Opening Our Community's Doors

Clark County 10-Year Homeless Housing Plan
2009 Report Card

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And with generous funding from:

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Executive Summary

This report card was developed from information gathered from volunteer committees, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database, local provider information and data collection tools, county and city government, school districts and many others. Motivation to create this document comes from the belief that it takes an entire community to end homelessness. With that, transparency is paramount and this type of report to the community is vital to share the successes and challenges of the past year.
The key findings of the 2009 10 year Homeless Housing Plan Report Card include:

- *Family sizes of households without homes are becoming smaller; the average family size of those in shelter decreased from 3.05 to 2.89.*
- *The number of people who were homeless in 2009 (1,093) compared to 2008 (1,159) decreased by 6% according to January Point in Time Counts (PIT).*
- *The percentage of the Clark County population that is homeless has decreased since 2005 by 15% while statewide the homeless population has increase by about 1%.*
- *Capacity increased within the top five prioritized strategy areas; this is in line with the overall 10-year plan goals. In total, 1,224 additional households were supported through increased capacity within homeless programs.*
- *Through a focus on prevention, the most important strategy in the ten year plan, 795 additional households were able to stay in their homes because of new or strengthened programs compared to 2008.*
- *An additional 260 households were placed in permanent housing from homelessness compared to 2008.*
- *The number of emergency shelter beds was reduced by 102 due to a re-designation of space into more stable, long-term housing.*
- *Our federal and state lawmakers' determination to end homelessness in Washington State is reflected in the funds to support programs that are well diversified in Clark County.*
- *The needs of adults over 65 and veterans were more closely examined during 2009.*
- *Creating new collaborations, even with unlikely partners, is making positive differences in the lives of those who are homeless and need encouragement.*

Because of the 10 year plan the number of people who are homeless, particularly those who have been homeless for over a year or multiple times, continues to decline in Clark County.

Economic Reality

In 2004 when Clark County was developing the 10 year plan to end homelessness the planners could never have predicted the economic turmoil the nation was about to experience. Now in 2010, the United States is entrenched in one of the longest spans of economic instability since the post war period.[1] Nationwide unemployment is skyrocketing, demand for safety net programs is unprecedented and home foreclosures are at an all time high.

This trend is no different for Clark County. According to the December 2009 AP Economic Stress Index Clark County has the highest economic stress index level in Washington.[2] Mortgage foreclosure rates have ranked first out of Washington's 39 counties in each of the first six months of 2009.[3] Clark County had the third highest level of unemployment in Washington State at 12.9% in 2009 and during this recession the monthly unemployment rate has soared higher than 15 percent during more than one month period. [4] Employers are also reducing employee work hours, enacting furlough days or keeping wages stagnant, if they have not already been reduced.

In addition to the indicators above, Clark County is experiencing a substantially higher rate of residents accessing safety net programs through the state. In 2008, 133.55/1,000 people in Clark County received food stamps, compared to the state rate of 126.43/1,000, and in the same year, 77.31/1,000 children ages 1-17 participated in Temporary Assistance to Need Families (TANF) programs the rate for Washington State was 87.81/1,000.[5]

All of these factors affecting our systems of care make the 10-Year Homeless Housing Plan more important and relevant than ever before.

With the assistance of Share ASPIRE, Michelle found full-time employment and an apartment for herself and her children, Chelsey and Wanda

Counting the People without Homes

Our Data Management and Analysis Workgroup of the Coalition of Service Providers for the Homeless continues to lead the community in counting people without homes through our annual Point in Time (PIT) census, and through our Homeless Management information System (HMIS). Through tireless study, extensive research and quality review, and a true desire to know the truth behind the numbers, the workgroup has been able to vastly improve data quality and be more thoughtful about what data is being collected and for what reason.

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[1] The Recession and Recovery in Perspective -Available online: http://www.minneapolisfed.org/publications_papers/studies/recession_perspective/index.cfm

[2] AP Economic Stress Indicator: Measuring Financial Strain Across the U.S. Available online: http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/_national/stress_index_premium/

[3] Washington State Employment Security Department

[4] Joner, C. 2009. "July home foreclosures at double the 2008 number." *Columbian*, August 13, 2009.

[5] Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, 2009

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

HMIS, the web-based data program managed by the Council for the Homeless, expanded to 12 agencies this year. Those agencies continue to collect information about the people accessing services for people without homes so that we can develop systems that best serve their needs.

The following chart illustrates the composition of people accessing shelter in 2008 compared with 2009. We can surmise from this data that households are staying longer in shelter. In addition, the average family size has also decreased, a trend also noted by the local service providers. The 2008 data has changed slightly from the previous 2008 report card because of a concerted effort in 2009 to sift through the HMIS system, identify incorrect data and change or delete anomalies.

Table 1-1
Clark County Shelter Population: 2007-2009

	Year	
Unduplicated Shelter Population	**2008**	**2009**
# Singles not in Families	1,010	732
# Adults in Families	453	424
# Children in Families	440	379
# Families	293	278
% of Households that are Families	48%	56%
Average Family Size	3.05	2.89

Next year we have decided to contract with Professor Clay Mosher of Washington State University of Vancouver to help us develop data analysis tools and begin the process of multi-variable analysis of the data we have collected. The capacity of the HMIS data system to generate valuable reports that can facilitate this process has been amplified with the purchase of new software that can provide advanced reporting capabilities.

