

Homeless Coordinating Council

May 21, 2010

To: Members of the Homeless Coordinating Council

From: Homeless Coordinating Council Steering Committee

Subject: Steering Committee Recommendations

The Homeless Coordinating Council (HCC) held their first meeting on May 3, 2010. From this meeting, the HCC discussed additional funder appointments, the need for a Homeless Czar, and the identification of key issues. The following are the Steering Committee's recommendations:

Additional HCC Appointments

The steering committee is recommending that Shannon Cofield, Executive Director of the United Way of Central Iowa, and Kristi Knous, Vice President of the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation be appointed to the Steering Committee. Additionally the committee is recommending that Barry Griswell or Fred Hubbell be appointed to the Homeless Coordinating Council as the representative from the Des Moines Community Foundation, and that a Board member of the United Way of Central Iowa be appointed to the Homeless Coordinating Council as a representative from the United Way of Central Iowa.

Homeless Coordinator (Czar)

The steering committee is recommending that the HCC wait to hire a Homeless Czar until this position's role and responsibilities can be clearly defined. The Steering Committee believes these roles and responsibilities will be further defined as the work of the HCC and Steering Committee continues.

Identification of Key Issues

The Steering Committee reviewed the eight (8) Key Initiatives and made the following assignments for respective staff to focus on:

City of Des Moines

- Solicit 100 new section 8 housing choice vouchers for homeless & at-risk families & youth through an innovative partnership between Des Moines Municipal Housing Agency and Iowa Department of Human Services.

- Implement a pilot initiative to provide project and tenant-based assistance targeted for people living in homeless camps.
- Solicit HUD technical support to incorporate state of the art practices in the new Central Iowa Shelter & Services facility, including a Homeless Opportunity Center (HOC) to link homeless people to multiple support services designed to expedite self-sufficiency and rapid exit from the emergency shelter system.
- Through collaboration with private developers, Des Moines Municipal Housing Agency will revitalize vacant, scattered site, public housing buildings that will be renovated as permanent housing for homeless households with incomes below 30% of area median income.
- Establish a formal linkage between homeless-targeted housing and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program by amending admissions policies to enable former long-term, Shelter + Care participants to receive tenant based or project based Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program assistance, allowing new units of Shelter + Care to become available for individuals from homeless camps.

Polk County

- A joint project of community organizations, complete “system mapping” as a means of streamlining service delivery and eliminating costly duplication of effort.
- Implement a pilot partnership between Polk County Health Service and Primary Health Care that allows staff from Primary Health Care to identify PCHS consumers and inform PCHS when a consumer is receiving shelter or services from Primary Health Care.

Polk County Housing Trust Fund

- Through community collaboration and reallocation of all available mainstream resources, create additional housing low income households <30% AMI.
This represents a key priority as a means of prevention and reducing homelessness. This reallocation of resources along with other strategies noted above is expected to create an additional 100 units for households below 30% AMI over the next 5 years.

Additional Recommendations

The Steering Committee is recommending that the HCC hold public hearings around specific topics related to homelessness. These public hearings will allow opportunity for service providers and the public to offer recommendations on homelessness in the community.

The Steering Committee is recommending that a schedule of HCC meetings be established for meetings to be held on a routine basis.

The Steering Committee will review these recommendations with the HCC during their next meeting on May 24th at 11:00 in Room 390 of the Polk County Administration Building.