

Engaging Experienced Adults in Systems Change

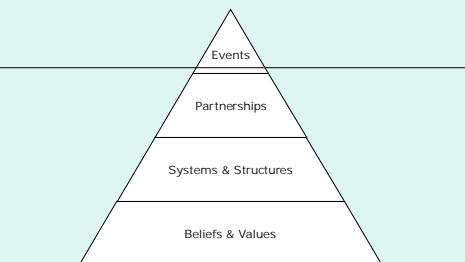
Gerontology Conference

Grand Valley State University
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Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness

Systems Thinking “Iceberg”



Why end homelessness?

- Homeless did not always exist as a system
- Began developing on a larger scale in the 1980's with the de-institutionalization of mental health facilities and post-war veterans; the face has changed since then...
 - Rise in the number of families that are homeless (over 51% including 33% that are children)
- Services were developed as a crisis response and have mushroomed into a system
- It is more expensive to *manage it* than to **end it**
- Because it's the right thing to do!

The Coalition & the Vision to End Homelessness

Coalition to End Homelessness

- Subcommittee of the Kent County Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF), Comprised of over 200+ people. Charged with coordinating the implementation of the *Vision to End Homelessness*, our community's 10-Year Plan

Vision Goals

- **Prevent homelessness** by helping people maintain housing or directly access housing upon discharge from other institutional systems
- **Re-house those in crisis**, helping people exit homelessness quickly with the resources they need to stay housed
- **Transform the system** for long-term change by expanding the supply of affordable, quality, permanent housing
- **Shift from management** of homelessness to one that focuses on housing

A Paradigm Shift

FROM	TO	
Homelessness Focus	Housing First Focus	Examples
Resources focused on crisis response	Resources focused on prevention and permanent housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Housing Assessment Program assisting anyone with a housing crisis § Funding redirected from emergency shelters to prevent services and affordable housing § Moving away from managing homelessness to ending it § Congregational Partnership model – focus on prevention § HPRP/Stimulus Funding
Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Provided through parallel social welfare systems § Fragmented § Centralized intake for homeless only 	Coordinated/integrated system of services involving mainstream systems and a centralized intake utilized by the entire community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Housing Focused Service Delivery Model § Coordination and education on institutional releases § Housing Assessment Program (HAP) § Community-based Housing Resource Specialists § Consistent and coordinated focus on quality through strengths-based model
Fragmented, insecure funding	Coordinated funding strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Aligning HUD funding with Coalition strategies § Funding accessible through coordination with system § Housing trust fund/endowment § Work with local funders to align practices
Data collection fragmented, focused on counting beds	System-wide data collection designed to measure outcomes and inform strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § System-wide indicators § Research on housing affordability § HMIS integration across system § Data, research and outcome driven with accountability

National Data on Homelessness & Affordable Housing

- 1 out of 10 poor persons in the U.S. face homelessness at some point during an average year (Burt, 2001)
- **17.7 million households** estimated paying more than 50% of their income towards housing (Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University, 2008)
- 80% of households in housing -with a lease -are spending more than 60% of their income on housing (HAP, 2009)
- 94% of the 4,579 households that were assessed at central intake in 2009, had incomes at or below 40% AMI (Area Median Income). For a family of three that translates to \$22,720 or less per year (HAP, 2009)
- In the 1970s, a surplus of 300,000 affordable housing units existed whereas today there is a shortfall of 1.7 million affordable housing units (Daskal, 1998 & NLIHC, 2007)
- In Michigan, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$747. In order to afford this level of rent, without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a household must earn \$2,489 monthly or \$29,864 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into a Housing Wage of \$14.36 (NLIHC, 2009)

