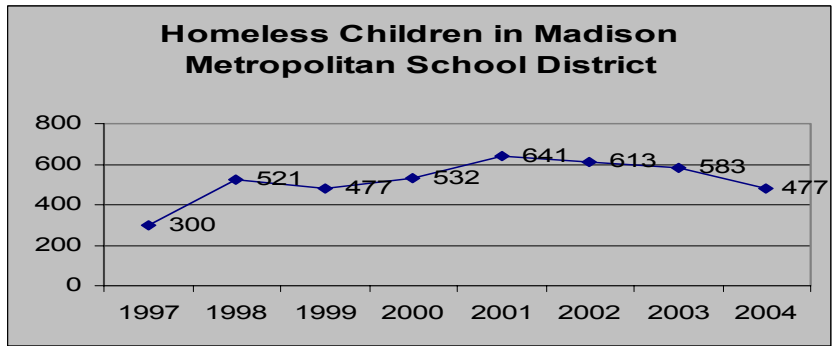


Reducing Homelessness Mobilization Plan

June, 2005

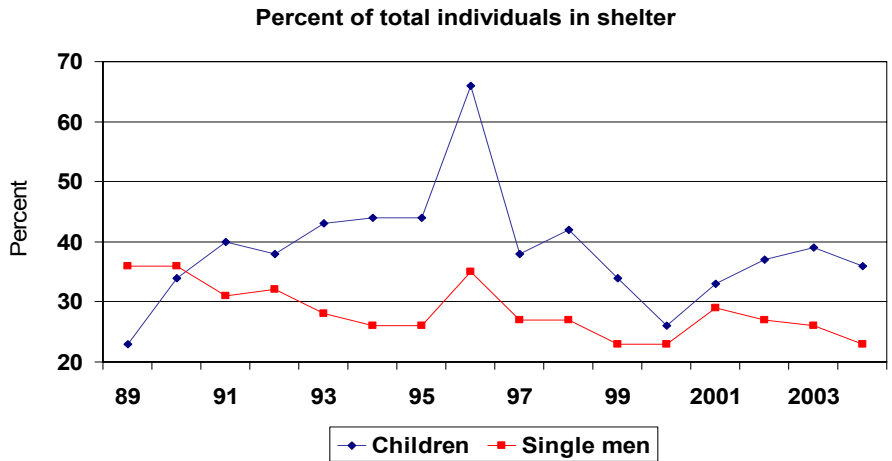
I. Problem Statement:

Homelessness is a costly problem for our community and devastating for the individuals involved. Annually, over \$9 Million in public and private funds are expended to support the homeless shelter system in Dane County. Despite our continuing expenditures, there continue to be nearly 500 homeless children served annually in Madison Schools and 1,466 families with children who are homeless in our community. 56% of the homeless in our community are now in families, including minor children while 24% were single men and 18% single women.



The composition of the homeless population has changed in the last ten years. Beginning in 1990 the number of homeless children exceeded the number of homeless men for the first time. That has continued to be true in every year since. (Attachment iv c1 includes data for all homeless categories for this time period.)

Since 1989 the percent of single men in shelter has declined while the percent of children in shelter has increased.



Beyond the costs of maintaining homeless families who are not able to locate permanent housing are the long term costs of homelessness for children. Research demonstrates these results for homeless children:

- 25% have witnessed acts of violence within their family
- 22% are separated from family to be put in foster care or sent to live with a relative
- Twice as likely to go hungry as compared with other children
- 74% worry that they will have no place to live
- Nine times more likely to repeat a grade
- Lower achievement, exacerbated by frequent moves and psychological distress
- Four times as likely to drop out of school
- Three times more likely to be placed in a special education program
- Twice as likely to score lower on standardized tests

Based on the escalating cost and impacts of homelessness, the conclusion is clear. We need to move from a strategy of managing homelessness to reducing homelessness. Our initial efforts in this direction are promising as the numbers of homeless children are showing a slight reduction. Given the growth in the numbers and proportion of children and families who are homeless, the cost to the system and especially the cost to those children it is time we rethink our approach and our goals related to homelessness.

II. Research:

National Research:

Importance of Available Affordable Housing:

Marybeth Shinn and Jim Baumohl in 1999 reviewed the research on what does and does not work in helping people to leave homelessness. Their research concludes that affordable, usually supported, housing prevents and reduces homelessness more effectively than specific intervention strategies such as job training, alcohol treatment and mental health counseling. They also concluded that eviction prevention programs show promise.

