throughout the county. Eight of these units are designated for the chronically homeless. There are 46 units under development (22 for families and 24 for individuals, 11 of which are set aside for the chronically homeless).

Effective July, 2006, there are 30 Housing Choice Vouchers set aside for the homeless.

With an inventory of 724 emergency shelter and transitional beds and 1,293 counted homeless, there is a shortage on a given night of 569 beds. The permanent supportive housing programs are full with waiting lists.

### Cost of Homelessness

The cost of homelessness is high, especially for the chronically homeless or those with special needs. Homeless persons use a variety of public systems in inefficient and costly ways. Costs shift to corrections, health care, welfare, education, etc. and mask the true price of homelessness. Nationally, the average cost is \$15,000 per year for single, \$25,000-\$30,000 for families.

Providing permanent supportive housing costs taxpayers substantially less than emergency shelters, jails, and medical facilities. This is discussed in detail. Services required for basic needs, education, and foster care are also less when one has stable housing. Interventions such as emergency shelters, jail stays, hospital stays, and foster care exceeds what housing would cost. The Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services has concluded that the cost of preventing a homeless episode is 1/6 the cost of responding once a family has become homeless.

### Oakland County Community Issues

A committee gathered information on the perception and reality of homelessness in Oakland County including the root causes of chronic and episodically homelessness.

Four main issues were identified:

- ❑ Access and Outreach/service Provision/Discharge
- ❑ Strengthened leadership for problem solving
- ❑ Family Structure and Skills
- ❑ Lack of Affordable Housing and Facilities

## Oakland County's Housing First Philosophy

Housing First is an approach that centers on providing homeless persons with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. There is a focus on helping households access and sustain rental housing as quickly as possible and the housing is not time limited. Following housing placement, a variety of services may be offered to promote stability and individual well-being.

Oakland County follows the Housing First Philosophy when suitable for the client's needs. Oakland County's model includes an assessment of the household, assistance in locating suitable long-term, rental housing and lease negotiation, housing assistance (ranging from security deposit and one month's rent to long term rental subsidy), case management, and other supports, services, and referrals that may be needed

## Goals & Strategies

### General Goals

#### 1. Prevention

The best way to end homelessness is to prevent it. Housing stability provides a base and allows households to concentrate on other needs to maintain family self-sufficiency.

Goal: To develop and implement a county-wide prevention plan for homelessness

#### 2. Affordable housing

Affordable housing means strong economic development, building neighborhoods, and sustaining our quality of life. Pursue opportunities for the development and preservation of safe, decent, and sustainable affordable housing that has positive impacts on our community.

Goal: To increase the affordable housing stock in Oakland County by developing a minimum of 30 units of affordable housing per year

Goal: Maintain the existing supply of affordable housing

Goal: Assist in the implementation of the recommendations in the Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment released in 2006

Goal: Advocate for the removal of regulatory barriers in the development of affordable housing

### 3. Data Collection

To measure success, performance measurements must be in place. This includes the collection of reliable, accurate, measurable data as a baseline. Effective outcomes should be realized.

Goal: To have all homeless service providers participate in the homeless management information system

Goal: Establish a base-line count of the homeless (including the chronically homeless) by conducting a nook and cranny search and street count in coordination with a shelter count within one year of implementation date of plan.

Goal: Determine measurable outcomes to see if strategies need to be altered

### 4. Enhance availability of medical care

The homeless and poor often suffer from poor health. Most are uninsured or underinsured. Many need dental work or eye glasses. These clients use the emergency room for medical needs that are more properly served by a practice or at a clinic.

Goal: Increase the availability of medical care for the homeless and those at risk for homelessness

### 5. Public Awareness of homeless issues

There is a stigma attached to being homeless. Those who are homeless often feel stigmatized as if being homeless is a crime.

Goal: Promote public awareness of the needs of the homeless. Inform the public of the benefit of affordable housing in creating prosperous communities.

## Family Homelessness

### 1. Prevention

Families at risk of losing their housing need swift, effective prevention strategies, and a supportive, effective network of resources.

Goal: Families in Oakland County will have access to the supportive services necessary to avoid homelessness and the disruption of the continuity of their lives.

### 2. Intervention

Families who have lost their housing must be able to secure immediate, safe, and service-connected shelter, compatible with the unique needs of each family, so that they may spend the least amount of time in this transitional mode as possible.

Goal: The length of homelessness experienced by families in Oakland County will be reduced through prompt, effective, and respectful response, delivered by a continuum of providers dictated by family needs.

### 3. Retention

Families will be able to retain their permanent housing situations in Oakland County.

Goal: The available resources and opportunities will be present in Oakland County to maximize the potential for families to retain permanent housing.

### 4. New Housing

In order to end homelessness in the County, additional affordable housing needs to be created.

Goal: Create additional affordable housing for families with children

## Chronic Homelessness

### 1. Increase the supply of permanent supportive housing

Permanent Supportive Housing is successful because it combines three key elements: affordable housing, support services, and community. In order to effectively end chronic homelessness, adequate permanent supportive housing must be in place.

Goal: Increase the supply of permanent supportive housing set-aside for the chronically homeless by a minimum of 12 units each year

Goal: Develop a safe haven

### 2. Discharge Planning

Coordinated efforts to place individuals being discharged from public institutions into permanent housing assists in the quick assimilation back into society

Goal: Create an effective discharge policy for jails, foster care, mental health, and health care.

### 3. Employment Resources

In order to maintain housing stability, economic independence, and self-sufficiency, a living wage must be obtainable.

Goal: Strengthen job training and placement links

4. Supportive Services

To remain housed, many of the chronic homeless will require additional and continued supportive services

Goal: Maintain effective links to main stream resources

5. Create an outreach program

Those who have been on the streets for a while often need time to build trust before they are willing to enter a program

Goal: Create an effective outreach program to locate and build trust among the chronic homeless

6. Substance Abuse

A large percentage of the chronically homeless have substance abuse issues that must be treated in order to be stably housed

Goal: Meet the needs for housing and treatment for people with drug and alcohol problems.

For additional information or to assist in the implementation of this plan, please contact the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness & Affordable Housing at (248) 858-1189 or at [Williamska@oakgov.com](mailto:Williamska@oakgov.com).

## **Introduction**

In response to President George W. Bush's initiative to end chronic homelessness by 2012 the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness and Affordable Housing (OCTH) decided to undertake the preparation of a plan to break the cycle of homelessness. The OCTH is a collaborative body comprised of advocates for people who are homeless and at-risk for homelessness, including representation from service providers, funding agencies, banks, governments, foundations, consumers, and private businesses. Founded in 1987 to obtain statistical data regarding homelessness throughout the county and to create a formal mechanism for better coordination, collaboration, and cooperation, the OCTH has evolved into a cohesive, established group of advocates working to end homelessness. The OCTH continues to work toward the goal of providing a human service infrastructure that will afford residents the ability to progress along the continuum of care efficiently in order to achieve personal empowerment, economic independence, and self-sufficiency. In late 2003, the Oakland County Housing Coalition (an affordable housing advocacy group) and the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness merged to form the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness and Affordable Housing. A new mission was adopted in February 2004. This mission is to bring together stakeholders from the private and public sectors to collectively determine a strategy to end homelessness and increase the supply of sustainable, affordable housing. This plan to end homelessness and its strategies and goals fits into the mission of the collaboration. The National Association of County Officials (NACO) and the U.S. Conference on Mayors have also sanctioned these plans.

On April 20, 2004, the Taskforce convened a planning meeting to discuss what would be required in the writing and implementation of such a plan. Information prepared by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness was reviewed. The group collectively decided to create a plan with the greater scope of dealing with ending all homelessness in Oakland County, while incorporating chronic homelessness within it. Persons who are chronically homeless are disabled individuals who have been homeless for more than one year or have had four or more episodes of homelessness in the last three years. Nationwide, these individuals make up less than 20 percent of the homeless population but use 50 percent-80 percent of service dollars. In addition to persons who are chronically homeless, Oakland County has an equally important homeless population comprised of families with children, single individuals, and run-away/throw-away youth (ages 10-21) who are episodically homeless.

The plan will define the problem, identify the gaps, and include realistic accomplishments. It was anticipated that the development of the plan would take over one year. Components of the plan, such as implementation of a countywide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the completion of a countywide Affordable Housing Needs Assessment, discharge policy planning, and the implementation of added beds and new programs, continued through out the planning phase.

On October 26, 2004, County Executive L. Brooks Patterson announced and pledged his support for the development of a Plan to End Homelessness in Oakland County.

Executive Patterson said, "If Oakland County can offer a well-spring of career and business opportunities for the vast majority of its citizens, then it has the ability to confront and conquer the problem of homelessness in this county over the next decade." In addition, representatives of the Board of Commissioners attending the October 26, 2004 summit also pledged support. These representatives actively participated in the planning process. In March 2005 a Board resolution in support of the Taskforce's efforts was made (Appendix A). These actions assisted in bringing the issue of homelessness and housing affordability to the forefront of the public's attention. Throughout the planning process, the public awareness committee insured that the efforts were publicized to keep the issue in the minds of the community.

Using the ten-year planning process guide written by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness and Affordable Housing began the process.

### **Process**

Expressed commitment from service providers, businesses, and the county and city governments was needed both in the planning and implementation stages. Stakeholders were identified and invited to both the conference announcement as well as the various planning sessions held. The stakeholders invited to participate consisted of individuals from categories including elected officials; government departments and agencies (both at the local and state level); business and civic leaders; law enforcement; media; medical community; education; housing developers and service providers; individuals who are or have experienced homelessness; non-profits and foundations, faith based organizations; the mental health authority and its core providers; and the general public. Representatives from all of these groups have participated in the planning process.

Working groups were convened. Initially, four groups were instituted. These included an executive planning committee that coordinated general planning and insured that work groups were moving forward; a stakeholder committee to insure representation from a broad segment of the community; a committee that worked on identifying and defining who the homeless were in Oakland County; and finally a research and data collection committee.

Accurate, timely data and research creates a solid foundation for a community's plan. Oakland County's research included:

- ❑ Existing research on homelessness (local/national)
- ❑ Local homeless counts and HMIS data
- ❑ Service and housing capacity
- ❑ Availability of funding resources
- ❑ The cost of homelessness in the nation and in Oakland County
- ❑ National and county-wide demographic and characteristics of the homeless, including the use of the point-in-time census for the homeless for the last three years

- Oakland County's current inventory using the housing activity charts and housing gaps analysis
- Examples of planning in other communities both in Michigan (Kent County and Washtenaw County) as well as counties in the United States with similar demographics (King County, Washington)
- Examples of discharge policy planning

A committee gathered information on the perception and reality of homelessness in Oakland County including the root causes of chronic and episodically homelessness.

Four main issues were identified:

- Access and Outreach/service Provision/Discharge
- Strengthened leadership for problem solving
- Family Structure and Skills
- Lack of Affordable Housing and Facilities

Each of these issues/areas will be discussed at length later in this document.

In order to develop strategies to address the problem of homelessness in Oakland County, the community has undertaken several steps. On November 22, 2004, a community summit was held. Over 100 community leaders attended this day long event. Strategies were discussed on closing the front door, opening the back door, and building the infrastructure.

Several focus groups were held. At the Welcome Inn located in Berkley, 15 homeless individuals (most who live on the streets and stay in the warming center during the cold months) agreed to participate. They discussed reasons for homelessness, prevention, resources, and barriers to maintaining housing. Focus groups were also held at New Bethel Outreach Ministry for homeless women with children, and with the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority core providers' case managers. The focus groups were led by Jennifer Williams, MSW.

During 2005 and the beginning of 2006, three additional retreats and focus groups were held for stakeholders to come together to formulate and discuss specific goals and objectives.

The following document outlines the data collected and the conclusions reached.

## **Overview of Need and Extent of Problem**

*Paul Toro, Department of Psychology at Wayne State University conducted research in 2000, as a follow up to a 1994 survey. His research indicated that 4.7 percent (1 in 20) of Michigan's population have been homeless at one point in their lives.*

### **County Population and Housing Characteristics**

*In response to the Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment released in August 2006, Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson said "This landmark study, the first of its size and scope anywhere in the country, will help Oakland County form the foundation for a stronger and more vibrant economy. We can't have economic growth and stability in our county without meeting the housing needs of our communities."*

Oakland County is a large, diverse county located in southeastern Michigan. At 910 square miles and with a 2000 population of 1.2 million (U S Census Bureau) Oakland County is more populous than, and nearly as large as the State of Rhode Island. The County contains 61 heterogeneous urban, suburban and rural units of general local government, including 30 cities, 21 townships and 10 villages. These communities vary in household characteristics, household incomes, housing types, housing conditions, housing cost, zoning requirements, ordinances, housing opportunities, population characteristics, educational levels, labor markets, major employers, etc., all of which affect and generate the need for comprehensive housing resources.