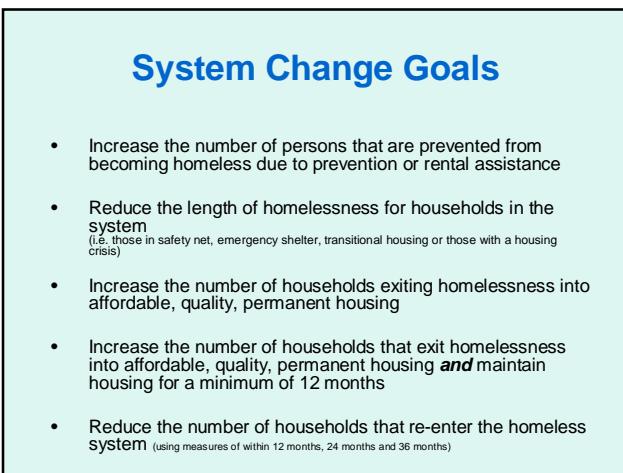
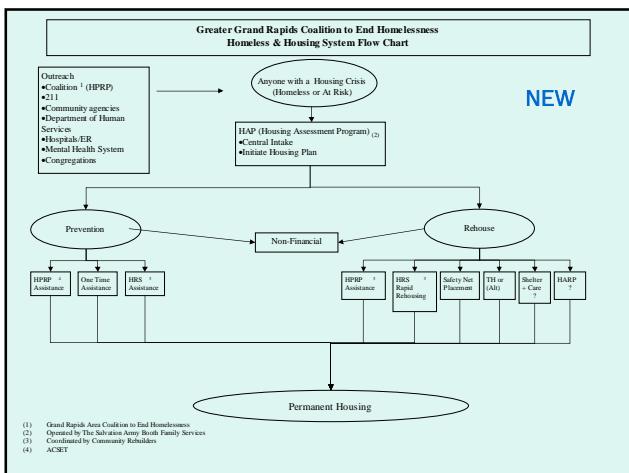
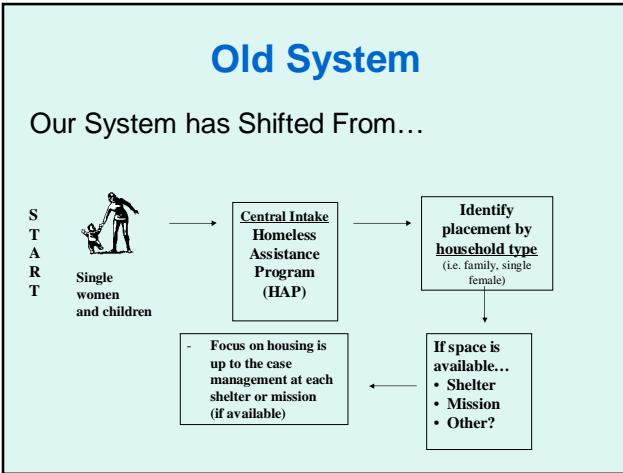
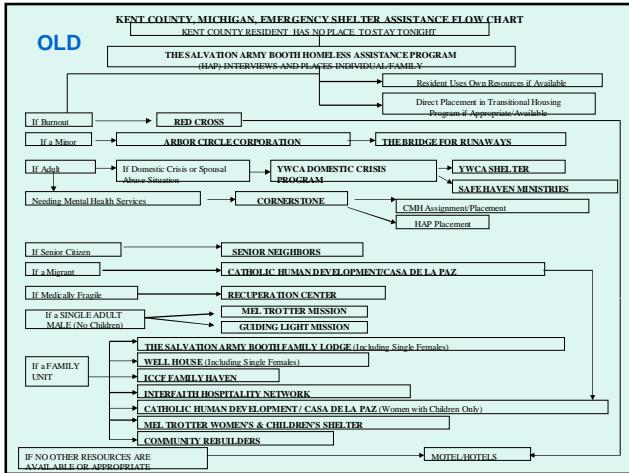
Funding for Homelessness

- Federal spending on *homelessness* has increased by 30% since 2001
- Federal spending on *housing assistance* programs for low-income households has declined by 10% since 1995
- More than \$31 million goes into supporting our local homeless system:
 - 53% of funds go to support Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing & Missions
 - 11% of funds go to support housing (homeless prevention/rapid re-housing)
- Average cost for a 3 person household to be in shelter for one month = \$3,000
(this does not include 1st month's rent, security deposit, etc. to get household back into permanent housing)

Grand Rapids Homeless Data

Data derived from Grand Rapids Area Homeless Management Information System

- **2008 Data**
 - 6,022 persons
 - 33% children
 - 50% families/50% single adults
 - 4,067 total households
 - 40% "first-time" homeless
 - 58% served only one time
- **Two Year Data (2007 & 2008)**
 - 8,719 persons
 - 5,483 adults
 - 3,256 children
 - 57% families/43% single adults
 - 5746 total households
 - 41% "first-time" homeless
 - 50% served only one time



Centralized Intake Data 2009

- 4,579 households completed assessments
 - 84% were in a housing crisis
 - 40% of households were homeless
 - 60% of households were cases of prevention
 - 54% were children
- Referrals from HAP go out to the community resources (when available)
 - To: rent assistance, prevention, re-housing
 - 47% decrease in shelter usage

Better Investment of Resources

- Case Examples:
 - A household of six assisted with \$1400.00 to move into housing
 - A household threatened with eviction assisted with \$1085.00 – remained in permanent housing, avoiding eviction & court costs and trauma of uprooting their family
- Old Response:
 - Placement in emergency shelter costing an average of \$2500-\$3000 for one month stay (not including first month's rent/security deposit costs)
 - Exacerbating the crisis and intervening with an emergency-orientated approach
- New Response:
 - Diversion from emergency shelter whenever possible
 - Conversation centered around HOUSING not shelter
 - Targeting of limited resources leads to better use of resources

Changes to the Local System

- Enhanced Central Intake: Expanded and enhanced services (with a 230% increase in the number of persons seeking housing-related services,
- Reduction of Emergency Shelter beds: 53 emergency shelter beds were taken offline
- New Supportive Services Model: Developed and launched community-based Housing Resource Specialist model
- New Resources: Addition of **\$1,224,601** new or re-aligned funding to support systems change PLUS more than **\$3.4 million** in stimulus funding over two years
- CEP: Investment of **more than \$800,000** in funding to find systemic solutions to engaging experienced adults at a system level to assist in the effort to end homelessness.
- Research: Comprehensive data sets on housing affordability for the West Michigan region.
- CPP: Six new congregations engaged in CPP, and 17 households served during 2009.
- Communications: Work completed to launch campaign in early 2010, which will raise awareness about the Coalition's work and continue to lay the ground work for system-wide changes.

Questions

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