

City of Portland/Multnomah County, Oregon

SELECTED PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES THAT ARE ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Home Again: a 10-year plan to end homelessness in Portland and Multnomah County was released in December 2004. Since then, 1,039 chronically homeless individuals and 770 homeless families with children were housed. 369 of the families were high-resource users. These outcomes, along with political will from the City and Multnomah County, have resulted in the creation of new funding to fight homelessness. The City dedicated \$1 million dollars in new resources for the Key Not a Card initiative to move chronically homeless people off the street, as well as a \$9 million bond for permanent supportive housing. The County dedicated \$1 million to support “Bridges to Housing,” a regional effort to create housing for homeless families. Many successful programs and initiatives that serve family and adult households are underway. They include:

Bridges to Housing – *Permanent housing and services for homeless families using private & public funds*

Bridges to Housing (B2H) serves high-need homeless families throughout the 4-county, Portland-Vancouver metro area with permanent housing, intensive family services, and child services. B2H is leveraging new resources to fund community-based organizations. The first phase began in Spring 2006. Expected outcomes include creating 300 units of housing with services over 10 years. B2H was developed by a local governments and housing authorities from Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas Counties in Oregon, and Clark County in Washington, as well as nonprofit providers of social services and housing. For more info visit www.bridgestohousing.org.

Volunteers of America Home Free DV Program – *Housing First & DV*

In 2003, VOA closed its 77-year-old domestic violence shelter program to focus on outreach-based services including transitional and emergency housing, home visits, children’s services, support groups and individual advocacy. With no additional funding, VOA was able to serve five times as many clients with services and emergency housing and improve the housing stability of the clients they serve. Their transitional housing program (home services and rent assistance) places 80-100 households per year in a private apartment, with retention rates between 70-80 percent at 6 months.

SUN Service System – *Multnomah County’s premiere poverty elimination effort*

SUN is an integrated system of care, providing social and support services to youth, families and community members that lead to educational success and self-sufficiency. SUN aligns city, count, state, and federal resources and programs. Services are delivered through school-linked and school-based strategies. Services available include: educational support, emergency services, rent assistance, extended-day activities, case management, parent education, early childhood programs, culturally-specific services, and alcohol and other drug services.

A Key Not a Card – *A key to a home, not just a business card*

Since October 2005, outreach workers from four programs have offered chronically homeless family and adult households more than just their business card. There are helping more than 100 households a year move from the street into housing and retain that housing. The City of Portland made \$1 million in one-time funding available to A Key Not a Card to further demonstrate the success of the “housing first” model and has provided renewal funding.

Increased supply of permanent supportive housing – *Creating housing for chronically homeless people*

Since 2003, the community has established a permanent supportive housing pipeline of nearly 1,000 units. This is the result of significant changes in the way the City, County, Housing Authority and the Portland Development Commission do business. With the 10-year plan, the City and County have jointly agreed to create 600 units for families and 1,600 for adult households by 2015.

Shelter Wait List Case Manager – *Skip shelter and go directly to housing*

In July 2004, the largest shelter provider in Portland, Transition Projects Inc., hired a case manager to work with clients on the wait list for one of their three shelters. In 2005, that case manager, and another hired in July 2005, worked with 309 men and women – successfully placing 65 people (half of whom were chronically homeless) directly into permanent housing, preventing homelessness for 17, and placing 8 in transitional housing.

Housing Connections – *Find permanent, affordable housing fast*

Housing Connections (www.housingconnections.org) is a web-based housing locator that helps low-income individuals and agency staff locate affordable, accessible and special needs housing. The user-friendly site allows customized search



criteria and detailed unit listings, helping people find housing that meets their needs. More than 56,000 units are listed for the Portland metro area and approximately 3,500 searches are performed each week.

Short-term rent assistance redesign – *Six funding sources and three funders streamlined into one*

Following an extensive community process, the City of Portland, Multnomah County, and the Housing Authority of Portland streamlined what had been a complex array of short-term rental assistance programs. The new model consolidates six different funding sources and three administrative entities into one. The rent assistance model supports flexibility, requires success, and makes “housing first” and homelessness prevention a priority. Nearly \$2 million will be available through this streamlined model for agencies and individuals who need rent assistance.

JOIN – *Moving people into housing first*

JOIN is a nonprofit agency that uses a “housing first” approach to achieve their goal of rapid re-housing. Their seven outreach workers engage people who are sleeping outside—on the street, camping, or in their car. In 2005, JOIN helped 373 people in 233 households move into permanent housing directly from the street. Overall, JOIN was able to help 151 people in families and 79 kids 17 & under. Outreach workers engaged 894 new people, continued street outreach to many more, and provided ongoing support to those they housed. 12-month housing retention was 76%.

Joint Access to Benefits – *Connecting qualified offenders to benefits prior to release*

Joint Access to Benefits (JAB) initiates the Social Security disability application process for incarcerated individuals being released into Multnomah County or who were released and are homeless. Prior to release, JAB staff works with corrections counselors to complete the application. In 2005, 90% of 77 applications were approved. JAB is a collaboration of the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice’s Transition Services Unit, the Oregon Departments of Corrections and Human Services, Multnomah County’s Sheriff’s Office, Department of County Human Services, and the Social Security Administration district office.

Housing Rapid Response: *Police, neighborhood, service-provider house homeless repeat offenders*

Housing Rapid Response (HRR) houses chronically homeless persons who have repeat contact with Portland police or jail. Participants are referred to Central City Concern for housing and treatment via the City of Portland’s Office of Neighborhood Involvement. Almost all participants have active chemical addictions or untreated mental illnesses. In 2006: 44 were served in transitional housing, 21 placed in permanent housing, and 8 were in inpatient treatment, and there was an overall 47% decrease in arrests for the year. HRR is funded by the City of Portland, Portland Police Bureau and Portland Business Alliance.

Project Homeless Connect is a nationwide movement to increase access to services for homeless people and engage the community in finding a solution for homelessness. Portland’s first Project Homeless Connect, in January 2006, brought together 400 volunteers to reach out to 900 homeless people. Portland’s Project Homeless Families Connect, in July 2006, was the first event of its kind in the nation aimed specifically at helping homeless families. The event utilized over 800 volunteers to provide critical services for 300 homeless families in a single day. The most recent event serving homeless singles in January 2007 brought together 550 volunteers and served more than 800 homeless people.

Portland’s **Homeless Youth Continuum** provides services and supports to homeless youth ages 13-24 through three agencies. Janus Youth Programs provides “front-end” services including screening, shelter, and referral to case management. Outside In and New Avenues for Youth provide intensive case management, transitional and permanent housing, employment, education, mental health and A/D services. Continuum goals are to provide 24-hour screening and referral and to assist youth in transitioning into stable living environments with mental health, alcohol & drug, education and employment services. More than 1,000 youth are served annually with 85% exiting to stable housing.

The Sobering Station and CHIERS —*Access points to the Continuum of Care*

CHIERS (Central City Concern’s Hooper Center Inebriate Emergency Response Services) is a specially equipped van staffed with emergency medical technicians and outreach workers. CHIERS evaluates, treats and refers, or transports individuals on the street who are incapacitated by alcohol and/or drugs to the Sobering Station at the Hooper Detox Center. The Sobering Station provides a safe, medically monitored place for individuals who are incapacitated by alcohol and/or drugs to sober up. It reduces the use of emergency rooms and jails and is a tool for harm reduction. From the Sobering Station clients are referred to the Hooper Center’s Sub-Acute detox program housed in the same building, and to A&D treatment, health care, and a variety of housing options.

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