Although Oakland County has the highest level of personal income per capita in Michigan, the economic well being of its 1.2 million residents varies significantly. The 2000 U.S. Census conveys substantial household income differences between communities. The median household income for Oakland County is \$61,907; yet, the median household income ranges from a high of \$170,790 in the City of Bloomfield Hills to a low of \$23,710 in Royal Oak Township. While it is true that the County is one of the wealthiest in the nation with a population of over one-million residents, it is a misconception to think of every resident as rich or without housing issues. According to the 2000 Census, over 39 percent of Oakland County's households (471,390) are low-income (at or below 80 percent of the median income for the Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area as defined by HUD). There are 65,478 persons in Oakland County with incomes below the poverty line dispersed throughout the County. Therefore, they are frequently overlooked.

There were 492,006 housing units in Oakland County in 2000-the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest total statewide. Home ownership is prevalent (75 percent) and housing values have increased over the past decade. In 2000, the US Census reported the median housing value at \$181,200. However, housing values varied by community, with the highest being Bloomfield Hills (\$854,000) and the lowest the City of Pontiac (\$74,300). Median monthly rents ranged from \$700 to \$999. The Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment (Wayne State University 2006) reports that almost every income group in Oakland County faces higher housing costs than their counterparts in almost every other county in the region. Oakland County's Urban County CDBG/HOME/ESG 2005-

2009 Consolidated Plan indicates that well over 25,000 single-family owner occupied homes need substantial rehabilitation work to make them decent, safe, and sanitary based on HUD's housing quality standards.

A national housing financing industry standard is that households can reasonably afford to spend approximately 30 percent of gross income for housing costs. Most financial institutions look for a ratio of no more than 29 to 31 percent of income for housing and 38 to 41 percent for total debt. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing assistance programs calculate a tenant's gross rent (rent plus tenant supplied utilities) at 30 percent of gross income. According to Oakland County's Urban County 2005-2009 Consolidated Plan and the 2000 U. S. Census, more than 23 percent of Oakland County's 471,390 households are cost burdened by housing expenses. Approximately 20 percent or 61,908 homeowners spend 30 percent or more on housing costs while 33 percent or 38,737 renters spend 30 percent or more of household income on rent. Approximately 9 percent are severely cost burdened, paying more than 50 percent of their income for housing. This can be further broken out by household type. Of the approximately 94,000 elderly households in the county, 29 percent pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Fourteen percent of elderly households in Oakland County pay more than 50 percent of their income, the highest in the State of Michigan. When broken down by income-category, 74 percent of extremely-low, 64 percent of very low, and 38 percent of low-income households pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing.

Twenty-eight Oakland County communities contain one or more 2000 U.S. Census block groups with densities of 35 percent or more low-income residents. Fourteen communities in Oakland County have substantial concentrations of low and moderate-income residents, persons in poverty and economically burdened homeowners and renters. Of the 14, the City of Pontiac and Royal Oak Township have the highest concentrations of low -income residents, 73 percent and 68 percent respectively as well as the highest percentages of families in poverty (over 18 percent). These two communities also have the highest numbers of residents who are burdened by housing expenses. Over 27 percent of homeowners and 43 percent of renters in Pontiac spend 30 percent or more on housing expenses. In Royal Oak Township 23 percent of homeowners and 45 percent of renters spend 30 percent or more of household income on housing. Pontiac and Royal Oak Township also have large non-white populations of 54 percent and 70 percent respectively and high unemployment rates.

A fluctuating economy and increasing unemployment rates impact housing stability. The State of Michigan has consistently ranked as having one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation. Southeastern Michigan has been hit especially hard with the downsizing and closing of much of its manufacturing base. Based on the State of Michigan Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Oakland County's unemployment rate rose from a record low of 2.2 percent in 2000 to 5.7 in 2005. The March 2006 rate for the county as a whole (seasonally adjusted) was 6.2 percent (compared to 6.8 for the State of Michigan and 4.7 nationally). However, not all communities fared as well. For example, the City of Pontiac had a staggering 16.3 percent unemployment rate in March

2006. People who lost jobs and income over the past year faced difficulties in paying rents and mortgage payments, and foreclosure and eviction has escalated.

The number and cost of foreclosures have grown significantly. Per the Housing Needs Assessment, using data from the County Equalization Department, the County Clerk and Register of Deeds, and other mortgage data obtained from national reporting requirements, "mortgage foreclosures increased dramatically over the period, from 468 in 1990 to 2,126 in 2004-an increase of 354 percent." From January 1990 to April 2005, the median dollar amount for mortgage foreclosures rose 258 percent from \$36,860 to \$137,045. In six communities the share of foreclosures outnumbered the share of sales. These communities are the City of Ferndale, City of Hazel Park, City of Madison Heights, City of Oak Park, City of Pontiac, and the City of Southfield, all communities that are predominately low-income. The City of Pontiac had the highest percentage of foreclosures, a 14 percent excess over sales.

According to an article in the April 23, 2006 edition of The Oakland Press the number of foreclosed homes that went to auction in Oakland County jumped from 193 in July 2005 to 274 in August, and remained over 200 per month since. In January 2006, 391 homes were sold at auction, in February 308, and in March 360, 110 more than the preceding year. In March 2006, 777 homes were in some type of foreclosure, the second highest in the State. An article on August 12, 2006 in The Oakland Press stated that "Employment-challenged Michigan led the nation in new residential foreclosures per household in July-a month that saw the highest number of new home foreclosures across the country this year." According to Ruth Johnson, County Clerk, foreclosure amounts range from \$60,000-\$400,000. Although predominately in Pontiac and Southfield, nearly every community in the county has homes in the foreclosure process right now.

In May 2006, the Oakland County Treasurer's office identified 5,906 households in jeopardy of tax foreclosure if delinquent taxes are not paid by March 31, 2007. Many who request an extension of time to pay at the annual Show Cause Hearing did not realize that the County could foreclose on their home because of unpaid taxes, and there is no redemption period. Many have refinanced with predatory loans that do not include taxes and insurance.

The Housing Needs Assessment indicates that the elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, the homeless, and persons in large families all have significant difficulties locating affordable housing.

The 2000 U.S. Census documents 96,667 disabled individuals between 21 and 64 years of age living in Oakland County. While not all of these individuals have specialized housing needs a substantial number do. According to the County's Consolidated Plan more than 81 percent of Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority (OCCMHA) consumers have income less than \$20,000 per year and 66 percent have incomes less than \$10,000 per year. OCCMHA and Consolidated Plan data conclude that these consumers must pay 79 percent and up to more than 100 percent of their monthly income for rent for a one-bedroom apartment at the current Fair

Market Rent. Oakland County has only 60 units of Section 811 housing and the number of group homes is decreasing. Subsidized housing is limited and have extensive waiting lists, most of which have been closed for many years. The County Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List opened for the first time in six years on June 22, 2006. The program had more than 11,000 households submit an application. The Oakland County Housing Choice Voucher Program only has a total of 1,406 vouchers, all currently in use.

Single head-of-households receiving Temporary Aid to Needy Families (currently \$489 for a family of three) are priced out of the rental housing market in Oakland County. Single mothers with children under the age of five make up 31.7 percent of the population living in poverty in Oakland County (2000 U.S. Census). Generally, there are more than 500 families on waiting lists for public housing and subsidized housing and most lists are closed when they become too long. Applicants can expect to wait more than three years for assistance due to the lower turnover of units and need to seek help elsewhere to locate affordable housing.

As Michigan is a home rule state, each of the 61 units of government has distinct zoning and land use ordinances. In completing the Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment, 36 communities were reviewed. Only three communities explicitly addressed affordable housing as defined by HUD (Pontiac, Ferndale, Oak Park), yet all 36 considered themselves to have a significant amount of affordable housing and wanted to diversify (higher cost housing) their housing stock. Regulatory Barriers include building codes, environmental regulations, land use and zoning, impact fees, and administrative processes. Chapter 8 of the study, which can be found at [www.oakgov.com/chi/pub\\_info/HNA](http://www.oakgov.com/chi/pub_info/HNA), provides more information on this issue.

### Characteristics of the Chronically Homeless

HUD defines an unaccompanied individual who is disabled or has a substance abuse issue and who has been homeless for more than one year or have had four or more episodes of homelessness in the last three years as chronically homeless. Nationwide, these individuals make up less than 20 percent of the homeless population but use 50 percent to 80 percent of service dollars.

The vast majority of the chronic homeless suffer from some sort of severe mental illness. Nationwide, about five percent of people with serious mental illness are homeless at any given time, and as many as two-thirds of all people with serious mental illness have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives (U.S. Dept. of HUD, Blueprint for Change). In addition, many have co-occurring substance abuse disorders.

These individuals tend to live on the streets, in parks, and in cars; staying in warming centers when the nights get cold. They are distrustful of government programs and most do not have basic identification. Poverty is an issue. Approximately 50 percent of the individuals have no income or pick up scattered day labor jobs. The majority of the remainder has Social Security or SSI. Currently the average disabled person receives \$604 per month from SSI (equal to just over 11 percent of Oakland County median

income). The State of Michigan disability payments for those not receiving SSI is \$264 per month, provided there is no additional income. The current fair market rent for a one-bedroom unit is \$644.00. Therefore, these individuals cannot afford a basic unit in Oakland County on their current income. Most do not have a means of transportation, a current support system, higher education, and financial literacy. Many have been incarcerated for minor offenses. Others need to re-learn basic housekeeping skills and how to get along with neighbors.

Gleaned from discussions during discharge planning policy meetings, these individuals also often use the local hospital emergency rooms for a place to get warm and obtain a meal and place to sleep for the night. Medical issues are common and costs are high as they do not take care of chronic illnesses such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Outreach, developing rapport and a relationship of trust is important before being able to assist this population.

A focus group was held at the Welcome Inn, Berkley, in March of 2005. Fifteen individuals agreed to talk to our moderator about issues important to them. Five (or 33%) were veterans who served in Iraq.

Reasons for homelessness included divorce, foreclosure, loss of employment, high rental rates, lack of job skills, low income, criminal record, addictions, mental health concerns, veteran's problems (veteran of Iraqi war), access to medication, and credit issues.

Prevention from homelessness includes the balance of minimum wage and the cost of living; increased availability of affordable housing; free psychological counseling, eliminating waiting lists for substance abuse rehabilitation programs; expediting social security claims; improving the system for those with mental illness; job availability for former felons; and education and job skill training.

Resources were accessed through referrals from other homeless individuals, churches, Easter Seals, Oakdale, PACE program (substance abuse), VA, MCREST (Macomb County emergency shelter), South Oakland Shelter, and the Department of Human Services.

Barriers to maintaining housing include employment (lack of job opportunities or low wages), increasing rents, mental health issues and proper services, divorce, abuse, and lack of reliable transportation.

These individuals suggested the following changes in the homeless system:

- Education to the general public about the homeless (who they are, what they look like, and why they are homeless).
- A program to lift the stigma of being homeless
- Education program for individuals to obtain skills to become self-sufficient
- Assistance for single individuals

- One-Stop shop for all resources in Oakland County that could include employment assistance, education, housing programs, case management, referrals, phones, and access to computers.
- Year-round programs (not just in winter)
- Build a coalition to include DHS, local organizations, social security, services, etc.
- Access to a mailing address
- Turn heat on in churches and hot water for showers
- Would like to be treated with dignity and respect
- More transitional housing
- More affordable housing
- Assistance for veterans that were not in combat zones
- Clothes for job interviews

The discussion also covered what affordable housing “looks like”, transportation issues, financial assistance, and prisoner re-entry needs. The full transcript is located in Appendix B.

### Characteristics of Homeless Families and Youth

Generally, homeless families are hidden from us, doubled up, staying with relatives or friends, living in cars, campgrounds, shelters, and motels. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, family homelessness is driven largely by the inability of very-low income families to afford housing. Providing housing greatly improves chances of success in employment, education and health. The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) reported that in 2002, families composed 41 percent of the urban homeless population (30 percent are children). The first annual HMIS report in Michigan indicates that 70 percent of the homeless in Michigan are in families; 50 percent of the homeless are children; and the average age is just over 9 years old. Because of children, families rarely live on the streets. Once they enter the homeless system, 60 percent of families find housing within 6 months and do not become homeless again.