Importance of Early Permanent Housing and Eviction Prevention:

In 2000 LaFranc Associates conducted systematic research into existing programs operating under a model called 'housing first.' This program places families as quickly as possible in permanent housing, and then provides intensive home-based case management and stabilizing support services to prevent a recurrence of homelessness. Unlike programs that are designed to help people become "ready for housing," Housing First programs' first priority is to stabilize people in the short-term and help them get housed immediately. By helping participants become housed and connected to mainstream services, Housing First programs can help prevent them from entering or help them rapidly exit the homeless service system. Their results demonstrated that 80% of families moved into permanent housing retained their housing for at least one year.

One specific study of the NY Families First program in Westchester County New York demonstrated these results: Homeless mothers with mental health or substance abuse problems who are together with their children can achieve better mental health and housing outcomes when rapid placement into community housing is augmented by intensive short term case management.

Value of Case Management:

Heslin, Anderson and Gelberg in 1997, through Drew University of Medicine and Sciences conducted a nationally acclaimed study on homeless families who had case management.

Their conclusion: more assertive forms of outreach and support result in greater housing, as this population is linked to case managers and a broader range of services.

Gary Morse, a widely known researcher in case management reviewed implications for practice, policy and research based on empirical analysis of homelessness and case management in 2003, especially as it relates to treatment effectiveness and critical factors. Several conclusions are postulated, including that case management is an effective tool to reduce homelessness. He presents case management approaches and models for various client subgroups and specialty areas. He concludes from his synthesis of studies on case management that there is strong support for the effectiveness of case management to help homeless people with severe mental illness into needed services, including stable housing. Frequent service contacts are critical to treatment retention and housing outcomes.

Eviction Prevention Research:

A Housing Stability Evaluation by Real World Research in Madison, Wisconsin in 2002-3, was based on 6-month, 12-month and 18-month stability analysis. Housing stability rates were compared based on levels of support provided families, with five levels of support identified. Families that received financial assistance, case management and financial counseling workshops had the highest stability. The level of housing stability was significantly influenced by the degree of comprehensive support. As a result, it is clear that long term case management for families at risk of homelessness to locate/retain affordable housing, management of personal finances, emergency financial assistance and training on how to be a better tenant are critical to success.

Access to Surplus Food as a Housing Strategy:

John Arnold, Executive Director of Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of West Michigan, developed and implemented a model to significantly increase access to surplus food. Research shows that low income families with ready access to surplus food can decrease their monthly food-related costs by \$384, thereby effectively allowing an informal rent subsidy. The methodologies to increase access to surplus food include:

1. People in need should be able to access food pantries as often as needed
2. In-take and screening at a pantry including screening for eligibility for federal food subsidy programs should be done in a welcoming dignified manner
3. Clients should be able to select from all products available vs. pre-packaged selections

4. Enough food pantries must exist within a accessible distance of clients to meet need

According to census figures, 38,815 residents of Dane County are in poverty. At an average of 234 pounds per person, we would need 9,082,710 pounds of food per year. Arnold estimates that one pantry can distribute 40,000 pounds per year. This equates to a need for 227 pantries in Dane County. While this number is high, Arnold suggests many ways to increase the number of pantries in a community and cites mobile food pantries as a highly efficient strategy.

Local Research:

Application Rejection Analysis:

The Housing In Action Leadership Team reviewed the reasons that 111 applicants for vacant affordable apartment units were rejected during the first three months of 2005. The team concluded through this analysis of data that there is a strong need for financial education and support, including knowledge about the process of applying for rental units and the importance of credit. From this research analysis the plan to provide a “bridge builder” strategy evolved, that would include methods for improving landlord and tenant connections.

Availability of Affordable Units:

The team analyzed apartment vacancy rates in Dane County during the last twelve months. The data review and analysis conclusions were that there are a slightly increased of percentage of affordable 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. There are consistently decreasing numbers of affordable 3 bedroom and larger apartments. The team concluded that until the vacancy rates decline, an effective strategy is improving the rent ability of individuals seeking permanent housing and improving connections between landlords and tenants, continuing support for the ‘bridge builder’ model.

Increasing Supply of Affordable Housing:

The team analyzed the features of the many independent efforts going on in our community to increase affordable, generally subsidized, housing, through application of federal and local tax supports and charitable organizations. Termed “hybrid vigor” they identified the features that led to the most successful of these efforts with an intent to share and encourage these features in future development efforts. Among the most consistent features of successful efforts were clear and achievable visions, consumer involvement in design, and community engagement prior to finalization of plans. The hypothesis of this effort is that that our community will be able to advance more affordable housing initiatives if we share and support the many independent efforts. It is not an effort to try to regulate and control the important energy in this area

Design Laboratory Research:

The team conducted a Design Laboratory in June, 2005. Over 62 developers, property managers, non-profit service providers and leaders in our community examined the issues that preclude placement of families in existing vacant properties and identify ideas with promise. The major findings of this laboratory were the need to develop resume format and technical assistance for tenants and landlords, the importance of

access to emergency funds to prevent eviction and the importance of ready access to financial counseling before families reach a crisis in their credit problems.

