

there's no place  
like a home



chicago's plan to end homelessness

State of the Plan

JUNE 30, 2006



CITY OF CHICAGO • RICHARD M. DALEY, MAYOR



## Message from the Mayor

This midyear report celebrates the hundreds of households that have had their personal homelessness ended and recognizes the special accomplishments made by the many partners in our Plan. We cannot forget the ultimate goal of the Plan: to give our fellow Chicagoans who need it most, the potential to succeed.

Some of the recent highlights that I am particularly proud of are the direct result of the City's investments in the first six months of 2006:

- Over 138 households were placed in private market housing through a new system of "housing locators."
- Nearly 1,800 others have been assisted through prevention funds; and
- Since January, nearly 35 individuals have been taken off the street and into permanent housing.

This is what we mean by ending homelessness.

City government, private agencies, religious communities, and other leaders are partnering together on exciting initiatives for the Plan. Whether it is providing permanent housing for the homeless, getting families more quickly back into housing, or developing a personal relationship with a homeless family, all of us are rallying around the same theme—"There's no place like a home."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard M. Daley".

# Introduction



Welcome to the third edition of the *State of the Plan*, a report to you to keep you abreast of the progress to date on Chicago's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness (the Plan). In January 2003, Mayor Richard M. Daley endorsed the Plan, an ambitious effort to eliminate homelessness. The Plan has united hundreds of public and private stakeholders, working together to transition the city's homeless system from a shelter-based system, focused on temporary fixes, to a system based on long-term solutions such as permanent housing.

The previous *State of the Plan* reports (June 2005, and December 2005) provided data on homeless counts, resources, and specific program initiatives. This midyear report highlights some of the results and successes of our partners throughout the city: north, south, and west sides, in the three core principles of the Plan: *Prevention of Homelessness, Housing First, and Wraparound Services*.

To see how a system based on permanent housing rather than simple shelter actually works in the real world, consider the recent experience of the Welsh family. A young family of seven, with five children aged from six years to two-month-old twins, had been homeless for six weeks when they were transferred from an emergency shelter to Sylvia Center, an interim housing program operated by Cornerstone Community Outreach.

Sylvia Center staff worked with the Welshes to set goals focused on attaining permanent housing. During the 30 days the Welshes were in interim housing, they made contact with a landlord willing to open the door for them, saved enough for the first month's rent, and saw their six-year-old son through his school year. With donations from the Emergency Fund to cover the security deposit, furniture from a past resident of the Sylvia Center, and a truck and driver arranged by the housing coordinator, the Welsh family settled into their new apartment on June 16.

We are encouraged by the success of families like the Welshes who, with the proper support, have made a quick transition from homelessness to permanent housing. After all, ensuring that all Chicagoans have safe, secure housing is what the Plan is all about.



# PREVENTION



- Approximately 1,800 have received homelessness prevention assistance in the first six months of 2006.
- The State of Illinois has increased the amount of homeless prevention funds in the FY2007 budget by 120%.

When families are displaced from their homes due to short-term financial hardship, many things suffer: children's education, time at work, even the cost to landlords to refill a housing unit. Thousands of households each year seek and receive help through over 50 community agencies and six Chicago Department of Human Services field offices.

## **SPOTLIGHT NORTH: Chicago Homeless Prevention Fund and St. Vincent DePaul Center**

St. Vincent de Paul Center, located in the heart of Lincoln Park, is one of the Emergency Fund's sites for homeless prevention assistance. In early June, St.

Vincent's began receiving an unusually high volume of requests. The increased demand was met with an additional \$5,000 provided through the Chicago Homeless Prevention Fund, making a difference to real people, who were able to stay in their homes. The following are two real life examples:

The Grace Family, a mother with four young children, was fleeing domestic violence and had obtained an apartment through a CDHS rental assistance program. However, the family also needed to pay a security deposit. Prevention funds helped the client make the security deposit, and the family was able to avoid the homeless shelter system and move right into their new apartment.