Characteristics of Homeless Families include:

- Extreme poverty (nationally, annually income is approximately \$5,000 per year – not enough to pay for housing)
- Headed by single female
- Low educational levels (nationally only 50 percent have a GED or high school diploma)
- Unemployment or Underemployment – 33 percent of the homeless are working, most rely on government assistance to meet basic needs; in Michigan 40 percent are employed
- Tend to have young children (nationally 42 percent of children in homeless families are 5 and under)
- Average number of children in homeless families is 2
- There is a lack of a support network
- There is a tendency to have no or poor housing histories
- Parents tend to be young, pregnant or parenting an infant

- More likely to be members of a minority
- Among children there are high rates of anxiety, depression, & behavioral problems
- Homeless families have somewhat lower incomes than poor housed families
- Parents in homeless families are more likely to have been placed in foster care as children and more likely to have had a mother with a drug problem than poor housed families
- Very similar characteristics of poor housed families

The primary cause of family homelessness is that families cannot afford housing; there is an inadequate supply and the family's income is too low to pay for housing. The NLIHC states "A lack of affordable housing and the limited scale of housing assistance programs are the primary causes of homelessness." Over the past 25 years, our nation has gone from having a surplus of affordable housing units to having a deficit. Most homeless families have been cost burdened; they pay more than they can afford for rent (over 50 percent of income) and housing becomes unstable. As with the chronically homeless, welfare or SSI alone is not a source of income adequate to pay for housing. The demand for housing assistance far outstrips the need; there are long waiting lists for subsidies. In Oakland County waits of three to five years are not uncommon.

Foster Care & TANF also fails to address the role housing plays. Thirty percent of the children in foster care have a homeless or unstably housed parent. Those who exit foster care at 18 have high rates of homelessness. Housing subsidy cost an average nationally of \$6,805 per year, foster care is approximately \$17,000 per child annually.

For people struggling to pay the rent, a serious illness or disability can start a downward spiral into homelessness (over 41 million Americans have no health insurance). Other factors include domestic violence, lack of affordable health care, mental illness, and substance abuse.

In order to end family homeless, the focus must be on prevention and rapid re-housing. Prevention is an important component and has proven to be cost effective. Families with housing they can afford seldom become or remain homeless, although some require additional supports.

A focus group was held a New Bethel Outreach Ministry Shelter in April, 2005. This shelter serves women and their children (males must be under 13).

Reasons for homelessness include divorce, domestic violence, eviction, landlord discrimination, sexual harassment by landlord, increased rent, bad credit, no security deposit, high utility costs, lack of safe, affordable housing, lack of job skills, low wages or on Social Security.

Homeless prevention should include increased availability of affordable housing, expedite social security claims, education of tenants on their rights, discrimination laws enforced, resources available to assist with move-in costs, a program to assist with non-

refundable application fees, rental inspections, and increased employment opportunities.

Resources were accessed through referrals from other homeless individuals, churches, DHS, HAVEN (domestic violence agency), and staff at the shelter.

Barriers to maintaining housing included landlord issues, affordability, loss of employment, low income, increased rent, health issues and lack of insurance, lack of job opportunities, divorce, abuse, child support issues, lack of transportation, and bad credit.

Suggested changes in the homeless system included regulation of landlords, centralized housing assistance, extended human service agency hours, tenant education, increased availability of affordable housing, decreased waiting lists, assistance with child care, educational assistance, credit counseling, additional transitional housing, home ownership programs, increased stay in shelters, transportation.

To those in the focus group, affordable housing included an increase in the Housing Voucher program, decreased waiting lists, fair rents to accommodate individuals who are low income, safe neighborhoods, clean units that are accessible to transportation, grocery stores, department stores, and drugstores.

See Appendix C for additional information gleaned from the focus group held at New Bethel Outreach Ministry.

### Youth & Aging out of Foster Care

Many studies indicate that children who age out of foster care are ill prepared to cope with the realities of the adult world. Many end up as teenage parents, in jail, or homeless. A study by Wayne State University's Research Group on Homelessness and Poverty found that more than 49 percent of the youth who aged out in 2002 and 2003 in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb County were homeless at some point during their first three years of independence. The study further found that 25.4 percent were homeless immediately after aging out, while 36 percent had to return to the homes from which they were originally removed from. Additionally, 16.7 percent lived on the streets, in cars, or in abandoned buildings. A study out of Philadelphia found similar results. In that study, during the first three years, 40 percent of girls had children and 40 percent of the males had been incarcerated. Nationally, the National Alliance to End Homelessness reports that those who exit foster care at 18 have high rates of homelessness (20 percent within two years).

### Number of Homeless & Sub-Populations in Oakland County

Since 1997, it has been the policy of the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness & Affordable Housing to perform a point-in-time census of individuals who are staying in an emergency shelter or in transitional housing in January of each year. The first street

count of the homeless was initiated in 2003, with a follow up count in January 2005. It is important for the reader to understand that this population is ever changing and the count reflects just one day in time. It does not include those who are doubled up or staying temporarily with friends or family.

The most recent complete count was performed manually on January 25, 2005. With data inputted into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) since that date, we feel that our numbers are low (especially for the chronically homeless and the sub-populations). A full base-line count will be completed in January 2007 including a count of guests staying at our shelters and in transitional housing as well as a nook and cranny search of those who are staying in places not meant for human habitation.

***Continuum of Care Homeless Population and Subpopulations Chart-January 2005***

<b>Part 1: Homeless Population</b>	<b>Sheltered</b>		<b>Unsheltered</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>Emergency</b>	<b>Transitional</b>		
<b>Example:</b>	<b>75 (A)</b>	<b>125 (A)</b>	<b>105 (N)</b>	<b>305</b>
1. Homeless Individuals	239 (A)	162 (A)	437 (N)	838 (A)
2. Homeless Families with Children	13 (A)	54 (A)		
2a. Persons in Homeless Families with Children	42 (A)	155 (A)	258 (N)	455 (A)
<b>Total (lines 1 + 2a only)</b>	<b>281 (A)</b>	<b>317 (A)</b>	<b>695 (N)</b>	<b>1,293 (A)</b>
<b>Part 2: Homeless Subpopulations</b>	<b>Sheltered</b>		<b>Unsheltered</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Chronically Homeless		66 (A)	71 (N)	137 (N)
2. Severely Mentally Ill		213 (S)	*	
3. Chronic Substance Abuse		125 (S)	*	
4. Veterans		7 (S)	*	
5. Persons with HIV/AIDS		4 (S)	*	
6. Victims of Domestic Violence		100 (S)	*	
7. Youth (Under 18 years of age)		23 (S)	*	

A-actual S-sampling N-numerated

In January 2006, a count was conducted using HMIS data on a sampling of emergency shelters only. The count revealed an 11 percent increase over 2005 data for the same shelters.

**Current Inventory of Beds in Oakland County**

As of January 2006, Oakland County had the following inventory of beds available to the homeless:

In emergency shelters and warming centers, there is room for 386 persons. There are 199 year-round emergency shelter beds. In addition, warming centers open up in the colder months, generally late December through early April. There is a current capacity

for 165 of these seasonal beds (100 in the Southern portion of the County, 65 in the Northern section). Generally, they will not accept children or families. Service providers also offer hotel vouchers. On-going, there are 22 available.

Transitional beds are available for 338 persons, primarily in the City of Pontiac. This includes 162 for women and children (families), 21 for youth ages 16-22, and 155 for individuals with a disability or substance abuse issue. Twenty-eight units are under development (8 for youth and 20 for women and children).

Oakland County has 375 permanent supportive housing units scattered throughout the county. All of Oakland County's supportive housing units are considered scattered sight leasing assistance programs. Eight of these units are designated for the chronically homeless. All of the permanent supportive housing is designated for homeless persons with disabilities and their families. As of January, 2006 there are 147 family units and 228 individual units. There are 46 units under development (22 for families and 24 for individuals, 11 of which are set aside for the chronically homeless).

Effective July, 2006, there are 30 Housing Choice Vouchers set aside for the homeless.

With an inventory of 724 emergency shelter and transitional beds and 1,293 counted homeless, there is a shortage on a given night of 569 beds. The permanent supportive housing programs are full with waiting lists.

#### Definitions:

Emergency Shelter is defined by the OCTH as a temporary location for homeless individuals to receive immediate food and shelter. Generally, the stay is for 90 days or less. Intensive case management is received during the stay. The client is expected to find and maintain a source of income and save toward a down payment/security deposit for permanent housing. Medical care and legal assistance is also provided.

Transitional Housing is housing that facilitates the movement of homeless individuals and families to some form of permanent housing within 24 months. Combined with supportive services, it is meant to enable individuals and families to live as independently as possible and to provide the life skill training necessary to succeed in permanent housing arrangements.

Permanent Supportive Housing is defined as long-term housing for individuals with disabilities. It is community-based housing and provides supportive services that help people transition from homelessness to living as independently as possible in a permanent setting.

#### Cost of Homelessness

It is inaccurate to think that placing people in shelters is the least expensive way to meet their basic needs. The price of homelessness is high, especially for the chronically homeless or those with special needs. Their conditions combined with the lack of stable housing result in ineffective and costly use of a variety of services. Because they have no regular place to stay, homeless persons use a variety of public systems in inefficient and costly ways. Costs shift to corrections, health care, welfare, education, etc. and mask the true cost of homelessness. Nationally, the average cost is \$15,000 per year for single, \$25,000-\$30,000 for families.

It costs \$1,850 to shelter one individual for one month at South Oakland Shelter. This includes the cost of sleeping arrangements, three meals per day, transportation, and case management. It is much more than the \$463 average monthly cost of an individual on SSI with a Housing Choice Voucher from the Madison Heights Housing Commission that supplies independent, permanent housing. Shelter costs also exceed the \$1,088 monthly cost for that same individual to receive leasing assistance, housing supports assistance, and transportation assistance from Community Housing Network in Troy. While sometimes necessary for short-term crises, limited shelter beds are too often used for long-term housing of the chronically homeless. The average monthly cost for transitional housing is \$1,411 per month.

Persons who are homeless are more likely to use the most expensive health care interventions, such as emergency rooms. They also average four more days per hospital visit than comparable non-homeless persons, at a cost of approximately \$2,414 per stay (Source: New England Journal of Medicine). POH Medical Center in Pontiac reports that a visit to the emergency room, without any medication administered, averages \$1,200. Beaumont Hospital, North Oakland Medical Center and St. Joseph Mercy Hospital charge similar rates. These individuals have no insurance and no means of paying for care. There are antidotal reports from social workers attending the Discharge Planning meetings of individuals feigning suicidal tendencies in order to be admitted. When discharged from one hospital, they go to the next, continuing the cycle. It is known by local emergency doctors as “the eats and sheets” program. Recent counts reveal that more than 12 individuals who are homeless may visit these hospitals on any given night, with an increase in winter months. Many come with chronic illnesses such as diabetes that are not under control.

Sources such as the National Alliance to End Homelessness report that attempts at treatment of addiction for those who do not have housing are ineffective and costly. An article in the New Yorker magazine appearing on February 13 & 20, 2006, entitled “Million Dollar Murray” emphasizes this point. It details the highlights of Murray Baur from Reno, Nevada. Murray was homeless and in and out of jail, hospitals, and de-tox facilities, costing taxpayers over \$1,000,000 in services. Housing stability, with supports would have cost just over \$1,000 a month or \$12,000 per year.

Persons who are homeless spend more time in jail often for petty crimes— sometimes for just public loitering. Some continue to commit minor offenses to return for a roof over their head and three meals a day. The average cost of a state or federal prison is \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year. At \$83 per day, or \$2,490 per month, housing individuals in the Oakland County jail is a very costly alternative for taxpayers.

Stop-gap hotel vouchers, food, and services for homeless families average \$3,000 per month according to a national study conducted by the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

The children of homeless families in Oakland County are at a significant disadvantage with school-related issues and need special services to overcome these difficulties. The Oakland Intermediate School District provides services to approximately 3,000 school-

aged children who are homeless during a typical year. This includes a limited number of hotel vouchers, transportation, clothing, food, tutoring, extra-curricular activity fees, counseling and supplies.

Two children in foster care cost \$34,000 annually.

Each of these interventions approaches or exceeds what housing would cost. The Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has concluded that the cost of preventing a homeless episode is one-sixth the cost of responding once a family has become homeless.

Perhaps the most difficult cost to quantify is the loss of future productivity and opportunities. Diminished health, complete disruption of domestic life, and loss of one's possessions, means that families and individuals who are homeless have more obstacles to overcome before they can contribute to society. With the proper investment, those contributions would be seen every day through work, spiritual growth, paying taxes, volunteering, building healthy relationships, civic engagement, and creative outlets.

### **Oakland County Community Issues**

During the course of developing this plan, several issues emerged. They are outlined below. Each was discussed and researched at length.