In 2010 we expect to have outcome measures and analysis to include in the 2011 10-Year Homeless Plan update that will directly link to the added Action Steps we hope to address for the next five years.

Point in Time Count (PIT)

The PIT gives us an opportunity to understand the needs of people without homes from a different perspective. Though HMIS can capture the vast majority of people in need in our community, there are those who are homeless but have not interacted with agencies in the homeless system for various reasons. During the last week in January the Council for the Homeless and all of its partner agencies

On January 27, 2010, 229 individuals were identified as living in uninhabitable places such as outside, in garage, in a car or in a camp in Clark County.

conduct a count of people without homes. This is a national effort, and the methodologies from community to community vary widely.

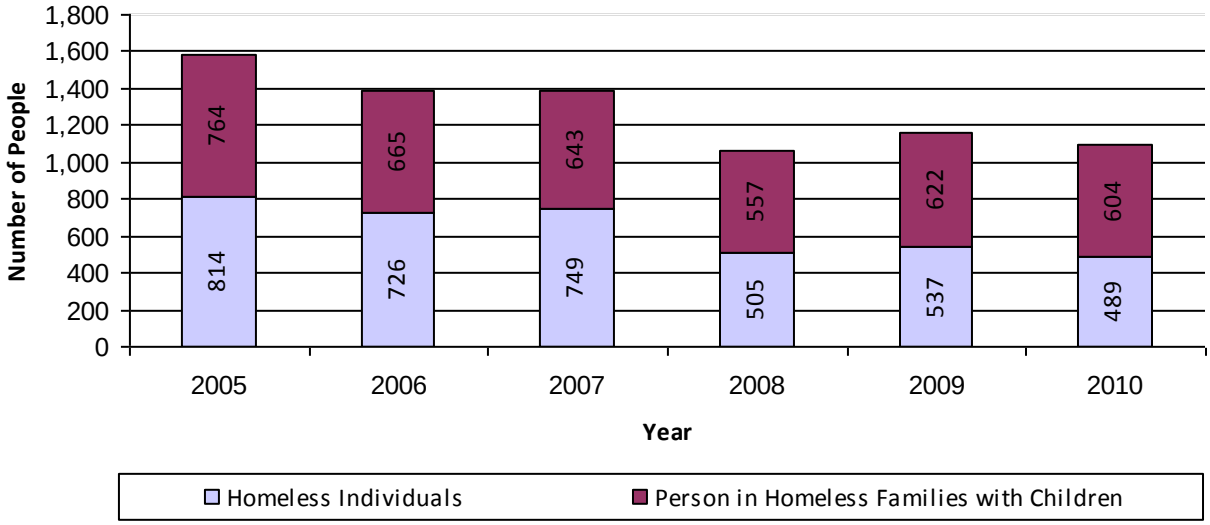
Clark County's system includes three basic methods that are designed to create a balance between sensitivity and specificity of data. Data sensitivity is the effort to be as all-inclusive as possible. Data specificity is the effort to insure that data is accurate and that there is no duplication of data in the system.

Table 1-2
Point in Time Counts in Clark County: 2007-2010

Homeless Individuals	Point in Time Count			
	1/27/07	1/24/08	1/29/09	1/27/10
Emergency Shelter	336	311	349	332
Transitional Shelter	828	569	578	532
No Shelter	228	182	232	229
Total	1,392	1,062	1,159	1,093

Source: Council for the Homeless 2007-2010.

Table 1-3
Clark County Point in Time Homeless Count 2005-2010



Source: Council for the Homeless 2005-2010

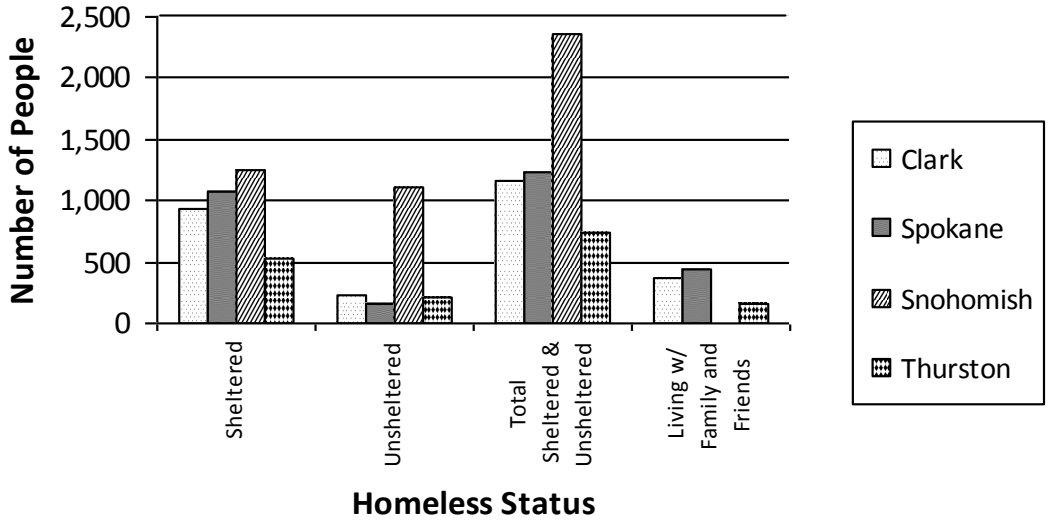
Table 1-4
Percentage of homeless individuals based on the population

