



# Heading Home

## SAINT LOUIS COUNTY

## History of Heading Home Saint Louis County

In September 2007, Heading Home Saint Louis County was launched and implementation began in 2008. Over the past four years, St. Louis County's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness has gone from a 47 page document, into a collective vision of many people, to the reality of housing and services for our homeless neighbors in St. Louis County. Over 142 community members, including business partners, government officials, funders, nonprofit social service staff, and volunteers, have been involved in various aspects of our 10-year implementation efforts. This report documents the progress made between 2007 and 2010 and outlines the structural changes being implemented in 2011 to increase efficiency and coordination of funding and services.

## The Great Recession's Heavy Toll

The period of time covered in this report includes the Great Recession and its aftermath. Homelessness, and those at risk of homelessness, increased in St. Louis County. The October 22, 2009 Wilder Homeless Survey helps us understand who the homeless are. On that date:

- ◆ A total of 1,113 homeless individuals were identified; 624 adults and 489 children. The 2006 total was 556 individuals; a 50% increase.
- ◆ 90% of these individuals had lived in Minnesota for one year or more.
- ◆ The number of homeless individuals interviewed increased 40% in Duluth from 362 (2006) to 600 (2009); On the Iron Range by 62% from 194 (2006) to 513 (2009).
- ◆ 40% of all females and 4% of all males had children living with them on the day of the survey.
- ◆ 65% of all children of adult respondents were aged 0-9.
- ◆ The age group with the largest increase was 18-21 year olds, who had an increase of 13% over the 2006 survey.
  - ◆ Largest increase of racial identification was an increase in African American individuals by 11% in Duluth and by 9% in rural areas (American Fact Finder 2010 for Duluth: African American is 2.2% - alone or in combination with other races).
  - ◆ A total of 50 individuals were identified as military veterans or 8% of all adult respondents (14 individuals identified as veterans in 2006).
- ◆ 46% of adult respondents have a physical, mental or other health condition that limits the kind of work they do.
- ◆ The average number of days since their last job was 1,251 days for all adult respondents.



# Development 2007–2010

## New Developments for the Homeless

Listed below are new units of Permanent Supportive Housing, affiliated with new Continuum of Care funds, in St. Louis County from 2007 through 2010.

- ◆ Perpich Apartments: Range Mental Health Center – Hibbing: 27 units
- ◆ San Marco: Center City Housing Corporation. – Duluth: 70 units
- ◆ Youth Foyer: Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency – Virginia: 15 units
- ◆ Duluth Veterans Place: Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans – Duluth: 16 units
- ◆ Gimaajii Mino Bimaadiziyaan: American Indian Community Housing Organization – Duluth: 27 Units

- ◆ Hearth Connection: – Giiwee mobile team – Duluth and Iron Range: 31 scattered site vouchers
- ◆ Hearth Connection: Duluth Housing & Redevelopment Authority, Churches United in Ministry and American Indian Community Housing Organization-34 Shelter Plus Care Vouchers

## Units Under Development

- ◆ New Moon Housing: Bois Forte – Bois Forte Reservation: 20 units
- ◆ Family Supportive Housing: Center City Housing Corporation – Duluth: 44 units for families
- ◆ St. Leo's Housing: Hibbing Housing & Redevelopment Authority, Range Transitional Housing: up to 28 units

## Funds Received through the Continuum of Care (CoC)

This federal grant, HUD's Continuum of Care SuperNOFA, is an annual competitive grant that brings in approximately \$2.5 million dollars annually to St. Louis County. In addition to the regular funds awarded, additional bonus projects are awarded if the grant application's score is high enough. In order to receive bonus funds, the Continuum of Care applicants need to show progress on the 10-year plan to end homelessness, as well as having good outcomes for current projects. Total awards and bonus funds received:

- ◆ 2007: Total funds of **\$1, 919,783** - No bonus projects were funded
- ◆ 2008: Total funds of **\$2,394,938** - Bonus funds awarded and distributed: \$269,698 to MAC V for Duluth Veterans Place; \$165,480 to AEOA for Youth Foyer Project.
- ◆ 2009: Total funds of **\$2,394,938** - Bonus funds awarded and distributed: \$141,000 to Range Transitional Housing; \$126,073 to American Indian Community Housing Organization; \$107,105 to Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency.
- ◆ 2010: Total funds of **\$2,514,078** - Bonus funds awarded and distributed: \$111,330 to MAC V in leasing dollars for Duluth Veterans Place; \$200,000 to Center City Housing for acquisition funds for Duluth Family Supportive Housing Project and \$70,331 in operating dollars for Memorial Park Apartments.

# Prevention 2007-2010

## Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP Stimulus Demonstration)

Starting in 2009, this one-time two-year stimulus funding through HUD, also known as the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, assisted both the St. Louis County Planning Department and the City of Duluth with rapidly re-housing homeless individuals and families on the Iron Range and in the City of Duluth through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement formulas. The focus of the funding was to prevent homelessness and provide rapid re-housing to assist individuals and families who were homeless.

When this demonstration funding was finished in 2011, HUD was able to carve out a \$40 M increase in the 2011 budget to assist communities with prevention and rapid re-housing programs.