Charlie is a good tenant who lost his job. Though he quickly found a new one, the short gap in his income left him unable to pay rent and he was facing possible eviction. Through St. Vincent DePaul's

# PREVENTION



homelessness prevention resources, Charlie was able to keep his apartment and the landlord is confident in Charlie's ability to remain a good tenant.

The households that require prevention assistance work hard each month to make their small budgets stretch. It truly is one paycheck, disability payment, additional medication, temporary job loss, or death of a relative that pushes people to the point where they need immediate help.

In other cases, the people at risk of homelessness also receive other types of assistance, but are working toward greater independence. A small amount of additional help can keep them moving toward that goal.

## **SPOTLIGHT SOUTH: Featherfist and the Housing Locator Program.**

The new Housing Locator Program kicked off in February and was designed to facilitate rapid housing placement of families already in the shelter system by identifying available private market rental units that are affordable. As of May, this program has placed 138 families. Though intended to place families already in the shelter system, it was recently applied to the cause of prevention, as well.

The White family of three, with a new baby due in July, had 14 days to vacate their apartment. Staff at the Department of Housing heard of their plight and thought that the Housing Locator Program might be able to help the Whites avoid homelessness and bypass the shelter system altogether. Staff from one of the three Housing Locator partner agencies, Featherfist, met with Mrs. White that same day, and was able to find them an apartment they could afford on their salaries in a neighborhood close to their son's preschool. They moved in within one week.

Featherfist, located in the South Shore neighborhood, has worked with the homeless on Chicago's south side for over 21 years. Their staff will follow up periodically with the White family to help them maintain housing stability.





# HOUSING FIRST



- Since March, 2006, over 138 households were re-housed into private market housing through the Housing Locator Program.
- Since February, 2006, 35 unsheltered homeless individuals are now in permanent housing; 82% of whom meet the definition of chronic homelessness.
- Since April 1, 2006, the Interim Housing Outreach Project has moved 76 people from emergency response shelters to permanent or interim housing.

The vision for 2012 is to have a housing system that responds to a homeless situation quickly and intentionally, by moving homeless individuals and families into appropriate and affordable permanent housing. Such response requires that we have enough permanent housing resources for people who are currently homeless and may become homeless, as well as services in place to sustain the housing. To achieve this goal, the existing shelter-based system is changing to a housing-based system with a range of permanent housing alternatives, including short-term rental subsidies, permanent supportive housing, and access to affordable rental housing.

## **SPOTLIGHT NORTH: Thresholds and the Street-To-Home Initiative**

The Street-To-Home Initiative, funded by Skyway Funds, started in February of this year. This new program was designed for partner agencies to conduct outreach to unsheltered homeless living in public spaces, such as along the lakefront and under viaducts, and place them directly into permanent housing. The agency then provides the necessary services to help the clients maintain their housing. By the end of June, this Initiative had successfully housed 35 individuals who had been living outside.

# HOUSING FIRST



John, 39, first displayed symptoms of mental illness while in college but managed to graduate in 1989. Despite having career plans and plenty of motivation, he became unable to hold a job, attended outpatient treatment inconsistently, and was hospitalized for psychiatric reasons several times. While he was able to stay with family members intermittently, he lost his place with his mother in spring 2005. He had been living unsheltered on the lakefront ever since.

Thresholds is one of the four Street-To-Home Initiative agencies and has specialized in serving the severely mentally ill for over 20 years. They met John at the Thresholds Peer Success Center and helped him to stabilize his medication, obtain psychiatric treatment, apply for benefits, and secure housing in an SRO. John is now awaiting his benefits and hopes to move to a larger studio apartment. He is also enjoying riding his new bike, donated by an anonymous Street-To-Home Initiative “booster,” which helps him stay active and engaged in his community, and saves him money on transit fares.





# WRAPAROUND SERVICES

Wraparound services, the third core tenet of the Plan, helps make both Prevention and Housing First succeed. A range of services is envisioned, whether for intensive clinical services or general case management, but the overriding theme and purpose of services is to keep people housed.