	Clark County		Washington State	
Population	**2005**	**2009**	**2005**	**2009**
General	400,722	431,200*	6,287,759	6,664,195
Homeless	1578	1093	22,827	21,962
Homeless per 100,000	39	25	35	34

***Based on most current WA OFM data of 2009 and 2009 HUD AHAR Report**

When comparing Clark County with like sized Counties throughout Washington, the number of people homeless in Clark County (population 431,200) during the 2009 homeless count is lower than the number of people who are homeless in Spokane (population 465,000) and Snohomish (population 704,300) Counties during the same year. In comparison, Thurston County with a much lower population (249,800) has practically the same numbers of unsheltered persons and only 314 less sheltered and unsheltered persons.

Table 1-5
2009 Homeless Count
Washington State County Comparison

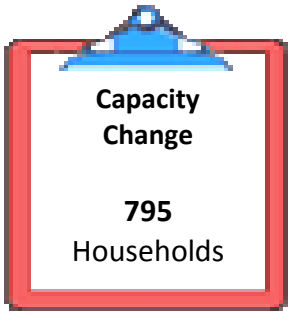


Housing Strategies

The charts below show the housing and support service opportunities available to people without homes, broken down by 10-Year Plan strategies. The strategies are listed in order of priority, as determined and reviewed regularly by the 10 year plan review committee.

Strategy One

PREVENTION: Programs that provide short-term rental housing assistance, eviction prevention services, or incentives for landlords to rent to low-income households



- ✓ ***Increase housing stability for individuals and families at risk of homelessness.***
- ✓ ***Support and expand programs that provide short-term rental housing assistance, eviction prevention services incentives for landlords to rent to low income households, and other supportive services.***

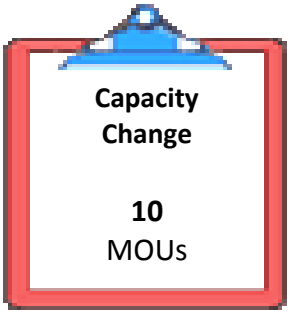
	Capacity	
Program Type	***2008***	***2009***
Rental Assistance	***733 Households***	***1528 Households***

OUTCOMES

- ***Provided Emergency rental assistance through the Emergency Food and Shelter Program increased with an additional phase of funding provided through the federal stimulus package.***
- ***Added a United Way Community Relief Fund that supported 143 households with rent and utility assistance.***
- ***Added a Foreclosure Assistance Program that served 500 households.***
- ***Added a Housing Justice Program that will assist 160 people in avoiding eviction.***
- ***Increased a children's back-pack program to serve an additional 250 children with food.***
- ***Received ARRA (stimulus) funds to prevent individuals and families from losing their housing due a short-term crisis.***

Strategy Two

DIVERSION/ RE-ENTRY: coordination and linkage among mainstream programs that ensure that public institutions (hospitals, prisons, jails, mental health facilities) discharge people into housing.



- ✓ ***Increase coordination and linkages among mainstream programs that provide care and services to low-income people***
- ✓ ***Consistently assess and respond to housing needs to prevent homelessness, and ensure that public institutions (hospitals, prisons, jails, mental health facilities) discharge people into housing.***

	Capacity	
Program Type	*2008*	*2009*
Coordinated Re-Entry	*2 MOUs*	*12 MOUs*

OUTCOMES

- *United Way funded the re-entry pilot program to extend the life of the project but at a reduced bed count.*
- *State legislature re-instated a three month voucher program for those being discharged from a corrections institution.*
- *Every public institution in the community developed Memorandums of Understanding with at least one housing and/or services agency to coordinate exits.*
- *Developed baseline data for landlords who are willing to rent to people with barriers.*
- *ARRA (Stimulus) funds received to provide rapid sustainable re-housing for those imminently losing their housing.*

Strategy Three

PERMANENT HOUSING: ***Provides housing which is intended to be the tenant's home for as long as they choose and appropriate supportive services for people who for reasons outside of their control cannot support themselves independently in housing. Reasons could include mental health needs, physical health needs, and other unique circumstances.***

Capacity Change

260
Households

✓ **Preserve and expand the supply of permanent housing and permanent supportive affordable housing to persons with very low-incomes.**

	Capacity	
Program Type	*2008*	*2009*
Permanent Supported Housing	*531 Households*	*791 Households*

OUTCOMES

- *Tenant-based rental vouchers with attached services came through collaboration between the Veterans Administration and the Housing Authority for homeless veterans.*
- *Tenant-based rental vouchers with attached services came through collaboration between the Department of Social and Health Services and the Housing Authority for homeless families trying to regain custody of their children.*
- *Services from Bridges to Housing, a program focused on caring for the 'high-service-user" families in a similar "Housing First" model were added.*
- *Performance-based Samaritan Funds provided by HUD to house 'chronically homeless" and some privately funded opportunities supported by faith-based initiatives and corporate partners added opportunities.*
- *Received ARRA (stimulus) funds to place families and individuals who are homeless into permanent housing that they can financially sustain.*
- *Some housing was designated to provide safe and affordable place for people to live when an unsupported living situation has proven to create instability from which people end up residing in the state mental health hospital.*
- *More than one program was designated Permanent Housing when the previous year it was Transitional.*

