

HOMELESSNESS SUMMIT REPORT

August 21, 2003

*A project of Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich in partnership with Ohio's 10th
District Homelessness Summit.*

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Northeastern Ohio, public officials, social service agencies, and advocacy organizations provide housing and employment opportunities, as well as support services to homeless persons. These programs face constant capacity and financial restraints, struggling to meet a demand that exceeds currently available resources.

Homelessness in Northeast Ohio persists in part because of a lack of affordable housing, a lack of stable employment that pays a livable wage, and gaps in social services for people with mental or physical health problem or drug and alcohol addiction. Persons experiencing homelessness face significant challenges to their quality of life, including violent hate crimes against them, barriers to housing and employment due to their housing status, and barriers to communicating with family and other social networks.

Four primary gaps in resolving these problems were identified in the Homelessness Summit meetings on February 7 and March 28, 2003, and a survey of 270 Summit participants. These gaps include:

Funding. Without dedicated federal, state, and local funding sources, advocacy and social service agencies expend much of their energy securing project funding. The constant lack of adequate funding and time dedicated to locating funding sources inhibits the ability of agencies to provide needed services. A combination of Housing Trusts and agencies coordinating funding for all local organizations and projects would ensure steady financial support while relieving the burden of fundraising.

Personnel and Program Expansion. Many homeless persons are unable to access existing services due to personnel and program capacity constraints. In some cases, including drug and alcohol rehabilitation, programs do not adequately address the needs of the homeless population; additional services and program openings need to be dedicated to serving homeless persons. In other cases, such as the Community Voice Mail system, programs are not large enough to meet the demand for their services.

Information Networks and Accountability of Services and Programs. Homeless persons and their advocates may be unaware of available services due to the decentralized structure of the homelessness support network. Agencies coordinating distribution of food, aid, and funding would allow more homeless persons access to needed services while providing a system of accountability to ensure effective program functioning.

Federal Legislation. Federal legislation to offer protection to homeless and low-income laborers, establish a National Housing Trust, and encourage the development of affordable housing is key to a working national homelessness policy. Proposed and pending legislation is detailed in Appendix A.

This report concludes by examining how these gaps can be addressed to prevent future homelessness while caring for current and long-term homeless persons.

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE HOMELESSNESS SUMMIT

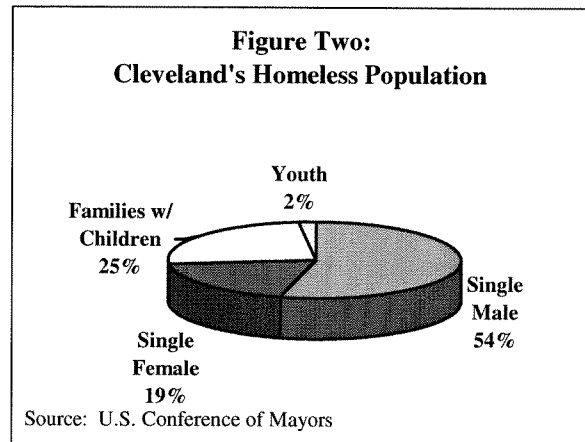
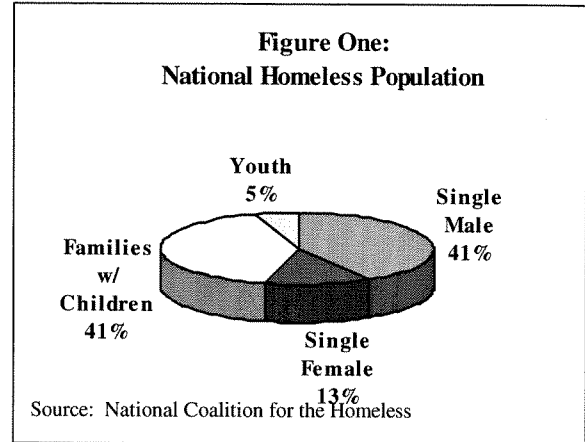
A. Mission Statement

The Ohio 10th District Homelessness Summit is dedicated to using our local experience to foster a national policy that generates the will and resources to end homelessness.

B. Who is Homeless?

The most encompassing and widely accepted model definition of homelessness is the definition of homeless youth embedded in the Stewart B. McKinney Act, 42, U.S.C. § 11301.¹ Following this definition, an individual is considered to be homeless if he or she lacks a stable and adequate nighttime residence or has a primary nighttime residency that is a supervised private or public temporary shelter, a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or any public or private place not designed to serve as primary nighttime accommodations. This definition does not include those sharing a living space with family or friends, or those doubled up in crowded living conditions.

¹ An individual is considered to be homeless if he or she "lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence and has a primary night time residency that is: (A) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations...(B) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or (C) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings."



Homelessness is a serious and growing concern in Northeast Ohio and across the nation. In 2002, requests for emergency shelter in Cleveland increased 15%, just under the 19% national average.² It is estimated that between 500,000 to 700,000 individuals are homeless on any given night in the United States, and anywhere from 2 million to 7 million individuals are homeless each year.³ In

² U.S. Conference of Mayors, *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities 2002*, available at <<http://www.usmayors.org/uscm/hungersurvey/2002/online-report/HungerAndHomelessReport2002.pdf>> (last visited Jul. 27, 2003).

³ National Coalition for the Homeless, *Fact sheet 4 (1999)*, available at <<http://www.nationalhomeless.org>> (last visited Jul. 27, 2003).

II. Introduction to the Homelessness Summit

the Cleveland area, it is estimated that nearly 26,000 individuals are homeless within each year, and approximately 4,000 individuals are homeless on any given night.⁴

The demographics of individuals experiencing homelessness vary. Year 2002 national estimates indicate 41% of the homeless adult population are single males, 13% are single females, 41% of the population are families with children, and 5% of the homeless population are unaccompanied youth. Of these individuals, 23% are mentally ill, 32% are substance abusers, 22% are employed, and 10% are veterans.⁵

In Cleveland it is estimated that 54% of the population are single males, 19% are single females, 25% of the population are families, and 2% are unaccompanied youth.⁶ Of these individuals, approximately 25% are mentally ill, 40% are substance abusers, 20% are employed, and 18% are veterans.⁷

	<i>NE Ohio</i>	<i>National</i>
Mentally Ill	25%	23%
Substance Abusers	40%	32%
Employed	20%	22%
Veterans	18%	10%

⁴ Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless, *Homelessness in Cleveland (2002)*, available at <<http://www.neoch.org>> (last visited Jul. 27, 2003).

⁵ U.S. Conference of Mayors, *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities 2002*, available at <<http://www.usmayors.org/uscm/hungersurvey/2002/onlinereport/HungerAndHomelessReport2002.pdf>> (last visited Jul. 27, 2003).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

In 2003, the National Coalition for the Homeless report ranked Ohio as the fourth most dangerous state for homeless individuals in the United States with eleven incidents of violence directed at homeless people in five cities, including setting fire to a Springfield, Ohio, homeless man in August, 2002.⁸

C. Background on the Homelessness Summit

The Ohio 10th District Homelessness Summit met on February 7th and March 28th, 2003, in the Lakewood, Ohio, district office of Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich. Those in attendance or who otherwise participated in information gathering included approximately 270 elected officials, social service agencies, advocacy organizations, and individuals experiencing, or who have experienced homelessness. Congressman Kucinich (Ohio-10) convened the Summit in response to the increasing frequency with which constituents are contacting his Cleveland-area congressional offices with requests for homeless services.

Summit participants agreed on the need to alleviate and eliminate homelessness, beginning at the local level, through collaboration and community support. Through the Summit and associated survey, participants examined Northeast Ohio's homelessness policies and services and identified gaps in the application and provision of those policies and services. This report suggests ways to close those gaps and develops a local model that could be adopted on a national level.

⁸ National Coalition for the Homeless, *Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence against People Experiencing Homelessness from 1999-2002*, available at <<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/hatecrimes>> (last visited Jul. 27, 2003).

III. EXISTING SERVICES

Northeast Ohio offers homeless persons a network of support services and advocacy organizations providing housing and employment assistance, social services, and enhanced quality of life, in addition to drafting and analyzing homelessness policy and legislation. The framework of a comprehensive support system to guide homeless individuals to permanent housing while resolving issues leading to homelessness has been instituted through the work of community activists and public officials. These existing programs and policies provide essential assistance to those currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. However, significant funding and service gaps remain barriers to ensuring homeless persons have access to all needed services.