#### **ISSUE AREA ONE – Access and Outreach/Service Provision/Discharge**

##### *Difficulty in accessing system in a service rich county*

- How to get information to those who need it
- High turn over in Human Services agencies may bring a lack of consistency to efforts

##### *Difficulty in engaging this population, i.e. outreach*

- Some may prefer the streets
- Lack of trust in system and persons
- Dislike of restrictions
- Some cannot deal with structure
- May be especially difficult to engage the mentally ill who have been de-institutionalized
- Lack of community based support systems
- Lack of access to medication
- Lack of structure leads to not taking medication even when access is available
- No capacity to receive outreach even if it exists

##### *Insufficient access to substance abuse treatment*

- Difficult to make referrals to treatment options
- Cost may be a barrier, i.e. population cannot afford programs
- Not enough options to refer clients to

##### *Services for Veterans*

- Services available but unknown to Veterans

*Critical issues identified too late to have maximum impact*

- Persons must be taught to assume responsibility for themselves at an early age and be taught when it is appropriate and necessary to seek help
- Education is needed for school personnel (social workers), hospital social workers, etc.
- Issues identified sooner may not become as acute

*Follow-up is critical, especially with substance abuse issues*

- Need follow up after referral to assure that persons are engaged in programs

*Discharge problems*

- Lack of pre-planning by courts, jails, and hospitals
- Clients literally “dropped at the doorstep” of agencies with no warning

ISSUE AREA TWO – Leadership to solve problems needs to be strengthened

- The Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness & Affordable Housing contains well intentioned, dedicated volunteers but only so much time can be dedicated to the Task Force versus their own agencies; need more elected official and business involvement
- Political leadership in Oakland County needs to be involved (Cities & County)
- Homelessness not an exciting issue
- Interest in the issues varies in intensity
- Many don't believe homelessness is an issue in affluent Oakland County

ISSUE AREA NUMBER THREE – Family Structure and Skills

- Greater numbers of low-income one parent families which brings a greater risk of homelessness
- Greater numbers of teen headed households which brings a greater risk of homelessness – an unstructured childhood leads to an unstructured adulthood, bringing the potential for a host of problems
- Need greater emphasis on life skills training (budgeting, finding and retaining employment, and parenting among others)
- Difficulty in breaking the cycle of Domestic Violence
- Difficulty in accessing shelter space in Oakland County

ISSUE AREA NUMBER FOUR – Lack of Housing and Facilities

*Lack of affordable housing*

- Affluence of Oakland County
- Definition of affordable housing – developers versus consumers and service providers

*Lack of permanent supportive housing for special populations*

- Where to refer chronically mentally ill for long-term housing and services
- Lack of capacity of these individuals to find services that do exist
- More information and training for agency personnel in this area

### *Lack of short-term assistance for special populations*

- No “day places/drop in centers” for mentally ill
- Once other housing barriers have been overcome, fair housing may become an issue
- Landlords may not want to rent to formerly homeless persons because of race, income level, and/or perceived stigma of “homeless people”

The Community Summit provided the following strategies (see appendix D for more information):

Closing the front door strategies include collaboration among agencies, raising public awareness, employment/job skills training, education, financial resources, more affordable housing, accountability and personal responsibility, directory of services, identification of persons in crisis and at risk, outreach, change of mindset, being proactive versus reactive, creating safer communities, language barriers, accessibility of mental and physical health options, community as support, 211, advocacy, volunteerism, service referrals, and tracking systems.

Opening the back door strategies include counseling and case management at emergency shelters, additional transitional housing, affordable rentals and housing choice, education, community awareness, lobbying, adult drop-in centers, centralized volunteer system, more collaboration among agencies, change perception of Oakland County, communication, data collection, create models to address need, stakeholder participation.

Building the Infrastructure strategies include removing bureaucratic barriers for agencies building affordable housing, help from the community administration, employment opportunities, local community fund for short-term loans, education assistance, evaluation, follow-up measures, awareness of resources, assisted living for seniors, and NIMBYism (not in my back yard).

### **Oakland County’s Housing First Philosophy**

As explained by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Housing First is an approach that centers on providing homeless persons with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. There is a focus on helping households access and sustain rental housing as quickly as possible and the housing is not time limited. Following housing placement, a variety of services may be offered to promote stability and individual well-being. Many studies provide evidence that services are more effective when people are in their own home.

Oakland County follows the Housing First Philosophy when suitable for the client’s needs. Oakland County’s model includes an assessment of the household, assistance in locating suitable long-term, rental housing and lease negotiation, housing assistance (ranging from security deposit and one month’s rent to long term rental subsidy), case management, and other supports, services, and referrals that may be needed.

## **Goals & Strategies**

*Charles & Helen Schwab Foundation: "Numerous studies have found that affordable, primarily subsidized, housing prevents homelessness more effectively than anything else."*

### **General Goals**

#### **1. Prevention**

The best way to end homelessness is to prevent it. Housing stability provides a base and allows households to concentrate on other needs to maintain family self-sufficiency.

Goal: To develop and implement a county-wide prevention plan for homelessness

##### **Strategies:**

- Research effective preventative methodologies used by our members and agencies in other communities
- Select best practices and develop a county-wide prevention plan
- Advocate for increased funding for prevention programs through foundations, community action agency, United Way, CDBG, etc.
- Advocate for increased education programs designed to prevent homelessness
  - Support and advertise local existing programs on financial literacy, how to be a good landlord, tenant responsibilities, eviction and foreclosure prevention, Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) counseling, and pre-purchase counseling
  - Increase awareness and advocate for current HUD approved housing counseling programs in Oakland County.

#### **2. Affordable housing**

Affordable housing means strong economic development, building neighborhoods, and sustaining our quality of life. Pursue opportunities for the development and preservation of safe, decent, and sustainable affordable housing that has positive impacts on our community

Goal: To increase the affordable housing stock in Oakland County by developing a minimum of 30 units of affordable housing per year

##### **Strategies:**

- Maximize McKinney funding stream to develop new units of permanent supportive housing where possible
- Maximize funding opportunities from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority for homeless initiatives

- Continue to develop owner-occupied and rental housing for low-income residents through the Home Investment Partnership Act, Tax Credits, foundations, and other sources
- Require potential homeowners to attend pre-purchasing classes
- Increase the supply of down payment assistance and Individual Deposit Accounts

Goal: Maintain the existing supply of affordable housing

Strategies:

- Maintain contact with federal and state representatives and advocate for continued/increase funding for affordable housing programs
- Educate current owners nearing the end of their original commitment to affordable housing about options other than moving to private sector rent
- Advocate for communities to license and inspect rental units
- Add additional supports to privately and publicly owned affordable housing to prevent evictions

Goal: Assist in the implementation of the recommendations in the Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment released in 2006

Strategies:

- Work with community leaders to investigate and implement recommendations found in the study

Goal: Advocate for the removal of regulatory barriers in the development of affordable housing

Strategies:

- Educate policy makers on best practices
- Work toward adoption of recommendations on regulatory barriers in the Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment

### 3. Data Collection

To measure success, performance measurements must be in place. This includes the collection of reliable, accurate, measurable data as a baseline. Effective outcomes should be realized.

Goal: To have all homeless service providers participate in the homeless management information system

Strategies:

- Have a minimum of 90% compliance on all null data reports by monitoring all HMIS agencies for accurate data entry
- Encourage faith based and non-federally funded entities to participate in HMIS

- Publish an annual in-depth report on the homeless population in Oakland County

Goal: Establish a base-line count of the homeless (including the chronically homeless) by conducting a nook and cranny search and street count in coordination with a shelter count within one year of implementation date of plan.

Strategies:

- Garner community (churches, businesses, interested persons, schools, etc.) support and assistance
- Conduct public awareness campaigns to get public input on where the homeless may be staying
- Provide training for volunteers
- Provide homeless with gift for answering questions.

Goal: Determine measurable outcomes to see if strategies need to be altered

Strategies:

- Determine goal-oriented results for chronic homelessness and general homelessness after six months, one-year, and two-years
- Include income source and housing stability

#### 4. Enhance availability of medical care

The homeless and poor often suffer from poor health. Most are uninsured or underinsured. Many need dental work or eye glasses. These clients use the emergency room for medical needs that are more properly served by a practice or at a clinic.

Goal: Increase the availability of medical care for the homeless and those at risk for homelessness

Strategies:

- Distribute information of existing medical clinics in Oakland County
- Encourage and assist in the expansion of existing clinics
- Advocate for medical personnel and businesses to participate in Project Connect Day to provide services for the homeless
- Assist clients in enrollment in government insurance programs including Medicaid and MI child.

#### 5. Public Awareness of homeless issues

There is a stigma attached to being homeless. Those who are homeless often feel stigmatized as if being homeless is a crime.

Goal: Promote public awareness of the needs of the homeless. Inform the public of the benefit of affordable housing in creating prosperous communities.

Strategies:

- Monthly public awareness campaign to educate the public
- Provide media success stories of persons moving from homelessness to home ownership and permanent rental housing
- Respond to negative media stories when appropriate-correcting stereotyping
- Celebrate homeless awareness week with an array of activities

Family Homelessness

1. Prevention

Families at risk of losing their housing need swift, effective prevention strategies, and a supportive, effective network of resources.

Goal: Families in Oakland County will have access to the supportive services necessary to avoid homelessness and the disruption of the continuity of their lives.

Strategies:

- Families at risk will make use of county wide resources such as housing counseling, public service agencies, at-risk hotline, 211 line, Oakland Schools helpline
- Where needed, a case manager will be assigned to assist the family in connecting to assistance

2. Intervention

Families who have lost their housing must be able to secure immediate, safe, and service-connected shelter, compatible with the unique needs of each family, so that they may spend the least amount of time in this transitional mode as possible.

Goal: The length of homelessness experienced by families in Oakland County will be reduced through prompt, effective, and respectful response, delivered by a continuum of providers dictated by family needs.

Strategies:

- Families experiencing homelessness will be best matched with the services they most need through:
  - use of 1-800-A-SHELTER call line, utilization of a quadrant-based response committee to review needs and response, improved communication and connection between providers
  - Family will be assessed by a case manager and moved to permanent housing as quickly as possible
- A list of possible landlords will be maintained
- If available, a housing choice voucher set-aside for the homeless will be provided

- Partner with Public Housing Authorities to publicize open waiting lists and to open dialog of homeless set-asides.
- Establish a no wrong door policy
- Coordinate with main stream resources
- Expand accessibility and utilization of the Earned Income Tax Credit

### 3. Retention

Families will be able to retain their permanent housing situations in Oakland County.

Goal: The available resources and opportunities will be present in Oakland County to maximize the potential for families to retain permanent housing.

Strategies:

- Families will be referred to an Oakland County housing counselor to determine need. Budgeting, information on tenant/landlord rights, credit counseling, pre-purchase counseling, loss mitigation for foreclosure, reverse mortgage counseling, financial literacy, and referral will be provided at no cost to the client. Assist the client in overcoming obstacles of poor credit and rent history. Advocate for use of alternative forms of credit.
- Client will be referred to appropriate public service agency for financial and/or legal assistance
- The OCTH will sponsor community forums and educational opportunities to assist families in the development of strategies to retain their permanent housing including money management seminars, agency linkage to assist with case management, job skills and search assistance, and opportunity to link to prevention funds if needed

### 4. New Housing

As referenced in the Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment, in order to end homelessness in the County, additional affordable housing needs to be created.

Goal: Create additional affordable housing for families with children

Strategies:

- Pursue available funding opportunities from state and local governments, foundations, CRA banks, and financial institutions

### Chronic Homelessness

#### 1. Increase the supply of permanent supportive housing

Permanent Supportive Housing is successful because it combines three key elements: affordable housing, support services, and community. In order to effectively end chronic homelessness, adequate permanent supportive housing must be in place.

Goal: Increase the supply of permanent supportive housing set-aside for the chronically homeless by a minimum of 12 units each year

Strategies:

- Maximize funding opportunities through MSHDA and HUD
- Encourage all permanent supportive housing to set aside a percentage of new units for the chronically homeless
- Collaborate with Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority, Oakland County Substance Abuse Services, and Oakland County Veterans Services to provide needed outreach and supportive services

Goal: Develop a safe haven

Strategies

- Work with existing warming center providers to build capacity
- Collaborate with current providers for outreach

## 2. Discharge Planning

Coordinated efforts to place individuals being discharged from public institutions into permanent housing assists in the quick assimilation back into society

Goal: Create an effective discharge policy for jails, foster care, mental health, and health care.

Strategies:

- Continue dialogue with representatives from foster care, community mental health, Oakland County jail, and hospitals regarding current discharge policies
- Work to implement stronger policies with a housing first emphasis
- Participate in and advocate for prisoner re-entry programs

## 3. Employment Resources

In order to maintain housing stability, economic independence, and self-sufficiency, a living wage must be obtainable.

Goal: Strengthen job training and placement links

Strategies:

- Provide career counseling and planning
- Increase linkages to work first programs
- Assist in providing financial aid to attend vocational and educational programs
- Provide resources and access for address, telephone, computers, and hair cuts and appropriate clothing for job interview and work.

