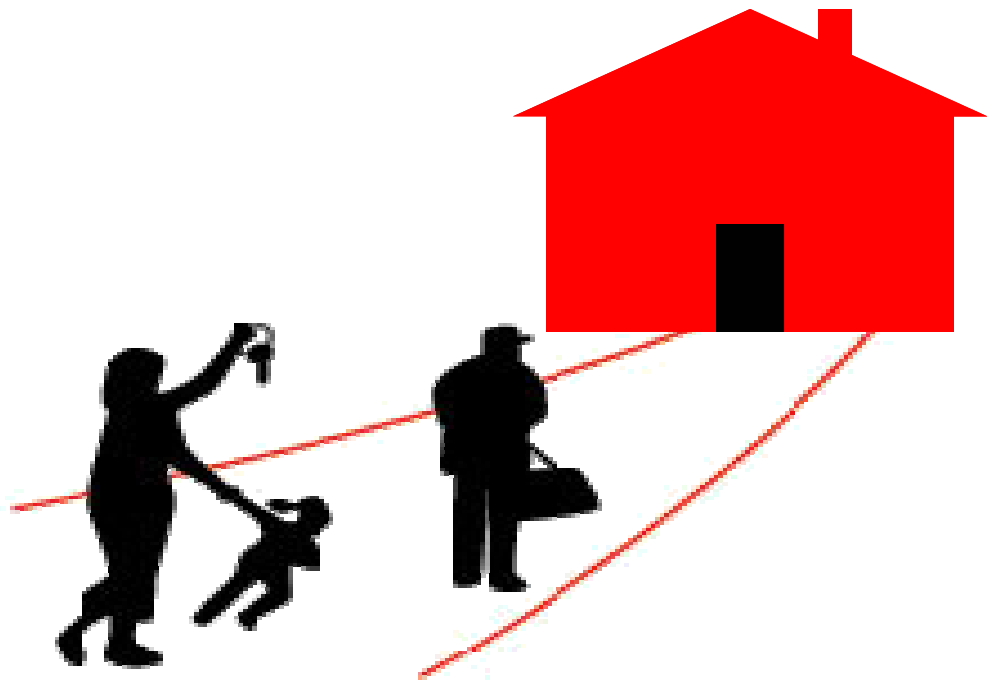


"There's No Place Like Home"



*A 10 year plan to end homelessness
in Clare and Gladwin Counties*

October 2006

**CLARE-GLADWIN
10 YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS**

Goal 1	Outcome	Strategies	When	Responsible Party	Evaluation Tool
Increase community awareness	Create comprehensive communication plan	Establish committee; develop plan	Dec 06-Sept 07	Continuum of Care; HSCB	Development of matrix
	Develop media activities or community events	Develop news articles or plan special events	Quarterly	Communication Committee	Completion of activities
	Develop website postings	Place postings on county, agency, and HSCB websites	on-going	Communication Committee	Completion of activities
	Diversify Continuum of Care membership	Invite new stakeholders	Dec 06-Sept 07	Continuum of Care	Increased membership
	Promote HMIS	Encourage provider participation; Provide training if applicable	on-going	Continuum of Care; HSCB	Increased data collection
	Provide advocacy on homelessness	Garner legislative support	on-going	Continuum of Care; HSCB; area providers	Increased Resources
Goal 2	Outcome	Strategies	When	Responsible Party	Evaluation Tool
Enhance job creation & economic development	Create comprehensive jobs plan	Establish committee	2006-2011	Stakeholders; Michigan Works!	Meetings hosted
		Develop plan of action	2007	Committee members; Michigan Works!	Completion of plan
		Develop relationship with economic development committees	2007	Committee members; Michigan Works!	Increase in economic development
		Implement plan	2008-2011	Committee members; Michigan Works!	Increase in jobs

Goal 3	Outcome	Strategies	When	Responsible Party	Evaluation Tool
Increase availability of safe & affordable housing	Assess housing needs	Determine current housing availability	2006-07	Continuum of Care; Housing Commission; Enterprise Community	List of available units
	Develop plan for scattered site development	Develop logistics	2008	Continuum of Care; Housing Commission; Enterprise Community; developers	Completion of plan
	Develop plan for walkable communities	Develop logistics	2009	City management; County Commission; Housing Commission; developers	Completion of plan
	Develop standards for quality housing	Develop local codes & enforcement	2008	Local governments	Codes
	Offer financial literacy	develop enhance classes	on-going	Local providers	Classes held
	Increase rental availability	Partner with landlords	on-going	Local providers; landlords; DASH	Increase number of units
	Expand housing voucher program	Research new resources & initiatives; apply for grants	on-going	local providers; Continuum of Care	Number of vouchers
	Develop life skills activities	Research new resources & initiatives; apply for grants	on-going	local providers; Continuum of Care	Participation in services
	Develop transitional housing opportunities	Research new resources & initiatives; apply for grants	on-going	local providers; Continuum of Care	Participation in services
	Develop other housing options (i.e.. modular, co-ops)	Research new resources & initiatives; apply for grants	on-going	local providers; Continuum of Care	Participation in services

	Develop assisted living options	Research new resources & initiatives; apply for grants	on-going	local providers; Continuum of Care	Participation in services
Goal 4	Outcome	Strategies	When	Responsible Party	Evaluation Tool
Sustain public finances	Identify costs of support & homeless services	Assign hard costs to services	2007-08	Local governments; local providers	Completed Matrix
	Identify needs of 10-year plan	Assign hard costs to services	2007-08	Local governments; local providers	Completed Matrix
	Communicate costs & needs to legislators & local leaders	Make direct contact & provide info	2007-08	Local governments; local providers	Number of contracts; increase in resources
Goal 5	Outcome	Strategies	When	Responsible Party	Evaluation Tool
Develop alternative transportation resources	Identify alternative options & resources	Promote millage; develop marketing plan; conduct needs assessment	2007-08	County Transits, local providers	CNA; marketing plan; additional resources
Goal 6	Outcome	Strategies	When	Responsible Party	Evaluation Tool
Enhance case management; understanding of individual needs of homeless; educational opportunities	Create community awareness	See goal 1	on-going	Continuum of Care; local providers	Events offered
	Identify gaps in services	Conduct assessment	2007-09	Continuum of Care; local providers	Data collection
	Develop best practices for case management of homeless	Conduct assessment	2008	Continuum of Care; local providers	Satisfaction survey

