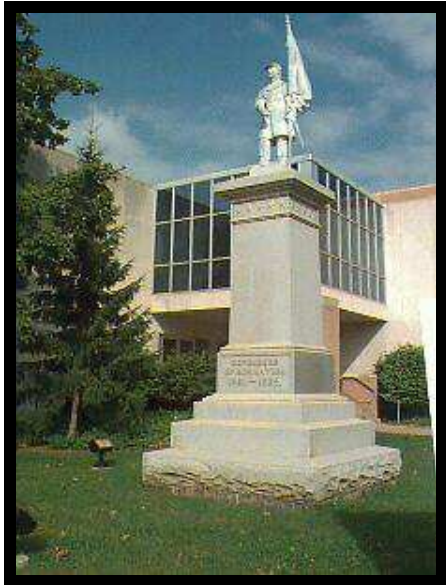


Allegan County Plan to End Homelessness



**Prepared by: Allegan County Continuum of Care
October 16, 2006**

**Allegan County Department of Human Services
Allegan County Community Mental Health Services
Allegan County United Way
Allegan County Crisis Response Services
Christian Neighbors
Sylvia's Place
Martin Resource Center
City of Allegan
Pullman Community Center
Allegan County Resource Development Center
Project Hope
Heritage Homes, Inc.
Allegan County – Michigan Works Service
Allegan County Foundation
LOVE, Inc.**

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Homelessness in Allegan County: The Faces

The man walks into the office of the Allegan Crisis Center with his head bent down anticipating the worst. His car barely made it into the parking lot – the gas gauge registers “empty” but he must have had enough fumes left over. He has his two sons with him and no money for food, for gas, or for a place to live. His requests for help have already been denied three (3 times) today. This is his last stop. He is homeless and disabled.

He was denied by three shelters because he is a single man with children and the shelters don’t have the capacity to house them. The Crisis Center places him in one of its Host homes and begins to provide services to the struggling family.

Because of his disability he is eligible for permanent supportive housing in Allegan. Within 4 weeks he is placed in a three bedroom apartment and begins to receive support services that will allow him to regain his independence and maintain his new “home.”

She is a 25-year old woman from Allegan County who left the father of her three-year old daughter after his abusive behavior began to escalate. She stayed in the domestic violence shelter at Sylvia’s Place for 34 days. She had a job and earned a promotion while staying at the shelter.

Sylvia’s Place referred her to a program at Work First called the Work Force Investment Act sponsored by the Michigan Department of Career Development. She wants to pursue a nursing degree and become a registered nurse. The Work Force program will provide her with a way to meet her goal. She is also receiving assistance from the Allegan Crisis Center, Center for Women in Transition (Holland), Project Hope, and ACRDC in the form of various support services. She earned too much money to qualify for assistance from the Department of Human Services, but did not earn enough to make it on her own.

She is a fifty-year old woman from Hamilton who left an abusive relationship after a long-term marriage. She told the shelter staff: “Now that my family is grown and on their own, I need to take care of myself.”

She lived in the shelter at Sylvia’s Place for five (5) weeks, during which time she obtained a Personal Protection Order, had a consultation with West Michigan Legal Services about a divorce, found a job (although she had not worked in years), and eventually moved into her own subsidized apartment to begin her life over. She is no longer homeless and she has hope.

They all have hope for a better future.

Executive Summary

The following plan represents the collaborative planning effort of the Allegan County Continuum of Care to eliminate homelessness in the county by 2016. The plan presented herein is based upon an assessment of the history of homelessness in the county, the current resources available to combat homelessness, the establishment of guiding principles to lead the effort, and the formulation of goals in each of the following areas:

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing for several populations (families, seniors, special needs populations, youth, victims of domestic violence)
- The establishment of a system to rapidly re-house individuals and/or families who are homeless (or at risk of becoming homeless)
- Reducing the incidence of episodic homelessness (and its negative impacts upon families and individuals) through effective early interventions and prevention efforts
- Reducing the incidence of chronic homelessness through more effective coordination of efforts by various community agencies
- Conduct ongoing research efforts to monitor the effectiveness of both the plans and strategies implemented to reduce homelessness and to gain a better understanding of the factors that contribute to homelessness in Allegan County
- Increased awareness of homelessness and the factors leading to homelessness among political and community leaders throughout Allegan County.

The planning process has included active involvement from a wide variety of community agencies through the Continuum of Care. It has also included in-depth interviews with individual agencies (by Woods Consulting) and a review of prior plans and surveys for the purpose of gaining a greater understanding of the issues facing Allegan County and the roles played by community agencies, and a review of demographic information for Allegan County.