- ◆ St. Louis County received \$1,000,000 which provided cash assistance and services to 200

St. Louis County households through March 31, 2011.

- ◆ The City of Duluth received \$1,000,000 which provided cash assistance and services to 345 households through March 31, 2011

## Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP)

These prevention dollars are a bi-annual grant application process. These activities are similar to HPRP activities, only the funds are provided by the State. This funding stream is reliant on having a 10-year plan in place with active efforts to implement its goals. Continued funding requires a planning process which engages the community and utilizes current data trends.

- ◆ 2007/09 Biennium - \$750,000 which provided cash assistance and services to 995 households
- ◆ 2009/11 Biennium - \$750,000 which provided cash assistance and services to 1200 households

## Progress Highlights

- ◆ Landlord Forums: Engaging with landlords is one way to house our higher barrier households, if the landlords feel supported and know that there is someone to call if an issue arises.
- ◆ Discharge Planning: St. Louis County was so fortunate to have had support for a discharge coordinator – this assisted tremendously with individuals discharging from our jails to be connected with community providers who can transition them securely into the community. Collaboration continues to happen around the issue of providing discharge planning.
- ◆ Homeless Emergency Service Pocket Guides: This tool is giving the community at large something to give to people (when identified as homeless) at places such as libraries that homeless individuals and families frequent.
- ◆ Project Homeless Connect Events: A hugely successful once-a-year event that serves as a one-stop shop for individuals and families who struggle with housing/homelessness. In 2009, 274 individuals attended the Project Homeless Connect event in Duluth, and over 200 individuals attended the event held in Virginia. Connecting with community resources is key.
- ◆ Cultural Competency: Trainings were held for more effective work with American Indian people. 47 participants from 15 agencies attended the training in October of 2009 and 69 participants from 15 agencies attended training in January of 2011.
- ◆ St. Louis County/City of Duluth Coordination: Coordination of homeless funds that come into our community, such as HUD CoC funds, FHPAP funds, ESG, HOME and CDBG, is essential to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of services. See the “Transition” section on page 4 for more details.
- ◆ Office of Justice Grant: This diversionary program deflects jail time in some instances by connecting our chronically homeless, severely mentally ill individuals with case workers in the community rather than being incarcerated.

# Transition to Collaborative Funding Model

**Incentive:** The HEARTH Act (Homeless Emergency And Rapid Transition to Housing) is driving significant changes at the local level by changing the application requirements of federal homeless programs. To be considered for federal funds, the communities will need to demonstrate clearly that they have achieved good outcomes and have a sound community process.

**The Challenge:** Heading Home Saint Louis County's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness is in year four of implementation. The downturn in the economy, as well as the State cuts to services for vulnerable populations, has resulted in an increase in people experiencing homelessness. Along with the Hearth Act incentive, it has become increasingly clear that the job of preventing and ending homelessness needs to become more efficient and coordinated in order to maximize the funds for targeted homeless populations.

However, three separate agencies (St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services, St. Louis County Planning Department and the City of Duluth) have traditionally worked independently of one another in applying for and administering funding to prevent and end homelessness. Three separate advisory committees were involved. Efficiencies in how the system operated needed to be found.

**Transition:** Locally, the decision was made to significantly restructure the way homelessness funding is administered in St. Louis County. After a series of stakeholder meetings, agreements were reached to substantially increase coordination of efforts and collaboration between the three lead agencies. The following structural changes are in the process of being implemented:

## Structural changes needed to meet Hearth Act requirements:

- ◇ *Leadership:* Formally designated active leadership
- ◇ *Working Groups:* Groups or committees that manage activities
- ◇ *Membership & Participation:* Meets regularly, active, and committed
- ◇ *Decision Making:* Pre-determined process that is formal, fair and transparent
- ◇ *Planning:* Active plan to end homelessness and community planning
- ◇ *Performance & Evaluation:* Formal, fair, written policies to use data to evaluate plans.

◆ **Leadership:** One advisory committee, the Leadership Council, to oversee the 10-Year Plan activities and all homeless funds coming into St. Louis County. In addition to overseeing funding, the Leadership Council will monitor local needs and gaps and will act as a clearinghouse for new funding opportunities and best practices.

◆ **Working Groups:** Continue to expand and strengthen the planning roles of the Affordable Housing Coalition (AHC) for Duluth and the Rural Housing Coalition (RHC) for the Iron Range. These groups will take the lead in making recommendations that respond to trends specific to each area. Representatives of both will sit on the Leadership Council.

◆ **Decision-making:** Transition all homeless funding resources to a new community process. Establish written procedures throughout the process that are well defined, fair and transparent.

◆ **Performance and Evaluation:** Increase use of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data collection system, including more consistent use of data in making program and system changes, funding decisions and establishing program goals.

◆ **Leadership:** Position St. Louis County PHHS to become a Unified Funding Agency (UFA) to administer the CoC funds.

## Homeless Funds & Activities to be coordinated:

- ◇ Heading Home St. Louis County 10 Year Plan
- ◇ Continuum of Care SuperNOFA
- ◇ Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance
- ◇ Emergency Shelter Grant
- ◇ Recommendations for the Community Development Block Grant (homeless)
- ◇ Recommendations for HOME dollars