	Develop relationships with landlords	Promote advocacy	2008	Continuum of Care; local providers	Direct contacts
	Offer life skills, financial literacy, tenant education	Provide classes	2007	Local providers	Classes held
	Promote education and job skills	Provide services	on-going	Local providers	Service satisfaction; education achievement; job attainment
	Individualize services to specific homeless populations	Identify needs & plan services accordingly; seek funding as applicable	2007-2010	Continuum of Care; local providers	Number of services provided; service satisfaction
Goal 7	Outcome	Strategies	When	Responsible Party	Evaluation Tool
Promote access to legal assistance for homeless	Create low or no-cost support system	Recruit local legal resources	2008	Continuum of Care; HSCB	Numbers of attorneys; access to service

The following document has been prepared by a dedicated group of professionals and stakeholders that have designed a plan to end homelessness in Clare and Gladwin Counties by 2015. The group represents public and private organizations that are concerned about the well being and safety of area residents. It has been determined that homelessness in these rural counties is unique and presents challenges that the entire community must embrace to end this misfortune that touches children, seniors, individuals and families. Through collaboration and shared visioning, the end of homelessness can be near...

Contributing organizations:

Clare County Department of Human Services
Clare County Community Collaborative
Clare County Continuum of Care
Clare County Housing Commission
Clare County Transit Corporation
Clare-Gladwin Council on Aging
Clare County Sheriff's Department
Shelterhouse
Listening Ear
Clare County Enterprise Community
Clare County Commission
White Pines LDHALP

Gladwin County Department of Human Services
Gladwin County Human Services Coordinating Body
Gladwin County Continuum of Care
Gladwin City Housing Commission
Community Mental Health for Central Michigan
Mid Michigan Community Action Agency
Habitat for Humanity
Women's Aid Service
MSU Extension
Michigan Works!
MSHDA Section 8 Housing Consultant
Homeless Participants

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*10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in
Clare & Gladwin Counties*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages....
Summary	3-6
The Problem	
Our Vision	
Definition of Homelessness	
Our Response	
Scope of the Problem	6-9
National, State, & Local Data	
Historical Response	
Contributors to the Problem	
Benefits of Pursuing the Vision	
Strategic Response Defined	9-12
The Planning Process	
How We Engaged Collaborative Efforts	
The Process Defined	
Response to the Root Causes of Homelessness	
The Current Situation	
Goals to End Homelessness	13-28
Community Awareness	
Job Creation	
Safe, Affordable & Decent Housing	
Sustained Public Finances for Social Services Agencies	
Transportation	
Individual Issues & Choices	
Legal Aid	
Conclusion	28-29
Acknowledgements	30
Timelines	31-34

“Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something”

In Summary...

Homelessness can be found in all communities—rural or urban. It is not restrictive to age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, disability or familiar status. It can happen to anyone...anytime...any place. Although rural homelessness is not always visible, it does indeed exist in many forms.

The mid-Michigan counties of Clare and Gladwin are not immune to homelessness. People living without stable and safe housing are a concern for area leaders, human service providers, and the general community. A plan of action is warranted to ensure that local resident's basic needs of housing are met.

Through a strategic planning process, a 10 year plan has been developed to end homelessness in Clare and Gladwin Counties by 2015 presenting a collaborative response to this serious social issue.

The Problem...

The demographics of these rural counties present issues that clearly pose concerns for the prevention or elimination of homelessness. The insufficiency of jobs and lack of livable wages; limited economic development; high rates of poverty; above average rates of domestic violence; limited public transportation; limited or no access to transitional housing or shelters; and the overall lack of affordable and safe housing has played a significant role in contributing to the problem of homelessness. Please see the following demographics which more clearly define some of the issues faced by area residents.

	MICHIGAN	CLARE COUNTY	GLADWIN COUNTY
Total population	10,112,620	31,838	27,172
Median family income	\$ 52,655	\$33,496	\$39,216
Average wage per job	\$ 38,737	\$25,215	\$25,484
Children in poverty	14.2%	22.5%	18.3%
Population 18-64 living in poverty	9.6%	14.9%	13.3%
Population 65 and older living in poverty	8.82%	10.7%	7.3%
Children insured by Medicaid	28.9%	43.1%	39.2%
Unemployment	7.1%	11.5%	12.0%
Total occupied housing units	3,785,661	12,686	10,561
Owner occupied households with own children	24.9%	21.7%	22.2%
Renter occupied households with own children	8.0%	6.5%	5.3%

Source: Kids Count in Michigan, Data Book 2005; The Annie E. Casey Foundation – Kids Count Census Data

According to the recent MSHDA Subsidy Housing Survey, there is limited availability of affordable apartments for low income families. Out of 23 apartment complexes in Clare and Gladwin Counties, there are 804 apartments with one, two or three bedrooms. Of the 804 apartments, only 594 have a subsidy attached. Of the subsidy units, 185 are designated for people 62 years and older or a person with a disability. Out of the 804 apartments, 646 are one bedroom units leaving only 158 subsidy apartments for families that have two or three bedroom needs.

Additionally, there appears to be a “public attitude” that either homelessness does not exist or that homeless people cause their problems and do not deserve public intervention.

Through the creation of shared visioning and implementation of concrete and attainable goals and strategies, the problem of homelessness will be addressed.

Our Vision...

Our vision is **“to initiate measures in Clare and Gladwin Counties to prevent and respond to homelessness by uniting governmental and private sector agencies, businesses and the community at large, under a common set of values that will offer all citizens an opportunity for decent, safe and affordable housing.”** Part of making this vision a reality is to clearly identify the issues and barriers faced by the homeless in this distinctive rural area, and respond with services and support that guarantees fundamental shelter for the *homeless, chronically homeless, and episodic homeless*. Housing first is the ultimate goal of aiding the homeless unless safety issues warrant other temporary measures.

Collaboration of the primary stakeholders is the key to the successful execution of this plan. Additionally, financial and organizational resources will be needed for full implementation of the identified strategies. A proactive approach is planned to ensure positive outcomes that are measurable, achievable, and necessary to truly impact the end of homelessness.