Section 8 program. These programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In each program, tenants pay 30% of their income in rent and the government pays the difference to meet rent standards created by HUD. Cuyahoga County has approximately 30,000 HUD housing units, split proportionately between the three programs.

1. Public Housing Program

Public Housing program properties are owned and operated by the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA). There are 9,800 units in Northeast Ohio, with 9,000 people on the waiting list. Approximately 500 new families receive housing each year. There is currently a preference for homeless applicants, but few units are available given the high demand and 10% annual turnover rate. Entry is also restricted by residency requirements, including prohibition of those with criminal records. Local programs such as Bridging the Gap (BTG) assist homeless persons during the public housing application process and facilitate a smooth transition after placement. BTG is administered by the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless.

2. Project Based Section 8 Housing

In Project Based Section 8 housing, subsidy assistance is attached to specific housing units. Tenants who leave the housing unit are not eligible to continue receiving housing assistance, although they may qualify for Tenant Based Section 8 assistance when a voucher becomes available. Project Based Section 8 housing assistance requires the resident to pay 30% of income toward rent with government funding through HUD financing the remaining rental costs.

**Table 2:
Cuyahoga County Overview**

Housing

Housing Units (2000)	616,903
% Units in Multi-unit Structures (2000)	35.8%
% Housing Unit Ownership (2000)	63.2%

Households

Households (2000)	571,457
Median Household Income (1999)	\$39,168
Per Capita Income (1999)	\$22,272
% Persons Below Poverty (1999)	13.1%

Source: U.S. Census.

A. Housing

The most consistent and far-reaching system of government housing programs includes the Public Housing program, the Project Based Section 8 program and the Tenant Based

3. Tenant Based Section 8 Housing

In the Tenant Based Section 8 program, a qualified tenant pays 30% of his or her income in rent to any landlord accepting a Section 8 voucher. HUD pays the remainder directly to the landlord. This subsidy moves with the tenant as opposed to remaining in the housing unit, as is the case with Project Based Section 8. The Tenant Based Program is managed by CMHA and housing units are distributed by lottery. The next lottery is expected to be held in 2006. There are 13,000 vouchers available in the greater Cleveland area and a current waiting list of 4,000 potential tenants. Between 300 and 500 new households receive vouchers each year. There is one point of access in Cleveland and a series of stringent requirements, including restrictions on criminal records.

4. The Gateway Program

The Gateway program is a good collaborative model, setting aside Section 8 vouchers specifically for disabled and homeless persons with the intake flow managed by Cleveland Housing Network, Emerald Development and Economic Network (EDEN), Inc.

5. Shelter Plus Care

Shelter Plus Care provides housing vouchers to those with a mental illness, alcohol or drug problem, or HIV/AIDS with similar rules as the Tenant Based Section 8 program. There are 1,050 vouchers in the Cleveland community, with 300 people on the waiting list. Approximately 100 people receive vouchers each year, but must have a support network to assist with the application and manage their care after placement. The sole access point in Cuyahoga County is EDEN, Inc.

6. EDEN Housing

EDEN, Inc. also manages EDEN Housing, a reserve of housing units for people with a disability, particularly the mentally ill. Community mental health agencies provide EDEN Housing residents additional support services. There are currently 250 units with 500 individuals on the EDEN Housing waiting list.

7. Housing Assistance Program

A third program under the direction of EDEN, Inc. is the Housing Assistance Program (HAP). HAP is reserved for those with a disability who can live with some degree of independence. The program capacity is 140 residents; 700 applicants remain on the waiting list.

8. Ohio Housing Trust Fund

Created in 1991, the Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF) provides flexible funding to a variety of housing related initiatives, including new housing construction, Habitat for Humanity, and housing repair. The Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) manages the fund. Previously, the Housing Trust Fund has been funded through the Ohio General Revenue Fund. Ohio Senate Bill 95, effective August 1, 2003, created a dedicated funding source by doubling most state recording and filing fees. The first \$50 million generated by this fee increase will fund the OHTF; any revenue above \$50 million will help balance the state budget.

9. Low Income Housing Tax Credit

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC) is a vehicle for stimulating the development of affordable housing. The LIHTC was created by the federal Tax-Reform Act of 1986 and extended by the Revenue Reconciliation Acts of 1989 and 1992 to encourage private sector investment in the construction and rehabilitation of housing for low- and

moderate- income families. The law gives states an annual tax credit allocation based on population.

The tax credits are awarded on a competitive basis to non-profit and for-profit sponsors of eligible housing projects. Awards are based on the criteria outlined in each state's Allocation Plan. Projects financed with tax-exempt bonds may be eligible for tax credits outside of the competitive process. Project sponsors, or in the case of syndication, investors, claim the tax credit on their federal income tax return.

A rental building that is to be occupied within two years after the allocation year and provides at least in part for low-income occupancy is eligible to receive a tax credit allocation. The low-income project must comply with a number of requirements regarding tenant income, maximum rent levels, and the percentage of low-income occupancy. The building must remain in compliance with these requirements for a minimum of fifteen years. To date, the program has financed over 20,000 projects representing over 1,000,000 units of affordable housing across the United States, including approximately 1,000 housing units in Cleveland.

B. Employment

1. Job Training

Various organizations and agencies provide job training for residents of Northeast Ohio. While some simply provide skills training in a particular area, others offer an array of services related to not only developing a job skill but addressing barriers to locating and retaining employment. These services range from General Educational Development (GED) programs, resume preparation, and dressing and cosmetic tips, to helping with transportation needs. Services may also

involve inter-personal skills, hints about punctuality, and coping with personal problems, including substance abuse.

2. High School Equivalency Programs

GED programs providing an alternative diploma are particularly important, as applicants without a high school diploma or a GED are at a disadvantage when competing for jobs. If employment is found, it is frequently temporary, paying minimum wage without benefits.

3. Day Care

Many homeless families depend on childcare services such as vouchers reducing the portion of costs born by low-income parents. The availability of vouchers and the amount of the co-pay depend on family income. Adults with children receiving public assistance and engaged in work, training or education activities are eligible to participate in Ohio's public childcare subsidy assistance program. Subsidies are available through a network of neighborhood family centers in Cleveland or through a telephone hotline.

4. Laborer Protections

In many cities, including Cleveland, local legislation prevents exploitation of homeless and other low-wage workers employed through temporary agencies. Unions, social services, day laborers, activists and religious organizations have formed a collaborative to construct a non-profit labor center to support employment searches and provide assistance in moving low-wage temporary workers to permanent employment. The model for an alternative temporary labor company is coordinated through the United Labor Agency. The model program for organizing and advocacy around problems facing the temporary laborers is through the Day Labor Organizing Committee (DLOC). The DLOC's non-profit alternative day labor

agency, the Hiring Hall, opened August 4, 2003, with a core of 25 laborers for a three-month trial period to demonstrate the viability of the system.

C. Policy

Citizen input into how public dollars are spent and policies are made is foundational to a vibrant democracy. However, policy decisions impacting affordable housing development and ending homelessness can be complicated, intricate and arcane.

1. Cuyahoga Affordable Housing Alliance

Organized discussions of housing and homelessness policy currently take place in Northeast Ohio through the monthly meeting of the Cuyahoga Affordable Housing Alliance (CAHA) at HUD's Cleveland office on the first Monday of the month.

2. Advocacy Groups

Advocacy groups and individuals work both locally and nationally to implement policies and legislation including new and dedicated sources of funding for local, state and national housing trust funds, and individual pieces of legislation detailed in Appendix A.

D. Social Services

1. Social Service Indexes

Existing social service agencies are indexed by First Call for Help through the Alliance of Information Referral Systems and 211 Ohio. These services include physical and mental health support organizations, as well as groups working with homeless individuals with specific needs: homeless

youth, the formerly incarcerated, homeless women, and homeless families.