#### 4. Supportive Services

To remain housed, many of the chronic homeless will require additional and continued supportive services

Goal: Maintain effective links to main stream resources

Strategies:

- Prepare an individualized plan of service for all who enter continuum – no wrong door
- Insure the client applies for all mainstream resources they may qualify for (SSI, TANF, VA)
- Assist in the enrollment of educational opportunities and job training
- Educate the consumer on available services, transportation, income streams and how to access these (as well as 211 and help-link)
- Assist in accessing banking and financial management systems

#### 5. Create an outreach program

Those who have been on the streets for a while often need time to build trust before they are willing to enter a program

Goal: Create an effective outreach program to locate and build trust among the chronically homeless

Strategies:

- Prepare a resource manual/card to be distributed at any point of contact (soup kitchens, clinics, emergency rooms, project connect, point-in-time census, warming centers)
- Conduct an annual project connect day
- Hire outreach workers specifically trained to locate and assist those on the street
- Name an advocate for the chronically homeless to assist if problems arise

#### 6. Substance Abuse

A large percentage of the chronically homeless have substance abuse issues that must be treated in order to be stably housed.

Goal: Meet the needs for housing and treatment for people with drug and alcohol problems

Strategies:

- Increase service to people who suffer from addictions including de-tox beds, resources for follow-up treatment, and transitional housing when needed.
- Secure access to the full range of treatment services for people with co-occurring diseases

**PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS  
ADVISORY BOARD**

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Oakland County Taskforce on  
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Community Mental Health Authority

**PLANNING PARTNERS**

*Our special thanks to the following individuals who gave time and energy to attend and give input at one of our planning sessions. We apologize if we missed any one.*

Organization Name	First Name	Last Name	City	State
Agape House	LaKeisha	Kennedy	Southfield	MI
Agape House	Shelly	Ashford	Southfield	MI
Aids Consortium Of South East Michigan	Erin	Dunkle	Detroit	MI
Apple Realty	Celia	Frye	Pontiac	MI
Arab American and Chaldean Council	Salem	Poles	Lathrup Village	MI
ASTI Environmental	Doug	Brown	Brighton	MI
Baldwin C & C	Caroline	Milne	Pontiac	MI
Barker Construction	Cliff	Barker	Pontiac	MI
Beaumont Hospital	Tricia	Thomas	Royal Oak	MI
Catholic Social Services	Margaret	Huggard	Pontiac	MI
City of Pontiac CDBG	Juanita	Harper	Pontiac	MI
City of Pontiac Federal Programs Division	Patricia	Lile	Pontiac	MI
City of Southfield	Harold	Shrimon	Southfield	MI
CNS	James	Patton	Pontiac	MI
CNS Peer Counselor	Bill	Woodstock	Pontiac	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	Colleen	Sootsman-Eicher	Bloomfield Hills	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	Megan	Clor	Bloomfield Hills	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	Melissa	Hope	Bloomfield Hills	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	David	Fraquelli	Royal Oak	MI

Organization Name	First Name	Last Name	City	State
Common Ground Sanctuary	David	Permaldt	Royal Oak	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	Steve	Overstreet	Royal Oak	MI
Community Development Opportunities	Catherine	Watkins	Southfield	MI
Community Development Outreach	Dan	Chambers	Pontiac	MI
Community Development Outreach	Lee	Anderson	Pontiac	MI
Community Homes Inc.	Paul	Thomas	Berkley	MI
Community Housing Network	Jennifer	Williams	Troy	MI
Community Housing Network	Barbara	Garrett	Troy	MI
Community Housing Network	Jill	Shoemaker	Troy	MI
Community Housing Network	Kirsten	Elliott	Troy	MI
Community Network Services	Rennie	Hughes	Pontiac	MI
Community Network Services	Roslyn	Johnson	Pontiac	MI
Community Network Services	Denise	Cicinek	Pontiac	MI
Community Network Services	Marion	Dockery	Pontiac	MI
Community Network Services	Veronica	Jackson	Pontiac	MI
Community Programs Inc.	William	Epling	Waterford	MI
Community Services of Oakland	John	Erich	Ferndale	MI
Exec. Comm Business Round Table				
Grace Centers of Hope	Pastor John	Ferguson	Pontiac	MI
Grace Centers of Hope	Rev Kent	Clark	Pontiac	MI
HAVEN	Shawn	Dehondt	Pontiac	MI
HAVEN	Rena	Howard	Pontiac	MI
Keller Williams Realty	Christa	Rosenberg	Waterford	MI
Lawrence Tech. University	Steven	Schneemann	Southfield	MI
Lighthouse	Tom	Stowell	Pontiac	MI
Lighthouse	Noreen	Keating	Pontiac	MI
Lighthouse Path	Sharman	Davenport	Pontiac	MI
Michigan DCMH	Monica	Bellamy	Lansing	MI
Michigan State Univ. Human Ecology & O.C. Child Care	Victoria	Martinez	Clarkston	MI
Mixed Modalities Inc.	Stanley	Kozlowski	Rochester Hills	MI
MSHDA Housing Agent Oak. Co.	Ned	Covault	Royal Oak	MI
MSHDA Housing Agt.	Rance	Thompson	Shelby Twp.	MI
MSHDA Housing agt. Oakland Co. waiting list	Jean	Gush	Utica	MI
MSHDA Section 8 Housing Agent	Daniel	Petroff	Washington	MI
MSU Extension	Mary	Hogan	Pontiac	MI
National Civility Center	Kent	Roberts	Pontiac	MI
New Bethel Outreach	LaWanda	Jackson	Pontiac	MI
North Oakland Warming Center/Baldwin OM Church	George	Covintree	Pontiac	MI
Oakland Co. Sheriffs Office OCJ	Cindy	Pruitt	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County	Carla	Spradlin	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County	Ron	Milligan	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County	Lynn	Alexander	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County Board of Commissioners	Sheryl	Mitchell	Pontiac	MI

Organization Name	First Name	Last Name	City	State
Oakland County Board of Commissioners	Jim	Nash	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County Board of Commissioners	Marcia	Gershenson	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County Board Of Commissioners	David	Coulter	Ferndale	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Michael	Dinan	Rochester	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Bonnie	Timmirman	Oxford	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Leroy	Newton	White Lake	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Blanche	Newton	White Lake	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Cheryl	Patel	Farmington Hills	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Barry & Melanie	Schwab	White Lake	MI
OC Community & Home Impr Div	Karry	Rieth	Pontiac	MI
OC Community & Home Impr Div	Kathy	Williams	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County DHS	Marlene	Stein	Bloomfield Hills	MI
Oakland County Housing Counseling	JoAnne	Hill-Brookshear	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County Sheriff's Office	Captain Charles	Snarey	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County Veterans Services	Diana	Calvin	Pontiac	MI
Oakland Dept of Human Services	Darlene	Davis	Bloomfield Hills	MI
Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency	Gerald	Sedick	Pontiac	MI
Oakland Schools	Linda	Ferro	Waterford	MI
Oakland Schools	Susan	Benson	Waterford	MI
Oakland/Macomb Centers for Independent Living	Susan	Marsh	Sterling Heights	MI
OCCMHA/ SOCH	Jackie	Castine	Auburn Hills	MI
OLHSA	Liz	Dillard	Pontiac	MI
OLHSA	Jamila	Turner	Pontiac	MI
OLHSA	Shelley	Harville	Pontiac	MI
OLHSA	Donald	Jones	Pontiac	MI
Place of Hope	Dan	Hosler	Pontiac	MI
POH Medical Center	Gwendolyn	Conner	Pontiac	MI
Pontiac Alliance for Community Empowerment	Marcia	Battles	Pontiac	MI
Recor Enterprises	Roger	Imerman	Keego Harbor	MI
South Oakland Shelter	Monica	Duncan	Royal Oak	MI
South Oakland Shelter	Bruce	Carr	Farmington Hills	MI
South Oakland Shelter	Lakeyla	Whitaker	Royal Oak	MI
Springhill Housing Corp.	Darlene	Ross	Troy	MI
St Joseph Mercy Hospital	Judy	Wheeler	Pontiac	MI
St Joseph Hospital/Gustafson Center	Mike	Cotant	Pontiac	MI
St. George Greek Orthodox Church	Dena	Hodgson	Bloomfield Hills	MI
State Representative 39th District	Aldo	Vagnozzi	Farmington Hills	MI
T T I	Don	Wiggins	Clawson	MI
Training & Treatment Innovations	Kevin	Boggs	Clawson	MI
Troy Schools, Wass Elem.	Diane	Bencik	Troy	MI
TTI	Ana Maria	Vazquez	Clawson	MI
U C P / Detroit	Paul	Landry	Southfield	MI

Organization Name	First Name	Last Name	City	State
U.S. Dept. of H.U.D.	Thomacina	Brown	Detroit	MI
United Way of Oakland	Rose	Culpepper-Johnson	Pontiac	MI
United Way of Oakland County	Donna	Cunningham	Pontiac	MI
Wass Elementary	Julie	Hampel	Troy	MI
Guests staying at the Welcome Inn, Berkley				
Guest staying at New Bethel Outreach Ministry Shelter				

## The Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness & Affordable Housing Roster

Organization	First Name	Last Name	City	State
Active Faith Community Services	Kathy	Reed	South Lyon	MI
Agape House	LaKeisha	Kennedy	Southfield	MI
Agape House	Shelly	Ashford	Southfield	MI
Agape House	Linda	Burdette	Southfield	MI
Aldersgate United Methodist Church	Kenneth	Bracken	Pontiac	MI
Aldo Vagnozzi	Monica	Zuchowski	Farmington Hills	MI
Baldwin Church	Cara	Rayner	Pontiac	MI
Berea family Tabernacle of Faith	Yolanda	Terry	Pontiac	MI
Builders Association of SE Michigan	Gerard	Mellnick	Farmington	MI
c/o Oakland Schools	Paula	Todd	Waterford	MI
Catholic Social Services	Sharon	Josephson	Royal Oak	MI
Catholic Social Services	Margaret	Huggard	Pontiac	MI
CHN	Jillian	Alexander	Rochester Hills	MI
City of Farmington Hills	Rick	Lampi	Farmington	MI
City of Pontiac Federal Programs	Juanita	Harper	Pontiac	MI
City of Pontiac-Federal Programs	Patricia	Lile	Pontiac	MI
City of Rochester Hills	Joe	Snyder	Rochester Hills	MI
City of Royal Oak	Mardy	Stirling	Royal Oak	MI
City of Troy	Vicki	Richardson	Troy	MI
Collaborative Solutions	Barbra	Ashley	Waterford	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	Colleen	Sootsman-Eicher	Bloomfield Hills	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	David	Permaloff	Royal Oak	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	Melissa	Hope	Royal Oak	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	Stephen	Overstreet	Royal Oak	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	James A.	Perlaki	Bloomfield Hills	MI
Common Ground Sanctuary	Megan	Clor	Bloomfield Hills	MI
Community Foundation of SE	Mariam	Noland	Detroit	MI
Community Homes, Inc.	Tom	Quakenbush	Berkley	MI
Community Homes, Inc.	Paul	Thomas	Berkley	MI
Community Housing Network	Dawn	Pischel	Troy	MI
Community Housing Network	Jill	Shoemaker	Troy	MI
Community Housing Network, Inc	Chuck	Bratton	Troy	MI
Community Housing Network, Inc.	Kirsten	Elliott	Troy	MI
Community Housing Network, Inc.	Jennifer	Williams	Troy	MI
Community Housing Network, Inc.	Marc	Craig	Troy	MI
Community Network Services	Rennie	Hughes	Farmington Hills	MI
Community Network Services	Mary	Klein	Pontiac	MI
Community Network Services	Roslyn	Johnson	Pontiac	MI