Allegan County's location in the southwest quadrant of the state presents several interesting challenges. The county is primarily rural in nature and does not contain a major "urban" area for shopping and other services. Rather, the county borders four (4) significant communities to which Allegan residents are drawn for commercial purposes: Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Holland, and South Haven. The county seat, the City of Allegan, serves as the locus of local government but not a major commercial center. County residents have established patterns of seeking various services in the adjoining commercial centers rather than in the county itself.

A second factor impacting the county is its location along the Lake Michigan shore-line. The Allegan lake-front between South Haven and Holland is the locus of "high-end" new home development, much of it "second homes" and tourist areas. The communities of Saugatuck and Douglas typify this development – both are relatively small communities during nine (9) months of the year that grow significantly in the warm weather months. The lake-front development also impacts property values in western Allegan County and may make some older housing units "un-affordable" for lower income residents.

The county is also blessed with a significant "inland" recreation area – The Allegan State Game Area – oriented around the Kalamazoo River basin. While this resource provides great

recreational opportunities, local community agencies report that it also provides a “warm weather” resource for individuals who lack adequate housing – they may choose to “camp” in the game area while trying to get their housing situation improved.

The eastern part of the county is significantly impacted by the US 131 corridor that connects Grand Rapids on the north with Kalamazoo to the south. The communities of Moline, Dorr, Wayland, Plainwell, and Otsego are among the most active growth areas of the county with increased levels of commercial development at major intersections with US 131 (the M-89 intersection at Plainwell/Otsego). This area has been negatively impacted by the loss of employment in the paper industry – centered in the community of Plainwell (Otsego lost Menasha Paper in 2005, its largest employer, and Plainwell’s paper mill closed in 2001). US 131 provides easy access to employment opportunities in both Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, but the impact of higher fuel costs may dampen some individuals’ willingness to travel a greater distance for work.

The professional staff at the Allegan County office of the Department of Human Services report that the issues leading to homelessness among county residents are very similar to those in other rural counties: lack of employment or employment in low-pay industries (service sector), medical problems or separation from the major wage earner, domestic violence issues, life-style choices, substance abuse, mental health issues, lack of education or job skills, lack of an adequate supply of affordable housing, and uncontrollable increases in other expenses (gas prices, natural gas for heating, etc.). The rural homeless in Allegan County are more likely to have a temporary place to stay (vs. living “in the streets”) but the housing is very precarious. The rural homeless are more likely to be staying with relatives or friends.

Allegan County has a wealth of resources to assist households with housing-related issues. The Allegan County Crisis Response Services (ACCRS) operates on a 24/7 schedule and serves as the “First Call for Help” for households facing a housing crisis. There are food pantries throughout the county, many operated by volunteer, church-related organizations. The county has over 1,000 units of affordable housing including 67 units targeted at “special needs” populations (including the homeless) and 300-plus Section 8 vouchers.

Allegan County lacks a strong community organization in the Pullman area (SW quadrant). The county would benefit from more affordable housing targeted at households earning 30% -50% of Area Median Income (AMI) and more affordable choices for elderly households. The county needs to develop local resources to serve youth who need housing services. The local Continuum of Care has worked to identify community resources available to homeless residents – it now needs to make its efforts even more effective with focused efforts to reduce the impact of episodic homelessness and to reduce the incidence of chronic homelessness.

Allegan County Plan to End Homelessness

Background

The Allegan County Continuum of Care has developed the following draft *10-Year Plan to End Homelessness* in response to an initiative by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). The plan is part of a national effort to move from a system that manages homelessness through the use of emergency shelters toward a system that ends homelessness via the provision of permanent housing to those in need.

Since the emergence of homelessness as a national issue in the early 1980's, a complicated and expensive network of emergency shelters and programs to serve the homeless was developed. This network, which functions primarily in urban areas, has now become institutionalized and has been criticized as "facilitating homelessness" (rather than relieving the suffering caused by homelessness).

The Housing First movement has emerged in recent years as a response to the "shelter mentality". The base concept of Housing First is to provide families with permanent housing **first**, then bring needed services to the household to help them maintain the housing. With this approach, the funds expended for emergency shelters are re-directed toward the provision of permanent housing.

I. Vision Statement

By the year 2015, Allegan County will be a community in which individuals or families who are struggling to find and maintain a permanent home will have a broad array of services available and readily accessible to them. Allegan County will be a community in which an individual or family without a permanent "home" or housed in a precarious situation will be able to find affordable, permanent housing within 72 hours of contacting the local Housing Resource Center.