2. Community Re-Entry

Community Re-Entry provides a range of services geared toward helping formerly incarcerated people successfully reintegrate into the community. Services include job readiness training and placement, case management and counseling, advocacy and public policy work, and prevention programs for at-risk youth. The Community Re-Entry Care Teams have employed ex-offenders to care for the elderly in CMHA buildings for over thirty years with enormous success.

a. Women's Re-Entry Network

Women's Re-Entry Network (WREN), a program of Community Re-Entry, provides a broad range of services including intensive case management, group and individual counseling, social support, GED tutoring, job readiness and placement assistance, creative writing, art therapy, parenting classes, anger management classes and information and referrals for housing, education and treatment to women who are re-integrating into society after incarceration. WREN also provides a range of individual and group support services to inmates in the Cuyahoga County Jail and Northeast Pre-Release Center.

3. Families United for Reform

Families United for Reform (FUR) is an advocacy group that aims to magnify the voice of the incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, and their families, to promote policy change and increased awareness. Additionally, a number of area social service and employment agencies, while not exclusively targeting ex-offenders, make a concerted effort to reach this population.

4. Health Care

Health care needs for the homeless population of Cleveland are currently met in several ways. The agencies that provide services to homeless persons, including Care Alliance, Free Clinic, the McCafferty Center, local hospitals, and Collinwood Health Center, do so in close proximity to several drop-in centers and emergency shelters, allowing the patients to access care with relative ease. Access is also enabled through on-site care provided at several of the drop-in centers and meal sites in Cleveland. The agencies that exist to serve the health care needs of the homeless community do not provide care based on ability to pay or insurance status. Services offered to the homeless community include: medical care, full dental services, gynecological care, health education, HIV/AIDS services, immunizations, case management, prescription drugs, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and laboratory services.

5. Social Service Organizations

Social service organizations also play a vital advocacy role, focusing on the preservation of existing housing, the development of affordable housing opportunities, and working with homeless persons to assure that they have access to housing. Grassroots organizing of tenants and homeless people allows those for whom the stakes are highest to be part of the decision making process. The empowerment of tenants and homeless persons is critical to the success of an apartment, emergency shelter, or social service program. Important projects include voter registration drives, education of citizens and community leaders, mobilization, and facilitating discussion among tenants and homeless persons. Model programs in Cleveland include the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless, the Homeless Grapevine, the Alliance of

Cleveland HUD Tenants, the Cleveland Tenants Organization.

6. Information Networks

The free exchange of information is equally important to ensure those in need of assistance and their representatives are aware of the problems and the possible solutions to immediate housing difficulties in the community. Outlets providing resource information include First Call for Help, a telephone system; and the Homeless Street Card, a one-page information guide of available programs that serve homeless persons.

7. Legal Services

Homeless persons or those at risk of becoming homeless may be in need of free legal services to avoid eviction, foreclosure, or to be represented in domestic or other matters. Legal Aid, Christian Legal Services, and Homeless Legal Assistance provide free legal services, including assistance with social security, Medicare and other entitlement programs. The most effective legal aid programs include clinics located in facilities frequented by homeless persons. The clinic staff conducts an intake for specialized attorneys to provide follow-up services. A model program in Cuyahoga County is Cleveland Homeless Legal Assistant Program (CHLAP), a joint project of the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless and the Cuyahoga County Bar Association.

8. Transitional Housing

Transitional Housing is defined by HUD as housing occupied by an individual for no less than four months and no more than two years. Comprehensive services are needed to move the individual or family into permanent stable housing. The case management plan should protect the individual or family's privacy. They should

be offered a social service contract separate from their housing contract, ideally a lease for their housing that is not tied to social services. Programs that stand out in Cuyahoga County include Family Transitional Housing, Y-Haven, and Transitional Housing, Inc.

9. Emergency Shelter

HUD defines Emergency Shelter as a thirty-to-ninety-day, time-limited housing facility. The facility should assess and document the individual or family's needs and develop a case plan capable of quickly moving the household into stable housing. The emergency shelter should offer social services, be accessible 24 hours a day, and allow the participant a sense of empowerment. The shelter should not stifle the resident with rules, but should provide a hand up while the individual quickly works their way back into stability. Emergency shelters operate more effectively with smaller resident to staff ratios and specialized populations. For example, a shelter specifically for those with a mental illness makes it easier for staff to become well versed and trained in serving a handicapped population. The Disabled Men's Shelter on Payne Avenue in Cleveland and the 2100 Lakeside Salvation Army shelter provide quality services.

10. Substance Abuse Rehabilitation

Alcohol and drug programs across the country have spent years debating the best way to assist people in moving to sobriety. The model programs involve a residential setting that does not require sobriety when the individual walks in the door, but can quickly move the individual to sober living. The best programs allow for relapse with increased restrictions rather than termination. Another mark of a quality program is sustained contact with the individual for at least one year to prevent

relapse from stress or loneliness. A model program in Cleveland is Stella Maris, though access to the substance abuse rehabilitation network by homeless persons is severely constrained by the limiting of beds to the formerly incarcerated, the inability of many homeless persons to pay for rehabilitation programs, and a lack of physical space for additional patients. The Free Clinic and Recovery Resources also provide quality services.

E. Quality of Life

1. Community Voice Mail

The Community Voice Mail program often serves as critical link in a homeless person's efforts to find housing, work, and other sources of help. Homeless persons provide a telephone number their contacts may call to leave a message. Simply having a phone number removes some of the stigma a homeless person may feel when trying to maintain contact with others, including prospective employers, housing leads, agency contacts, and friends and family.

2. Schools for Homeless Children

Federal and state law guarantees a child the right to maintain enrollment at the school attended prior to becoming homeless. In most cities, one organization coordinates the homeless children's' access to school, providing transportation, tutoring, collection of school records, and assure compliance with the law. They provide homelessness education to teachers and parents, and assure that the child's education does not suffer when their housing is lost. A model program in Northeast Ohio is the Cleveland Public School's Project ACT.

3. Food Distribution

The system for distribution of food aid in Cuyahoga County involves significant coordination. Food is donated or purchased by the Food Bank and sold or provided on a formula basis to pantries and soup kitchens in Cuyahoga County. An extensive network of neighborhood organizations and churches coordinate the food needs of those living below poverty. Each residence or address

has a pantry that provides several days worth of food. Churches, salvation army centers, and food pantries throughout the city offer individuals and families regularly scheduled hot and nutritionally balanced meals. Programs that coordinate the food needs of the Cleveland community include the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, and the Hunger Network in cooperation with the Cleveland Food Bank.

IV. FUNDING AND SERVICE GAPS

A. Housing

1. Affordable Housing

A house or apartment is considered affordable under federal standards if the resident pays no more than 30% of his or her income toward a mortgage or rent payment. However, testimony before the Cleveland City Council on January 9th and at the February 7th, 2003, Summit indicates that 25% of income is a more realistic standard. In Ohio, a low income household, earning \$17,251 per year, or 30% of the median income of \$57,503 per year, should pay no more than \$431 a month; However, the fair market rent for a two bedroom unit is \$613 a month. It is estimated that low-income households in the U.S. spend an average of 49% of their income on housing.⁹

a. HUD

Preservation of Public Housing, Project Based Section 8 and Tenant Based Section 8 housing units is important, especially the Project Based program, which has seen many attempts over the last five years to diminish its housing stock. Expansion of these programs is even more important, as the total amount of these units does not come close to meeting the existing need. There are also substantial waiting lists and delays in accessing these housing programs. Section 8 voucher applicants may wait as long as four years before receiving their voucher. The Project Based Section 8 Program properties are administered by hundreds of landlords throughout the community with many different application standards and points of entry, a source of further confusion and delay.

b. Preference for Homeless Applicants

Applicants to subsidized housing programs are ranked on the waiting list according to a series of preferences, including homelessness. The preference for homeless applicants must be protected to alleviate often-lengthy waiting periods.

c. Security Deposits

Under current laws, landlords may charge tenants holding Section 8 vouchers the full security deposit, an often-insurmountable financial hurdle. Recently cut financial assistance to help homeless persons meet security deposit requirements must be reinstated. Public officials must also implement a standardized policy regulating the amount a landlord may charge in a security deposit for those receiving subsidy assistance

d. Rent Increases

Another contributing factor to homelessness is the fact that rent payments increase annually while wages or fixed incomes remain constant. An individual cannot pay more in rent if he or she is not earning more money. These annual increases leave individuals and their families vulnerable to homelessness.

