

Section III. Homeless Needs

A. Actions Taken to Address the Needs of Homeless Persons

The primary effort to address the needs of the homeless undertaken in 2005 was to begin developing a “Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.” The Executive Director of the Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authorities was an active participant on the Advisory Board for the Ten-Year Plan. The Advisory Board included representatives from:

- the private sector,
- the United Way of Lancaster County,
- a local nonprofit housing developer,
- a financial institution,
- the local Council of Churches,
- a local hospital,
- the City of Lancaster government,
- a homeless provider,
- the faith-based community, and
- Lancaster County government.

A staff member from the United Way provided administrative support for the Advisory Board.

This Advisory Board developed several objectives including but not limited to:

- Homeless Employment Strategy,
- Affordable Housing,
- Prevention,
- Transitional Housing, and
- Housing First.

The Lancaster County Board of Commissioners, through the Planning Commission, has prepared a Draft *Housing Element Update* of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. Consistent with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the Draft *Housing Element Update* contains goals, objectives and strategies designed to meet the housing needs of current and future residents of all income levels through the year 2030, using a variety of regulatory and programmatic tools to build, rehabilitate and conserve an adequate supply of housing units. The document is expected to be approved in early 2006.

Another 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 Lancaster Interagency Council for the Homeless, 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.

In addition, the County addressed the needs of the homeless by continuing 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. The County was awarded a grant from the Supportive Housing Program (SHP) to renew the funding for the HMIS in 2005.

The year 2005 saw the creation of a new committee under the Interagency Council for the Homeless called the Outreach Committee. The purpose of this committee is to develop and implement outreach strategies for the Continuum, particularly addressing street outreach and outreach to the chronically homeless in our community.

In September 2005, a group was convened to establish a temporary emergency cold weather shelter in the City of Lancaster. At this time, all three existing emergency shelters (Domestic Violence Services, Crispus Attucks Community Center and Water Street Rescue Mission) were full, and City police officers were seeing more homeless people on the streets. In addition to staff from the shelters and City police, representatives from, the Lancaster Interagency Council for the Homeless; the United Way; Love, INC; Shaarai Shomayim; and the Council of Churches were involved in the planning of this project. Other community organizations, including the Red Cross, Lancaster General Hospital and Hogar Crea, agreed to donate supplies or services. A training for the volunteers was held in mid-December, and the actual shelter system was scheduled to begin the second week of January 2006 with six (6) different Houses of Worship using their facilities to provide shelter.

The County of Lancaster allocated both ESG 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, HSDF, to address the needs of the homeless. Table 8 below lists the programs that received County CDBG, ESG and HSDF monies in 2005 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

At the recommendation of the Advisory Board for the “Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness,” the Redevelopment Authority resurrected the HOME Rental Assistance Program in November 2005 by partnering it with the United Way Homeless Assistance Employment Program. The purpose of the Homeless

Assistance Employment Program is to achieve employment for individuals (with or without children) living in shelters. The employment opportunity should provide a living wage. For this project a living wage is defined as a wage that will allow the individual to acquire housing without spending more than 30% of his or her total income. As part of this project, funding is available to help remove certain barriers to employment. These include situations such as childcare, transportation and training. These will be made available to project participants while they are actively involved in the program. Individuals who are participating in the program will become eligible for a rental subsidy that will allow them to move into permanent housing.

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 and the Lancaster City Housing Authority continue 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. Unfortunately, due to a lack of any significant turnover of vouchers in the County's program, there were no Section 8 Housing Vouchers in 2005 to help homeless persons make the transition to permanent housing. In the Lancaster City Housing Authority, there were 12 vouchers issued in 2005 to homeless persons. 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 2005, three organizations received federal grant funds through the Super NOFA process. The Shelter Plus Care program obtained renewal funding to continue to provide rental assistance to homeless persons with disabilities that are also receiving supportive services. Lincoln House, a permanent supportive housing program, also obtained renewal funds to continue to provide services to homeless persons with mental illness. Neighborhood Services of Lancaster County obtained Supportive Housing Program funds to establish a small, permanent, supportive housing project for persons with disabilities.

B. 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, 2004 to June 30, 2005, 1,059 households (representing 2,944 individuals) were issued rental assistance funding to either prevent eviction or secure permanent housing. 2,777 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. of PA, 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.