Definition of Homeless:

An individual, family, or household (including children and youth) who are forced, due to economic hardship or loss of housing, to find alternative accommodations as described below:

- Must live in a place that is not designed for human habitation, including sleeping in an open air setting
- Must live in an emergency shelter that is designed only to provide temporary accommodation
- Must live in a residence that is designed to provide only temporary residence for individuals who will eventually be placed in an institution
- Must live in a motel, hotel, trailer park, campground, or automobile
- Must remain in a hospital due to abandonment or while awaiting placement in foster care (children only)
- Must share a house with another person in a non-sustainable situation (known as “couch surfers” – no permanent place to sleep).

Issues that lead to Homelessness – Allegan County

An informal survey conducted among professional staff of the Allegan office of the Michigan Department of Human Services identified the following issues as leading causes of homelessness in Allegan:

- Low employment levels or unemployment
- Unexpected medical problems – separation from wage earner
- Domestic violence issues
- Life-style choices
- Substance abuse issues
- Mental health issues
- Lack of education and/or job skills
- Poverty
- Lack of high school diploma or GED
- Lack of sufficient affordable housing
- Uncontrollable increase in other expenses (gasoline, heat, utilities, etc.)

The above factors are consistent with those experienced in other rural areas of Michigan. For many families (and individuals), the challenge begins with low levels of educational attainment that limits access to high-paying employment. Low-wage earnings limit the ability of a family to afford decent, quality housing without contributing more than 35% of gross income for housing costs. Families must choose between paying “too much” for housing or choosing housing that is not safe or adequate.

This scenario is further complicated by externalities such as loss of employment due to plant closings, separations and divorce, medical crises, and other factors that place the household at risk of becoming homeless.

II. Key Demographic Issues – Allegan County Households at Risk

The following demographic information about Allegan County provides an overview of key factors that place families/households at risk for becoming homeless:

- 56.8% of population (2000) had a high school education or less with 17.7% not securing a high school diploma. The ability to secure and keep a job that pays an adequate wage is significantly impacted by the lack of a high school diploma.
- 2,197 households (5.7% of total) less than age 65 in 2000 had income below the poverty level; 662 households over age 65 had income below the poverty level. Households with income below the poverty level are very vulnerable to losing their permanent housing if an external crisis impacts them.
- 1,610 renter households ages 15-61 were living in housing “with conditions” in 2000; 750 of those renters earned less than \$15,000. The Census defines housing “with conditions” as having one or more of the following conditions: lack of complete kitchen or plumbing facilities, more than 1 person per room, or housing costs exceeded 30% of gross income. These families are apparently choosing to live in “poor quality” housing or choosing to live in housing that is not “affordable”.
- 4,675 owner households ages 15-61 were living in housing “with conditions” in 2000, with 800 of those earning less than \$15,000. Homeowners may also choose to live in poor quality housing or in housing that is not affordable.
- 395 senior renters (over age 65) living in housing “with conditions” in 2000 with 269 of those earning less than \$15,000. This indicates that seniors are also choosing to live in poor quality housing or in housing that is no longer affordable.
- 1,579 senior owners (over age 65) living in housing “with conditions” in 2000 with 842 of those earning less than \$15,000. Senior “owners” may choose to live in poor quality housing because the community is lacking sufficient choices of affordable housing.
- 14.4% of the population in the work-force in 2000 Census classified their occupation as “services (7,321). A growing number of jobs in the “service” sector are low-paying, unskilled jobs that have a high degree of turn-over. Job instability will impact a household’s ability to maintain permanent housing.

III. Assets Available in Allegan County

Allegan County contains a variety of resources and services available to families who are facing housing-related challenges. The resources described below are, for the most part, well-distributed throughout the county. The major exception appears to be the southwest quadrant around the community of Pullman. Pullman does have two (2) small organizations that provide some emergency services, but both organizations appear to lack adequate capacity to meet the growing demand for services.

- Heritage Homes provide 67 units of permanent supportive housing to “special needs” populations in Allegan County. The units are located in Douglas, Fennville, Allegan, and Otsego Township. The projects currently have 33 households who were considered “homeless” – 25 of those had either a physical or mental disability. Most of the referrals to the units were made by the Crisis Response Center followed by Allegan CMH and the domestic violence shelter. The property manager for Heritage Homes reports that the units in Fennville and Douglas are more difficult to keep filled vs. those in Allegan/Otsego. She also noted that 3BR units take the longest to re-rent (when vacant).
- Allegan County residents are served by food pantries throughout the county: Saugatuck/Douglas (2), South Haven (1), Pullman (2), Hamilton (1), Allegan (3), Wayland (1), Martin/Dorr (2), Otsego (1)
- Allegan County Crisis Response Services, Inc. (ACCRS) operates on 24 hours per day/7 days per week basis. ACCRS acts as the “First Call for Help” for households with housing issues. It also houses a “Housing Resource Coordinator” on its staff. ACCRS has developed working relationships with a variety of governmental and community agencies throughout the four quadrants of Allegan County and in the City of Allegan.
- Allegan County has 1,081 units of subsidized housing – 909 “family” units and 156 “senior” units. Many of the affordable units are located in the Allegan/Plainwell/Otsego corridor. The western part of the county contains significantly fewer units (Fennville and Saugatuck). There is a new development in the pipeline in Fennville that will contain both family and elderly units. Many of the properties contacted by Woods Consulting (via telephone) are either full (no vacancies) or have very limited vacancies.
- Allegan County receives 300+ Section 8 tenant vouchers. The vouchers are administered by an organization that also serves Kent and Barry counties. The Section 8 manager reports a 6 month-1 year wait list for vouchers.
- Allegan County CMH serves 1271 and adults and 291 children with mental illness or developmental disabilities. The agency reports that 15 of their clients are considered “homeless”. The majority of CMH clients find housing in a private residence, either with family members (574) or “alone or with spouse”.

