

## **Committee to Review the Community Plan to End Homelessness REVISIONS 2012**

### **Introduction**

An ad hoc committee of the Thomas Jefferson Area Coalition for the Homeless was formed to review, consider and revise the Community Plan to End Homelessness that was adopted in May 2009. This committee met three times to complete this work and reviewed the draft plan independently. Committee members were:

Kathy Galvin, City of Charlottesville Council member

Holly Edwards, former vice mayor of Charlottesville, JABA, & PHAR

Mike Murphy, City of Charlottesville

Michael Costanzo, Region Ten Mohr Center

Liz Forney, TJACH Board member

John Gobble, TJACH Board member

Colleen Keller, PACEM

Marnie Allen, MACAA Hope House, Service Provider Council chair

Sue Moffett, City of Charlottesville Department of Social Services

Ed Bain, TJACH Board chair

Judith Pitts, Service Provider Council

Billie Campbell, TJPDC COO

Jason Ness, OAR

Kaki Dimock, TJACH ED

### **Changing Context**

The Committee acknowledges that the context in which the existing homelessness continuum of care operates has changed considerably since the adoption of the Community Plan in 2009. Some of the notable changes are:

- 1) A true continuum of care for chronically homeless adults now exists. This continuum includes:
  - a. PATH Street Outreach provided by Region Ten
  - b. The Haven day shelter provided by TJACH
  - c. Low-barrier, overnight shelter & case management provided by PACEM
  - d. Access to mainstream resources such as SNAP and SSI/SSDI provided by the City of Charlottesville Department of Social Services
  - e. Mental health and substance abuse treatment provided by Region Ten
  - f. Dental care provided by The Free Clinic
  - g. Health care provided by the University of Virginia
  - h. Permanent supportive housing provided by The Crossings and Region Ten
- 2) The number of families experiencing homelessness has increased significantly and constitutes the majority of homelessness people in this community, but they

remain a largely invisible homelessness population. Few resources are in place to respond to this increase.

- 3) State and federal funding priorities have changed. While, historically, HUD and DHCD have supported local shelter operations, they have announced a shift in focus away from traditional shelter programs to an emphasis on rapid re-housing programs. These programs operate as income-transfer projects, providing cash for rent to families in danger of eviction or foreclosure or to help a family get into stable housing. There are generally no expectations or requirements that clients engage in case management or life skills development activities. In addition, HUD and DHCD have indicated that they will completely phase out funding for traditional transitional housing programs, such as MACAA's Hope House and Salvation Army's Center of Hope.
- 4) The Haven was opened and staffed in January 2010. It has provided low-barrier respite care services since that time but has not served as the comprehensive clearinghouse for people experiencing homelessness and extreme poverty that had been described in development documents and Service Provider Council notes. While service providers including PACEM, Region Ten, Legal Aid Justice Center, VA and, occasionally, On Our Own and the City of Charlottesville's Department of Social Services, offer services at The Haven, services are not coordinated and there is no central intake. The Haven remains a strong potential resource for TJACH, the Service Provider Council and this community.

### **Revised Goals**

#### **Lead Organization on Homelessness: Strengthen TJACH's role as the lead organization to implement and market this Community Plan to End Homelessness.**

- Establish an annual work plan for the Service Provider Council to ensure providers are working together on common objectives
- Consider separating the coalition and Haven operation duties of the TJACH executive director to allow for adequate time and energy to implement this community plan
- Provide a yearly presentation on the status of the community plan to service provider leaders and local governments
- Actively pursue the engagement of agencies and governments outside of Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville
- Serve as an advocate for the continuum of care and for individuals experiencing homelessness in this community

#### **Common Intake: Establish an intake protocol and utilize The Haven as a physical location for intake to: enroll clients, enter demographic information, and assign a case manager.**

- Establish information-sharing agreements across provider agencies to avoid duplication of services and address gaps in service continuum

- Resolve user concerns about Pathways Compass so that HMIS may be used to manage referrals and community-level data and/or agree to manage referrals through the Open Knowledge Collaborative, whichever method is most effective
- Ensure that Haven staffing is appropriate for common intake procedures, reassigning staff as necessary and using volunteers as possible

**Early Intervention and Prevention: Create a Local Housing Options Team (LHOT) as a TJACH program to coordinate prevention activities and provide crisis stabilization and/or mediation.**

- Consider engaging a Housing Advocate or Housing Navigator to lead the efforts of a local housing options team
- Establish regular communication and coordination between the agencies that provide emergency funds for housing stabilization and rapid re-housing including CARES, Love, INC, and the Housing Intervention Program at Salvation Army
- Create information on homelessness for landlords to dispel myths about people experiencing homelessness and address concerns
- Work closely with schools as they are likely to be the first to identify a family in trouble

**Increase housing options: Pursue development of a variety of housing types for individuals and families by working with Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), establishing housing trust funds, creating public-private partnerships, and creating incentives connecting under-utilized housing stock with case management support.**

- Advocate for and support the creation of new housing for low-income individuals
- Participate on the City of Charlottesville's Housing Advisory Committee, TJPDC's Coalition for Housing Opportunity, and any other community group dedicated to addressing this community's housing needs
- Develop and implement a housing barrier assessment tool to provide more accurate information on the barriers faced by homeless and formerly homeless individuals
- Consider specific resources for families experiencing homelessness:
  - Converting existing transitional housing beds to dedicated emergency shelter beds for families
  - Establishing transition in place programs that could ensure family support and case management, and take advantage of rapid re-housing funds
  - Developing a permanent supportive housing option dedicated to families experiencing long-term homelessness at-risk of child welfare system and juvenile justice system involvement

**Supportive Services: Provide case management for individuals and families. Provide a Tenancy Protection Program to prevent evictions and difficulties leading to evictions.**

- Ensure that everyone experiencing homelessness is connected to a service provider who is able to assess their health, mental health and housing needs and make the appropriate referrals to get these needs met
- Consider a dedicated case manager within the City of Charlottesville's Department of Social Services to coordinate mainstream resources for people experiencing homelessness
- Establish meaningful communication and relationship with the University of Virginia Emergency Room Department and Social Work Department
- Advocate for and support the development of health care navigation and direct service programs for people experiencing homelessness
- Advocate for and support the development of practical life skills, mentoring, job training and education programs for people experiencing homelessness

**Secure stable, sustainable funding: Seek funding from localities, private donations, and government and private grants. For long-term stability consider an endowment.**