C. 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-04-UC-42-0006 (Final), and the Financial Status Report for S-05-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, 2005**

Program	Type of facility	Subpopulation - number and type	Activity	Funding source	Resources/Leveraging	
Crispus Attucks Community Center	Emergency shelter	UM, UW, SPF, AC, TPF 20 beds – barracks	Operations and essential services	CDBG, HSDF, ESG	28,517 16,000 10,000 61,200 30,161 00 120,500 \$267,178	County ESG CDBG HSDF FEMA Private Fees Other Total
Domestic Violence Services	Emergency shelter	SPF, UW, 33 beds – large home Victims of domestic violence	Operations/batter ed and abused spouses	ESG, CDBG	42,975 83,700 224,393 1,141,930 \$1,492,998	County ESG CDBG Private Other Total
Transitional Living Center	Transitional housing	UM, UW, SPF, AC, TPF 54 rooms (55/100 beds) Single Room Occupancy	Operations	ESG	31,500 16,450 413,140 \$461,090	County ESG City ESG. Fees Total
Clare House	Transitional housing	UW, SPF 21 rooms, two large homes	Operations and essential services	CDBG, ESG	15,000 8,370 10,000 20,000 70,180 77,150 \$200,700	County ESG CDBG City ESG Fees Private Other Total

Program	Type of facility	Subpopulation - number and type	Activity	Funding source	Resources/Leveraging	
Beacon House	Transitional housing for veterans	UM 8 beds – large home Veterans	Operations	ESG	3,900 150 10,851 14,820 \$29,721	County ESG Private Fees Other Total
Hope House	Transitional housing/Permanent supportive housing	UM, UW Persons with AIDS	Operations		30,359 46,446 167,917 10,184 \$254,906	United Way Agency Funds Federal Other Total
Jubilee House	Transitional housing for persons recovering from substance abuse	UW, SPF Persons recovering from substance abuse	Essential services	CDBG	11,205 47,050 85,108 \$143,363	County CDBG Agency Funds Other Total
Bridge House – DVS	Transitional housing for victims of domestic violence	UW, SPF Victims of domestic violence	Essential services		73,232 24,785 11,000 31,000 \$140,017	HUD United Way Fees Other Total
Rental Housing Counseling Program	Essential services		Essential services/ tenant/landlord counseling	CDBG, HSDF	43,591 26,750 22,006 5,000 \$97,347	County CDBG County HSDF Agency Funds Other Total

Program	Type of facility	Subpopulation - number and type	Activity	Funding source	Resources/Leveraging	
Representative Payee	Essential services	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 services, 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
Outreach & Case Management	Essential service	All	Essential services/public services	HSDF	65,000 71,200 173,441 2,000 240,410 80,821 \$632,872	County HSDF Other County DPW FEMA Utilities Agency Funds Total
Shelter to Independent Living	Essential service	All	Housing first, essential services	CDBG, HSDF, ESG	28,109 254,000 11,176 \$293,285	County ESG Other Federal Private Total
Supported Housing and Outreach Program (SHOP)	Essential services	Persons with mental illness	Housing first/essential services	CDBG, SHP	15,000 152,430 20,349 \$187,779	County CDBG SHP Funds Other Total
Lincoln House	Permanent supportive housing	Persons with mental illness	Permanent supportive houses	SHP	81,552 31,281 \$112,833	SHP Funds Agency Funds Total

Program	Type of facility	Subpopulation - number and type	Activity	Funding source	Resources/Leveraging	
Homes of Hope	Transitional housing	UM, UW, SPF, AC, TPF	Transitional housing	FEMA	\$6,900	FEMA
Lancaster City Shelter + Care	Permanent supportive housing	Chronically homeless	Rental assistance	S + C	\$114,816	S + C Funds

ESG Matching funds indicated in bold type

Acronyms:

UM Unaccompanied Male

SPF Single Parent Family

TPF Two Parent Family

UW Unaccompanied Female

AC Adult Couple

CofC Continuum of Care

Homeless Discharge Coordination

The Interagency Council for the Homeless or ICH (of which the 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 ICH planning meetings. The strategy also includes annual meetings with each individual organization to review strategies for discharge planning.

During 2005 the County and nonprofits serving prisoners created a Prison Re-entry Council to address issue of discharge planning for prisoners. The efforts to date have focused on coordinating and collaborating services to ensure a continuum of care is available for persons being released from Lancaster County Prison and other places of incarceration.

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