2. Emergency Shelters

Emergency shelters are chronically underfunded and unable to meet demand for their services. In April 2003, the men's emergency shelter at 2100 Lakeside Avenue in Cleveland housed 600 homeless men in a single night, a record for any shelter in the Cleveland area. Additional funding, staff, and physical space are required to accommodate the need for emergency shelter.

⁹ National Low Income Housing Coalition. *Homeless in Cleveland (2002)*, available at <<http://www.nlihc.org>> (last visited Nov. 7, 2002).

3. National Housing Trust

There are various proposals to create a National Housing Trust that would serve as a permanent source of dedicated funding for the preservation and development of affordable housing. It is recommended that each State provide a permanent dedicated revenue source for a State Housing Trust, and that each city and county develop supplementary housing trust funds.

4. Housing Information Center

A housing information center needs to be developed in order to match individuals in need of housing with landlords that offer affordable and/or subsidized housing. This facility would feature available housing and other services that exist in the community, augment the First Call for Help Services, and provide a centralized referral service for homeless persons.

5. Vacant Building Program

Tools should be developed to enhance the ability of communities to utilize existing building space. Through such tools, city officials could redevelop the large number of vacant buildings in Cleveland and some of the surrounding area (12% of the buildings in Cleveland), by sponsoring a sweat equity program in which buildings are rehabilitated and ultimately owned by groups of homeless persons given a limited period of time to bring the buildings up to housing standards. This would function similar to a Habitat for Humanity program for single adults. An oversight agency would coordinate ownership and furnish building supplies. Individuals might then have the option of residing in these buildings while they are renovated.

6. Specialized Housing Services

a. Subsidized Housing Units

There are gaps in the provision of subsidized housing due to lengthy wait lists. All units

need to be occupied, resulting in a zero vacancy rate, and there is a need for more housing vouchers.

b. Permanent Supportive housing

Permanent rental housing with accessible social services is an effective model to permanently house the most marginalized homeless population and reduce homeless recidivism. Although there are many special needs housing facilities in Northeast Ohio, there is limited space for the estimated 3,800 long-term homeless individuals.

Efforts to develop supportive housing in the Cleveland area include a plan to develop 1,000 units over the next five years targeting those who have had repeated experiences with homelessness or have spent a full year on the streets. The plan would be to offer housing and then provide social service contact in hopes of building a relationship with the individual while they are in housing. Locally, the initiative is called Housing First and is led by Sisters of Charity and The Enterprise Foundation. Currently, a pipeline for permanent supportive housing projects is in development.

7. Continuum of Care

Continuum of Care is a federally funded community plan to organize and provide housing and homelessness services. HUD requirements, including the Continuum of Care mandate that 30% of the funds must support permanent housing, do not allow federal funding to reach qualified programs in need of financial support.

8. Predatory Lending

Predatory lenders offer loans with unnecessarily high interest rates, balloon payments, and inflated lender fees to individuals that often result in the individual losing his or her home. Many low-income individuals, some living on fixed incomes, fall prey to these lending practices.

B. Employment

1. Living Wage

Not only do individuals need secure employment, they need to receive a living wage. The amount a full-time worker must earn to afford a two-bedroom unit at fair market rate in Ohio is approximately \$11.79 per hour, and \$14.38 per hour for Cuyahoga County.¹⁰ That is 229% above minimum wage. Federal legislation must ensure a living wage tied to regional housing costs for all workers.

2. Temporary Agencies

Many individuals experiencing homelessness use temporary agencies to find employment. An alternative infrastructure that would allow individuals to find permanent, stable employment would be an ideal solution for both employers and unemployed individuals.

3. Employment Rules

Employment rules need to be enforced. Homeless individuals, who often work through Day Labor Agencies, need to have the same protections that other employed individuals have, including OSHA, EEOC, and U.S. Department of Labor Wage & Hour Division regulations. Day Labor Agencies need to be required to pay a living wage and offer benefits to their employees.

Existing programs, including the Workforce Investment Act and the One Stop Centers that assist displaced workers in improving their skills and finding employment, do not adequately serve the homeless populations in most cities. Training and services tailored to homeless individuals must be included in these programs.

4. Criminal Records

Chronic homelessness is often inextricably linked to the revolving door of incarceration. Having a criminal record makes it more difficult to obtain employment and housing, while homelessness constitutes a barrier to progress. Substance abuse and mental health issues further complicate ex-offenders' struggles. Due to inadequate pre-release planning and sparse re-entry resources, most ex-offenders released from state prisons and county or city jails do not return to a stable residence.

5. Day Care

Affordable, quality day care is a must for any family with children under 12. Without such care, stable employment is difficult, if not impossible. In addition to the issues of cost and trained personnel, day care facilities should be easily accessible, ideally located on-site at the parent's place of employment, operate multiple shifts, and care for children of all ages.

6. Lack of Permanent Mailing Address

Many jobs require individuals have a residential address, so it is difficult for homeless individuals to obtain employment. Many employers will not accept shelters as permanent mailing addresses. An expansion of the voice mail system and the assignment of post office boxes to homeless persons would alleviate this problem.

¹⁰ National Low Income Housing Coalition. *Out of Reach (2002)*, available at <<http://www.nlihc.org/>> (last visited Aug. 12, 2003).

C. Policy

1. Funding Sources

Due to recent cuts in the federal and state budgets, many programs have lost funding. A secure, dedicated funding source at all levels of government is needed, so that these important programs can continue and expand their services to help homeless individuals. Currently, there is no consistent revenue source for homeless and affordable housing programs at the local or state level. There is a need for a housing trust fund at the state, federal, and local level to preserve and expand affordable housing opportunities.

2. Local Coordination

There is a need for coordination of homeless services and affordable housing funding in order to relieve the burden of fundraising so that agencies can concentrate on moving people to stability. One entity should coordinate funding local efforts to reduce the number of homeless persons in Greater Cleveland. With increasing demands on public/private partnerships, finding sustainable funding sources, and providing matching dollars, one agency needs to coordinate this effort.

3. Child Support Enforcement

Child Support Enforcement laws need to be re-examined. Individuals who become homeless often fall behind on their payments. Courts frequently need to re-assess the individual's debt and financial situation so that a new payment plan can be created if appropriate. If a custodial parent is receiving cash assistance, the judge loses authority over the payment plan and this causes some individuals to acquire large debt and become homeless.

4. Standardized Definitions

A standardized definition of homelessness is needed to address the confusion created by the multiple definitions currently in use. The Department of Education's definition of "homeless youth" embedded in the McKinney Act has a more encompassing definition that should be expanded to serve as the universal definition of youth and adult homeless persons for all government entities. This definition, which defines a homeless individual as one who lacks a stable and adequate nighttime residence or has a primary nighttime residency that is a supervised private or public temporary shelter, a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or any public or private place not designed to serve as primary nighttime accommodations, is already in use by many state and local education boards and educational service agencies.

Funding of homeless services is also restricted by these definitional disparities. Donors and agencies providing funding tend to use strict categories for grants. Flexibility is needed to enable individuals who fall into more than one category, such as being both a victim of domestic violence and homeless, to receive financial assistance.

5. Entitlement Programs

Entitlement programs such as Social Security Insurance (SSI) need to make the application process more accessible and efficient. Individuals often have to wait a year or more to receive disability benefits due to denials and appeals, and the local government must cover the financial burden in the interim. The system must also accommodate those experiencing homelessness and offer assistance in finding and maintaining housing.

6. State Discharge Policies

The State of Ohio, which has oversight of hospitals, institutions, and prisons, needs to create and implement a discharge policy for individuals so that they do not become homeless. The state needs to contribute funds so that these individuals move from the hospital, institution, or prison into a stable residence rather than an emergency shelter.

7. Legal Protections

The Justice Department should monitor and assist local jurisdictions to investigate, prosecute, and prevent hate crimes or municipalities attempting to criminalize homelessness.