Organization Name	First Name	Last Name	City	State
Community Network Services	Brad	Ewing	Pontiac	MI
Community Network Services	Maryanne	Dockery	Pontiac	MI
Community Programs Inc.	William	Epling	Waterford	MI
Community Services of Oakland			Ferndale	MI
CRS	Evarister	White	Southfield	MI
Department of Social Work - Beaumont Hospital	Marian	Samet	Royal Oak	MI
Disability Network	Gena	Hintz	Sterling Heights	MI
Disability Network Oakland/Macomb	Genafer	Hintz	Sterling Hts.	MI
Easter Seals	Dorothy	Pilla	Southfield	MI
Easter Seals	John	Cocciolone	Southfield	MI
Easter Seals	Lori	Warholak	Waterford	MI
El Centro La Familia	Sonya	Acosta	Pontiac	MI
Food Bank of Oakland County	John	Dziurgot	Pontiac	MI
Furniture Bank of Oakland	Colette	Kelly	Pontiac	MI
Future Homes	Don	Harris	Royal Oak	MI
Glorious Way Church	Lueginia	Harris	Pontiac	MI
Grace Centers of Hope	Kent	Clark	Pontiac	MI
Grace Centers of Hope	Michelle	Atwell	Pontiac	MI
HAVEN	Heather	Porter	Pontiac	MI
HAVEN	Allyson	Rick	Pontiac	MI
Haven, Inc.	Ernestine	McRae	Pontiac	MI
Haven, Inc.	Beth	Morrison	Pontiac	MI
Hope Network, SE	Pat	Crandall	Pontiac	MI
Housing Plus	Jennifer	Lichtman	Pontiac	MI
Housing Plus/New Passages	Dave	Slade	Pontiac	MI
Job Link Career Center	Idrander	Moore	Pontiac	MI
Lighthouse	Bridget	Riddick	Pontiac	MI
Lighthouse - Comm Dev.	Joseph A	Heaphy	Pontiac	MI
Lighthouse of Oakland County	Doris	Hairston	Pontiac	MI
Lighthouse of Oakland County	Thomas	Stowell	Pontiac	MI
Lutheran Social Services			Detroit	MI
Macomb Homeless Coalition	Carrie L.	Fortune	Clinton Twp.	MI
MCAH	Christina	Riddle	Lansing	MI
MDHS of Oakland County	Marlene	Stein	Bloomfield Hills	MI
Michigan DCMH	Monica	Bellamy	Detroit	MI
MORC, Inc.	John	Kiblinger	Auburn Hills	MI
MSHDA	Betty	Dixon	Detroit	MI
MSHDA	Charles H.	Keiffer	Lansing	MI
MSHDA	Rance	Thompson	Shelby twp.	MI
MSHDA HCV Program	David	McGuire	Mt. Pleasant	MI
MSHDA Section 8 Housing Agent	Daniel	Petkoff	Washington	MI
MSHDA-Housing Agent	Jean	Gush	Utica	MI
National Civility Center	Kent	Roberts	Pontiac	MI
New Bethel Outreach	LaWanda	Jackson	Pontiac	MI
New Life Christian Outreach	Reverend Kennis	Hutchins	Pontiac	MI
North Oakland Medical Center	Anita	Mendoza	Pontiac	MI
Oakland & Macomb Centers For Independent Living	Susan	Marsh	Sterling Heights	MI
Oakland Citizen	Katherine	Houser	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County Board of Commissioners	Sheryl	Mitchell	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County BOC	David	Coulter	Ferndale	MI

Organization Name	First Name	Last Name	City	State
Oakland County Citizen	Allen	Meltzer	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Fred	McDonald	Berkley	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Bill	Doub	Waterford	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Dr. Mike	Conant	Birmingham	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Bruce	Carr	Farmington Hills	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Vivian	Tigner	Oak Park	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Sandra	Bryant	Rochester Hills	MI
Oakland County Citizen	Tom	Derocha	Mt Clemens	MI
Oakland County Commissioner	Jim	Nash	Farmington Hills	MI
Oakland County Commissioner	Marcia	Gershenson	Beverly Hills	MI
Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority	Caroline	Babb-Leahey	Auburn Hills	MI
Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority	Jackie	Castine	Auburn Hills	MI
Oakland County Heath Division	George	Miller	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County HSCC Coordinator	Pamela R.	Barckholtz	Bloomfield Hills	MI
Oakland County Jail/JAWS	Cindy	Pruitt	Pontiac	MI
Oakland County Rental Assistance (MSHDA)	Melissa	Larson	St. Clair Shores	MI
Oakland County Substance Abuse	Lynn	Neideck	Pontiac	MI
Oakland Cty. Veteran's Services	Diana	Calvin	Pontiac	MI
Oakland Family Services	Barbra	Hoffman	Pontiac	MI
Oakland Housing	Bill	Brownfield	Birmingham	MI
Oakland Housing, Inc.	Conrad	Cole	Birmingham	MI
Oakland Schools Homeless Program	Susan	Benson	Pontiac	MI
Oakland Schools Homeless Program	Lynda	Ferro	Pontiac	MI
Oakland Schools Homeless Student Ed.	Meghann	Campbell	Pontiac	MI
OCCHI	Kathy	Williams	Pontiac	MI
OLHSA - Home Support	Liz	Dillard	Pontiac	MI
OLHSA South	Michael	Ennis	Ferndale	MI
OLHSA Venture Inc	Don	Jones	Pontiac	MI
OLHSA-Pontiac	Michelle	Brazeau	Pontiac	MI
OMCIL	Michael	Palm	Sterling Heights	MI
Open Door Outreach	Roseann	Failla	Waterford	MI
Open Hands Food Bank	Linda	Ebright	Troy	MI
Place of Hope Warming Center	Daniel	Hosler	Pontiac	MI
Plymouth Housing Commission	Sharon	Thomas	Plymouth	MI
Pontiac Latin Affairs	Maria	Delgado	Pontiac	MI
Residential Housing Co. MSHDA	Ned	Covault	Royal Oak	MI
Rose Hill Center	David	Ballenberger	Holly	MI
Royal Oak Police Department	Gena	Vilums	Royal Oak	MI
Salvation Army/Royal Oak	Renee	Wojciechowski	Royal Oak	MI
Social Security Administration	Robert	Berg	Pontiac	MI
South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless	Roy	Watson	Berkley	MI
South Oakland Shelter	Monica	Duncan	Royal Oak	MI
Southfield Housing Department	Erica	Williams	Southfield	MI
Springhill Housing	Karla	Chambers	Troy	MI
Springhill Housing	Michele	Wehrheim	Warren	MI
SSA - Area Work Incentive Coordinator	Kevin	Troup	Pontiac	MI
St. John's United Methodist	Frederick	Moore	Pontiac	MI
St. John's United Methodist	Cheryl	Moore	Pontiac	MI
St. Mary's Rectory	Sister Therse	Allgeyer O.P.	Royal Oak	MI
St. William/ St. Vincent De Paul Society	Lee	Mitchell	Wixom	MI

Organization Name	First Name	Last Name	City	State
The Salvation Army	Captain	Irvine	Pontiac	MI
Township of Waterford	Robert	Vallina	Waterford	MI
Training and Treatment Innovations	Donald	Wiggins	Madison Hts.	MI
Training and Treatment Innovations	Kevin T.	Boggs	Madison Hts	MI
Turning Point/Completion HSE	Joe	Kopietz	Pontiac	MI
U.S. Depart. Of HUD/Community Planning and Develop	Gerald	Henry	Detroit	MI
United Way of Oakland County	Rose	Culpepper	Pontiac	MI

## APPENDIX A

### MISCELLANEOUS RESOLUTION #05013

BY: Commissioner Eric Wilson, District #3

### IN RE: BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS - SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS IN OAKLAND COUNTY AND PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

To the Oakland County Board of Commissioners

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen:

WHEREAS homelessness is a problem even in affluent places such as Oakland County. During the last 20 years, the homeless population has changed from mostly indigent men to 65% women and children; and

WHEREAS homeless women and children can be found in every city, village and township within Oakland County. Homeless students are in every one of the 28 school districts in Oakland County; and

WHEREAS although many of the homeless men are veterans, the average homeless person in Oakland County is a 9 year old boy. More than 3,000 children each year in Oakland County are forced to live in a shelter, motel, vehicle or "doubled-up" with friends or relatives; and

WHEREAS many things contribute to homelessness including: low wages, transportation issues, child care costs (or lack of adequate child care), medical costs, domestic violence, substance abuse, evictions and mental illness; and

WHEREAS the median household income in Oakland County is \$75,540, but 25% of the County population falls below HUD's Section 8 low-income guidelines - making the possibility of homelessness just one missed paycheck away; and

WHEREAS the common misconception is that placing people in shelters is the least expensive way to meet their basic needs. The cost of homelessness to our society is high. It costs \$1,850 to shelter one individual for one month at local shelters; and

WHEREAS people who are homeless spend more time in jail - often just for public loitering. At a cost of \$83 per day, or \$2,490 per month, housing individuals in the Oakland County jail is very costly for taxpayers - also contributing to jail overcrowding; and

WHEREAS in 2002, President George W. Bush introduced a ten year plan to end homelessness. In 2003, this undertaking was endorsed by both NACO and the US Conference of Mayors. While the plan is not mandated by Congress or HUD, local communities are strongly encouraged to adopt such a plan; and WHEREAS the Oakland County Task Force on Homelessness and Affordable Housing is an organization consisting of representatives of emergency shelters, transitional housing, human service agencies, municipal governments, private foundations and individuals with an interest in the issue of homelessness; and

WHEREAS the Task Force is responsible for developing and maintaining the Continuum of Care strategy that provides interim services to homeless individuals and families while they achieve self-sufficiency. Supportive housing and services for those physically and mentally unable to be self-sufficient also comes under the purview of the Continuum of Care strategy; and

WHEREAS the Oakland County Task Force on Homelessness and Affordable Housing has issued an "A Call to Action" to all stakeholders to participate in a community-wide effort to develop and implement a "Blue Print to End Homelessness"; and

WHEREAS Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson has stated, "If Oakland County can offer a well-spring of career and business opportunities for the vast majority of its citizens, then it has the ability to confront and conquer the problem of homelessness in this county over the next decade."

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Oakland County Board of Commissioners hereby supports the efforts of the County Executive and the Oakland County Task Force on Homelessness and Affordable Housing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Oakland County Board of Commissioners hereby joins in partnership with the growing coalition to seek better methods to serve our homeless populations and unite in developing a community-wide plan to pro-actively end the cycle of homelessness within our borders.

Chairperson, we move the adoption of the foregoing resolution.

ERIC WILSON, CHARLES PALMER, WILLIAM R. PATTERSON, CHUCK MOSS, SUE ANN DOUGLAS, JEFF POTTER, TOM MIDDLETON, JOHN A. SCOTT, HUGH D. CRAWFORD, BILL BULLARD, MIKE ROGERS, DAVID COULTER, MARCIA GERSHENSON, JIM NASH, VINCENT GREGORY, GEORGE W. SUAREZ, CHRISTINE A. LONG, MATTIE HATCHETT, EILEEN KOWALL

## APPENDIX B

### Focus Group - Welcome Inn - Royal Oak March 2, 2005

Reduce rent for people who can't afford to pay it.

Ok, that's one of the things that we are going to talk about.

One good thing is I'm glad that he's (president) going for people who are there not for those who have sympathy for those who are in that plight but are not actually in those that are actually there. Because when you are actually trying to survive and find work whatever, you're scared to death when this ends where are you going to be then? Basically are you going to sleep in the street or ??? Like people saying I sympathize with them but I've never been homeless myself what can I do? You need people who are in really in those shoes.

Exactly, and that's why we're doing this. So, I'm really excited that you want to participate and I really do appreciate it very much. One of the first things in order to understand how people become homeless. What brought you to this point? Certain circumstances, events?

Circumstances. Don't have job skills or income. Don't have no compensation to pay the rent.

Ok

The rent is too high.

Ok, so the rent is too high?

Exactly.

I think they should have a regulation s where they can regulate the landlords from keeping the rent so high. You know. A One bedroom for instance. A one bedroom should be like 1 or 250 or \$300 something that I can deal with. Like out here a one bedroom is \$665, now who can afford that on a minimum wage job? So either hike minimum wage up or reduce rent so people can afford to pay rent. And then the Section 8 thing People should have to be if they have housing for people on Section 8 there shouldn't be no long waiting period. No long lists. You understand what I'm saying? Increase Section 8 vouchers and decrease the wait list. If you have money that's over there across the way have enough money to build houses for people that's on that waiting list. You know what I'm saying. Because Habitat I bet you would be more than happy to pitch in and build houses for Section 8. You understand what I'm saying? All you gotta do is just ask.

Anyone else. Other ideas?

I'd like to. I'm just speaking for myself right now in this capacity. Maybe some other people have this kind of problem but I'm just going to put it out there.

Ok.

I did eight months in jail because I kinda have this off beat addiction I wasn't in to drugs or alcohol or things like that. I was addicted to the phone. I used to make phone calls to women. They were of a harassing nature. Ok, and women basically called the police and I was put into jail for 8 months for that. Ok. And while I was in jail my boss couldn't hold my job I mean I'm still cool with the guy but there was a lot of people working at the place he couldn't hold it or anything like that so I lost that. I'm working if the government could offer programs, counseling, I've been through the counseling but when you're poor \$10 is a lot of money. You're trying to take a job at Coney Island, washing dishes or whatever. Trying to pay the rent. You know you want to get ahead and you're beaten down by life even though it's my own fault. Still you know I feel like I'm going up this??? altitude. I'm putting in applications everyplace but some people need psychological counseling. It's expensive and a way to avoid problems is offering it to people for free.

Psychological counseling for free?

