

### **Section III. Homeless Needs**

#### **Actions Taken to Address the Needs of Homeless Persons**

The primary effort to address the needs of the homeless undertaken in 2004 was to begin developing a "10-Year Plan to End Homelessness." The Executive Director of the Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authorities was an active participant on the United Way Community Needs Committee, which carefully studied homelessness in the Lancaster community. The resulting report was entitled "State of Housing and Homelessness in Lancaster County 2004," which formed the groundwork for the "10-Year Plan to End Homelessness." The Advisory Board for the 10-Year Plan will begin work in 2005.

The second major effort to address the needs of the homeless was the County of Lancaster's involvement in updating the Continuum of Care Plan for the Homeless. This plan, created by the Interagency Council for the Homeless in Lancaster, describes the goals and objectives for the use of funds for the homeless. Lancaster County adopted the updated Continuum of Care Plan as a part of the Consolidated Plan.

The County's third major effort to address the needs of the homeless was to continue to administer the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) called ServicePoint. The system was instituted in July 2002 and has continued to improve the accuracy of data entry and participation in the system. In 2004, the County submitted an application to Supportive Housing Program to renew the funding for the HMIS (the grant was later approved).

The County's fourth major effort was to update of the housing element of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. In September 2003, the Lancaster County Planning Commission appointed representatives of a broad range of stakeholder groups involved in housing matters to prepare an update to the housing element of the Comprehensive Plan to identify housing needs through 2030. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that housing needs will be met for all income groups in a manner that coincides with the smart growth provisions of the County's Comprehensive Plan and the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code. The Housing Steering Committee has been meeting monthly with the charge to review recommendations of the Housing Element adopted in May 1995, analyze more recent data, engage public review and comments, and prepare a strategy that addresses the housing needs of the County through 2030.

In June 2004, the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners contracted with a consultant team that will lead the Committee through completion of a final update by June, 2005. This team is led by ACP Visioning and Planning, Ltd. of New York, New York, and also includes Thomas Comitta Associates of West Chester, Pennsylvania and Zimmerman/Volk Associates of Clinton, New Jersey. All three firms have extensive experience in planning and housing, and all three have experience working in Lancaster County. This team wrapped up the public participation process in 2004.

The County of Lancaster allocated both Emergency Shelter Grant funds, as well as CDBG public service dollars toward the needs of the homeless. Additionally, the County of Lancaster allocated a portion of the funds from the State Department of Public Welfare, called Human Service Development Fund (HSDF), to address the needs of the homeless. Table 8 below lists the programs that received County CDBG, ESG and HSDF monies in 2004 to address the needs of the homeless. This table also lists the types of activities, as well as the number and type of subpopulations served.

### **Homeless Persons Making the Transition to Permanent Housing and Independent Living**

The County of Lancaster provided both ESG and CDBG funds (see Table 8) to help homeless persons transition to permanent housing. All of the emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities funded by the County provide residents with case management services to assist them in their transition to permanent housing. The County also funds two housing and budget counseling programs (also called “housing first” programs) that help the families and individuals that are homeless to move into permanent housing with any needed supportive services.

The Lancaster County Housing Authority continues to give a preference for Section 8 Housing Vouchers to persons living in shelters and transitional housing facilities that are working with an organization that will provide at least one year of case management or other supportive services to the client. Twenty-three (23) households were provided with Section 8 Housing Vouchers in 2004 to help homeless persons make the transition to permanent housing. This option is an extremely effective method of getting the homeless back into safe, decent, affordable housing.

### **New Federal Resources Obtained from Homeless SuperNOFA**

In 2004, several organizations received federal grant funds to help the homeless called Continuum of Care/Supportive Housing Program funds (Fiscal Year 2003). The grants allocated monies through this funding source include a renewal of the Supported Housing and Outreach Program or SHOP (a housing first program operated by The Lodge, Inc. of PA) and the Mifflin Street Apartments Program (operated by Tabor Community Services), which will provide permanent supportive housing for homeless persons with disabilities. The Mifflin Street Apartments Project is still underway. The SHOP program continues to leverage HSDF monies and private contributions.