- Allegan County Crisis Response Services, Allegan County CMH, and Allegan DHS offer their clients a range of “preventive” services designed to help individuals/families make rent payments, pay utilities and other housing expenses, and avoid losing their home(s). Each organization has its own specific requirements for receiving aid – requirements typically dictated by their funding source.
- ACRDC (CAP agency) provides a range of services to county residents including a food pantry (in City of Allegan), utility payments, and weatherization services.
- Allegan County also has a number of private, many church-affiliated, community organizations (Christian Neighbors, LOVE, Inc., Project Hope, etc.) that offer county residents food, utility payments, housing (rent) payments, and other services designed to keep families housed in a stable situation. These organizations typically are funded from a variety of sources including local fund-raising, food donations, FEMA, and volunteerism. The southwest quadrant of the county (Pullman area and surrounding environs) appears to have the least organizational capacity to meet the needs of its lower income residents.
- The ARK for Youth (based in Kalamazoo) provided temporary housing to 12 youth from Allegan County in 2005; the average length-of-stay was 13.25 days; ARK also provided telephone counseling to 61 contacts from Allegan County youth (The ARK is a program of Catholic Family Services that provides shelter, counseling, and a homeless youth program to youth ages 10-21 from a variety of counties in SW Michigan.)

IV. Guiding Principles for Preparing Homeless Plan:

The Allegan County Continuum of Care developed the following “Guiding Principles” to help in preparation of its goals:

- Rapid re-housing of homeless households – “housing first” – stabilize housing situation then bring support services to the household will be the over-arching principle of the plan.
- Minors may need age-specific transitional housing in the short-term but placement in permanent housing will be a priority.
- There will be a single agency (Housing Resource Center) in the county that will serve the homeless and those at immediate risk of losing their homes. Individuals and families may contact the Housing Resource Center through other community agencies that employ a common system of forms and procedures supported by a shared information system. A variety of community agencies can provide assistance with prevention programs to help families avoid a housing crisis.
- The supply of affordable housing for households at 30% AMI – 50% AMI (Area Median Income) is lacking; explore opportunities for small, scattered-site housing in rural areas of county and affordable, supportive housing for seniors (affordable assisted living for seniors).
- The plan will work with existing landlords to make more housing available to families who are precariously housed or homeless.
- The development and distribution of effective prevention programs can significantly reduce the instance of episodic homelessness.
- The availability of a wide-range of support services including financial counseling, credit repair, “life-skills” training, and vocational training should be centralized and readily available.
- The creation and support of effective career training (re-training) programs and programs to support effective entrepreneurship will improve the overall economic conditions for families with episodic homeless issues.
- Agencies that serve the homeless (and those with homeless issues) should establish an electronic system for sharing information and resources between the organizations in order to make the service delivery system more efficient.
- The agencies that serve persons with housing issues must commit to an ongoing program of evaluation, research and monitoring in order to better understand any changes occurring among the populations served and to monitor the effectiveness of their efforts.

V. Goals for Allegan County:

Goal: Increase the Supply of Affordable Housing in Allegan County:

(Note: all plan dates imply that the goal will be accomplished by December 31 of the year appearing in the goal statement.)

An adequate supply of quality, affordable housing is critical to the over-arching principle of “rapid re-housing” of households facing housing issues. Given the existing supply of housing, the goals outlined below will focus on several key sectors of the population:

- Increase the supply of affordable family and senior housing in select quadrants of Allegan County focusing on households earning between 30% AMI – 50% AMI. This will likely require partnerships between community groups/agencies and developers to assure that the lowest income households will have access to affordable housing.
 - Evaluate the potential for forming a not-for-profit housing development entity that could partner with for-profit developers who may be interested in developing affordable housing projects in Allegan County; the not-for-profit entity may help attract private-sector investors by providing access to local resources.
 - Steering Committee will meet with Heritage Homes to evaluate their (Heritage Homes’) potential interest in working with the Continuum of Care; if Heritage Homes is not interested, the Committee will seek-out other development partners.
 - Increase the supply of affordable supportive housing to serve the needs of victims of domestic violence and other special needs populations – with site locations especially in the eastern part of the county and in the City of Allegan.