Yeah, yeah, to keep people away from problems. Whatever of course mine wasn't alcohol or drugs but whatever so that you have the kind of consciousness so that they can understand why they are doing this. So they can keep on the straight and narrow path, avoid jail and hold on to what they have. I'm sure there's people in this program who've got those kind of problems you know what I'm saying? Mine was on the unique side but still it's an addiction. Mine involved victims, some people get high it's against the law; it's against the law to make harassing phone calls. Women get offended when they don't the guy. You know what I'm saying? So, this is basically really what they need to do is offer some kind of counseling whatever you want to call it but it needs to be free. It needs to be free and available to people who are low income who want it but can't afford it even at \$10 on a sliding scale. Ok. I have more than that but I'm going to give other people a chance to speak.

Ok. Well we'll come back to you.

That was near and dear to my heart so..

I appreciate that very much. Thank you. How about you?

Yeah, I have something to say.

Ok.

I'm homeless because of my severe alcoholism. That's the reason why I'm homeless and my family and everybody has given up on me. They've tried helping me and I didn't help myself. That's my fault but still there was times there are many people in this county that drink and use drugs and their not homeless. I hear them say things like I'm going to be homeless if I don't pay my rent. You know what they key to not being homeless if you make enough money you're not going to be homeless. So, ever since Ronald Regan was in office and I'm not trying to be an intellect. So I'm just going to say the idiot Regan was in office back in the 80's. For 8 years he never raised the minimum

wage once. Now the cost of living when up tremendously since. Now the minimum wage is what \$5.70 \$5.75 hour? So over 20 something years minimum wage has only gone up like \$2.50 I mean the price of living has sky rocketed. So you know what? There are people who don't use drugs or alcohol that are homeless because their pimped out low paid job can't get him in. If minimum wage isn't raised at least \$10 an hour in the next few years there's going to be more homeless people. Not less.

So do you think that raising it to \$10 would help keep people from being homeless?

Yeah, raising at least to balance with the cost of living. Let them figure out what the cost of living is and then figure out what the minimum wage has to at least live comfortably. Even if you use drugs or alcohol there are a lot of people that use drugs or drink that have nice homes and stuff. That's because they have good jobs. Not everybody's going to get a good job. Not everybody's educated, not everybody knows a trade. So, the minimum wage should at least be \$10 an hour or what they should do is put it to average to what the price of living is. Because if they don't there's going to be more homeless people in 10 years than ever. Cause I know a lot because look at my dad he was a drunk and he's a millionaire. How come he's not homeless? I'm a drunk and I'm homeless. It's cause I ain't got the biaches. It's the minimum wage thing and responsibility. Now if I was making \$50 an hour right now I wouldn't be homeless and I'd be at home drinking and watching TV right now. I'm being honest with you right now.

I appreciate that.

And two they should automatically give help to people on alcohol and drugs. That's an automatic.

They meaning?

The government. Those who work and help with alcoholism.

They do though. Transitional housing.

I'm talking about rehabilitation. How come I went down to a place who said they can't get into rehab because they're all full. How can you get into rehab when they're all full?

Well I got one for you for people who are convicted felons. A lot of times once they've done their prison time or jail time, the government says or anybody says we don't have any housing for you. Things like that. You're a bad boy. We don't want you near us. That stigma they put on you. Anytime you put that on your job application you know you put down that yes you have a felony and you're hit. You know so the government needs to I think it's illegal that they do that or there needs to be lifted. The discrimination needs to be lifted. You know.

For real. That's my problem.

I don't know if it's the government or just the government in general. But to make the plan work, it needs to be lifted. When you see if you're black or white people can see that. But when you have a felony even the most severe ones and you put that down people can't see that but when I went to

the post office in Royal Oak, Right and I had the skills right. I was honest. I put down that I'm a convicted felon. He told me and I'm pretty sure it was illegal and I remember he told me there's 10 people and all of you is qualified I'm not going to hire you because you're a convicted felon. Now that's got to be a form of discrimination. Black, white, purple, green, you know when you have that going for you your hit. So the government needs to do something for black people and the poor people. For whatever reason they end up catching a case they get the felony and the government and people don't want nothing to do with them. You know you can't find a job, you can't find a place to stay because they say we don't want you and if you hide it you're hit. If you put it down you're a felon you're hit. You know?

So they need some programs specifically for each types of populations be it convicted felons, or people who have some specific problems. Maybe are you saying programs tailored to that specific type of problem?

Well maybe in that case too. But for like the convicted felons. Too many people around too many companies around including the government who discriminate against that. You know, once a man or woman has done their time, you know they're trying to get on the straight and narrow path. They're trying to do the right thing and then the public or says not we don't want you because you're a felon. Because you've been in prison, you've been in jail. Because you have a stigma. Even if it's a one time thing. Even if they were innocent. People in the ??? you know cuz they're in circumstances they need to do whatever they need to pick up a gun. The same cycle happens. But give people hope and say we're going to take that off you. We're going to take that off the application or if we do we're not going to hold it against people. Because a lot of people they got the skills to take really good job that pay really good money. But when they have that brand on them that's when homelessness comes in and that's when the crime starts. They get frustrated they get angry they say blank the government, blank the people If I can't get money legally, I'm gong to get it illegally. This is a stick up. You know and that's where somebody gets hurt.

And to go into that like he's saying. People, like some people come out the pen and can't even get loans to start their own business.

Yeah, Yeah, Right.

I myself, I detail cars and I'm a felon and I can't even get a loan because I'm a felon. To start my own car wash or detailing place.

Ok, so a loan for starting your own business?

You know I mean it hard for people like us as felons. To even get an edge on life. I think there's a lot of felons out here who are more homeless than senior citizens. You know?

I mean if the judged can say that the person has paid their debt to society. Why can't society as a whole be that way? I just came from that. The judge said you did 8 months for your misdemeanor and I told him you know I did almost a year. He says, you know you paid your debt. I had a \$738 court and fines that was owed by me to the courts. The judge suspended that. But still if I go out

there I put down misdemeanor you know and then there's a tag as a felon goes on that. The public says no.

So, I'm out the job now but I know I have the capabilities to make \$50 an hour. I want to become a paralegal. That's not going to stop me but for other people that might.

Then you have some people that's still on paper out there but they don't get in trouble with the police. You know? You done did your crime maybe two or three years ago and you have no other problems with the police but you're still a felon. You know. Cuz I just blew a job at Cedar Point because they didn't they did a background check. It wasn't even on the application but they doing the background check.

The worst one was the sex offender stigma. For those people convicted of sex offenses even if it didn't have anything to do a child, it might have been with and adult person. When they have that label on them that really sticks with them.

They should be locked up forever.

See some people think that they should be locked forever but for those who have done their time. It's a ??? nobody wants. Especially for that one.

So, it sounds like some of the reasons people become homeless is because by having a felony, addictions, not having enough income, low-income, and the rent being too high. Any other reasons?

Lack of education.

Ok. Anything else? Want to expand on that?

Yes, I don't pretend to be an expert on homelessness but I can speak for myself. First of all Oakland County is at the forefront of treating those less fortunate who have mental health illnesses and homelessness issues. I've lived here and I've lived in Denver which is also at the forefront so, I've never had a problem like going to PACE where I needed help and they got me a bed within 48 hours. I think Oakland County is part of the solution. Which is manifested by your presence here today. But yum with my experience I think a social awareness program which raises the awareness of mental health issues and diminishes the stigma to encourage those. I see a lot of people in my situation who refuse to get help. You know it's up to you know I don't know that reducing homelessness to 0% is going to happen because you're not going to get 100% willingness for those who have mental health issues to get help. But, But if we raise the awareness and lower the stigma among the general population it won't seem to be that demeaning or daunting for those who need help like myself. I've been fortunate. I also have a substance abuse problem and I'm struggling with dual diagnosis situation. So, here I am. But there are lots around me who refuse to acknowledge their problems and I think that we can help by teaching Americans that mental health issues are just as serious as treating cancer, or a broken leg or heart disease.

I appreciate that. Thank you. The next question is when we talked about being homeless, what could have prevented you from becoming homeless? If there was a resource that you could have had what it would it be that would have helped you from becoming homeless?

Counseling, Counseling, for most people whatever the problem is you know if they would have had counseling maybe a trade like a skilled a trade for those who want to learn like a skilled trade. Or those that have the ability. Any kind of skilled trade make it free or at least make it affordable for low income people.

May I say something?

Yes, please.

I heard you talking about felons. I'm a felon too and I'm on disability Social security I'm a full time felon and I'm having a problem getting to a place simple because when they see that I'm a record, I have two drug cases, the first thing they think is I'm selling. They don't want to let you in their place because they think I'm selling. Once they see that on your record.

He can't even get a Pell grant because it says drugs and that's on his record.

Yes that's true.

What did you say?

You can't even go to college to get a Pell grant because if you put down drugs you can't even go to school or get help to go to school. Because of drugs.

You can't?

No you can't even get a Pell grant to go to college right now. Just because of drugs. I know that. OCC here they won't let you because of that.

Yeah, basically what they're, the government and the people of this country are saying is get rid of alcoholics, mentally ill people and criminals. That's what the people of this nation are saying. Get rid of the people who are criminals, alcoholics, and drug addicts. Because we don't need them let them stick them on the island and drop the atomic bomb on them and blow them all up.

That's why we're homeless.

That way you and your great family members can take over the country.

That's what I mean by lowering the stigma.

That's right, that's right. Well, I don't understand big words like you but I understand a little.

You talk about eliminating people from being homeless and that's the only thing (felony) from keeping me from getting in a decent place. That's on my record. I can go find a dump roach infested, rat infested, and drugs. I don't want to live like that. Especially when you're trying to get your life together.

Sure, because you don't want to be in that type of situation as that will not make anything any easier.

The people of Oakland County need to look at discrimination or whatever it is again people who are felons, people with drug problems. People with lower education. For those that don't fine. For those that want to keep the straight and narrow. We need help.

## Synopsis

### Reason for Homelessness:

- Divorce
- Foreclosure
- Loss of employment
- Rent too high/Not enough affordable housing
- Lack of job skills
- Minimum wage too low/low income/SSD/SSI
- Have a felony
- Addiction
- Mental Health concerns
- Served in Iraqi war - "no benefits due to not actually being in combat situation but was over there and served"
- Meds are not readily available or are hard to access for individuals who suffer from mental illness and are homeless.
- Credit checks for assistance with apartments and/or Section 8 - They stated that "if people have income they will pay rent because don't want to be homeless".

### Prevention from being Homeless:

- Balance of minimum wage and cost of living
- Increase availability of affordable housing
- Free psychological counseling - "\$10 is a lot for a low-income person"
- Not having a wait list for substance abuse rehabilitation programs
- Allow persons when in jail to seek education and increase job skills
- Expedite Social Security claims at a faster rate - Too slow -denials, lawyers, red tape - lack of income creates homelessness
- Improve system for those with MI to have someplace to go after leaving a residential setting or hospital
- Jobs need to be available for former felons

### How are resources accessed?

- Referrals from other homeless individuals
- Churches
- Easter Seals
- Oakdale
- PACE Program
- VA
- McRest
- SOS
- FIA

### Barriers to Maintain Housing:

- Loss of employment
- Low income
- Low wages
- Increase in rent
- Mental health issues and not having proper services
- Lack of job opportunities
- Divorce
- Abuse
- Lack of good transportation

### Suggested Changes in Homeless System:

- There needs to be an education program to the general public about who the homeless are, what they look like, and why they are homeless.
- A program to help lift the stigma attached to being homeless.
- Education program for individuals to obtain skills to become self-sufficient
- Assistance for single individuals
- One Stop Shop for all resources in Oakland County which could include: employment assistance, education, housing programs, assistance in working through the system, referrals to services, phones, computers
- Year round programs not just in winter - People are afraid when programs end because they don't know what to do.
- Build a coalition to include the FIA, local organizations, social security, Medicare/Medicaid services, etc.
- Need more churches willing to use them for an address because in order to have many services homeless individuals must have an address
- Turn heat on in churches and hot water for showers
- Would like to be treated with dignity and respect
- More transitional housing
- More affordable housing

- Assistance for Veterans - has to be a combat Veteran to receive services - make services available for anyone who has served
- Don't have money to buy clothes to get a job - need to look the part to get a job.

Affordable Housing looks like:

- Increase in Section 8 vouchers and/or some form of subsidized housing
- Conditional and qualified housing voucher program - increase funding
- Decrease in waiting lists
- Fair rents to accommodate individuals who are low income - rent rates such as \$200-\$250 a month for a one bedroom
- For the application "take off felony conviction information"
- Studio apartment
- Safe neighborhoods
- Clean
- Accessible to transportation, grocery stores, department stores, drugstores

Transportation:

- Lower bus fares
- More bus routes, increase busses
- Marry DOT and SMART for cohesiveness
- Subway
- Regional transportation program
- Make bus routes run 24 hours a day 7 days a week
- Gas vouchers
- There are some programs to purchase a car but people are low income and can't pay for gas, insurance, registration
- Sundays are the biggest challenge for people who don't have homes - no transportation, stores close early (no place for warmth or to go)

Financial Assistance:

- Give a person a one time grant to assist them get on their feet and find a job. They would pay back.
- "Stop sending money to other countries when we need the help here. Help your own people. There shouldn't be any homeless or hungry in the USA. It's a disaster zone here to be homeless".
- Politicians need to spend time being homeless or working directly with the homeless.
- 90 day of help - financial assistance to get on feet, find a job, and skills training, housing.