Julie and her child were accepted onto the A.S.P.I.R.E. Housing program after being homeless numerous times. She was in a drug treatment facility for six months prior to entering the program. Over the past year A.S.P.I.R.E. spent $5,104 in rental subsidies, bus passes, and support staff. She successfully stayed clean and sober saving the state $78,624 in residential treatment costs. She also obtained employment and her earnings including taxes are $19,200 a year as well as saving the state the money they would have paid in TANF of $5,568 for the year. Julie's total value of success: $103,392.

Strategy Four

TRANSITIONAL/SUPPORTIVE: ***Provides people who are homeless with housing and appropriate support services to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months.***

Capacity Change

111
Households

✓ ***Preserve and expand the supply of transitional supportive housing for individuals and families.***

	Capacity	
Program Type	*2008*	*2009*
Transitional Housing	*557 Households*	*668 Households*

OUTCOMES

- ***One shelter changed its designation from an emergency shelter to transitional housing.***
- ***More than one program was designated Permanent Housing when the previous year it was Transitional.***
- ***One program reduced the number of transitional housing units.***
- ***Rapid re-housing housing program was added through federal recovery fund assistance.***
- ***One state funded program saw a small increase to house families.***
- ***One housing program changed to a permanent affordable housing opportunity.***

Strategy Five

EMPLOYMENT/INCOME SUPPORT: ***Helps connect individuals who are at-risk of being homeless or homeless with support to find employment or increase their earning potential.***

Capacity Change

2
Programs

✓ ***Increase access to educational and employment programs to increase earning potential for individuals who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and lead to self-sufficiency.***

	Capacity	
Program Type	*2008*	*2009*
Employment Support	*2 programs*	*4 programs*

OUTCOMES

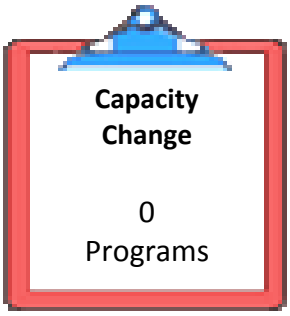
- *Created an asset building coalition and received a grant to support the facilitation.*
- *Increased employment assistance to homeless persons - an additional 40 people will be served.*
- *Established a pilot employment program for women veterans that will assist 75 people in obtaining employment.*

Employment Success Story:

The first time the Homeless Employment Navigator (HEN) employment specialist met Ruth at a local shelter she was unable to hold a conversation without crying because of the abusive relationship she had survived. She had not held a job for over five years because her partner did not allow her to work. She had gained 150 pounds while unemployed and was very self-deprecating. After listening further to Ruth they learned she had strong graphic art and web development skills, but was afraid to look for a job, because she felt that if they asked her why she had not worked for so long she would dissolve into tears. The HEN program wrote her skills into her resume, so the gap in employment could be easily explained. Not long after, Ruth was offered a hard to get part-time job working for a governmental entity and she could not be more proud.

Strategy Six

OUTREACH/ACCESS/LINKAGE: *Reaching out to individuals and families who are homeless or may be homeless soon. Providing easily accessible entry points into the service system and linking individuals with all services needed.*



✓ *Maintain an effective outreach program to chronically and non-chronically homeless persons having difficulty accessing services.*

	Capacity	
Program Type	*2008*	*2009*
Outreach	*4 programs*	*4 programs*

OUTCOMES

- *Funded and created a drop-in center for youth and young adults.*
- *Developed a drop-in center for those who are chronically homeless.*
- *Developed a drop-in center for veterans.*
- *Coordinated a homeless connect and veterans stand down.*
- *Identified a centrally located facility willing to store the belongings of those who are homeless for a period of time.*

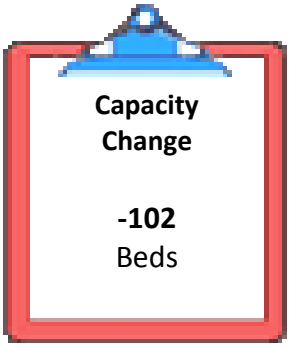
CLARK COUNTY
Project Homeless Connect

On January 30, 2009, the community came together to connect those without homes (guests) to community members willing to offer hospitality and resources. Over 75 volunteers hosted the event serving 344 households, including 15 children.

The event offered guests opportunities to connect with veterans resources, volunteer lawyers, mental health providers, alcohol and drug counselors, spiritual guides, census representatives and social service representatives. Guests could access identification cards, vehicle registration, clothing, food, wellness screenings, dental consultations, eye exams, voter registration, glasses, books, toys, pet care, haircuts, tax preparation, possible job opportunities, DSHS benefits and more.