III. Data Review:

The team reviewed local data regarding both the supply side and demand sides of housing and homelessness in our community. The major findings from this analysis were that the largest single concentration of the homeless in our community are families with children, representing 56% of the homeless population. A review of the supply and vacancies shows that there are at least 441 vacant ‘affordable range’ units currently in the Dane County market. Their analysis of this data resulted in the placemat of affordable housing that is attachment iv c to this report.

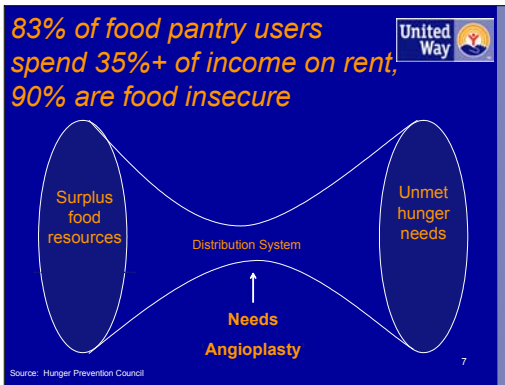
A. Data on Early Permanent ‘Housing First Model’:

The data on the Housing First model is impressive. As shown below, programs have extremely high success rates in helping families obtain and maintain permanent housing.

Individual Program Data Results from “Housing First’ Model Research	
Program:	Results
Beyond Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed three years after housing placement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88% were still in permanent housing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 66% were still in their same apartment. Participants who had moved were living in similar or improved housing.
	80% were paying their rent on time
Rapid Exit Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed two years after program entry, 85% of families remained in permanent housing.
	For families who did return to homelessness, homeless episodes were reduced from 30 to 10 days
Community Partnership for the Prevention Homelessness	Placed 199 homeless families in permanent housing in from FY 2000-02
	77% of all families (199 out of 259) served were housed in permanent, safe, and stable housing.10
Family Housing Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between July-December 2002, 128 households were served.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 51 of 71 families who exited the program (80%) were in permanent housing at time of exit.¹¹
	Moves families out of shelter within an average of 17 days.12
Shelter to Independent Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2003, 78% of families who entered the program moved into permanent housing.
	On average, 70-80% of the families move into permanent housing.
	Of these, 70-80% retain their housing for at least one year.

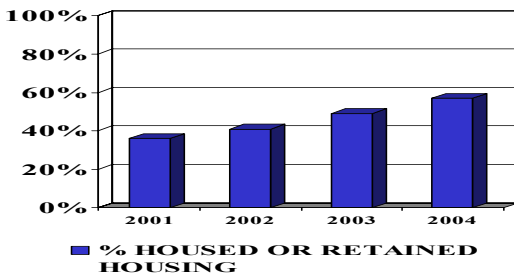
B. Data review Access to Surplus Food as a Housing Strategy:

According to census figures, 38,815 residents of Dane County are in poverty. At an average of 234 pounds per person, we would need 9,082,710 pounds of food per year. Arnold estimates that one pantry can distribute 40,000 pounds per year. This equates to a need for 227 pantries in Dane County. While this number is high, Arnold suggests many ways to increase the number of pantries in a community and cites mobile food pantries as a highly efficient strategy.



C. Data review from *Eviction Prevention Research*:

A Housing Stability Evaluation by Real World Research on the housing stability rates shows the increasing effectiveness of financial assistance and case management. Detailed data analysis shows:



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D. Data from *Application Rejection Analysis*:

The local analysis of individuals rejected from apartments is detailed in the following table.