Additional thoughts:

- Provide a program to help felons who need assistance getting employment, housing, social security, education
- Offer different companies and organizations tax incentives or other incentives to hire homeless individuals.
- Give jobs that prisoners are doing and give them to the low income people
- Allow prisoners to learn a trade/skill while in prison and have an employment placement program.
- Reinstate program to allow prisoners to go to school
- Many fear they will die before 10 years are up to end homelessness
- Program cuts are hurting the homeless and mental health programs
- Needs people to talk to them and help throughout the year. Not just at Christmas or major holidays.
- Have to disclose tons of information to get a bus pass or basic assistance

## APPENDIX C

# Synopsis - New Bethel Women's shelter 4/27/05

### Reason for Homelessness:

- Divorce
- Domestic Violence - spouse/boyfriend/ and parents
- Eviction of people individuals were staying with
- Landlords did not follow legal proceeding properly for eviction as individual would have had the money to pay the rent on the 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Landlords discriminating against how many children the mother had - told her that she had too many children
- Landlord sexually harassing individual causing her to flee her home with her children and end up homeless
- Landlord increased rent due to having a bad credit score and she wasn't able to afford the amount
- Landlord was charging tenant for past bills before she moved in - utility
- Too high of application fees and move in costs to get into a home
- Lack of safe/decent housing available that is affordable
- Loss of employment due to disability
- Rent too high/Not enough affordable housing
- Lack of job skills
- Minimum wage too low/low income/SSD/SSI
- Credit checks for assistance with apartments and/or Section 8.
- Moved from another state where she had a good job and housing. Stated Michigan is more difficult to get affordable housing.

### Prevention from being Homeless:

- Increase availability of affordable housing
- Expedite Social Security claims at a faster rate - Too slow -denials, lawyers, red tape - lack of income creates homelessness
- Educate tenants of their rights and how the law can protect them
- Laws enforced regarding discrimination/sexual harassment from landlords
- Resources available to assist in security deposit/1<sup>st</sup> month's rental assistance - money is often exhausted from what help is out there.
- A program to assist in paying at least 5 rental application fees as they range from \$30-\$100 and it is non-refundable. Or regulation of what a landlord can charge for application fees.
- Regulations of rental amounts landlords can charge per bedroom

- Actually have Section 8 inspections completed so that repairs are fixed and people do not lose their housing because the landlord blames the tenant for the repairs when the tenant called to have things fixed.
- "FIA wouldn't help me pay my rent for one month (\$801) due to being ill so I was evicted. However, when I was looking for another place to live they offered to pay for \$2400 in move in costs. Had they paid the \$801 for one month I would have been fine and they wouldn't have had to pay \$2400. It doesn't make sense."
- Increase employment opportunities

### How are resources accessed?

- Referrals from other homeless individuals
- Churches
- FIA
- New Bethel staff provides resources
- Haven

### Barriers to Maintain Housing:

- Harassment from landlords
- Slum landlords not maintaining the safety of their homes
- Landlords coming into apartments without a reason and without notification - did not feel safe for self or children
- Affordable/good legal assistance
- Loss of employment
- Low income
- Low wages
- Increase in rent
- Health issues and lack of insurance
- Lack of job opportunities
- Divorce
- Abuse
- Not receiving child support, constant changes in child support amounts
- Lack of good transportation
- Employer's are checking credit reports and turning people with bad credit away. "I was told that because my credit was bad they wouldn't hire me. I told them I know my credit's bad and that's why I need a job. What does having bad credit have to do with getting a job?"

### Suggested Changes in Homeless System:

- Regulate landlords so they are required to follow laws against discrimination due to being a woman with children
- Centralized housing assistance so that people don't have to go to many different agencies trying to find assistance. Have all applications at one location.

- Set a price range for landlords so they are not able to charge high rental rates, move in costs, or application fees
- "FIA needs to have hours that extend beyond normal working hours for those of us who work. I am not able to get my paperwork to them during the hours of 8-4:30 and there is no longer a box to drop off paperwork after hours."
- Educate tenants of what they can do when landlords do not fix repairs and housing is unsafe
- Educate tenants of their rights and how to use the law for their protection from eviction.
- Make more affordable housing available
- Decrease waiting lists for affordable housing
- Increase availability of affordable housing for single mothers with children regardless of if they have a disability or not
- Increase assistance for child care expenses as being low-income the cost is very expensive, FIA does not cover total cost and the places that do charge low rates are not clean, safe, etc. Much of the money earned goes towards child care still leaving a gap in money for rent, food, clothing, etc.
- Educational assistance for those with poor credit.
- More transitional housing
- Credit Counseling
- More affordable housing
- Increase shelters throughout Oakland County as there are not enough places to go when needed. One woman spent \$1000 in hotels which could have been used towards housing but she was not able to get into a shelter in time and had exhausted the money quickly.
- Programs for low-income people to buy homes
- Increase length of stay at shelter so long as individual is working towards their goals and actively seeking employment/housing.
- Transportation assistance for those seeking housing - bus is expensive for people with children
- Put a time limit on people who are in public housing. "If I'm paying only \$20 a month for 5 years, I would have saved up a lot of money to afford a place on my own. Get an education. These people have been paying \$20 a month for 20 years and there's no room for anyone else to go."

### *Affordable Housing looks like:*

- Increase in Section 8 vouchers and/or some form of subsidized housing
- Conditional and qualified housing voucher program - increase funding
- Decrease in waiting lists
- Fair rents to accommodate individuals who are low income - rent rates such as \$200-\$250 a month for a one bedroom
- Safe neighborhoods
- Clean
  - Accessible to transportation, grocery stores, department stores, drugstores

## APPENDIX D

# Oakland County Task Force on Homelessness & Affordable Housing

Results from the Community Submit to End Homelessness- reporting for all three groups.

### **CLOSE THE FRONT DOOR:**

#### Collaboration and Coordination among Agencies

- Hold More Summits to Inform Agencies of Programs/Share/Informative
- Stream lining (HMIS) Sharing Agreements
- Sharing Expertise
- Teamwork

#### Raising Public Awareness

- Media
- Homeless Awareness Week In Spring/ Summer
- A Day in a Life of Homeless Person
- Involvement of Religious Institutions
- Police Department
- Chamber of Commerce
- Definition of "Homelessness"
- Community Awareness – Info.

#### Employment / Job Skills Training

- Job Training Services
- Relocation of Homeless Individuals Where Employment Opportunities are Available
- Transportation

#### Education

- Work With Youth in Schools (Curriculum)
- Job Training Skills
- Relationship Skills – Develop Support System

#### Financial Resources

- Emergency Funding
- Housing Funds
- First Months Rent/ Security Deposit Paid
- Funds for Collaborative Efforts
- Affordable Health Care
- Cities Provide Tax Relief – Pilot (COP)
- Emergency Services Tied Financial Education

- Financial Literacy – Credit
- Exceptions For Non-Profits
- Funding Sources - Unrestrictive

#### Affordable Housing

- Maintain Affordable Housing in Market
- Affordable Rentals / Housing Choice / Development / Education
- Landlord Responsibility

#### Accountability/ Personal Responsibility

- Engaging Homeless Population in Their Own Initiative
- Priorities: Long vs. Short Term
- Clarify Needs and Goals of Homeless People

#### Directory of Services

- Directory Available Communitywide
- User Friendly

#### Identify Persons In-crisis / At Risk

- Outreach for Those Not Seeking Assistance

#### Create Opportunities

- Employment
- Education
- Housing

#### Change of Mindset “It Can Happen”

#### Proactive vs. Reactive

#### Create Safe Communities

#### Language Barrier

#### Accessibility Mental Health/ Physical Health

#### Community as Support

- Hold Consumers Accountable
- Engage Those Contributing to Homeless

#### Coordinator – 211 Website

#### Lobbying

#### Volunteerism

Tracking System

Service Referrals (Mental etc.)

### **OPEN THE BACK DOOR:**

All Shelters Must Have Counseling on Site to Identify and Refer People to Appropriate Agency

- Emergency Shelters
- More Shelters/ Case Management
- Follow-up After Case Management

Case Managers

- Better Ratios
- Pay Livable Wage
- Focus More on Youth

Additional Transitional Housing

- Transitional Housing with Services
- Transitional Housing Requirements Specialized

Affordable Rentals / Housing Choice

- Reasonable Cost for Rentals
- Leasing Assistance Programs
- Maintain Affordable Housing in Market
- Development
- Education
- Landlord Responsibility
- Financial Institutions Take a Chance
- Mixed – Income Communities
- Work With Current Debt Financial Institutions

Education

- Identify Agencies Already Providing Programs
- Financial Management Skills/ Save Money/ Budget
- Employment Training
- Home Maintenance
- Education of Youth on Life Skills
- Mentors
- Open Youth Center
- Individual Account Program

Community Awareness

- Community As Support, Hold Consumers Accountable
- Sharing Expertise

- Establish Relationship with City Government
- Cities Provide Tax Relief – Pilot (COP)
- Educate Legislature
- Red Tape
- Domain Support ex. Tobacco Addiction

Exceptions For Non-Profits

Lobbying (OCTH)

Permanent Adult Drop in Center

Centralized Volunteer System

More Collaboration Among Agencies

Change Perception of Oakland County

Communication

Keep Good Data

Create Model to Address Needs

Reach Out To Other Stakeholders

Access HMIS License

Pay Back Agency

## **BUILD THE INFRASTRUCTURE:**

Remove Bureaucratic Barriers for Agencies Building Affordable Housing

- Contact Representatives – Min. Wage
- Work With HUD
- Collaboration/ Agencies/ Private/ Government
- Build Relationships with Civic Leaders
- Change Zoning Laws/ Ordinances
- Decent, Safe, and Sanitary
  - o Code Enforcement (evenly)
- Laws Preventing Progress

Help From Community/ Administration

- Form Committee to Solicit Assistance

- Partnership with City, County, State etc.
- Representation From All Areas
- Team to Work with Communities
- Michigan Municipal League
- Involve City Government
- Faith – Based Originations
- Community Support Such as UAW etc.

#### Employment

- Subsidized Employment
- Employers Receive Incentive to Hire/ Keep Employees
- Learn a Skill
- Employment Assessment
- Job Retention and Creation/ Livable Wage
- Transportation
  - Car Leasing Program/ Subside/ Pep GM/ Incentives to Dealerships

#### Local Community Fund for Loans/ Short term (Research other Cities)

- Funding for Supportive Services
- Lending
- Task Force Fund Raiser

#### Education

- College Internship/ Research/ Social Work
- Learn a Job Skill
- Basic Life Skills
- Peer to Peer Learning
- Expand Learning Opportunities to All Facets of Community
- Application of Learning
- Cross Learning
- Include in School Curriculum/ Break Cycle of Poverty

#### Decrease Red Tape

#### Individual Evaluation of Each Case and Proper Follow Up

#### Wrap Around

#### Centralized Network

#### Create Safe Communities

#### Language Barrier/ Illegal

#### Awareness of Resources

- Open and Accessible to Homeless

Assisted Living for Seniors Concept

Oakland County is Own Worst Enemy  
NIMBY

“Environment Where Everyone Can Be The Best They Can Be.”

You Have the Private, Public, Non-profit, and Community All Working Together and on the Same Page.

## RESOURCES

In addition to the valuable input from our many providers, the following sources provided information and resources in the development of our plan:

Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment for Oakland County Michigan, by Dale Thomson, PhD, through the Wayne State University Center for Urban Studies ([www.oakgov.com/chi/info\\_pub/hna](http://www.oakgov.com/chi/info_pub/hna))

Oakland County Urban County Consolidated Plan (CDBG/ESG/HOME) 2005-2009

U.S. 2000 Census

Wayne State Research on Homelessness & Poverty

The Oakland Press (4/23/06 & 8/12/06)

The Detroit Free Press (7/9/06)

National Alliance to End Homelessness – Family Homelessness in our Nation and Community: A problem with a Solution and other information on their website [www.naeh.org](http://www.naeh.org)

Homelessness Initiative: Charles & Helen Schwab Foundation

National Low Income Housing Coalition “People need Affordable housing, Health Care, Livable Incomes”

American Planning Association Policy Guide on Homelessness

Kent County Vision to End Homelessness

U.S. Dept. of HUD, Blueprint for Change

New Yorker Magazine Feb 13 & 20, 2006