Strategy Seven

***ACCESS TO SHELTER:** Ability to easily access any open emergency shelter space with the least amount of effort.*



✓ *Ensure availability and access to staffed clearinghouse, emergency shelter and services in the existing shelter system.*

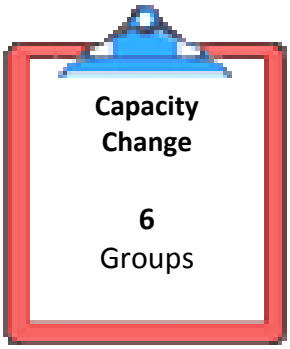
	Capacity	
Program Type	*2008*	*2009*
Emergency Shelter	*316 beds*	*214 beds*

OUTCOMES

- *The number of shelter beds was reduced due to a re-designation of beds from emergency to transitional.*

Strategy Eight

***PLANNING/COORDINATION:** Plan and coordinate countywide and system wide to efficiently manage limited resources for ending homelessness.*



✓ *Plan and coordinate countywide and system-wide to efficiently manage limited resources for ending homelessness.*

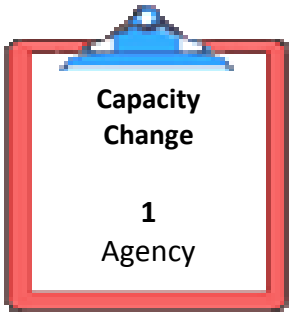
	Capacity	
Program Type	*2008*	*2009*
Planning Groups	*7 groups*	*13 groups*

OUTCOMES

- *The Discharge and Prevention workgroup integrated all discharge organizations with memorandums of agreements and began creating and working towards a community-wide coordinated intake and screening process.*
- *10-year planning work group began updating the 10 year plan.*
- *The Youth Service Integration Workgroup need study identified transitional housing as primary need. When working with youth and young adults transitional is classified as permanent.*
- *Housing Inventory Chart identifying all housing options from emergency to low-income housing in the community was updated and the community continuum was revisited.*

Strategy Nine

***DATA ANALYSIS:** The process of evaluating data using analytical and logical reasoning to examine each component of the data provided in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).*



✓ *Build on successful implementation and expansion in Clark County*

	Capacity	
Program Type	*2008*	*2009*
Agencies Submitting Data	*11 agencies*	*12 agencies*

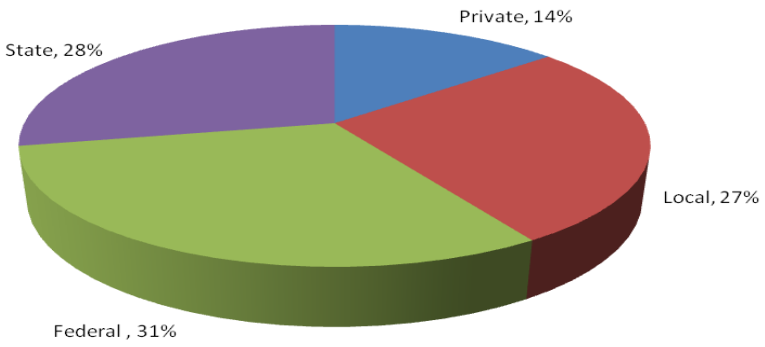
OUTCOMES

- *Added one new agency to HMIS entering data will begin soon.*
- *Developed new reporting tools.*
- *Developed new data integrity monitoring tools.*
- *Developed a new user group for feedback and training opportunities*

Funding Opportunities Strategies

The 2009 funds for programs supporting those without homes have decreased by 2.3% percent from 2008, but the source of funding has changed more drastically. Funds have increased from federal (9%) and local (20%) sources, but decreased in private (11%) and state (18%) sources of funding. Clark County received significant federal funding resources from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. These funds were earmarked to be a direct response to the economic crisis and were utilized to provide employment support to those who are homeless or imminently at-risk of becoming homeless and transitional housing for youth and families.

Table 1-6
2009 Funds Expenditures



On the state level, funding has decreased primarily due to the local document recording fees shifting to local funding since it is collected and distributed locally. In 2008, an additional $10 document recording fee was passed by the Washington State Legislature and established through House Bill 2060. Of the money collected,

60 percent, after the first $250,000 in dedicated funds is used locally to fund shelters. This fund complements the 2005 Homelessness and Housing Assistance Act (ESSHB 2163) which is also $10 and the Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1359 of 2007 which created an $8 document recording fee, of which $7.20 goes towards supporting the strategies of the 10 year plan to end homelessness.

Considering the tumultuous economy, the expenditure matrix is expected to change on a yearly basis. At this point, pieces of the ARRA federal funds are not expected to continue and the state budget is facing deep cuts across program. The unstable economy is pressing agencies to diversify funding streams for each of their programs, so no program will dissolve with the elimination of a grant or other single funding source.

Complimenting and Coordinating

Clark County's 10-Year Plan on Homelessness is complemented by other related plans, in particular, the Consolidated Plan, and the planning processes in the Continuum of Care Application. The Consolidated Plan sets priorities for the expenditure of federal Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Continuum of Care application, also a HUD program, is a competitive process and requires local planning entities to submit annual plans to HUD under the McKinney-Vento Act for new or renewing projects and programs to end homelessness.