Definition of Homelessness...

A homeless person, according to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), is a person who is living:

- in places not meant for human habitation,
- in an emergency shelter,
- in transitional or supportive housing who came from the streets,
- in transition or supportive housing who came from the streets and no subsequent residence has been identified,
- in a or shelter in any of the above, but spending up to 30 days in an institution (mental health or substance abuse facility or jail) in which the person has been a resident for more than 30 days and no subsequent residence has been identified

- and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing,
- in a housing unit with an eviction notice within seven days with no identified subsequent residence.

This definition has been adopted for the Clare-Gladwin 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, however, the planning committee added the following to link the definition more closely with their perspective on rural homelessness, to include:

- Living on others' couches temporarily
- Living in tents, campers, or vehicles with no other alternatives for housing
- Living in a home that lacks adequate heat, electricity or water.

There are several types of homeless people that include the *chronic homeless* often linked with mental illness or substance abuse; *episodic homeless* often found with more situational homeless like domestic violence; homeless youth attempting to survive independent of their family; *individual homeless* men and women; or *homeless families with children*. This plan responds to the needs of all homeless individuals and families.

Our Response...

In response to the call for action regarding the elimination of homelessness by 2015, the primary agencies joined efforts to recruit a planning committee and lead agency. Area leaders responded quickly to identify interested parties and specifically seek out the support of an agency that could expedite the coordination of this process given the brief time frame of the project. A meeting was held with the mandatory participants (Department of Human Services, Community Mental Health, Community Collaboratives, and Continuums of Care) to determine the likeliness of moving forward. Presentations were made to the Clare County Community Collaborative, the Clare County Continuum of Care, the Gladwin County Human Services Coordinating Body, and the Gladwin County Continuum of Care to collectively determine the direction for this project.

Knowing that the two counties share similar demographics; are often served by the same agencies; the homeless often move between the two counties in search of a place to stay; residents access resources in both areas; and, the physical counties have adjoined boundaries, it was determined that a two county plan would be most suited to meet the needs of the participants and homeless community. The lead agency, Mid Michigan Community Action Agency, a private non-profit homeless serving and Community Housing Development organization was selected and meetings initiated to open the dialogue on homelessness.

A variety of public and private organizations were asked to attend orientation meetings, followed by strategic planning sessions. A trained facilitator was engaged to lead the process as well as conduct focus groups with homeless individuals offering an objective collection of information and feedback.

A total of eight meetings were held to initiate the planning process including one pre-planning session, one orientation meeting, one full day and three half-day strategic planning sessions, and two focus groups with previous or current homeless individuals. The initial meetings were held to engage the primary stakeholders, local leaders, and organization representatives in the planning process. The following issues received a thorough review and strategies developed to respond to the major themes identified which will be more clearly defined throughout this document:

- Contributors to the problem of homelessness;
- Defining homelessness;
- Factors in our local control that will help eliminate homelessness or hinder solutions;
- Factors outside of our control that may help or hinder the implementation of solutions;
- What we need to address in order to realize the vision of sustainably ending homelessness in the next 10 years.

The Scope of the Problem

National, State, and Local Data

According to a 2006 USA TODAY survey, as reported by 460 localities to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), “there are 727,304 homeless people nationwide, meaning about one in 400 Americans were without a home.” Although this is just a glimpse of the problem, it does provide an estimate of what homeless looks like across the nation. An earlier study in 2000, conducted by the Urban Institute estimated 444,000 to 842,000 homeless people. Regardless, the sheer numbers demonstrate a significant need to address this issue.

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) has reported that “over 30,000 Michiganders sleep in emergency shelters or on the streets each night. Of these, 45-50% is persons in families with children.” MSHDA further states, “approximately 6,000 men and women across the state of Michigan are considered chronically homeless. This population, which comprised 15-20% of the homeless population, uses 75% of the resources committed to homelessness.”

On the local level, quantitative numbers are difficult to compile due to the lack of a comprehensive tracking system. According to the Clare County Continuum of Care and the Gladwin County Continuum of Care, in their 2006 “point in time study,” there were 11 homeless people and two (2) homeless people identified in the two county area respectively. The point in time study portrays the number of homeless identified through shelters or homeless serving organizations served on a given day. Due to the non-existence of shelters in these rural communities, it is impossible to capture the full extent of homelessness. The lack of shelters also restricts the homeless in entering the system of services in rural areas and they remain hidden.

Mid Michigan Community Action Agency, the largest homeless serving agency in the local area, served 19 chronically homeless families with case management and supportive services, 103 homeless families with shelter assistance, and 906 families with homeless prevention services in FY'2005 in the respective counties. The domestic violence programs, Women's Aid Services serving Clare County served 40 homeless women and children with shelter services while Shelterhouse in Gladwin County reported serving 18 women and children with residential care last year. Community Mental Health for Central Michigan provided homeless support to 75 individuals since 2005. Listening Ear, a local non-profit organization, reported serving 59 homeless youth in Clare County, while the McKinney Homeless Grant, administered by Clare Public Schools for five (5) school districts, reported serving 75 homeless youth last year in the two county area. Unfortunately, information from the Department of Human Services is not accessible for determining assistance provided to the homeless through this state organization.

This information, coupled with the knowledge of unreported and underreported services confirms that a homeless issue exists in the two county area. In time, the local data will be more readily available through the implementation of the Homeless Information Management System (HIMS) that is now being used by the homeless providers, and supporting agencies, to more accurately track the services provided to the homeless population. This data system was fully implemented June 2006.

Historical Response

Historically, rural homelessness has often been ignored because its presence is not easily detected. The typical resident in these noted communities would not observe a homeless person sleeping on the street, living in a cardboard box, or wandering through the neighborhood with their grocery cart such as seen in urban areas. It is more likely that the rural homeless will be found sleeping in a tent at a local park, hidden away on a two-track road not visible to the passerby or doubling up with another person/family in illegal housing arrangements.

