



**The San Francisco Bay Area
Regional Steering Committee on
Homelessness and Housing**

Collectively, we identify common needs and problem areas, design workplans to reach a goal in relationship to needs and problem areas, and create products in which a wide-range of people can share

December 5, 2008

Dear President-Elect Barack Obama:

We, the members of the San Francisco Bay Area Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and Housing (RSC), write to you seeking support for an end to homelessness in the United States. We are an eleven-county body composed of representatives of local government, non-profit homeless services and housing developers, academics, advocates, volunteers, and those who have experienced homelessness. The RSC meets quarterly to collaborate on homelessness and poverty issues. For over two decades, we have advocated our concerns regarding federal and state policy issues, conducted research and trainings, designed programs, and supported the work of those in our community to serve homeless people while seeking an end to homelessness.

Today more than ever, there is a crucial need to act on housing- and poverty-related initiatives, as we are seeing an unprecedented demand for assistance. For example:

- In San Francisco, the number of families waiting for space in the emergency shelter system has almost doubled in the past year, such that some families wait for upwards of 130 days for shelter that they can only occupy for 90 days.
- Agencies serving food and other emergency assistance are reporting unprecedented demand for their services alongside increasingly limited resources. At the recent Food and Shelter Summit hosted by the Silicon Valley Foundation, one agency in Santa Clara County reported that the demand for their food pantry services increased by over 30% in October 2008 alone; in the same month, their individual and corporate donations decreased by 40% and 75%, respectively.
- At the same meeting, providers reported that many of the families to which they provide food assistance designed to last roughly 3 days are forced to make those resources stretch for 5-7 days, meaning that more and more families are making do with much less.

The RSC believes that homelessness can be permanently ended both for individuals and as a national crisis. Attached to this letter is a list of our recommendations, which we believe comprise the first steps to ending homelessness. These recommendations are based on outcome-based, best practices that we have already implemented in our Bay Area communities.

Additionally, we invite you to our next convening on 23 January 2009; at that time, we will be finalizing a more expanded platform conveying our perspective. We meet at the Association of Bay Area Government building, which is at which is at 101 Eighth Street, Oakland, California. For more information, please contact Danielle Wildkress at Danielle@HomeBaseccc.org.

This is a time of tremendous uncertainty alongside tremendous hope for change. We hope that you consider our recommendations as part of a larger national platform for change. We look forward to working with you and we thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The San Francisco Bay Area Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and Housing