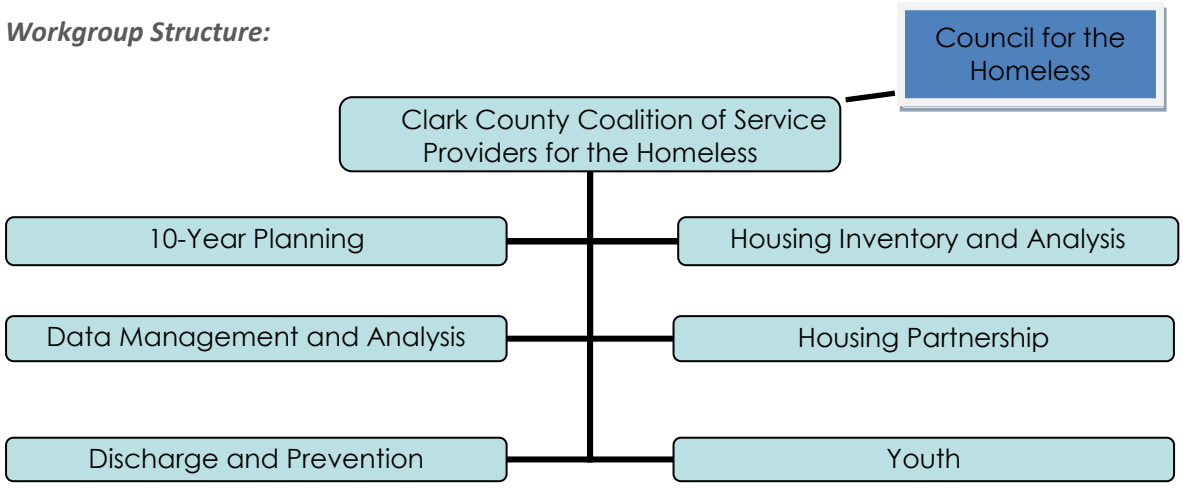
Clark County takes great pride in our ability to work together collaboratively and in a coordinated manner to maximize resources, minimize duplication, enhances partnerships and invokes a spirit of community.

The groups described below work harmoniously, and acting as checks and balances, to ensure that the priorities of the 10-year plan are sustained. The membership of each board is highly diverse, and each includes members who are now, or have at one time have lived without a place to call home. Each group strives to consolidate resources, make system change and develop additional resources using city and county resources.

The Coalition of Service Providers for the Homeless

The Coalition of Service Providers for the Homeless (The Coalition) advises on the development and implementation of the 10-Year Homeless Plan, develops the Continuum of Care Plan and monitors successes and challenges, and acts as the state Homeless Task Force as described in the Washington State Homeless Assistance Act. The coalition consists of nearly 50 organizations or government departments that provide services for people without homes. The full group meets bi-monthly, with smaller workgroups meeting on opposite months. The Coalition is managed by the Council for the Homeless www.icfth.com.

Workgroup Structure:



The Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB)

Community Action Agencies reach out to all low-income people in their communities, address multiple needs through a comprehensive approach, develop partnerships with other community institutions, involve low-income clients in the agency's operations and administer a full range of coordinated programs aimed at having an impact on poverty. The CAAB is comprised of nine members representing a cross section of the community. The Advisory Board conducts a biennial needs assessment and recommends funding for programs and services provided by community-based organizations that meet identified priority needs. The board makes recommendations for funding programs that address essential human needs and programs that move people towards self-sufficiency.

Asset Building Coalition (ABC) The Clark County Asset Building Coalition is a collaboration of 25 partners working to actively engage those who are low-income in building assets through education and tools for success. Coalition partners are developing programs to give low-income wage-earners the tools they need to move out of poverty, plan for the future and increase their financial resources and acumen.

Moving to Work (MTW) Community Stakeholders Group

Moving to Work is a program of the Vancouver Housing Authority (VHA), intended to promote resident self-sufficiency by redirecting VHA's resources to provide more direct and beneficial services to low-income families participating in the public housing and Section 8 programs. The MTW group is in place to advise and support the Vancouver Housing Authority in their effort to maximize their capacity to offer opportunities to residents so they may achieve self-sufficiency.

Bridges to Housing (B2H) County Team:

Bridges to Housing is a four county collaboration offering permanent supportive housing to families in each community and seeking regional approaches to ending homelessness. The B2H team of 12 meets regularly to ensure smooth implementation of the program in Clark County and to coordinate the dedication of locally controlled resources to the effort

Homeless Grant Assistance Project (HGAP) Outreach Collaboration Meetings:

The innovative HGAP program assists individuals living in homeless encampments and those re-entering the community from institutions in obtaining immediate housing and supportive services to help them sustain housing and stability. The collaborative brings stakeholders, local agencies and community members together to jointly implement HGAP initiatives and explore ways to improve cross group understanding and collaboration to support those who are homeless regardless of their housing situation.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) Board:

The EFSP program provides funds for food and shelter programs in the Portland metro four county area. The Local Board determines national board policies, how funds are used, which organizations are funded, how much each organization receives, and provide monitoring for accountable reporting.