According to anecdotal reports from the local sheriff's department and area professionals, there are isolated areas in the counties where homeless can be found. However, once they become aware that their locality has been noticed, they move on to another location. In one case this past year, an elderly veteran was found sleeping on top of the downtown buildings to stay warm accessing the rising heat from inside. Another group of people were found living in an abandoned motel in the downtown area.

In year's past, a couple of the area churches hosted shelter opportunities, but it was determined not to be feasible when only a single individual would access this support. More recently, a domestic violence shelter was opened in Clare County only to be closed a short time later due to the lack of volunteers and operational funds. At the present time, emergency shelter care for both Clare and Gladwin women and children is hosted in adjoining counties; therefore, they must leave the comfort of their community, schools, friends and family. In regards to emergency shelter care for others, short-term fixes have

been offered for limited stays in motels only placing a band-aid on the situation rather than a solution.

Another concept to consider is the lack of awareness on behalf of the homeless themselves. From their perception, and verified through the focus group discussions, they often do not know where to access help; are fearful to report their homelessness due to possible repercussions such as an employer finding out or having their children removed from their care; there is a lack of transportation to access available resources; restrictions on sanctioned services are evident; and their pride may interfere with asking for help.

All in all, these historical concerns must be considered in the plan to end homelessness in these rural areas. By placing this issue in the public's eye, as well as identifying it as a priority for area human service providers and leaders, it is hopeful that there will be a broadening of community support, including both prevention and intervention strategies that will promote long-term solutions through the implementation of the plan to end homelessness. This will be accomplished through the development of several committees and task forces that will be assigned a specific focus streamlining the impact whether it be on public awareness, housing expansion, job development and other identified issues.

Contributors to the Problem

Through a thorough review process, contributors to homelessness in Clare and Gladwin Counties were identified and categorized into six separate areas:

- Lack of economic development
- Education and awareness
- Individual issues and choices (i.e. pertaining to youth, domestic violence, individual and families)
- Community issues (i.e. discomfort with the issue, lack of collaboration, buy-in, systems)
- Larger Societal Issues
- Lack of Entrepreneurial Activities

Each of these categories was more clearly defined, prioritized, and strategies developed as can be found in the "Goals and Timeline" sections of this document. One of the primary contributors noted is the lack of jobs. This can be directly contributed to the lack of economic development as the two county area has primarily been considered a tourist and recreational area for seasonal visitors.

Low education achievement can also be found which is a direct link to attaining jobs with sufficient pay and benefits. Individual issues such as mental illness, substance abuse, generational poverty and others also contribute to the problem of homelessness. A

" You won't agree on the solution if you can't agree on the problem. "

significant contributor found in the strategic review process was the lack of community awareness and acceptance. This directly links to the lack of affordable housing stock, limited subsidized housing development, unorganized landlord collaboration, and other community level issues that directly or indirectly contribute to homelessness.

One recent development that must be considered is the increase in energy costs and how it is contributing to homelessness. There is a significant rise in households that can no longer pay their heating bills due to the considerable increase in fuel costs. The communities are now seeing seniors who had worked hard all their lives, own their home, previously identified in the middle working class, but dropping quickly to poverty due to the inability to pay the increasing costs of health care and energy.

Benefits of Pursuing the Vision

By consensus of the homeless planning group and the homeless focus groups, to provide decent, safe, affordable and stable housing, the stakeholders must ensure that comprehensive support is available. The basic needs of housing must be provided via the increase of housing vouchers offering financial relief, renovation projects to enhance the housing stock, increase in the enforcement of housing standards; and other strategies that guarantee that housing first is the priority. The public cannot expect someone to retain a job when they do not have a stable place to sleep at night. Addresses, telephones and reliable transportation are prerequisites to stable employment. Support services are necessary to ensure sustainable and permanent housing options for the homeless.

A concerted effort of all parties must be initiated and financial resources committed to pursue the community vision of ending homelessness. A unified response and change in the infrastructure of the counties will afford more opportunities to this population. Rather than using short-term fixes such as a temporary motel or shelter stays, long term strategies must be initiated that promotes the housing first philosophy. Housing stability must remain the number one goal to truly make an impact on homelessness in turn being more cost effective for the counties and service agencies that are involved.

Strategic Response Defined

The Planning Process...

In order to effect change in our communities regarding 1) Awareness that homelessness is indeed an issue in our communities and 2) Resources needed to combat this problem, a collaborative effort was engaged in Clare/Gladwin counties to address homeless issues.

Championed by Mid Michigan Community Action Agency, the lead agency, members of human service agencies, community leaders, employment agencies, health care, transportation, law enforcement, housing commissions, mental health, faith-based organizations, county commissioners, and the community at-large were invited to partner in this effort. Additional partners will be sought for plan implementation.

Participation was high at the introductory meeting with agreement to partner in an effort to end homelessness.

How We Engaged Collaborative Efforts...

The following steps were completed to engage the collaboration of interested parties in the planning process:

- Defined homelessness in a rural setting which assisted with gaining true buy-in from stakeholders in our community
- Series of meetings were held with stakeholders to define problems, analyze root causes, and develop goals with action plans for sustainable results
- Key stakeholders were provide all meeting notes with targeted inquiries for feedback and additional perspectives
- Individual appeals to key stakeholders were made
- Focus groups were conducted with homeless, previously homeless, and near-homeless individuals to gain their perspectives on contributors to the problems as well as potential solutions
- Data collection was completed by various agencies, governmental entities to benchmark the current situation

The Process Defined...

In order to get the *sustainable* results, the committee decided to "dig deep" and look at the causes and root causes of homelessness, hoping to identify those factors and put plans in place to *prevent* homelessness and not simply *respond* to the issue. In a brief period of less than five months, the planning committee met and the following steps were taken to ensure a collective review of homelessness in Clare and Gladwin Counties:

Step 1: Defining the Problem

- Defining "homelessness" in a rural setting
- Identifying contributing factors to homelessness in our community
- Clarifying contributing factors
- Prioritizing contributing factors
- Identifying those factors we can control, can not control, and where we might simply have influence
- Identifying factors that exist that hinder our ability to impact the problem
- Conducting focus groups with homeless for their input on contributing factors
- Conducting a reality check between focus group and committee information

Step 2: Defining the Solution

- Included subject-matter-experts from entities that currently deal with the homeless and also non-experts who could promote "out of the box" thinking
- Addressed problem areas where multiple small groups were able to reach consensus on the causes of homelessness
- Reviewed recommendations from homeless focus groups
- Brainstormed solutions
- Prioritized solutions

Step 3: Implementation Plan

- Went from "problem orientation" to "vision orientation" in setting goals
- Reviewed initial recommendations and upgraded them based on data gathering between meetings
- The committee reviewed focus group recommendations to see where there was commonality in recommendations for a reality check
- Documented SMART goals for short and long term solutions
- Agreed that there are individuals who choose homelessness and refuse support; our action plans do not include those individuals
- Took SMART goals to action plans that included "who" would be responsible for "what" parts of the plan, by "when", and with "what expected outcome".