- Complete an evaluation of the need for affordable assisted living for seniors by 2008. Affordable assisted living is intended to serve those frail elderly who need assistance with one or more daily living activities (dressing, bathing, meals, etc.), but who can otherwise live independently.
 - Subcommittee will evaluate the October, 2006 MSHDA Demonstration Initiative for Affordable Assisted Living in conjunction with Allegan County Medical Care Facility (evaluate potential for affordable assisted living at Medical Care facility site).
 - Local governments are more likely to be supportive of affordable housing initiatives for seniors – senior affordable housing more likely to receive PILOT from local communities.
 - Seniors with health issues have greater difficulty accessing services – affordable assisted living provides more convenient access to supportive services.

- By 2008, Allegan County will develop a detailed strategy for serving youth who have either been “kicked-out” of their family home or who have chosen to leave (the home) and are unwilling to return.
 - Focus on the development of a plan to prevent youth from being evicted from family home – prevent them from becoming chronically homeless adults.
 - RAP (Responding to Adolescent Problems) members will develop detailed strategy involving education and preventive strategies to reduce homelessness among teens.
 - The RAP members will be asked to conduct a research study of current incidences involving homeless youth, what services they received, and identify any gaps in services (see specific description of assignment for RAP).
 - The survey results and analysis will be reported to the Steering Committee by June, 2007.

- By 2007, Allegan County will develop a “youth in transition” case management plan to provide supportive services to youth ages 18-24 and “emancipated minors”. The plan will include training in life skills, budgeting, locating an appropriate place to live, career counseling, and other services designed to provide the youth with the skills needed to live independently in the community.

Goal: Establish a System that will Rapidly Re-House Individuals and Families who are Homeless

- By 2008, the community agencies that serve the Pullman area (southwest quadrant of Allegan County) will have significantly increased their capacity to respond to housing issues facing their neighbors. This may include increased investment of community resources in existing organizations and/or the formation of a new community service entity in the Pullman area.
 - The Continuum of Care will convene a focus group discussion in the Pullman area that involves the Pullman Health Clinic, BRAVO School, Pullman Community Center, El Shaddai, and Mr. David Babbitt (County Commissioner) for the purpose of identification of community needs and the roles each organization is willing to plan in serving those needs (and the resources each organization brings to the effort) – initial meeting scheduled for October 10, 2006 at the Pullman Community Center.
 - Project Hope and Martin Resource Center have indicated some level of interest in expanding operations to serve the Pullman area.
 - The expected outcome of these sessions will be to expand/improve services to the Pullman area.
 - The Continuum of Care will develop a plan for increasing organizational capacity in the Pullman area by July 1, 2007.

- By 2007, Allegan County Crisis Response Services (ACCRS) center will serve as the single point of entry (Housing Resource Center) to provide services to individuals who are homeless or in need of immediate re-housing. Agencies that serve individuals and families with housing-related issues will refer homeless cases to the Housing Resource Center for rapid re-housing and assessment. Community agencies that serve homeless families and individuals with housing issues will have a common set of forms and procedures for referral to ACCRS.
 - ACCRS will initiate regular contacts with local landlords for the purpose of exploring how their properties might be used as part of a rapid re-housing strategy for homeless households.
 - ACCRS will develop an inventory of available rental properties (and the condition of those properties), how the units are furnished, key contacts, rents, etc.; the inventory will be updated on a regular basis.
 - Meetings with area landlords are likely to be more effective if conducted on a “local” (community) basis vs. county-wide.
 - ACCRS will seek funding support for a full-time position that will support the rapid re-housing initiative and monitor the supply of available rental housing.
- By 2009, any resident of Allegan County who is homeless or is precariously housed will be able to be placed in a permanent housing situation with 72 hours of contacting the Housing Resource Center.
- By 2008, all the agencies that serve individuals/households with housing-related issues will have a common electronic data base (HMIS or other system) for sharing information about clients and to schedule programs for clients.
 - Expand participation in the HMIS system among agencies in the county who provide services to those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
 - Seek funding support for training of staff who will be entering information into the HMIS system at each agency.
 - Explore methods to enhance the value of information collected through HMIS to aid homeless planning efforts.
- By 2008, the Housing Resource Center will have developed agreements with local landlords to create a supply of available rental housing units to house individuals/families who are experiencing serious housing issues

