

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT: OUTREACH, TREATMENT AND SERVICES

### I. Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Stakeholder Meetings

#### Where This Stakeholder Input Came From?

In 2005 the State of California Inter-Agency Council on Chronic Homelessness requested state government departments to solicit stakeholder input to assess current needs. Responding to the request, HCD held three stakeholder meetings throughout the State:

Tuesday, November 15, 2005	1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	San Francisco, California
Thursday, November 17, 2005	1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Los Angeles, California
Monday, November 28, 2005	1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Sacramento, California

The following questions were presented to the Department:

1. What are state agencies doing well and what should continue?
2. What is not working well and should be changed?
3. What should be done that isn't being done?
4. What changes, improvements, etc., do we need from the federal government?

- Multiple sources of funding are a problem - different criteria, schedules, etc. Combine into one housing plus services program. Need one-stop for provider grants.
- New McKinney-Vento funding needs a new allocation formula to better serve the poorest counties. Rural areas have limited services for the homeless.
- Increase HHS and Veterans' Services funding.
- Create local political will to serve the chronically homeless through a public education campaign to end stigmatization of mental illness.
- Protect existing CoC funding.
- Don't punish agencies that serve the most needy and costliest populations.
- Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) may not serve all homeless populations needing assistance.
- Need more residential alcohol and drug treatment funding.
- Support existing local plans and business plans for homelessness response. Several exist. Help them or they will lose momentum.
- In rural counties they don't do a lot because they don't have to. Want rural counties to do more.
- Coordinate and centralize federal funding services at the local level for HUD and health services.
- Provide State funding for HMIS.
- Increase consumer involvement in State and federal planning processes and service delivery.

- Improve level of systems integration. Recognize that housing is a recovery issue under Prop 63.
- Include rural, suburban, ethnic diversity groups' needs in 10-year plan.
- Need a workable "one-stop" system. Make it more responsive to the homeless population. Access one-stop services through the year-round shelter. Use existing systems and break down barriers to their use.
- Need more uniformity in how data is tracked. Some agencies use HMIS, but not all. Things need to link. Develop more unified, consolidated HMIS with integrated reporting requirements among State agencies.
- Increase HUD bonus for projects that participate in HMIS.
- HUD should fund Continuum of Care planning and data collection.
- Encourage public health, mental health, social services, housing and the legal system to work together. Archive their best results to inform other providers.
- Let service agencies share client information, with clients' permission. The work necessary to determine eligibility could be reduced.
- Urge the State to think carefully about youth. Give youth Interagency Council representation and outreach. We need to think of youth as being chronically homeless. They are an important population to reach out to to prevent chronic homelessness.
- Non-profits are lagging in technology. They are being forced by HMIS to become more technologically competent. Need more money for computers, etc.
- Could improve AIDS testing and services for women.
- Money is slow to come. Need well-rounded support and faster funding from funding sources.
- Need focus on shelter-resistant clients.
- Community based representatives should be included on Interagency Council.
- Address mentally ill homeless on a one-to-one basis to overcome their paranoia and fears of "big brother."
- Create better partnerships between housing and mental health services. Require counties to contribute Prop 63 dollars for operating costs and services in state-funded housing developments.
- The focus on chronic homelessness may mean needs of families not considered as strongly. Definition of chronic homelessness should include youth, families and those exiting institutions.
- Do not limit interagency participation (stakeholders) to those who can make decisions. Include consumers and local community-based organizations.
- Change the federal definition of homeless to include people who aren't on the street but don't have a stable permanent home.
- Have Governor issue an Executive Order w/ ground rules for State's homelessness efforts, to extend policy past his term. Formalize State's program.
- Try to equalize services across the state. Some cities or areas have more services and are magnets for the homeless, while others have very few. Give smaller or rural areas as much chance per capita as more populous areas to get services.

- Definition of federal homeless should include those in motels. Definition needs to be uniform among other programs.
- HUD's definition of homeless should change to that of the Dept. of Education, to include families and the chronic homeless.
- State should advocate to feds to keep McKinney-Vento service funding.
- Pull together a State Continuum of Care. There are 24 counties not covered by CoC. Money left on the table.
- Address mental health needs of vets coming back from Iraq, including female vets with different needs.
- Need more coordination at State level. Would like State to issue one RFP to cover several services. Suggest that State issue a multi-agency RFP with one lead agency to coordinate.
- Have a unified State funding application for services, with supplemental questions for specific agency needs. Similarly, use a unified State evaluation format with supplemental questions that reflect specific agency needs.
- Some areas of California have bad weather in all seasons. Need to take into account.
- HCD should post success stories on its website.
- Have the Governor stress homelessness efforts as he did for preschools
- State should run a PR campaign to end stigmatization of the homeless and to help counter NIMBYism.
- Create a one-stop service center and housing to implement a housing-first policy.
- Make all subsidies available for people living in shared housing, often the best option for people with mental illness.

## II. California Department of Veterans Affairs Stakeholder Input

### Where This Stakeholder Input Came From?

In 2005 the State of California Inter-Agency Council on Chronic Homelessness requested state government departments to solicit stakeholder input to assess current needs. Responding to the request, the California Department of Veterans Affairs submitted written input.

The following questions were presented to the Department:

1. What are state agencies doing well and what should continue?
2. What is not working well and should be changed?
3. What should be done that isn't being done?
4. What changes, improvements, etc., do we need from the federal government?

- Establish outreach programs to ensure veterans are aware of their benefits.
- Integrate veteran issues into ongoing initiatives to reduce long-term homelessness.

- Increase the number of one-stop services, which bring USDVA, State VA, social services and labor departments. Local veteran and social services departments, and VSOs should be brought together to provide immediate information for filing of veteran benefits.
- Develop public service announcement programs, including radio and print media designed to make veterans aware of their eligibility.
- The California Department of Veterans Affairs must become more involved in addressing homeless veteran needs.
- The state must make it a priority to reach out to all veterans not currently receiving benefits.
- Conduct outreach to underserved populations.
- Expand and fund the “Thank You for Services” program, a 2005 California Governor’s Office project providing recently released veterans with information on how to obtain benefits.
- Coordinate with new veteran service organizations such as the National American Indian Veterans, Inc.
- Target young veterans, National Guard & Reserve veterans, homeless veterans, and minority veteran populations for focused outreach.
- Re-fund the position at the California Department of Veterans Affairs that was dedicated to outreach to homeless veterans. One full-time position at the Staff Manager I.
- Target outreach efforts to include Native American veterans, minority veterans, and transitional programs for incarcerated veterans.
- Reach veterans in rural populations, as this is an area where California lags behind other states.