Response to the Root Causes of Homelessness...

Stakeholders agreed *that first, creating a sustainable vision for ending homelessness* in the next 10 years is the number one priority. Once the community is committed to ending homelessness, the following root causes of homelessness need to be addressed:

- Creating jobs with living wages and health insurance
- Availability of safe, affordable and decent housing
- Sustained public finances for social services agencies

Supplemental causes of homelessness that also need to be addressed includes:

- Transportation issues
- Individual issues and choices
- Legal aid

"Dare to reach out your hand into the darkness, to pull another hand into the light"
~Norman B. Rice

The Current Situation...

Before drafting goals for the root causes of homelessness in Clare/Gladwin counties, we first assessed the current situation to determine what our current ability to influence outcomes were and were not.

Factors and resources in our local control that will help eliminate homelessness are following:

Creating jobs with living wages and health insurance

- Education of community about issues and trickle-down effect of lack of jobs with living wages
- Transportation's impact on ability to maintain a job
- Counseling/case management
- Having passion for the project including champions for this
- Being committed to the long distance run

Safe, affordable and decent housing

- Ability to verify wording of the law that has victims of domestic violence receiving preferential treatment on housing
- Enforcement of minimum standards for safe housing
- Landlord/tenant forum
- Budgeting/credit counseling
- Transitional housing
- Looking at local ordinances for land use, codes, enforcement of blight ordinances
- Ability of local government to donate property instead of selling it
- Increased involvement in homelessness awareness week
- Publishing data on number of homeless
- Re-looking at people's records on evictions for non-payment if rent was too high when low-income housing would have been more appropriate
- Communication with landlords on losses due to vacancies instead of simply lowering rent
- Incentives to landlords to take on higher risk tenants.
- Housing first. Then work on the other issues.
- Work toward having transitional vouchers
- Educate developers on standard of living for housing development
- Put preferences on MSHDA for homeless getting permanent vouchers first

Sustained public finances for social services agencies

- How we distribute local dollars
- Education of elected officials on impact of case management approach to homelessness

- Communication between agencies and government
- Publish data on number of homeless
- Educate interagency, funding sources on what they need and what info we can provide to be successful

Transportation issues

- Multiple sources of transportation
- Dedicated resources

Individual issues of homeless

- Issues/needs of specific homeless populations (i.e. domestic violence, youth, chronic homeless, families)
- Spiritual commitment
- Emotional stamina
- The "elite" thing works for the youth
- Single parent support groups, mentoring, dedicated resources (utilize public health department individual, family planning person)
- Couple with senior citizen mentoring, i.e. lunch buddies
- Housing first, then work on the issues

Legal aid

- Better community resources
- Better resource directory

By maintaining our assets as they relate to fighting homelessness and building upon those interventions that are within our control, we began the task of realistic goal-setting.

Goals to End Homelessness

The following SMART goals were developed on the identified areas and are defined in the “timelines” attached to this document.

Goal 1: Increase Community Awareness

Specific Outcome

Increased awareness of homelessness and a sustained, shared vision to end homelessness in 10 years through a comprehensive communication plan.

Measurables

- Communication events will take place quarterly in Clare/Gladwin counties.

- Increase and diversify the membership of the Continuum of Cares
- Track, analyze, and report information on homelessness in the county by increased participation in the HMIS system by area providers. Partnering of MMCAA, United Way, Salvation Army, Hard Times and other homeless providers, on these efforts with a target date of end of 2008 for system developed and utilized.
- Work with PACs in order to expand the federal definition of homelessness and garner legislative support for homeless initiatives
- Provide communication to ministerial associations and faith based organizations to enhance awareness activities

Actionable

- The Collaborative Committees and/or the Continuum of Cares will establish a communication committee. This committee is charged with developing a comprehensive communication plan including timelines and responsibilities.
- Training and support need to be provided to encourage area providers to participate in HMIS and tracking process.
- Implement a vehicle for the homeless population to tell their story
- Create one page summary for townships and commissions to gain their support
- Provide information and/or links to county websites
- Establish a covenant with law enforcement to enforce laws as they relate to domestic violence, school boards for youth issues and so those who are elected movers and shakers so that it's reviewed and reported on in a public forum
- Establish a report card for public officials to see improvement on these issues
- Publish the economic impact on the community of domestic violence and others issues as they relate to homelessness
- Promote the provision of training on pertinent topics (i.e. Framework for Poverty)

Resources Needed

- Volunteers and agency staff to assist with communication activities.
- Financial resources to support awareness events.
- Institutional expertise. i.e. media
- Tap existing resources, i.e. county housing commission, MSHDA
- Participation of Collaboratives and Continuum of Cares on implementation plan
- Bi-partisan persons of influence with PACs

Tracking -- Communication plan matrix will track completion of events

- HMIS will give us more accurate, reliable data when tracking homeless demographics
- Regular review of committee minutes will help us measure progress toward outcomes
- Completion of homeless focus groups and/or feedback will be sought

- Amount of contact with PACS both for positioning initiatives as well as tracking legislation supported

Goal 2: Job Creation

Specific Outcome

Strategic plan to be developed between business, government, education, social and social services agencies with an emphasis on job skills, job creation, and economic development

Measurables

- Plan to be developed within the next five years. Implementation plans will be developed with target dates, resources needed, and progress report structure in place
- Plan will not only include business development but maintenance and sustainability of current jobs in the region
- Plan to increase the presence of regional economic development councils, registered voters, and advocacy efforts in order to have a voice in Lansing