D. Social Services

1. Health Services

The health services infrastructure must be reorganized and expanded to meet the demand. Services and follow-up care should be coordinated at a central location and managed by one agency for an individual patient. The current volume of patients exceeds the capacity of the delivery system.

a. Universal Health Care

Single payer universal health care will ensure that all Americans have adequate health care regardless of housing status.

b. Mental Health

Access to mental health services must be need-based and not simply a reaction to what is perceived as a threat to self or others. Depression, personality disorders and post-traumatic stress need the same type of counseling services as are provided in the more affluent parts of our society. There is a need to establish assisted-living recuperative care facilities for those homeless individuals who require medical,

mental health and/or addiction services, as well as supportive housing for those with recurring or permanent disabilities.

c. Physical Health

Affordability should never prohibit either mental or physical health care. There should be universal access to comprehensive, affordable, quality health care through strengthening and expanding health care for the homeless and ensuring the presence of mainstream health care programs for the homeless population.

Access to prescription drugs and eligibility levels for Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) should include all persons at 200% of poverty or below. Initial application and re-enrollment processes for Medicaid programs must be streamlined while ensuring ongoing access to all aspects of comprehensive health care for homeless persons.

d. Substance Abuse

Programs must be available to address both short- and long-term recovery from alcohol and drug abuse. Dedicated rehabilitation beds are needed. While faith-based programs are helpful to many, recovery programs should also be available to those who would not be compelled toward spiritually grounded programs. Individuals who are addicted to substances need to receive treatment so that they can overcome their addictions and move towards stability. If these issues are not addressed, stability will not be possible. Residential treatment should be available on demand by those in need, and not only for those coming out of jail or with insurance. After detoxification and treatment, alcohol and drug caseworkers should work to stabilize an individual by assisting with housing and periodic support services.

2. Time-Limited Housing

a. Emergency Shelters

A significant lack of emergency shelters exists in Greater Cleveland. Although more shelters are not the answer to ending homelessness, the systems that discharge individuals need to become more active in providing emergency housing. Shelters in Cleveland are consistently full. On any given night in the Cleveland area there are approximately 4,000 homeless individuals; however, there are only approximately 2,000 shelter beds. The systems that refer people to the shelters, including hospitals, jails, prisons, mental health institutions, and treatment centers, need to be engaged in providing safe havens, pay-to-stay facilities, and short-term and transitional shelters. Residents of emergency shelters also need to become more actively involved in the decision making process.

b. Transitional Housing

Hospitals, corrections institutions, mental health facilities and other programs from which participants might “graduate” to homelessness should participate in providing or funding transitional housing for their clients who leave the program. Such transitional shelters should require a housing lease for the residents. As with emergency shelters, the residents must be empowered to become involved in decision-making.

3. Group Specific Concerns

a. Youth

Programs are needed for homeless youth. Services need to be available to assist youth who are living on the streets so they can be placed into a safe environment. In many cases, youth do not trust existing programs or providers and need to have specialized care in order to help with residential housing and job counseling. Youth graduating from the foster care system require dedicated resources and staff.

b. People with a Criminal Record

Employment prospects for ex-offenders are slim. While several area agencies provide job readiness and placement assistance, placement rates for persons with criminal records are low due to the current competitiveness of the job market and employer reluctance to hire ex-offenders. Extensive employer education on the plight of ex-offenders and available incentives (such as bonding and tax write-offs) for hiring ex-offenders is needed. Legal obstacles to hiring ex-offenders should be reviewed, especially where blanket prohibitions are concerned. Where possible, a move toward case-by-case restrictions should be made.

c. Victims of Domestic Violence

Homeless victims of domestic violence are often unable to access support programs due to system capacity restraints. Domestic violence is often a key factor contributing to homelessness, especially for women, and access to specialized support services is vital to their re-entry into safe and stabilized housing.

d. Military Personnel and Families

Programs are needed to assist individuals in the military and their family members. Service personnel and their families need help both when they are overseas and when they return, so that these individuals will not become homeless.

4. The Role of Social Service Agencies

a. Agencies

All publicly funded institutions providing residential care, treatment or custody must be required to adopt and implement policies that prohibit discharges into homelessness. Residential care and treatment facilities should also access all available entitlements for their residents upon discharge. Agencies must also support the broader goals of ensuring sufficient jobs and adequate

incomes, affordable housing, universal health insurance, accessible health care, and other community services. Finally, social services agencies must be active in establishing assisted-living recuperative care facilities and supportive housing for homeless individuals who require medical, mental health and/or addiction services.

In addition to more social service programs, all agencies that work with homeless individuals need to be held accountable for the services that they provide. A standardization of policies, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of programs are needed. Uniform standards for shelters and drop-in centers need to be established to prevent improper discharge, violation of privacy, and alienation of homeless people from those who are funded to help.

b. Information/Resource Center

There is a need for an expanded information and resource center to include a physical location that an individual can visit for comprehensive information to augment existing services through Alliance of Information Referral Systems and 2-1-1 in Cleveland. Including a housing component in this information system could match individuals in need of housing with landlords offering affordable and/or subsidized housing. Agencies that provide services for individuals experiencing homelessness must be better coordinated, including enhancing their intake system to redirect individuals in need of services to other appropriate agencies.

c. The Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has an opportunity to establish a revenue stream to support health care, outreach programs, social workers, alcohol and drug rehabilitation, mental health services, care for AIDS patients, and the other factors that lead people to

homelessness or prevent them from moving back to stable housing. Through a dynamic connection and dialogue with service agencies and homeless advocates, HHS can engage in a broad and open request for proposals to provide support services to homeless people.

d. Preventive Measures

Social service agencies need to become involved in preventative measures taken before individuals become homeless. Programs working on eviction prevention and diversion and on debt counseling need additional funding. Public housing agencies need to take a proactive role in preventing homelessness by deploying social service staff to attempt to help households when they receive an eviction notice, but before they are put on the street.

5. Transportation

Homeless individuals have a difficult time affording transportation. Affordable transportation needs to be available so that individuals can get to and from work, medical appointments, and other necessary commitments.

6. Legal Services

The demand for free legal services for homeless clients outpaces the number of lawyers available to assist and the funding for free legal aid programs. Additionally, the ability of legal aid societies to advocate for their clients has been curtailed by 42, U.S.C.A § 2996e, a law passed in 1996 forbidding Legal Aid and other government funded legal service agencies from using government funds to challenge or attempt to change any existing legislation. Among the prohibited activities are class-action lawsuits, lobbying legislators, providing aid to certain immigrants, seeking lawyers' fees and representing prison inmates.

E. Quality of Life

1. Service Center

Homeless individuals should be able to receive mail at shelters and drop-in centers and rent mailboxes, and they need help registering to vote. Homeless individuals also have a difficult time acquiring identification because they do not have a permanent address. Other issues that hinder homeless individuals from regaining stability include lack of telephone access and voicemail, computer access, storage, and laundry facilities. It would be helpful for homeless individuals if a twenty-four hour center that provided these needed amenities were available.

2. Empowerment

Homeless persons should be involved in the creation, development, and oversight of social services. Their empowerment to make decisions and secure employment and services is vital to their re-entry to permanent housing. Education in conflict mediation and resolution can be a powerful tool and cohesive force for homeless individuals. There should be a concerted effort to assure that homeless persons are building communities and creating facilities that serve their best interests. There also needs to be a forum where homeless persons can meet to address the problems facing their community.

3. Voting

A critical link in the empowerment of the homeless population is their inclusion in local, statewide, and federal elections. Permanent residency must not be a prerequisite for voter registration, and registering officials must be aware of the difficulties homeless individuals may face when voting. The homeless population must also be educated about their right and ability to vote. Homeless advocacy agencies could be helpful in facilitating voter registration,

transportation and participation on voting days.

4. Community Outreach

Along with these difficulties, individuals who are homeless also must deal with insensitivity from police officers, and a lack of respect from the population in general. Police officers and communities need to be educated about homelessness. Homeless persons must be treated with the dignity afforded all citizens.

5. Hate Crimes

The Justice Department and local police must investigate hate crimes and violent acts against individuals experiencing homelessness. On August 9, 2003, four teenagers carrying a stun gun attacked six homeless persons in Cleveland. Ultimately, homeless individuals should be included as a protected class under state and federal hate crime statutes.

6. Community Opposition

Opposition to the provision of services to the homeless must be addressed. Programs that counter the “Not In My Backyard” attitude should be created to make housing and service programs for the homeless more widely available. Leadership and political will is needed so that programs and services are made available throughout the community to assist individuals experiencing homelessness and awareness of these programs and their positive impacts reach the general population.