Five organizations applied in 2004 for additional SHP funds. They are: Shelter to Independent Living Program (housing and budget counseling), Homeless Advocacy and Outreach Program (supportive services/legal services), Jubilee House (transitional housing for women recovering from substance abuse and their children), Bridge Housing (transitional housing for victims of domestic violence), and the Homeless Management Information System. All organizations were notified in 2004 that the projects were funded in full or in part.

The Shelter to Independent Living Program is a “housing first” program which means that the program is based on the belief that vulnerable and at-risk homeless families are more responsive to interventions and social services support *after they are in their own housing*, rather than while living in temporary/transitional facilities or housing programs. The housing first approach stresses the immediate return of families to independent living. The program homeless families move directly into affordable rental housing in residential neighborhoods as quickly as possible and then provides six months to one year of individualized, home-based social services support "after the move" to help each family transition to stability. This program was highlighted as particularly effective in the United Way’s Community Impact report on Housing and Homelessness.

### **Specific Homeless Prevention Elements**

Lancaster County provides several services and resources to help prevent homelessness. The organizations providing prevention services comprise Lancaster’s effort to “close the front door” to homelessness. These organizations work closely together to ensure coordination of services. These services range from those meeting emergency needs (food, rental assistance, etc.) to specific programs that advocate for families facing homelessness by preventing evictions. Preventing evictions is accomplished through budget counseling, landlord advocacy and forbearance agreements, mediation, and intervention. The primary efforts include:

- Rent and utility assistance programs- The Community Action Program (CAP) Outreach and Case Management Program (funded with County HSDF funds) provides emergency material assistance and crisis intervention, service planning, and case management to economically disadvantaged families. Crises dealt with generally include homelessness, imminent eviction, overcrowded or unsafe living conditions, lack of food, lack of fuel, or imminent termination of utility service. The program offers utility assistance, security deposits, first month’s rent and rental arrearage payments. From July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004, 896 households (representing 2,586 individuals) were issued rental assistance funding to either prevent eviction or secure permanent housing. 2,372 families were approved for funds to be sent to an energy vendor to either prevent a utility termination or to purchase a minimum supply of oil or kerosene. This program is the sole source for FEMA and DPW rental assistance. Furthermore, all DPW crisis funds, local electric and gas suppliers and FEMA utility applications are handled by this program.
- Legal Representation – MidPenn Legal Services (funded with County CDBG funds and Supportive Housing funds) provides legal advice and representation in the areas of landlord/tenant hearings, illegal lock-outs and evictions, negotiations with landlords for “pay and stay” cases, public housing terminations, obtaining or preventing termination of public benefits, bankruptcies, mortgage foreclosures, and securing protection from abuse orders.

- Housing Counseling and Education– Tabor Community Services provides case management, landlord advocacy and intervention, housing location and budget counseling to prevent homelessness (funded through County CDBG and HSDF monies).
- Budget and Life Skills Counseling - Tabor, The Lodge, Inc., and Neighborhood Services (all funded through County CDBG and HSDF monies) provide protective/representative payee services which prevent homelessness by ensuring timely rent payments.
- Food, Clothing and Furniture – Local food pantries such as the Council of Churches and other local churches provide material assistance and emergency food and clothing. The “Donation Station” has been established by United Way LINC (funded through County HSDF monies) which acts as a clearing house and distribution center for all Homeless Providers, including prevention providers, for donations of furniture, food and household items.
- Homeowner Programs- Both the City and County of Lancaster operate Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Programs (both funded through CDBG and HOME funds) to preserve affordable housing and prevent homelessness through the provision of critical home repairs for low income homeowners. CAP operates a Weatherization Program through County CDBG funds to reduce utility costs for low-income homeowners.
- Outreach and advocacy - CAP provides victims of domestic violence with information on Protection from Abuse Orders, which bar the abuser from the home, thereby avoiding the need for the victims to go the Domestic Violence Services shelter (funded with CDBG and ESG funds). MidPenn Legal Services (funded with County CDBG funds) provides legal representation in court for victims of domestic violence to keep their homes and exclude the abuser.