Actionable

- Develop committees to look at job creation
- Identify the number of jobs moved from area
- Target well respected community members as leaders and spokespersons for the plan
- Initiate dialogue with Mid Michigan Development Corporation and Gladwin Economic Development
- Determine what actions education, business, and social agencies are doing now and can do in the plan
- Enhance relationships between business and human service providers
- Promote small businesses/entrepreneurship opportunities
- Avoid making this solely about "homelessness" – it has to be about economic development if we expect community leader buy-in
- Recommend targeting service and health care industry for initial development
- Target services toward retirees

Resources

- Mid Michigan Development Corporation
- Gladwin County Economic Development
- Michigan Works!
- Enterprise Community
- Economic Development

- M-Tec / Mid Michigan Community College
- Local leadership (city managers, mayors, county commissioners)
- Financial institutions
- Chambers of Commerce
- Political Action Committees
- State-supported business incentives

Trackables

- Lack of communication between business, agencies, and community awareness. "We need county-wide awareness" of the impact of lack of economic development
- Measure whether we are utilizing what we currently have
- Number of businesses and jobs created
- Number of businesses and jobs sustained past the five-year mark (critical for sustainability)
- Number of unemployed being reduced
- Number of those needing assistance reduced
- Property tax revenue increasing
- Income taxes increasing

Goal 3: Safe, Affordable, and Decent Housing

Specific Outcome

Availability of housing increased for homeless and "near" homeless, i.e. rentals, complexes, home ownership, senior housing, handicap accessible, transitional housing, and supportive housing.

Measurables

- Number of individuals acquiring affordable, cost efficient building, financing.
- Improved data collection (HMIS) for more accurate/reliable information
- Scattered site housing developed -- transitional housing developed in school districts for families with children so should their housing situation change, their school will not.
- Walkable communities developed in Clare/Gladwin counties in the long-term
- Transitional housing established with human resources development (life skills) supported with case management.
- Standards set for decent, quality housing with officials' buy-in, support, and enforcement. Property Improvement – (See EC Benchmark 18.5 Target end of 2008 for completion of this plan with local government implementation by 2010).

- Increase financial literacy and home buyer education with an emphasis on budgeting, asset development, and home maintenance with the outcome being a reduction in foreclosures.
- Develop a list of current housing and rental availability
- Identify the number of mortgage foreclosures
- Identify the number of residential and commercial property up for tax sale
- Review recommendations of Decent Affordable & Safe Housing (DASH) for potential implementation (i.e. revolving loan program)
- Increase availability of rental housing for those who are either using rental housing as a stepping stone to home ownership or do not desire or are unable to sustain home ownership.
- Availability of assisted living housing for mental health, seniors, teenagers, jail release, foster care, substance abuse -- Contact people would include CMH, Department of Corrections, Council on Aging
- Local housing voucher program developed for those who might "fall through the cracks"
- Develop a life skills training component
- Conduct a "meet the landlords" forum

Actionable

- Open the definition of homeless to include our rural definition so that we have fewer people falling between the cracks
- Financial institution involvement in creative lending
- Government agency involvement in examining the implications of lack of housing on costs to businesses and the community
- Local government implementation of quality standards in housing
- Community awareness of where we do not meet the need!
- Develop landlord education activities
- Develop a landlord association with the help of the assessor's office
- Develop a "meet the landlords" luncheon for agencies
- Maintain a list of landlords who keep their buildings to code
- Market projections needed to be done by local government
- Identify resources specific to needs of youth and/or victims of domestic violence
- Organize evaluation of rental units with code enforcement -- (if you charge for inspections and look at fines, you could in fact pay for the position)
- Contractor involvement
- Alternative uses for Women's Shelter investigated. Consider as transitional housing.
- Encourage townships to develop and communicate blight ordinances and then enforce them -- this encourages neighbors to also improve
- Large trash pick-up day of celebration
- Group work camp program/United Way/Make a Difference Day engaging the community in clean-up efforts

- Education developed and obtained by individuals towards maintaining housing; may be a condition of receiving assistance
- Human service agency utilization of HMIS (note: Family and Individual Homelessness Assessment form has already been distributed to agencies for their use)
- Increase awareness of fair housing counselor for counties
- More transitional and MSHDA vouchers available
- Research entrepreneurial approaches to housing, i.e. modular housing, co-ops to grant a sense of ownership
- Develop fund for repair of homes and resources for emergency repairs (septic system, black mold, etc.)
- Review recommendations from Decent Affordable Safe Housing (DASH) committee

Resources

- MSHDA funding
- Rural Development funding
- Enterprise Community funding
- Foundation grants
- Community agencies
- Volunteerism
- Planning & Zoning Boards
- College students
- Individuals
- Financial institutions
- Realtor involvement
- MSU Extension
- Michigan Works!
- Results of Larson/Allen market study on senior housing
- Veteran's Affairs

Trackable

- Create inter-agency information network
- Projection of needs now and future
- Requests for housing
- Requests for housing fulfilled
- Project plan with milestones put in place for scattered-site development
- Project plan with milestones put in place for walkable communities
- Curriculum development for educating individuals on home maintenance
- See Mt. Pleasant housing commission study as possible model

Goal 4: Sustained Public Finances for Social Services Agencies

Specific Outcome

Sustained public funds in place for social services agencies to assist the homeless in obtaining safe, secure, and affordable housing in the short term. In the long term, funds will be in place to help **prevent** homelessness by giving individuals and families the broad resources needed, i.e. education, job and job skill development, supportive housing for those who cannot adequately advocate for themselves, and individual resources, i.e. anger and stress management, financial literacy, life skills education with a case management approach. We cannot secure sustained public finances without the benefit of partnerships at the local, state and federal level that will occur through realization of our first goal -- securing the vision.

