

# Recession Lesson: Get Creative



## ***Ford Street Project Mendocino County, CA***

### **Provider Background**

Ford Street Project has served Mendocino County since 1974, offering services in housing, drug and alcohol treatment, and job training and development. Ford Street Project is currently the largest housing provider in Mendocino County.

They focus primarily on drug and alcohol treatment; programs offered include detox care, residential drug and alcohol treatment, extended residential treatment (housing clients for up to nine months), and outpatient counseling.

Ford Street Project offers a variety of housing programs, including a 64-bed shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing. Ford Street Project's transitional and permanent housing serve approximately 150-200 people at any given time.

## **Community in Context**

Mendocino County is a coastal community located north of the San Francisco Bay Area; it is a largely rural county whose homeless population totaled approximately 1,900 adults and children as of January 2009.

*As of April 7, 2010, 75-80 County positions are slated for lay-offs or elimination in the coming months as the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors attempts to close a \$7.6 million hole in its \$56 million general fund budget. "These are not easy times," said Board Chairwoman Carre Brown.*

*There are approximately 1,900 homeless adults and children in Mendocino County, as of January 2009.*

California's budget problems have been widely aired. The astronomical spending cuts will impact California state spending within Mendocino County. Because of state budget cuts, the county department of Health and Human Services has been forced to reduce their case workers' hours, increase case loads, and cut back on social services.

Like much of the area, the unemployment rate has risen above the national average: in September 2008, Mendocino's unemployment rate was at 6.3 percent and climbed to 12.5% in February 2010. Benefits are in greater demand: between 2008 and 2009, the number of new CalWORKS applications increased 13 percent in Mendocino County, while the number of new food stamps applications increased 12 percent.

## Funding

Almost one-half of Ford Street's \$1.75 million budget is from County contracts with Mental Health, Social Services, Public Health, Sheriff's Department and the Division of Alcohol and Other Drug Programs.

Ford Street Project received a Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing grant, which will go toward funding a small case manager position.

## Economic Impact

A significant portion of Ford Street Project's funding has come from the state, because of the drug and alcohol treatment Ford Street Project offers for recently released offenders from other communities. However, because of the economic downturn, Ford Street Project has had to close that treatment program, resulting in a heavy loss of funding. Ford Street Project has since been forced to further reduce their services, staff and hours.

*A cyclical pattern: As a result of the economic downturn, FSP had to shut down one of its treatment programs, which then resulted in a loss of state funding.*

However, so far Ford Street Project has not noticed a dramatic increase in demand for their services.

## Solutions

*FSP's small fundraisers include a soul music festival with donated refreshments, a classic car exhibit, and a yard sale*

Ford Street Project is experimenting with a number of small fundraisers, and has contacted the local bank about hosting larger fundraisers.

Ford Street Project's recession philosophy is to see the economic crisis as an opportunity to engage and partner with other providers, streamline operations, and "get creative."

Ford Street Project is determined to continue looking for opportunities to provide new services, remembering that new funding opportunities may come with those new programs.