7. Accountability

The decentralized structure of homelessness service and advocacy organizations could benefit from an independent oversight agency that provides a standard grievance procedure for all service agencies, oversees community shelters and services, and

ensures follow-up services and support for past and present program participants.

8. Identification Problems

Homeless persons may not have access to identification, due to prohibitive costs and processes. Cleveland Vital Statistics and other local bureaus should be more aware and knowledgeable of identification procedures and assist homeless individuals in obtaining proper identification. Fees associated with obtaining a birth certificate should be waived for homeless persons.

9. Community Voicemail

The current Community Voicemail system serves 2,200 individuals in the Cleveland area. Expanding this system to reach more homeless individuals would support searches for permanent housing, employment, and ultimate re-entry into the larger community.

10. Storage

Homeless individuals struggle to find a place to store important documents and possessions. Existing storage facilities could offer cheaper rentals to homeless individuals. Alternately, sites dedicated to providing storage for homeless persons could be created.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A national homelessness policy must address the root causes of homelessness to prevent future homelessness and care for currently homeless persons by addressing the four primary gaps identified in this report: inadequate funding; insufficient program and personnel capacity; a lack of accountability and coordination between complementary services; and an absence of federal legislation addressing homelessness. These gaps remain significant barriers to reducing and eliminating homelessness in the United States.

A. Preventing Future Homelessness

1. Preventive Measures

Individuals and families at risk of becoming homeless must be offered assistance to ensure they maintain housing. There is often a window between when a household receives an eviction or foreclosure notice and the loss of housing during which social service and public housing agencies could intervene to prevent homelessness.

Recommendation: Provide increased funding for homelessness prevention programs to enable a more proactive approach.

2. National Commission on Homelessness

An independent government entity dedicated to researching, developing and advising national homelessness policy could coordinate efforts to reduce homelessness across geographic regions as well as branches and levels of government.

Recommendation: Create an independent National Commission on Homelessness to oversee a national network of state and regional coordinating boards comprised of homeless advocates, public officials, social service providers, and current and formerly homeless persons.

3. Affordable Housing

Providing sufficient, adequate, affordable housing is central to ending homelessness. Applicants to existing subsidized housing programs, including Public Housing, Project Based Section 8 Housing, and Tenant Based Section 8 Housing, may wait up to four years before placement.

Recommendation: First, fully fund existing subsidized housing programs. Second, expand the affordable housing stock and funding for affordable housing, including subsidized housing units and vouchers, to meet the demand.

a. Affordable Housing Standards

HUD considers affordable housing any rental or mortgage payment no more than 30% of income. Testimony gathered at the Homelessness Summit and given before the Cleveland City Council indicate that 25% of income is a more realistic figure.

Recommendation: Lower the federal affordable housing standard set by HUD from 30% of income to 25% of income.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

b. National Housing Trust

A national housing trust could provide a permanent, steady source of funding for the development and preservation of affordable housing.

Recommendation: Enact federal legislation to create a National Housing Trust such as the proposed National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of 2003 (H.R. 1102).

c. Local Coordination of Funding

To allow agencies to focus on moving homeless persons to stability, funding efforts should be coordinated by a single regional entity.

Recommendation: Establish a single agency to coordinate local funding of efforts to reduce the number of homeless persons in Greater Cleveland.

d. Low Income Housing Tax Credit

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit is a valuable tool encouraging investment in affordable housing for low-income families and individuals.

Recommendation: Protect the Low Income Housing Tax Credit as a permanent resource for the development of affordable housing.

e. HUD Housing Residency Requirements

Public Housing, Project Based Section 8 and Tenant Based Section 8 housing residents must meet stringent residency requirements, including a prohibition of those with criminal records.

Recommendation: Relax HUD residency requirements to allow more homeless persons access to affordable housing.

f. Security Deposits

Individuals receiving housing subsidy assistance may be charged the full security deposit, preventing use of their subsidy.

Recommendation: Link security deposit costs to rental cost born by the resident and provide residents financial assistance for security deposits.

3. Predatory Lending

Legislation and law enforcement to halt predatory lending will prevent ballooning interest rates and unfair lending practices from forcing individuals to homelessness.

Recommendation: Enact federal legislation such as the Predatory Mortgage Lending Practices Reduction Act (H.R. 1663) to protect homebuyers from predatory lending practices.

4. Entitlement Programs

Individuals often wait a year or more to receive disability benefits from entitlement programs such as Social Security Insurance (SSI) due to complex application, denial, and appeal processes.

Recommendation: Streamline processes and assist homeless applicants in locating and maintaining housing.

5. Living Wage

A worker must earn 229% above minimum wage to afford a two-bedroom apartment in Northeast Ohio. Employees must be paid a living wage tied to regional housing costs.

Recommendation: Implement federal legislation, including The Living Wage, Jobs For All Act (H.R. 1040) to ensure all workers a living wage.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

6. Temporary and Day Labor Agencies

Many homeless persons employed through temporary or day laborer agencies experience exploitation and unfair labor practices. These laborers could benefit from an alternative infrastructure to place homeless persons and low-income laborers in stable employment

Recommendation: Create a network of day laborers working together towards positive change while establishing alternative hiring processes such as the Community Hiring Hall proposed in Cleveland.

7. Laborer Protections

Homeless, low-income, and day laborers must be protected from unfair labor practices and exploitation, including working without benefits or a living wage. Homeless laborers must also be protected by current OSHA, EEOC, and U.S. Department of Labor Wage & Hour Division regulations.

Recommendation: Enforce current employment protection rules while implementing protections specifically designed for day laborers through federal legislation including the Day Laborer Fairness and Protection Act (H.R. 2755).

8. Drug and Alcohol Substance Abuse Rehabilitation

Drug and Alcohol abuse often contribute to homelessness. Quality rehabilitation centers, for both short- and long-term rehabilitation with the funding and capacity to serve the homeless population, are critical to addressing a root cause of homelessness. Currently, most substance abuse program space is dedicated to patients referred by the corrections department.

Recommendation: Provide increased funding, physical space, and staffing

to quality substance abuse rehabilitation programs with beds dedicated to serving homeless patients.

9. Discharges into Homelessness

Many individuals discharged from jails, prisons, hospitals, mental health institutions, and treatment centers do not return to a stable residence. Often referred to emergency shelters, these individuals quickly move to homelessness.

Recommendation: Enact state and federal regulations prohibiting health care and penal institutions from discharging residents into homelessness.

10. Child Support Enforcement

Custodial parents entitled to child support and non-custodial parents mandated to pay child support must be monitored to ensure payments are made and neither parent incurs excessive debt and becomes homeless.

Recommendation: Re-examine child support enforcement laws to adjust payment plans according to each parent's debt and financial situation.

B. Caring for Current and Long-term Homeless Persons

1. Permanent Supportive Housing

For many of the 3,800 estimated long-term homeless in Northeast Ohio, permanent housing attached to social services is the most effective means of ensuring stable housing. Currently, there is no permanent supportive housing in Northeast Ohio, though local advocacy groups have created an initiative to develop supportive housing facilities.

Recommendation: Create permanent supportive housing facilities for those who have spent a full year without permanent housing or have repeatedly experienced homelessness.

2. Information Networks

Homeless persons must be able to access all available services. Referral centers capable of addressing multiple social service, health, legal, and economic issues will link homeless persons to the assistance needed to move each individual to permanent housing.

Recommendation: Create an information and referral service to ensure homeless persons access all available services.

3. Day Care

Any family with children under twelve must have access to day care. This is particularly crucial for homeless persons who do not have the option of leaving their children at emergency shelters.

Recommendation: Establish quality, easily accessible and affordable day care centers operating multiple shifts and caring for children of all ages.

4. Job Training and Education

Homeless persons unable to afford housing or maintain employment need job skills training and educational programs, including GED courses and specialized certificate programs. Additional job skills and further education can help homeless persons obtain employment and afford adequate housing.

Recommendation: Provide increased funding and program capacity for job skill training and education programs.

5. Health Care for Disabled Individuals

Many short- and long- term homeless persons affected by mental and physical health problems or substance abuse issues require health care. These individuals could be moved to permanent housing through a combination of easily accessible health care services for homeless persons, and supportive housing facilities for those homeless persons unable to live independently. Mental health parity laws, ensuring the same insurance coverage of mental health disorders and physical disorders, could also assist disabled homeless persons in meeting their health care needs.