Measurables

- Assign "hard" costs of currently dealing with homelessness in our community, i.e. health care, day treatment programs, crime, housing assistance, nutritional support, human services agency support....
- Ten year plan needs to be fully developed and then associated costs of implementing that plan determined
- Cost savings for implementing the plan forecasted
- Better utilization of HMIS will help us in tracking these numbers
- Foreclosure prevention measures

Actionable

- Communicate the cost of homelessness to politicians and the general public
- Organize efforts in the community to increase awareness of homelessness and associated costs with our Political Action Committees
- Work with our educational and governmental units to budget for initiatives that will intervene with homelessness today and plan to prevent homelessness tomorrow
- Identify financial resources for **individual** homeless (those who fall between the cracks) ie. transitional vouchers
- Enhance/expand foreclosures prevention and education (second mortgages, short term lending)
- Enhance/expand financial literacy and homebuyer education

Resources Needed

- HMIS
- Systems for tracking costs tied to homelessness
- City, county, state, and federal funding
- Active voices in our community; Individual support and commitment

- Political support
- Reporting mechanism to track and measure the effectiveness of our utilization of resources

Tracking

- Monitor legislation tied to prevention of and intervention for homelessness
- Reports generated and USED that show our progress on dealing with the problem
- Aggressive timelines on putting plans together with local and state officials
- Communicate legislation impacting homelessness to our community members so they can help hold officials accountable for outcomes that reduce this problem in Clare/Gladwin counties

Goal 5: Transportation

Specific Outcome

Alternatives in place that will provide low-cost yet cost effective transportation for individuals spread throughout our rural counties in a manner that addresses our riders' needs for on-time pick-up and delivery, 24/7 transportation needs for getting to work, and yet is able to respond with some flexibility.

Measurables

- Response time
- Schedule
- Availability
- Ridership
- Costs to county
- Costs to riders

Actionable

- Promote millage vote for transportation because local participation is critical to getting MDOT funds
- Develop marketing plan that will create awareness of NEEDS for transportation:
 - Employment
 - Medical
 - Everyday living
 - Education
 - Enrichment classes
 - Parenting
 - Housing
 - Hobbies
 - Recreation
- Look at alternatives to public transportation:

- Volunteer drivers
- Car pools
- Fellow employees
- Service agencies
- Non-cars including bikes, walking, motorcycles
- Medical community
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Co-op (buy van)
- In conjunction with the "walkable community" plan, address transportation needs over acres, not multi-miles, as is the current situation
- Conduct needs assessment
- Promote mind-set change from relying on cars to public transportation
- Promote living within walking distance of job

Resources

- Clare County Transit Corporation (CCTC)
- Gladwin City/County Transit
- Michigan Department Of Transportation (MDOT)
- Millage
- Elected officials
- Media
- Volunteer resources
- Public funds for individual/families' transportation needs
- Safe, well-maintained vehicles
- Scheduling/software support
- JARC's program

Trackable

- Grant support
- Ridership
- On-time pick-up and delivery
- Sources of transportation support and reliability of that support
- Satisfaction of riders with transportation

Goal 6: To plan for the individual issues of chronically homeless, families and individuals without a home, estranged youth, victims of domestic violence

➤ *Specific Outcomes #1 – Chronically Homeless*

Increase opportunities that are specifically designed for the chronically homeless to support their individual needs.

Measurables:

- Number of chronically homeless served
- Tracking on HMIS
- Increase in services
- Meetings with landlords
- Availability of case management
- Availability of transitional housing
- Number of vouchers

Actionable:

- Increase outreach to chronically homeless
- Enhance independent living skills
- Provide financial literacy and tenant education
- Provide job skills training
- Strengthen/expand existing mental health support for individuals with mental illness
- Strengthen/expand existing substance abuse programs
- Advocate with landlords for housing issues
- Increase availability of transitional living arrangements
- Increase availability of case management
- Expand the Supportive Housing Program
- Offer vouchers for laundry or personal hygiene
- Provide transportation to access services and jobs

Resources:

- Financial support – public & private grants
- Life skills classes
- Financial literacy classes
- Job skills training
- Case management
- Additional Supportive Housing staff
- Transitional vouchers
- Laundry & personal hygiene vouchers
- Transportation vouchers or vehicles purchased

Trackable

- Grant support
- Classes taught
- Hours of case management provided
- Staff time

- Vouchers released

➤ **Specific Outcomes #2- Homeless Families & Individuals**

Increase opportunities that are specifically designed for homeless families and individuals to support their individual needs.

Measurables:

- Number of homeless families and individuals served
- Tracking on HMIS
- Increase in services
- Meetings with landlords
- Availability of case management
- Availability of permanent housing
- Number of vouchers

Actionable:

- Increase outreach to homeless families and individuals
- Advocate with landlords for housing issues
- Increase the availability of permanent housing vouchers
- Increase job skills training and placement
- Increase availability of affordable child care
- Initiate “back to work” vehicle giving/purchasing program
- Expand evening transportation services for employment needs
- Increase services for veterans
- Expand the Supportive Housing Program
- Encourage/educate families on the Family Self Sufficiency Program
- Assist participants in obtaining GED or high school education
- Provide financial literacy classes

Resources:

- Financial support – public & private grants
- Life skills classes
- Financial literacy classes
- Job skills training
- Case management
- Additional Supportive Housing staff
- Permanent housing vouchers
- Laundry & personal hygiene vouchers
- Transportation vouchers or vehicles purchased

Trackable

- Grant support

- Classes taught
- Hours of case management provided
- Staff time
- Vouchers released

➤ **Specific Outcomes #3 – Homeless Youth**

Increase opportunities that are specifically designed for homeless youth to support their individual needs.

- Increase outreach to youth
- Enhance independent living skills and job skills
- Strengthen/expand existing mental health support for families with severely emotionally disturbed youth
- Access to support resource and services
- Improve teacher/counselor/social workers' education regarding support services for homeless youth
- Create a "safe place" for youth to be (i.e. after-school program)
- Plan activities in conjunction with other school programs
- Promote the expectation that all children graduate from high school in a traditional or non-traditional setting
- Promote long-term career planning

Actionables:

- Enhance outreach efforts to homeless youth
- Advocate/provide services for homeless youth
- Create opportunities kids helping kids in after-school care/mentoring
- Emancipation for youth in order to receive benefits when appropriate
- Provide in-service training for teachers/counselors in schools
- Establish a support plan for youth to attend community college or trade school

Measureables:

- Number of homeless youth
- Student drop-out rates
- Teen pregnancy
- Drug involvement
- Breaking the law/arrests
- Number of outreach contacts

Resources:

- McKinney grant
- Other grant funding

- Shelters
- Juvenile officers
- Service providers
- Schools

Trackable:

- Number of services provided to homeless youth
- Number of educational trainings held with school personnel
- Changes in demographics of youth
- Creation of safe place

➤ **Specific Outcomes #4 - Domestic Violence**

Increase opportunities that are specifically designed for women and children experiencing domestic violence to support their individual needs.