(See discussion of strategies under “Single Point of Entry” goal above)

Goal: Reduce the Incidence of Episodic Homelessness and its Negative Impacts upon Families:

- By 2007, the Housing Resource Center and the community agencies who serve the homeless will have developed and implemented a series of preventive strategies designed to significantly reduce the occurrence of episodic homelessness in Allegan County. The effectiveness of these strategies will be monitored over the ensuing five (5) years to determine which efforts are most effective. The Prevention Committee will assume lead responsibility for the review of existing prevention strategies and an evaluation of their effectiveness. This evaluation will be shared with other agencies who serve families experiencing the potential loss of housing.
 - The Prevention Committee of the Continuum will assume responsibility for collecting and assessing information regarding current prevention efforts/strategies that are being used in Allegan County (and elsewhere).
 - The assessment process will evaluate “what works best from the client’s perspective” - realizing that some strategies will not work for all clients or in all circumstances.
 - The assessment process will be completed by July 1, 2007 and information shared with County agencies who serve homeless families.
 - The goal of the prevention strategies will be to reduce the number of evictions and foreclosures and to stabilize families’ housing situations.

- By 2009, cases of episodic homelessness in the county will be handled more efficiently and effectively resulting in quick placement in permanent housing and services made available to assist the household in its return to independence.

Goal: Reduce the Incidence of Chronic Homelessness in Allegan County

- By 2008, the Allegan Continuum of Care will develop a strategy to effectively focus resources on the reduction of chronic homelessness with a goal to reduce the incidence of chronic homelessness by 20% per year for a 3-year period and by 10% per year for the next 4 years.
 - Conduct research among the managers and residents of the “host homes” operated by ACCRS and housing operated by Sylvia’s Place for the purpose of gaining a greater understanding of the factors contributing to chronic homelessness and what behaviors the chronic homeless utilize to maintain their situation.
 - The Continuum of Care will design a research tool (survey) that can be used in all host Homes and other facilities that house chronically homeless during the period from January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007.
 - Results of the survey effort along with recommendations for new strategies will be Reported to the Continuum by September 30, 2007.

Goal: Conduct On-going Research Efforts to Monitor the Effectiveness of Strategies to Reduce the Incidence of Homelessness

- Beginning in 2007, the Allegan County Continuum of Care will conduct a bi-annual (2X per year – warm and cold weather) study of persons who are homeless or precariously housed with the following objectives (Responsibility: Steering Committee):
 - to monitor the number of persons/households who are homeless or precariously housed and to collect demographic information including seasonal trends and characteristics of the population.
 - to create a profile of those individuals/households who are chronically homeless and to collect detailed information about them.
 - to monitor the effectiveness of strategies adopted to reduce episodic homelessness.
 - organizations that participate in the HMIS system will be asked to utilize one of the “notes” sections of the system to report additional qualitative information on the reasons for homelessness.

(The HMIS system may provide sufficient information about individuals/households who seek service. The purpose of this research is to learn more about reasons for both chronic and episodic homelessness in Allegan County and develop more effective strategies to combat the problem. It will also help identify those individuals and households who are not seeking services from the local agencies.)

- Utilize the HMIS system to collect and store information concerning causes of homelessness among those interviewed in the Point-in-time surveys.
- Allegan DHS will manage the Point-in-Time study in Sept., 2006 – long-term goal is to select for one agency/organization to assume the leadership role in this study on a regular basis (preliminary results of survey collected and reviewed).
- Continuum will develop a methodology for sharing the results of the survey with county agencies who may find the information helpful in their efforts.

Goal: Increase Awareness of Homelessness and the Factors that Contribute to Homelessness Among Key Political and Community Leaders in Allegan County. The Continuum will prepare a presentation that can be used by multiple presenters.

- By December 31, 2006, present the Allegan County Plan to End Homelessness to the Allegan County Board of Commissioners; seek the support and endorsement of the Commission for the plan.
- By January 31, 2007, present the Allegan County Plan to End Homelessness to the elected bodies of the following communities: Cities of Allegan, Plainwell, and Otsego; Villages of Fennville, Saugatuck, and Wayland. Also present the Plan to the local Township Officers Association. In each instance, seek the support and endorsement of the local governing body.
- In January, 2007 initiate a coordinated public relations effort throughout Allegan County utilizing local (Allegan County) media resources (print, radio, internet) and regional media (Holland, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo) to inform the public of the issues facing some households in Allegan County and the plan(s) to eliminate Homelessness by 2016.