## **SPOTLIGHT WEST: Interfaith House's Housing for Health Outreach Team**

Interfaith House, located in East Garfield Park, provides interim housing for homeless individuals who are ill or injured. In 2006, Interfaith House initiated a Housing for Health Outreach Team (HHOT) that assists former clients in their own homes with wraparound services that address the issues that frequently threaten the housing stability of formerly homeless men and women—physical health, mental health, and substance abuse.



Graham is not only living with HIV, he is still in therapy for a stroke he suffered three years ago and is also in recovery from substance abuse issues. The HHOT team meets with him every other week to help him comply with his medication regimen and attend medical appointments. His HHOT coordinator arranged homemaker assistance for him, and has helped him to budget his income. With the assistance of the HHOT team, Graham has remained in permanent housing for ten months and has been sober for three months. He is currently studying for his GED.

## **SPOTLIGHT WEST: La Casa Norte's Esperanza Trabajando**

Less than four years old, La Casa Norte is making an impact in the Humboldt Park community. Employing bilingual case management, they focus on permanent housing placement and economic stability. Esperanza Trabajando is a job readiness and placement service tailored to at-risk young adults, many of whom have been incarcerated. By focusing on youth who have experienced homelessness or are likely to, they are truly breaking the cycle by helping individuals achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Jose dropped out of high school and had been incarcerated twice by the age of 19, leaving him with few skills necessary to survive and succeed in the adult world. He was eager to work with La Casa Norte who enrolled him in a GED program, and helped him develop a resume and open a bank account. He is currently employed full-time at a local food store.



# PARTNERS IN THE PLAN



- Chicago's philanthropic community contributes over \$26 million each year in funding for homelessness related housing and services.
- Thirty-one congregations are involved with the Faith-Based Initiative in sponsoring homeless families with rental assistance and social support.

## **SPOTLIGHT: Private Philanthropy**

A core group of Chicago's private foundations has played a crucial role in supporting the development and implementation of the Plan to End Homelessness. This core group comprised of the Irvin Stern Foundation, Polk Bros. Foundation, Prince Charitable Trusts, McCormick Tribune Foundation, and The Chicago Community Trust has engaged and educated other philanthropies through the Donors Forum of Chicago, Chicago's regional association of grant makers.

In an effort to become more proactive in the Plan's implementation, foundation staff members are discussing ways to address relevant issues, identify service gaps, and share information. The Polk Bros. Foundation recently arranged a meeting to educate peers about a model of permanent housing designed for individuals who are homeless with drug or alcohol addictions, or untreated mental illness issues. These circumstances typically disqualify clients for many permanent housing programs, which may prolong their homelessness. As a result, foundations have identified a gap in services and will consider making grants to programs that provide services to this population. Program officers use peer education to place funding requests in a larger context and inform their institutions on the potential impact of their grantmaking decisions.

Private foundations are also collaborating to establish the Prevention Call Center, a significant piece of infrastructure for the Plan that has been discussed in previous reports. Chicago is fortunate to have a funding community that is committed to the Plan and willing to support the priorities of government and non-profit organizations.

## **SPOTLIGHT: Communities of Faith**

Churches, synagogues, mosques, and other places of worship receive and fulfill numerous calls for help. This commitment to serve others undergirds the Plan's Faith-Based Initiative, which asks faith communities to work in concert with government and nonprofit organizations in the effort to end homelessness. One component of the Faith-Based Initiative is to sponsor a homeless family with short-term rental assistance and provide a system of support as the family establishes itself.



# PARTNERS IN THE PLAN

In recent months, Interfaith Council for the Homeless has recruited six Chicago churches and one synagogue to sponsor homeless families for between six and twelve months through its Interfaith Homes program, joining approximately 31 religious institutions already involved in similar programs scattered across the city. Two communities of faith who are participating in the Interfaith Homes family sponsorship program are highlighted below and show how small groups can make a difference.

Wicker Park Grace is a small, new Presbyterian church that meets in an art gallery with less than 30 congregants. The small but generous group has committed to sponsor a homeless family for six months, and has already raised the funds to do so.