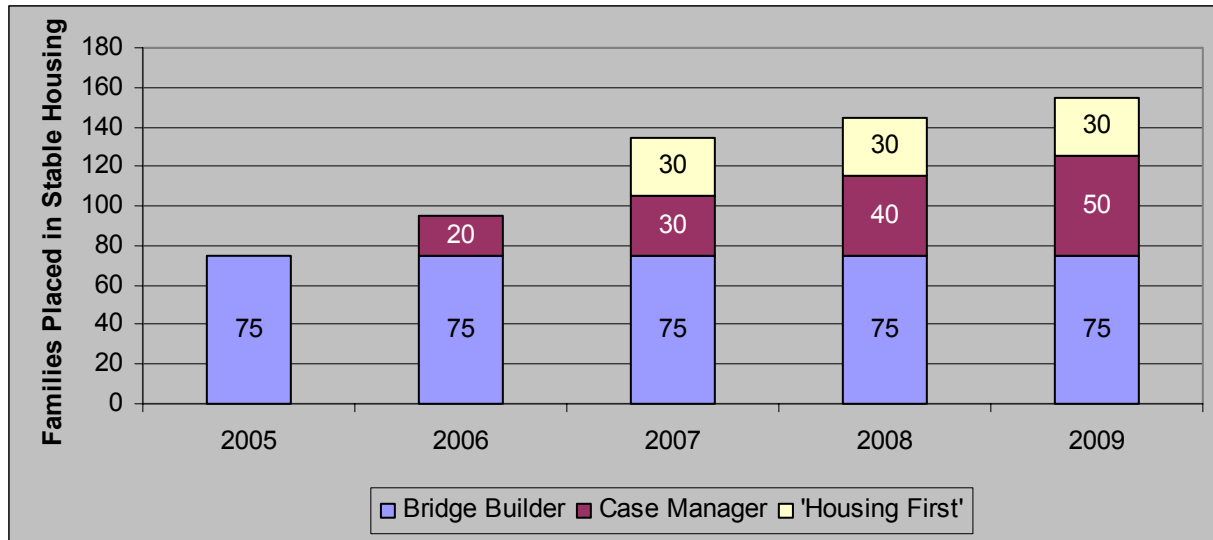
Major Reason for Rejection	Percentage of applicants rejected
Unfavorable credit	56.7%
Inaccurate/incomplete information	45%
History of rental agreements	45%
History of non-payment of rent/utilities	43.5%

Only 10.8% were rejected based on a history of criminal activity. The conclusion that 32.4% had only one basis of rejection identified this as a target population for a bridge builder strategy that could successfully result in placement in vacant apartments.(Full detail of this analysis is attachment iv. a.)

IV. Hypothesis:

By instituting strategies focused on landlord and tenant connections, financial counseling, food access and direct access to permanent housing we can reduce the number of homeless families with minor children in Dane County by 50% in five years.

The ability to reach the goal of reducing homelessness among children by 50% in five years will require that we successfully place 150 homeless families within five years, on an ongoing basis. Following is a graph that summarizes that cumulative impact of the three key strategies over the five years of implementation:



V. Strategies and Resources:

A. Strategies:

Research Based Strategy:	For Dane County: Best Practice Results Opportunity for Focus:	Implementation Status:
Supporting and linking families and individuals to access available housing	Bridge Builder network function, & drop-in support	Top Priority for Housing In Action Leadership Team
	Case Management: Unified, effective, trained providers	Priority Strategy for Housing In Action Leadership team
	“End Hunger” model for Food Pantry distribution and access	Interest in Supporting Efforts gaining momentum in Dane County with Hunger Prevention Council and Food Pantry Network
Increasing subsidies	‘Housing First’ Model	Priority Strategy for Housing In Action Leadership Team
Increase affordable housing volume	Hybrid vigor sharing	Completed, ready to share w/ community

B. Resources and Impact on Targeted Families:

Strategy	Resources Needed:	Impact on Targeted Families:
Bridge Builder	\$30,000 annually—begins late 2005, inc. funds for eviction prevention	25% of families = 75 annually based on application rejections
Case Management	\$200,000 annually for 5 additional case managers and additional work on skills development and support—begins mid-2006	Building to 50 families annually by 5th year
Housing First	At \$7,800 per family = \$234,000/yr at full impl. + training funds at start-up—begins late 2006	30 annually beginning in year three = 90 fam. in 5 yrs
Food access	Collaboration among partners, Capital purchases Staff to transport, Some Add'l food funding	100% of homeless families assisted in mtg housing cost

VI. Results and Measures

In order to measure and report on the effectiveness of the identified strategies and to assign resources needed to accomplish results, the team determined indicators and outcomes to measure results. The team approved implementation specifics for the priority initiatives of Bridge Builder

Timing	2005		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Strategy	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	2nd Qtr	Report Results Annually	Report Results Annually	Report Results Annually	Final Report to Community
Bridge Builder	Implement, HALT team						
Case Mgt System			Implement				
Housing First	Evaluate HALT team		Determine Implement. level				
Food Resources		Implem. w/Basic Needs Team					
Sharing Best Practices		Implement					
Indicators	Set		Review				
Resources	Identified		Mobilized				
<p>These strategies support the current strategic efforts of the Basic Needs Team focused on reducing the barriers to homelessness, with \$1.5 million annually directed to this agenda</p>							

The Housing In Action Leadership team members are now working on implementation teams for Bridge Builder and Case Management strategies. They will meet as a whole in September and report to the United Way Board of Directors in October on the status of the work.