Allegan County Demographics

Population and Households:

	<i>2000 Census</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2010</i>
Total Population	105,665	113,780	122,414
Annual Growth Rate	1.47%.....	
Total # Households	38,165	41,778	45,335
Annual Growth Rate	1.65%.....	
Avg. Household Size	2.72	2.68	2.66
Median Household Income	\$45,825	\$50,510	\$54,751
Median Home Value	\$111,325	\$143,924	\$178,843
Median Rent	\$441		
Median Age	35.2	36.4	37.4

Ethnicity:

White Alone	93.5%	92.6%	91.7%
Black Alone	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%
Hispanic Origin	5.7%	6.6%	7.6%

Educational Attainment (Age 25+) – 2000 Census

Total population:	66,925
Less than high school graduate	17.7%
High school graduate	39.1%
Some college, no degree	21.0%
Associate degree	6.3%
Bachelor degree	10.8%
Graduate degree	5.0%

- 56.8% of adults over age 25 had a high school education or less with 17.7% not earning a high school diploma

Employment by Industry (2005 Estimate)

Services	34.3%
Manufacturing	27.0%
Retail Trade	11.5%
Construction	7.8%
Wholesale Trade	4.6%
Transportation Utilities	4.5%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	4.3%
Agriculture/Mining	2.6%

Average Travel time to work: 23.4 minutes

Housing Profile:

	<i>2000 Census</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2010</i>
Total Housing Units	43,292	47,354	51,322
Occupied Units	38,165	41,778	45,335
Owner-Occupied	31,652	35,079	38,362
Renter-Occupied	6,513	6,699	6,973
Vacant Units	5,127	5,576	5,987
Vacant Renter	544		
Seasonal/Recreational	3,154		
Migrant Worker	73		
# Mobile Homes	6,171		
# Subsidized Rental Units		1,197	
% of Total Rental Units		17.9%	

Housing Tenure by Age of Household/2000 Census

<i>Age</i>	<i># Occupied Units</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Renter</i>
15-24	1,642	663	979
25-34	6,348	4,632	1,716
35-44	9,736	8,093	1,643
45-54	8,030	7,128	902
55-64	5,120	4,647	473
65-74	3,756	3,428	328
75-84	2,746	2,412	334
85+	787	649	138
Totals	38,165	31,652	6,513

- County contains 30,876 occupied households ages 15-61 of which 5,713 (18.5%) are renters with the balance (25,163) owning their own home
- 58.7% of renters 15-61 were in the age range 25-44
- County contains 7,289 occupied housing units ages 65+ of which 800 (11%) are renters with the balance (6,489) owning their own home

Housing Expenses: 2000 Census

# Owner-Occupied Housing Units*	14,828
Median monthly owner costs for units with mortgage:	\$956
# Owner-Occupied Housing Units with no mortgage	6,183

* Excludes houses on 10+ acres, mobile homes, units in multi-unit buildings, and houses with a business or medical office.

Contract Rents/2000

# households paying cash rent	5,595
Less than \$200	510
\$200-\$299	475
\$300-\$399	1,184
\$400-\$499	1,508
\$500-\$599	1,172
\$600-\$699	479
\$700-\$799	131
\$800-\$899	93
\$900-\$999	23
\$1,000-plus	20
No cash rent	478
Median Rent:	\$441
Average Gross Rent	\$518

- 69% of renter households paying cash rent paid between \$300-\$599
- 17.6% of renter households paying cash rent paid less than \$300

Households at Risk:

Assumptions: Households most at risk of becoming homeless

- Households with low annual incomes
- Households residing in “sub-standard” housing
- Households with low educational attainment

Low Annual Incomes:

- 2000 households less than age 65 with income below poverty level: 2,197 (5.7% of total)
- 2000 households age 65+ with income below poverty level: 662 (1.7% of total)

Residing in Sub-standard Housing: Defined as having at least one of the following conditions:

- Lacking complete plumbing facilities
- Lacking complete kitchen facilities
- More than 1.01 persons per room
- Selected monthly owner costs greater than 30% of household income
- Gross rent greater than 30% of household income

Ages 15-61:

- 1,610 (29.3% of total) renters living “with conditions”
- 750 of those renters earning less than \$15,000 annually
- 4,675 owners living “with conditions”
- 860 of those owners earning less than \$15,000 annually

Ages 62-plus:

- 395 (35.7% of total HH) renters living “with conditions”
- 269 of those renters earning less than \$15,000 annually
- 1,579 (20.3% of total) living “with conditions”
- 842 of those owners earning less than \$15,000 annually

Low Educational Attainment:

- 17.7% of population age 25+ (11,845 individuals) in 2000 had not earned a high school diploma
- Estimated rate of unemployment in 2010 is 6.5%
- 14.4% of population in the work force classified their occupation as “services” (7,321)

Project Name: Bridgeport
Community: Allegan
Contact Number: 269-673-2948

Total Units: 48
Senior Units: 16
Family Units: 16
1 BR 16 \$
2 BR 26 \$
3 BR 6 \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 48

Special Notes: no vacancies; time to rerent is only time takes to clean the property. All units are section 8 @ 30% of income. Would not give contract rent information.