Policy Development and Civic Will

Clark County is fortunate to have strong and dedicated voices willing to advocate for those who are homeless on all levels of government. Due to the economic climate, state and local governments are being forced to make challenging choices to cut programs which may serve as a lifeline for those who are homeless. Advocacy has become more important than ever particularly on a state and local level.

On the state level we have had great success in delivering our message to the legislators and receiving support and resources because of their efforts. We were the benefactors of additional deed recording fees and received ARRA funding to allow our programs to serve additional individuals and families. Clark County follows lobbyist agenda from the Washington Coalition for the Homeless and other state housing organizations.

On the national level, Washington state lawmakers, particularly Senators Cantwell and Murray, have proven to be strong allies in Washington, bringing funds to address homelessness into the state and serving as advocates, particularly around veterans who are homeless and asses building. The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a strong voice for ending homelessness and issues a political agenda on a yearly basis.

The faith based community in Clark County is an extraordinary force behind the effort to end homelessness. Many faith communities choose to become involved politically and encourage their members to become civically engaged. In addition, the recent spotlight on veterans who are homeless has lead to many new programs and funding streams to help house those who have served our country.

Governor Chris Gregoire fills food bags for the Share Backpack Program.

Especially during these trying times, we must remind our neighbors that homelessness can strike anyone, anywhere and that it does not make someone less of a person. Respect and dignity for each person need to continue to be the cornerstones of program and funding policies at all levels. One silver lining in our economic climate is the new sense of urgency related to helping others and the broader understanding that homelessness can happen to anyone.

Updates to the 10 Year Plan Strategies

New Expectations:

Clark County service providers, partners and advocates continue to identify, develop and strengthen new collaborations, agreements and opportunities to move the community closer to achieving the 10 year plan strategies. Expectations identified for 2010 include:

- *opening the list of landlords willing to rent to those with barriers to all case managers throughout the continuum of service*
- *utilizing the HMIS database to differentiate between first time users of homeless services and repeat users*
- *adding the requirement in many housing programs for their residents or those on housing waiting lists to take a local renter readiness course.*

Emerging and Diverging Populations:

After reviewing our 10-year plan this year, areas for improvement were identified, based partially on the natural growth and transition of a good plan, and partially on a changing economic and social climate in our community and across the nation.

Veterans:
Our veterans of war in the Middle East are returning. Their needs both for housing and supports are high. As we address the needs of people without homes and focus on a person-centered approach, we must also remember that veterans have unique entitlements they may not always know they are eligible to access. Added to the plan is a renewed and advanced commitment to partnerships with the Veterans' Administration to give maximum opportunities for our veterans of foreign wars to reintegrate into our community in a safe and welcoming way. This effort has already proven beneficial to veterans through the VASH coupon program and the Veteran Women's Program.

At the beginning of February, a client entered the men's shelter after living in his car. He was very motivated to get back on his feet, and had already found a part time job. Once in shelter, he decided he needed to find full time work, or at least a second part time job. He worked 20 hours per week at a local store and used his time off to search job listings. As a Veteran, he was also working with the VA to obtain housing and medical care. . After only a few weeks in shelter he was able to secure affordable housing through the VA and move out. The last week he was in shelter he also had several good job interviews, and he was optimistic about his opportunities for a second job.

Youth:
The numbers of unaccompanied youth, traditionally called runaways , are rising at a disconcerting rate. The number of children in families without a decent place to call home is also on the rise. Young adults just graduating from High School or aging out of foster care are facing bigger challenges with accessing decent housing, living wage jobs, and finding opportunities to further their education.

Chronically Homeless:
With the infusion of new programs targeted at housing people who have been identified as chronically homeless, agencies are seeing a decrease in people who have utilized many of the services throughout the years. Those who are chronically homeless are is defined as "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.[6]Historically, those who are chronically homeless have utilized a large number of emergency services at a very high cost and sustaining housing is challenging.

Aging Population:
National trends indicate homelessness is increasing among elderly adults. By 2020 it is projected that the number of elderly adults who are homeless will rise 33 percent.[7] The root of the problem points to a lack of affordable housing and poor money management skills. Elderly adults with fixed incomes are being forced to choose between housing costs and other basic needs, such as food or prescriptions. Similar to the national trend, Clark County's population of residents age 60 or older will nearly double by 2025.[8] The vast majority

[6] Notice of Funding Availability for the Collaborative Initiative to Help End Chronic Homelessness/Federal Register, Vol. 68, No. 17/Monday, January 27, 2003, 4019. This definition is shared by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
[7] National Alliance to End Homelessness, Demographics of Homelessness Series: The Rising Elderly Population, April 2010
[8] The Columbian, New Clark County task force will suggest strategies to deal with the myriad of issues, May 21, 2010

would like to age in place, staying in their own home and community.[9] These factors and more need to be considered as we continue to revise our ten year plan and reflect on our system to address homelessness.

System Design:

As a collaborative community, Clark County has added many new components to the system of homelessness. The new VASH voucher program provides rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services. This is provided by Veterans Affairs at its local medical centers and in the community.

Formalized memorandums of agreements (MOU) have been signed between institutions, such as hospitals, mental health facilities, corrections facilities and non-profits with long-term housing programs to alleviate the need to discharge people onto the street.