Recommendation: Provide easily accessible health care to homeless persons, permanent supportive housing facilities for those unable to live independently, enact mental health parity laws to ensure coverage of mental health disabilities, and establish a dedicated revenue stream for health services through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

6. Universal Health Care

Federal legislation providing comprehensive, affordable health care to all Americans would ensure that homeless persons and persons at all income levels without regard to housing status, would have access to health care. Universal health care could also facilitate the transition from homelessness to permanent housing by ensuring health care continues when housing or employment is lost. It will also ensure that pre-existing health conditions do not stand in the way of a successful transition from homelessness to economic stability.

Recommendation: Enact federal legislation establishing a single-

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payer universal health care system. Current legislative proposals for universal health care include the United States National Health Insurance Act (H.R. 676).

7. Community Voicemail

The Community Voicemail program provides homeless persons a permanent telephone number allowing friends, family, and potential employers and landlords to leave voice messages.

Recommendation: Expand the Community Voicemail Program to serve all homeless persons.

8. Lack of Permanent Mailing Address

Many employers require job applicants have a residential address. Homeless persons who have no permanent mailing address must have a way to receive mail and an address to provide potential employers.

Recommendation: Require employers to accept emergency shelters as residential addresses and provide homeless persons with post office boxes.

9. Storage

Homeless persons often have no way of storing important documents and possessions, including birth certificates and valuables.

Recommendation: Provide homeless persons with inexpensive storage at existing facilities or establish sites dedicated to providing storage for homeless individuals.

10. Identification

Prohibitive costs and processes may prevent homeless persons from accessing identification such as drivers' licenses and birth certificates.

Recommendation: Waive fees associated with obtaining a birth certificate for homeless persons and educate Vital Statistics offices about homeless population needs.

11. Community Opposition

Opposition to emergency shelters, supportive housing, and public housing facilities remains a substantial barrier to addressing homelessness.

Recommendation: Establish homelessness education and awareness training to familiarize local officials, law enforcement agents, and residents, while removing some of the associated stigma. Enact legislation such as the A Living Wage, Jobs for All Act (H.R. 1040) affirming the basic human rights of homeless persons

12. Hate Crimes

Public officials and communities must be educated about homelessness, particularly the occurrence of hate crimes against homeless persons. The National Coalition for the Homeless ranked Ohio as the fourth most dangerous state for homeless persons between 1999 and 2002 with eleven separate incidents of violence in five cities.

Recommendation: The Justice Department and local law enforcement must investigate hate crimes against homeless persons. Include homeless persons among the classes protected under state and federal hate crimes legislation.

13. Legal Services

Current demand for legal services by homeless persons exceeds the available lawyers and capacity of Legal Aid and other free legal services. The services provided are also limited by legislation prohibiting any attempts to influence or challenge

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existing laws by legal aid societies using government funds.

Recommendation: Establish legal aid clinics in facilities frequently used by homeless persons to link clients with specialized attorneys providing follow-up services. Allow legal service providers to fully represent and advocate for their clients by amending or repealing 42, U.S.C.A § 2996e.

14. Youth

Homeless youth do not frequently trust or utilize existing programs. They also require specialized care, including assurance they continue to attend school.

Recommendation: Provide services to homeless youth, particularly those graduating from the foster care system. Enforce federal and state laws guaranteeing a child the right to maintain enrollment at the school attended prior to becoming homeless. Enact and support federal legislation protecting children, including the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

15. Victims of Domestic Violence

Victims of domestic violence, primarily women, are often unable to access support services due to a restrictive system capacity.

Recommendation: Expand and fully fund support programs for homeless victims of domestic violence.

16. Military Personnel, Families, and Veterans

Military personnel and their families require assistance during service and as veterans to assure housing is not lost. During the consolidation of Veteran's Administration

Hospital facilities, veterans' services must be protected.

Recommendation: Provide housing assistance to military personnel, veterans, and their families while ensuring no net loss of beds dedicated to serving veterans during the consolidation of veterans' services.

17. Standardized Definitions

There is no standard definition of homelessness, leading to confusion for government entities and social service providers. The lack of formal definition as well as an overlap of definitional categories also creates confusion when allocating funding; many homeless persons belong to more than one category, such as a victim of domestic violence who is also homeless.

Recommendation: Adopt the definition of "homeless youth" embedded in the McKinney act as a universal definition for homeless persons of all ages. Relax strict grant categories to allow homeless persons not in a specific category to access funding.

18. The Role of Social Service Agencies

Social service agencies work to support broad homelessness policy goals, including ensuring sufficient jobs and adequate incomes, affordable housing, universal health insurance, accessible health care, and other community services.

Recommendation: Pro-actively establish assisted-living recuperative care facilities and supportive housing, develop standardized procedures, and hold agencies accountable for their practices.

19. Transportation

It is often difficult for homeless persons to get to and from work and medical appointments without access to reliable transportation.

Recommendation: Provide reliable, affordable transportation to homeless persons.

20. Voting

Voting is critical to the empowerment of homeless persons. Many homeless persons are unaware of their right to vote and are unable to access voting booths during elections.

Recommendation: Educate homeless persons about their right to vote, provide transportation on voting days, and do not make permanent residency a pre-requisite for voter registration.

21. Vacant Building Program

Vacant buildings in Cleveland could be rehabilitated and owned by homeless persons to utilize the area's abandoned buildings while housing homeless persons.

Recommendation: Develop tools allowing communities to utilize existing building space for homeless persons.

22. Protect Homelessness Preferences

CMHA currently processes applications for subsidized housing based on a series of preferences that determine an individual's placement on the waiting list. The preference for homelessness allows some of the most disadvantaged applicants to receive housing more quickly.

Recommendation: Preserve the preference for homeless applicants to subsidized housing.

23. Emergency Shelters

Emergency shelters in Cleveland are continually filled to capacity. There are approximately 4,000 homeless persons each night in Cleveland with only 2,000 shelter beds.

Recommendation: Involve systems that refer individuals to shelters, including hospitals, jails, prisons, mental health institutions, and treatment centers, in providing short-term, transitional, and pay-to-stay shelter facilities.

APPENDIX A

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

The Northeast Ohio 10th District Homelessness Summit supports the adoption of new legislation and the support of current legislation to alleviate the identified service gaps on a national level.

<p><i>United States National Health Insurance Act</i> H.R. 676</p>	<p>Provides all residents of the United States health care including primary care and prevention, prescription drugs, emergency care, and mental health services through an expanded and improved Medicare system.</p>
<p><i>A Living Wage, Jobs For All Act</i> H.R. 1040</p>	<p>Asserts basic human rights such as the right to a living wage, right to housing, a right to health care, and a right to a decent standard of living for those unable to work.</p>
<p><i>1989 UN Convention On the Rights of the Child</i></p>	<p>Congress should be urged to ratify this convention offering protection and human rights to all children, including a permanent, stable residence.</p>
<p><i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)</i></p>	<p>Originally passed in 2001, No Child Left Behind reauthorized the McKinney-Veno Act providing education to homeless children and youth. The Act must now be fully implemented and fully funded</p>
<p><i>Predatory Mortgage Lending Practices Reduction Act</i> H.R. 1663</p>	<p>Protects homebuyers from predatory lending practices.</p>
<p><i>Bringing America Home Act</i></p>	<p>A comprehensive bill to be introduced in the 108th Congress that expands funding for affordable housing programs and homeless programs, protects day laborers, and protects the civil rights of individuals who are homeless.</p>
<p><i>National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of 2003</i> H.R. 1102</p>	<p>Legislation to establish a fund to provide for the development, rehabilitation, and preservation of decent, safe, and affordable housing for low-income families</p>
<p><i>Day Laborer Fairness And Protection Act</i> H.R. 2755</p>	<p>Protects day laborers from unfair labor practices and exploitation. H.R. 2755 was introduced in the 107th Congress and has been reintroduced in the 108th Congress as H.R. 2870.</p>

APPENDIX B

SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

The following agencies and individuals participated or were invited to participate in the Homelessness Summit survey, meetings, and drafting committee. The views expressed in this report are not necessarily the views of any listed individual or organization. Any omissions are unintentional. Organizations marked with an asterisk (*) participated in the drafting committee.