“Our decision to sponsor a family came out of our desire to make a real difference in people's lives. Even though our community is small, with many young working families, we understand that generosity isn't the volume of giving, but involves a spirit of care and freedom which comes from living with open hands rather than clenched hands. We believe that by working with the Interfaith Homes program, the family has a good chance of getting beyond homelessness for good. We feel honored to have the opportunity to give.” —Nanette Sawyer, Pastor, Wicker Park Grace

Church of the Three Crosses is a small urban congregation which has long been engaged in social ministries. The church's pastor, Rev. John Hobbs, was involved in the creation of Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness, and has educated his congregation about it. So when Interfaith Council for the Homeless sent him a notice seeking a congregation to sponsor a young homeless mother with two children, the church council voted unanimously in favor of the proposal. While the church's budget did not provide for this type of funding, the Council decided to “go on faith” that the funds would come to do this work.

Says Pastor Hobbs, “This program connects us to the city at large and invites us to express our faith in concrete ways. Rather than feeling overwhelmed by the enormous concerns related to homelessness, this program gifts us with solutions to ending homelessness for this family.”



## Housing Creation, Shelter Reduction, and Prevention Assistance Dedicated Homeless Funding

Category	Type of Housing		2002 Actual <sup>(1)</sup>	2004 Actual <sup>(1)</sup>	2005 Actual <sup>(1)</sup>	Goals for 2006 <sup>(2)</sup>	Goals for 2012 <sup>(2)</sup>
Permanent Housing Units	Permanent Supportive Housing	units	3,304	4,187	4,300	5,397	7,586
	Permanent Housing w/Short-Term Supports	units	226	365	509	711	1,115
	Safe Haven	units	68	92	92	92	21
	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>3,598</b>	<b>4,644</b>	<b>4,901</b>	<b>6,200</b>
Interim Housing Beds (3)	Interim Housing	beds	0	945	1,497	1,802	3,632
	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>1,497</b>	<b>1,802</b>
Shelter Beds (4)	Shelter	beds	3,873	2,896	2,517	2,200	300
	Transitional Housing	beds	1,938	1,511	1,346	1,154	0
	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>5,811</b>	<b>4,407</b>	<b>3,863</b>	<b>3,354</b>
<b>All Categories of Housing/Shelter</b>	<b>Subtotal Housing Units/Beds</b>		<b>9,409</b>	<b>9,996</b>	<b>10,261</b>	<b>11,356</b>	<b>12,654</b>
Homeless Prevention (5)	<b>Subtotal Prevention Units of Assistance (Rent and Utility)</b>		<b>2,900</b>	<b>5,476</b>	<b>5,775</b>	<b>7,100</b>	<b>7,100</b>
<b>All Categories: Housing and Prevention</b>	<b>Total number in place to meet system need</b>		<b>12,309</b>	<b>15,472</b>	<b>16,036</b>	<b>18,456</b>	<b>19,754</b>

**Sources:**

(1) *Housing Activity Chart*, updated quarterly. Prepared by DOH, in collaboration with CDHS, Chicago Continuum of Care, and the Partnership to End Homelessness.

(2) Originally, the *Implementation Schedule for Chicago's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness: Getting Housed, Staying Housed*, January 2005, provided the primary source for the Plan's goals through 2012. Since the publication of that report, updated methodology and new data has become available, necessitating a revision of those goals. With the application of these new sources, projections have been adjusted to best meet the needs of the homeless population. In this report, the goals for 2006 and 2012 have been derived from working papers, "2006 Projections," developed by DOH with CDHS, the Continuum, and the Partnership to End Homelessness.

**Notes to data:**

(3) The June 2005 report projected the number of interim housing units for families and did not convert it to beds. The projections in this report do convert interim housing beds from units and therefore appear higher than previously stated.

(4) Though the Plan calls for the complete phasing out of shelter beds, CDHS will maintain its capacity to open additional emergency beds as conditions or circumstances warrant.

(5) Units of homelessness prevention are not separated by individuals and families.

For the breakdown of the above chart between singles and families, please go to [www.cityofchicago.org](http://www.cityofchicago.org). Click on Departments, then Housing, and go to the "There's No Place Like a Home" section.



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