Measurables:

- Host awareness events on domestic violence issues and needs
- Identify and plan for gaps in services
- Conduct educational sessions

Actionable:

- Increase awareness
- Increase education for professionals and communities
- Increase services specific to domestic violence
- Ensure targeted law enforcement, educators, social services provide support to families of domestic violence in their "home" community
- Coalition of law enforcement professionals to keep families in homes instead of the abuser
- Systemic issues need to be reviewed and/or addressed
- Hold annual sessions with law enforcement professionals with credible educators
- Enhance and increase relationships with law enforcement
- Plan to cascade training with law enforcement internally since they can't afford to send all their professionals
- Need to have "point persons" as specialists for domestic violence and youth issues.
- Utilize October Domestic Violence month for awareness activities

Resources:

- Law enforcement
- Service providers

- Grant funding

Trackable

- Number of training/educational sessions held
- Increase in service availability

➤ *Specific Outcome#5 – Homeless Issues*

Increase opportunities that are specifically designed to support needs of all homeless including:

- Individuals who landlords do not want to rent to, usually the chronically homeless due to prejudice against race, ethnicity, past negative history such as criminal sexual conduct (CSC), prisoner re-entry, homeless “label” etc.
- Those who lack "life skills" management such as low self-esteem, lack of problem-solving skills, anger management, lack of financial management skills resulting in poor credit, debt, lack of education, inability to maintain a job or relationship
- Those we as a society need to advocate for such as the mentally ill, physically impaired, developmentally disabled, youth, those aging out of foster care, and senior citizens
- Those episodic homeless due to divorce, death, victims of domestic abuse, substance abuse, or change in family circumstance.

Measurables

- Utilize HMIS system to track demographics on homeless or "near" homeless
- Identify gaps in resources that have people falling through the cracks
- Calculate the costs of NOT housing hard to place individuals, i.e. recidivism, squatting, physical, mental and emotional trauma
- Survey landlords on issues that prevent them from renting to this population
- Forecast the number of future episodic homeless due to patterns of divorce, death, aging, domestic abuse, substance abuse, drop-outs, and others in our communities

Actionable

- Develop an association of landlords where annual conferences are held locally to educate landlords on multiple issues, including issues to help dispel biases
- Create awareness of differences in CSC offenses (1st, 2nd, 3rd degree)
- Create awareness of civil rights violations for landlords
- Partner with human service agencies, landlords, and local government in an effort to raise housing quality standards and maintain those standards, both from the landlord and tenants' responsibility
- Only use vouchers with landlords who maintain housing quality standards (HQS) in their rental units

- Provide life skills education
- Develop speaker resources for both landlord associations and those non-profit entities who can provide support if enlisted
- Research the projected need for supportive housing in the counties over the next 10 years; should the need for more housing be present, work in partnership with contractors, human service agencies, and local government to plan for those housing starts
- Approach *prevention* of homelessness with a case management approach for near-homeless or families in transition
- Identify organizations that will serve as case managers

Resources

- Private, state, & federal grants
- Increase the number of vouchers available
- Fund-raising efforts that involve non-profits, businesses, human service agencies, educational institutions, and the community at large
- City, County, and State government
- Landlord associations
- Contractors
- Economic Development
- Community Mental Health

Trackable

- Affordable housing starts
- Transitional and emergency housing available and utilized
- HMIS figures
- Placement of all four types of homeless cited above in decent, safe housing increases
- Speaker bureaus and landlord association meetings result in more rentals available to those with individual issues
- Number of episodic homeless ending in chronic homeless reduced
- Funds available for human service agencies to support homeless during the entire year
- Number of staff involved in case management increases
- Cost of moving the homeless to communities where jobs exist

Goal 7: Legal Aid

Specific Outcome

Near-homeless and homeless individuals will have a low or no-cost support system available to them for legal aid.

Measurable

- Low or no cost legal aid available
- Easy access to legal aid
- Legal Aid of Michigan services available locally
- Development of local legal resources

Actionable

- Need to recruit volunteer lawyer(s) or judges who can provide services to those with housing issues that may cause homelessness
- Need to recruit volunteer lawyer(s) or judges who can provide services to those with needs in terms of: SSI, evictions, guardianship, divorce, child support, bad debt, and bankruptcy.
- Once we have resources available, need to develop a brochure that can be made available through human service agencies and places like churches and libraries
- Legal aid services need to be made available
- Identify possible county support for this purpose
- County or municipal conflict resolution services

Resources

- Local lawyers and or judges willing to do pro bono work
- Gifts or grants to cover the cost of brochure development and printing
- Investigate area law schools to provide support

Trackable

- Hours/week when legal aid available
- Utilization of legal aid
- Feedback on effectiveness of assistance

In conclusion, the collaborative partners are well equipped to successfully implement the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Clare and Gladwin Counties. With the exception of noted operating funds and the development of committees to address the various goals, all of the components for implementation are in place: partnerships and commitment throughout the communities are present; knowledgeable and key staff are employed, trained, and prepared to develop the project activities within the various entities;

the objectives and evaluation design have been formulated in relation to need and lessons learned; the project model is designed and appropriate to meet the needs of the target population; and the project could be duplicated in other areas; As this proposal demonstrates, the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Clare and Gladwin Counties will fill gap in services for the homeless, chronically homeless, and episodic homeless. It is a “living document” that will be revisited regularly and amended as applicable to the needs of the two county area.

“I feel passionately that when people learn to see other human beings as having insides, hopes, feelings as real as their own, homelessness will be a thing of the past. And I want people to know what is in these sentences from Self and World by Eli Siegel: The world should be owned by the people living in it...All persons should be seen as living in a world truly theirs.”

~Ken Kimmelman, Emmy Award-winning filmmaker & Aesthetic Realism Consultant

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