Services Planned To Improve Homeless Prevention:

In an effort to help people to avoid the homeless system, planned efforts include:

- Continued work on discharge planning with the local prison and local hospitals to reduce the number of people leaving these facilities and arriving on the doorstep of the emergency shelters.
- Additional and expanded educational efforts are planned to increase the knowledge of tenants’ rights and responsibilities to reduce homelessness due to improper evictions.
- The plan developed by the Community Needs Committee will be used to re-evaluate the gaps in prevention services to provide clear direction for development of programs to address these gaps.

## **Emergency Shelter Grants**

Listed on Table 8 is a description of the actions taken to address emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless individuals and families including significant subpopulations. Please see Section IX for the ESG Grantee Activity Summary, ESG Grantee Financial Summary, ESG Grantee Statistics, Financial Status Report for S-01-UC-42-0006 (Final), and the Financial Status Report for S-02-UC-42-0006 (Interim).

## **Assessment of Relationship of ESG Funds to Goals and Objectives**

The majority of County Emergency Shelter Grant funds are used to continue the operation of local emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities. As permitted by ESG regulations, 30% of ESG funds are used for essential services to help homeless clients to move from the shelters and transitional facilities into safe, decent, affordable housing.

**Table 8.  
Homeless Programs, Subpopulations and Resources Leveraged, 2004**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Type of facility</b>	<b>Subpopulation-number and type</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Resources/Leveraging</b>	
Crispus Attucks Community Center	Emergency shelter	UM, UW, SPF, AC, TPF 20 beds – barracks	Operations and essential services	HSDF, ESG	19,668 51,000 20,000 <b>18,000</b> 50,000 <b>90,000</b> \$203,660	County ESG Other Federal Local Gov't <b>Private</b> Fees <b>Other</b> Total
Domestic Violence Services	Emergency Shelter	TPF, SPF, UW, AC 33 beds – large home Victims of domestic violence	Operations/battered and abused spouses	CDBG, ESG	45,000 90,000 48,677 <b>140,954</b> 1,146,651 \$1,471,651	County ESG CDBG Local Gov't <b>Private</b> Other Total
Transitional Living Center	Transitional Housing	UM, UW, SPF, AC, TPF 54 rooms (55/100 beds) Single Room Occupancy	Operations	CDBG, ESG	32,000 35,000 47,000 <b>203,898</b> 198,935 \$516,833	County ESG Other Federal Local Gov't <b>Fees</b> Private Total
Clare House	Transitional Housing	UW, SPF 21 rooms, two large homes	Operations and essential services	CDBG, ESG	5,500 7,000 9,000 63,674 <b>21,884</b> 74,000 \$181,058	County ESG CDBG Federal Local Gov't <b>Fees</b> Private Other Total
Beacon House	Transitional housing for veterans	UM 8 beds – large home Veterans	Operations	ESG	3,900 8,000 <b>13,000</b> \$24,900	County ESG Private <b>Fees</b> Total

<b>Program</b>	<b>Type of facility</b>	<b>Subpopulation-number and type</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Resources/Leveraging</b>	
YWCA Residence Hall	Transitional housing	UW, SPF	rehabilitation	CDBG	20,000 10,000 3,500 \$33,500	County CDBG City CDBG Agency funds Total
Hope House	Transitional housing/permanent supportive housing	UM, UW Persons with AIDS	Operations	CDBG	8,000 30,987 43,523 181,254 \$263,764	County CDBG United Way Agency Funds Other Federal Total
Jubilee House	Transitional housing for persons recovering from substance abuse	UW, SPF Persons recovering from substance abuse	Essential services	CDBG	13,500 33,437 90,574 \$137,511	County CDBG Agency Funds Other Total
Bridge House – DVS	Transitional housing for victims of domestic violence	UW, SPF Victims of domestic violence	Essential services	CDBG	33,750 19,117 99,309 \$152,176	County CDBG United Way Other Total
Rental Housing Counseling Program	Essential services		Essential services/tenant/landlord counseling	HSDf, CDBG	42,000 46,943 8,370 13,347 \$110,660	County CDBG County HSDf Agency Funds Other Total
Representative Payee	Essential service	Chronically homeless, disabled	Essential services/public services	CDBG	24,750 7,741 111,957 28,000 48,985 \$221,433	County CDBG City CDBG United Way Agency Funds Other Total
Legal Services	Essential service/prevention	Chronically homeless, disabled	Essential services/legal services	CDBG	77,625 1,451 111,395 787,895 \$978,366	County CDBG City CDBG United Way Other Total