2100 Lakeside Emergency Shelter	The Cuyahoga Plan Of Ohio
Advisory Council on Senior and Adult Services	Day Laborer's Organization Committee*
AIDS Taskforce Of Greater Cleveland	Detroit Shoreway Community Development Corporation
Alexis Advisory Group	Disabled Men's Shelter Mental Health Services, Inc.
Alliance of Cleveland HUD Tenants	Domestic Violence Center
Antioch Baptist Church	EDEN Inc
Association Of Ohio Philanthropic Homes for the Aging	Enterprise Foundation
Bridgeway, Inc	Federation for Community Planning
Campaign for UN Reform	First Suburbs Consortium Development Council
Care Alliance	Founders Path
Carnegie West Branch Library	Franklin Circle Christian Church
Catholic Worker	From Thy Bounty
Center for Neighborhood Development	Glenville Community Center
Christian Home	Harbor Light Complex
Christian Legal Services	Office of Homeless Services Transitional Housing
Church in the City	Housing Research & Advocacy Center
City Mission	InterAct Cleveland
The Cleveland Foundation	Interagency Council on Homelessness
Cleveland City Council	Interfaith Hospitality Network
Cleveland Department Of Aging	Keating Center
Cleveland Department of Health and Public Safety	City of Lakewood
Cleveland Free Clinic	Lakewood Christian Service Center
Cleveland Housing Network	Lakewood Human Services
Cleveland Neighborhood Development Corporation	Legal Aid Society Of Cleveland
Cleveland Tenants Organization*	Levin College Of Urban Affairs
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio	Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Cosgrove Center	Lutheran Housing Corp
Cogswell Hall	Lutheran Metro Ministry
Commission on Catholic Community Action*	Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences
Community Partners for Affordably Accessible Healthcare	May Dugan Center*
Council on Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland*	Mental Health Services, Inc
Cuyahoga Community Land Trust	Merrick House
Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners	MHCL Community Services
Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission	Millennia Management
Cuyahoga Health and Nutrition	New Alternatives
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority	NHS of Cleveland
	Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless*
	Ohio Department Of Job and Family Services

Ohio Governor Robert Taft
 Ohio Rep. Michael DeBose
 Ohio Rep. Dean DePiero
 Ohio Rep. Annie Key
 Ohio Rep. Sally Conway Kilbane
 Ohio Rep. James Trakas
 Ohio Rep. Lance T. Mason
 Ohio Rep. Dale Miller
 Ohio Rep. Thomas Patton
 Ohio Rep. Michael Skindell
 Ohio Rep. Shirley Smith
 Ohio Rep. Claudette Woodard
 Ohio Senator Dan Brady
 Ohio Senator C.J. Prentiss
 Ohio Senator Eric Fingerhut
 Old Stone Church
 PASS Program Harbor Light Complex*
 Pilgrim Congregational Church
 Preserving Affordable Housing in Ohio
 The Salvation Army
 St. Augustine Center
 St. Herman's House of Hospitality
 St. Ladislas
 Savip
 Sisters of Charity Foundation
 South Westerly Tenants Organization
 Spanish American Committee

Transitional Housing*
 West Haven Youth Center
 West Side Catholic Center
 West Side Ecumenical Ministry
 West Side Rental Housing Collaborative*
 Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging
 City of Westlake
 Whitman House
 Women for Women
 Women's Re-Entry Network*
 United Church Of Christ
 United Labor Agency
 United Way Services
 U.S. Department Of Housing and Urban
 Development
 U.S. Rep. Sherrod Brown
 U.S. Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones
 U.S. Rep. Steven LaTourette
 U.S. Senator Mike DeWine
 U.S. Senator George Voinovich
 VA Medical Center
 Veterans Service Commission
 Volunteers of America
 Y-Haven
 YMCA
 Zelma George Shelter Harbor Light Complex

Municipalities in Ohio's 10th Congressional District

Bay Village
 Berea
 Brooklyn
 Brooklyn Heights
 Brook Park
 Cleveland
 Cuyahoga Heights.
 Fairview Park
 Garfield Heights
 Glenwillow
 Independence
 Lakewood
 Linndale

Middleburg Heights
 Newburgh Heights
 North Olmstead
 Oakwood
 Olmstead Falls
 Olmstead Township
 Parma
 Parma Heights.
 Rocky River
 Seven Hills
 Strongsville
 Valley View
 Walton Hills
 Westlake

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY

<i>Community Voicemail</i>	The Community Voicemail System provides homeless persons a constant telephone number potential employers, landlords, friends, and family may call to leave voice messages.
<i>Continuum of Care (COC)</i>	COC is a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet specific needs as homeless persons move to stable housing and self-sufficiency. COC is managed and coordinated by Cuyahoga County's Office of Homeless Services and meets federal guidelines to ensure Cuyahoga County receives HUD funding.
<i>Day Laborer</i>	A Day Laborer is a type of temporary employee whose labor is contracted on a day-by-day basis.
<i>Emergency Shelter</i>	Any facility that provides a homeless person a short-term place to sleep, usually for 30 to 90 days. Shelters provide protection from the elements, violence, abuse, neglect, and substance abuse while the resident plans a move to permanent housing. There are 18 providers at 25 sites with 875 beds in the Cleveland area for approximately 26,000 homeless in Cuyahoga County.
<i>Homeless Prevention</i>	Efforts include short-term subsidies to defray rent and utility arrearage, security deposit/first month rent, mediation for landlord – tenant disputes, legal services, payments to prevent foreclosure on a home, etc.
<i>Housing Trust Fund</i>	A housing trust fund is a permanent, dedicated source of funding for the development of affordable housing. Housing Trusts can be established nationally, within each state, and locally.
<i>Living Wage</i>	A wage that allows any individual working forty hours per week to afford at least the cheapest form of housing available in his or her geographic region.
<i>Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)</i>	The LIHTC was created by the Tax-Reform Act of 1986 and extended by the Revenue Reconciliation Acts of 1989 and 1992 to encourage private sector investment in the construction and rehabilitation of housing for low- and moderate- income families through a tax credit distributed by each state.
<i>Market Rate</i>	Housing products can range from single-family home ownership to multi-family rental units and typically target income levels from 60% of area median income and above.
<i>Permanent Rental Housing</i>	Tenants are offered supportive services and affordable rental units. The goal is to keep safe, decent, and sanitary housing costs below 35% of household income. Typically developed by non-profits, financing tools include Low Income Housing Tax Credits, HOPE VI, 202, HOME and CDBG funds. The West Side Rental Collaborative production goal is to develop 500 permanent rental units for very low-income households and people with special needs by December 31, 2006.

<i>Permanent Supportive Housing</i>	Service-enriched permanent housing for long-term homeless persons that provides readily available services designed to facilitate long-term tenancy and a skill base that helps assure self-sufficiency. The Housing First production goal is to develop 1,000 units in Cleveland by 2008.
<i>Predatory Lending</i>	Lending practices including loan flipping, excessive fees, lending to unsuitable borrowers, and outright fraud. Predatory lending is often referred to as “subprime mortgage lending.”
<i>Project Based</i>	Project Based Section 8 housing assistance requires the resident to pay 30% of income toward rent with government funding through HUD financing the remaining rental costs. This subsidy assistance is attached to specific housing units.
<i>Public Housing</i>	Subsidized rental units owned and managed by Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) for very low-income households. CMHA has an extensive waiting list of 8,900 for its 9,800 units.
<i>Single Room Occupancy</i>	Efficiency style units designed for single individuals that may or may not require linkage to social services. Cleveland has lost its supply of units in this market must develop new units with reputable owners.
<i>Temporary Agencies</i>	Temporary agencies provide short-term staffing. There is no federal definition of a temporary agency, however, temporary agencies may be defined as any individual or agency that recruits workers who then become its legal employees. These employees are then contracted to a third-party employer who utilizes their labor.
<i>Transitional Housing</i>	A type of supportive housing designed to assist formerly homeless residents in regaining stability and learning skills necessary to live in permanent housing. Typical programs provide housing for up to 24 months and may focus on specific populations such as women, men, or ex-offenders. There are 18 providers at various sites managing 562 units in the Cleveland area.
<i>Voucher Programs</i>	Many voucher programs reserve housing assistance for specific demographic groups, including the mentally and physically disabled and the formerly incarcerated.