Homeless encampments are a common throughout the community especially in the non-winter months. In an effort to alleviate undue stress and to engage those living in the encampments with services two important developments have occurred. Pointed outreach and collaboration was initiated with the local public work department and the state department of transportation to try to alleviate the unannounced disruption of homeless camps in the community. As a result of these efforts, 72 hour notice will be given if a camp is going to be cleaned up. This will give those sleeping in the area an opportunity to move their belonging. To where they would move their belongings raised concerns, so a local non-profit agency agreed to store the belongings of anyone who is homeless.

Innovative Ideas:

New or enhanced ideas for innovative projects or programs will often come from community members, workgroups, meetings, or elsewhere. Often these projects are creative, viable ideas but without startup funding cannot move forward. Other projects don't need funding, but instead need extensive coordination in order to build them and that takes time. We also find when we have shelved projects needing coordination more than funding, the project design can shift and develop with available resources. Some of those changes are noted here.

Common Intake Form: ***The Clark County system for people who are homeless often asks individuals and families to utilize many programs. Currently each program has its own unique intake form, although each agency is collecting basically the same information to put into the same HMIS data base. To ease the length of the intake process, and to ensure all information is collected accurately, a work group is creating one common intake form. The most important strength of this type of form is that it doesn't require clients to repeat the same information over and over and over again.***

Housing Opportunity Points of Entry Centers: ***Since the last Report Card we have come to recognize that there are a number of drop-in centers situated throughout the County that give people access to resources. They are not coordinated, however, and can have different focuses. We believe that we can coordinate these locations through the use of a coordinated entry point where the common intake form will be utilized and individuals and families can be directed to the program that will best meet their goals.***

[9] ibid

***Case Manager Certification*: A community case management certification program would help ensure that case managers are well trained across all agencies and that anyone accessing resources has some level of accountability and equity in available resources regardless of which agency they access services through.**

***Veteran's Service Center:* There is a core group of individuals who have a plan to create a center where veterans can access mental health, behavioral health, and spiritual health supports and outpatient therapy. Spurring from the Clark County Veteran's Resource Committee, the model will "provide a safe environment and a listening ear for the veteran and his or her family. The center speaks the language of the veteran and understands the veteran's needs." The center would include a service officer, a drop-in center, and information, healing on the home front, referral service, Point Man Ministries, Chaplain, and Chapel Services.**

***Alternative Subsidy Pilot Project:* The Vancouver Housing Authority has what is known as "Move to Work" authority. This essentially means that they are allotted flexibility in how they administer their voucher programs. A group of program directors met for a number of months and developed a program design to utilize 12 existing vouchers in a unique way. The intent is to provide assistance in a time-limited manner that builds incentives for early completion and hard work by blending housing and banking resources like IDAs. The project was dependent on the acquisition of a state funding source which did not develop. Alternative case management resources for the project are still being sought.**

***Medically Necessary Emergency Shelter*: In collaboration with SW WA Medical Center, the Discharge and Prevention Workgroup of the Coalition has envisioned a facility, or portion of an existing facility to which people without homes who need to recover from wounds, surgeries, or the like, can be housed temporarily until they heal. Case management and nursing services would be available with the hope that the healing process would not be hindered by a lack of a home, and that a home may be made available during the brief stay.**

***Youth Winter Overflow Shelter:* Though the Youth Integration Workgroup initially identified a Youth winter overflow shelter mirroring the WHO program, others in the community felt that this concept needed further study. The workgroup is developing a comprehensive needs study that they will finalize and present in 2010.**

***Runaway and Homeless Youth Transitional Living Program (RHY TLP)*: All young people need relationships with caring adults, opportunities to learn important life skills, and the chance to plan their future. Through a Youth Development approach TLPs offer young adults housing and resources to be self-sufficient. The Youth Integration workgroup has identified a need for this resource in our community. Janus Youth applied for funding, and though denied this time, they were encouraged by the US Administration for Children and Families to continue to apply.**

A young single mother with one child and another on the way had been kicked out of their home. The Janus Youth NEST program moved the family into an affordable apartment, and assisted the client in creating a savings to help her maintain their housing during her maternity leave. This family of three is now living happily in their apartment with over $2,000 in savings.

Conclusion

Giving everyone in Clark County the opportunity for a safe and decent place to call home, though daunting, is not an insurmountable task. As can be seen from this report, focused and targeted resources do decrease the number of people we see in our community who do not have homes, even when the economic environment has been severely stressed.

In 2004 when the 10 year plan was being created we could have never anticipated the type of economic devastation that would hit our county. Even so, it was those efforts compounded over five years that put us in a situation where the number of people did not rise. Without the 10 year plan there is no telling how many more people would have become homeless.

Knowing resources will be decreasing in the coming years we find great value in the 10 year plan process and having had the opportunity to already identify priorities for our community. These priorities, although not inexpensive, have been proven to reduce homelessness in other communities and to be less expensive than the traditional emergency shelter first path.

We are dedicated to advocating for at least the maintenance of our existing system because as a community we know it is both pragmatic and humane to offer all of our neighbors the opportunity for a home. Knowing that trends show resources available over the next few years are in jeopardy, we will continue to focus on maximizing our capacity and will strive to reduce homelessness, at least 50% by the year 2015.