Program	Type of facility	Subpopulation-number and type	Activity	Funding source	Resources/Leveraging	
Outreach & Case Management	Essential service		Essential services/public services	HSDf	72,000 152,021 173,441 2,000 223,478 \$622,960	County HSDf Other County State Federal Utilities Total
Shelter to Independent Living	Essential service		housing first, essential services	HSDf, CDBG, ESG	28,109 <b>254,000</b> <b>11,176</b> \$293,285	County ESG <b>Other Federal</b> <b>Private</b> Total
Supported Housing and Outreach Program (SHOP)	Essential services	Persons with mental illness	housing first, essential services	HSDf	15,500 158,081 \$173,581	County HSDf HUD CofC Total

**ESG Matching funds indicated in bold type**

Acronyms:

- UM Unaccompanied Male
- UW Unaccompanied Female
- SPF Single Parent Family
- AC Adult Couple
- TPF Two Parent Family
- CofC Continuum of Care

## **Homeless Discharge Coordination**

The Interagency Council for the Homeless or ICH (of which the Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority is a founding and active member) works closely with publicly funded agencies to develop discharge plans to prevent discharges which immediately result in the individual becoming homeless. The strategy to implement this planning process includes representatives of those organizations as active members of the ongoing Interagency Council for the Homeless (ICH) planning meetings. The strategy also includes annual meetings with each individual organization to review strategies for discharge planning.

The discharge plan with the State mental hospitals and local psychiatric units includes them having access to four (4) respite beds in the community that provide transitional housing, case management and support for a 30-day period. This 30-day respite allows the housing first programs in the local Continuum of Care to work with the individual to obtain permanent housing and benefits. There is also a hospital diversion program, which offers a six (6)-bed program for patients leaving the psychiatric hospital, or for individuals who do not meet the criteria for inpatient services but need more intensive care than what the community system can offer. Once in the diversion program, social workers develop a comprehensive plan of care that includes housing and support services to ensure that individuals do not enter the homeless system or need further inpatient care.

The ICH began working with the Lancaster County Prison to review the discharge requirements for the local prison versus the State Penitentiary. Local limitations on discharge planning for many of the county prisoners are due to short term incarceration, many while waiting for bail to be posted. In essence, once bail is posted or charges are dropped, the prisoner cannot be legally detained even if a discharge plan is lacking. In spite of these limitations, workable and effective discharge efforts have been developed. For prisoners with mental illness, trained social workers, funded by the Lancaster County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Program, develop discharge plans to ensure these individuals can assimilate back in the community into permanent housing options. In addition, the Special Offenders Program, an arm of the Probation and Parole system, works intensively with identified individuals to ensure that they remain in treatment and are housed in the community. The newest development in the Lancaster community is the implementation of a faith-based organization, Transition to Community, which works with the local prison system to help prisoners reintegrate into the community and has developed special housing options upon discharge. The collaborative work with the local prison system has developed a better rapport and network for future efforts on discharge planning. There are no State prisons within Lancaster County.

An effective discharge policy is implemented through the Lancaster County Children & Youth Agency to prevent youth exiting the foster care system from entering the homeless system. Due to the discharge policy, there are few sheltered youth in the

homeless network; those that are identified are not in the foster care system. In addition to the discharge policy, regular meetings are held with representatives of the Youth Intervention Center (Juvenile Incarceration) in coordination with the Children & Youth Agency to continue to revisit the policy and address any issues for youth leaving the facility to prevent their discharge into Lancaster's shelter system.

The ICH continues to work with local substance abuse treatment programs to prevent the discharge of clients into Lancaster's homeless system. While most treatment programs have their own discharge policies, progress has been made in utilizing the housing first programs to move homeless persons in treatment directly to permanent housing upon release. Efforts are underway to develop a coordinated discharge policy among the treatment providers.

Currently, no ESG homeless prevention funds are being used in the homeless discharge coordination efforts.