Project Name: Maple Tree
Community: Allegan
Contact Number: 269-673-7155

Total Units: 48
Senior Units: 0
Family Units: 48
1 BR 20 \$410-575
2 BR 20 \$435-615
3 BR 8 \$460-655
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes: Section 515, 2 Barrier Free. 1-1BR, 1-2BR, 1-3BR available. Time to rerent averages 1-2 months

Project Name: Rivers Run Senior CIT
Community: Allegan
Contact Number: 269-673-4915

Total Units: 32
Senior Units: 32
Family Units: 0
1 BR \$
2 BR \$
3 BR \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 19

Special Notes: 11 Section 515. Message states they are taking applications for 1 & 2 BR.

Project Name: Harbor Village
Community: Holland
Contact Number: 616-396-7621

Total Units: 120
Senior Units: 0
Family Units: 120
1 BR 40 \$560
2 BR 60 \$575, 616
3 BR 20 \$720
4 BR \$
Section 8: 120

Special Notes: 1-1BR, 2-2-BR available, 1 week to rerent (cleaning).

Project Name: Oak Lane Apartments
Community: Hopkins
Contact Number: 269-672-9275

Total Units: 24
Senior Units: 0
Family Units: 24
1 BR 8 \$465-590
2 BR 14 \$490-615
3 BR \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes: 24 Section 515, 1 Barrier Free. No AC, No Vacancies, Wait list. All Subsidized. Accepts Section 8

Project Name: Walnut Lane
Community: Moline
Contact Number: 269-792-6314

Total Units: 24
Senior Units: 0
Family Units: 24
1 BR 14 \$480
2 BR 10 \$610
3 BR \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes: 24 Section 515, 1 Barrier Free. Also manages Heritage Village I, II, III. Over 11 4 developments, has 2-1 BR and 2-2 BR available. 1-2 months to rerent. Issue is tenants ability to raise security deposit.

Project Name: Brookside Apartments
Community: Otsego
Contact Number: 269-381-0350

Total Units: 24
Senior Units: 0
Family Units: 24
1 BR 16 \$359-435
2 BR 8 \$394-470
3 BR \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes: 24 Section 515, 1 Barrier Free. 15-30 days to rent. Currently 2-1BR & 2-2BR available

Project Name: Washington Manor
Community: Otsego
Contact Number: 269-694-6911

Total Units: 12
Senior Units: 0
Family Units: 12
1 BR 4 \$
2 BR 8 \$
3 BR \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes: 12 Section 515

Project Name: Emerald Park Senior
Community: Otsego Twp
Contact Number: 269-685-9274

Total Units:
Senior Units: 0
Family Units:
1 BR \$
2 BR \$
3 BR \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes:

Project Name: 12th Street Apartments
Community: Plainwell
Contact Number: 269-672-9275

Total Units: 32
Senior Units: 0
Family Units: 32
1 BR 16 \$437-550
2 BR 16 \$472-575
3 BR \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes: 32 Section 515. No Vacancies. Waitlist (6)

Project Name: North Prairie Manor Keystone Management
Community: Plainwell
Contact Number: 269-694-6911

Total Units: 28
Senior Units: 28
Family Units: 0
1 BR 28 \$
2 BR \$
3 BR \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes: 28 Section 515

Project Name: Olde Mill Heights Apartments
Community: Saugatuk
Contact Number: 269-857-4331

Total Units: 24
Senior Units: 0
Family Units: 24
1 BR 12 \$415-601
2 BR 10 \$435-631
3 BR 2 \$456-661
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes: 14 Section 515, 10 RAP

Project Name: Heritage Village
Community: Wayland
Contact Number: 269-792-6314

Total Units: 40
Senior Units: 0
Family Units: 40
1 BR 16 \$455
2 BR 24 \$546
3 BR \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes: 21 Section 515, 19 RAP, 2 Barrier Free. Also manages Heritage Village I, II, III. Over 114 developments, has 2-1 BR and 2-2 BR available. 1-2 months to rent. Issue is tenants ability to raise security deposit.

Project Name: Heritage Village III
Community: Wayland
Contact Number: 269-792-6314

Total Units: 12
Senior Units: 0
Family Units: 12
1 BR 12 \$518-758
2 BR \$
3 BR \$
4 BR \$
Section 8: 0

Special Notes: