

MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and Housing

FROM: HomeBase

RE: Ending Long-Term Homelessness Services Initiative and the Samaritan Initiative:
Update and Action

DATE: March 19, 2004

Background

Increasing federal homelessness funding from non-HUD sources and strengthening federal interagency collaboration in support of local Continuums of Care have long been key objectives pursued vigorously by the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and Housing (RSC). Every year since the early 1990s, the RSC has highlighted these critical themes in major public education and advocacy publications, events, and campaigns, including, for instance, “Ending Homelessness: Ten Steps in Which Every Community Should be Engaged” (1991), the HUD Interactive Forum (1993), the U.S. Conference of Mayors Homeless Task Force meeting in San Francisco (1993), “Ending Homelessness in America’s Cities: Implementing a National Plan of Action” (1993), homeless people’s Paper March on Washington (1995), the Bay Area Regional Initiative Collaborative Plan (1996), “Turning Homelessness Around: Restructure Mainstream Systems; Integrate Homeless Specific Responses” (1999), and annual Federal Homeless Issues Briefs and visits to Capitol Hill, federal departments, the Interagency Council on Homelessness, and Office of the President.

Status

During recent meetings (September 19 and November 21, 2003 and January 30, 2004), the RSC heard presentations and held extensive discussions about the Ending Long-Term Homelessness Services Initiative (ELHSI). To recap the proposal, ELHSI seeks to create a new services funding stream within the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to support local efforts to end chronic homelessness. The proposal includes:

- Authorization for \$45 million for FY2005 and amounts as needed for the following four fiscal years.
- Funding for a flexible range of health and supportive services
- Targeting of funding to services in connection with permanent supportive housing, including households in housing, soon to be in housing, and moving into independent situations.
- Serving chronically homeless households, including individuals and families

- Coordination with Continuum of Care and Samaritan Initiative housing
- Initial grants for three to five years, with renewals for five years
- Required match of \$1 for every \$2 from ELSHI for the initial grant period, increasing to \$1 for every \$1 from ELSHI thereafter.

Attached is a draft Homelessness Issues Brief synthesizing RSC views about how ELHSI can best be structured to meet chronic homeless needs in our own communities. Please feel free to share the Issues Brief with members of your Continuum and community and to report any views or perspectives back to Tony Gardner at HomeBase at 415.788.7961, extension 320, or tony@homebaseccc.org. We want to hear people's views and will update the Issues Brief accordingly and will provide it to those who need to hear RSC views.

Update on legislative front ...

A great deal has happened on the federal chronic homelessness front since the RSC last met, and national advocates are very optimistic that we can get new funding in the federal budget this year. Key actions underway:

ELSHI-

Senator DeWine (R-OH) has said he will introduce ELSHI legislation soon and will hold hearings on ELSHI and the Samaritan Initiative (see below) in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Subcommittee.

On the House side, Representatives Simmons (R-CT) and Capito (R-WV) are circulating a letter to other representatives requesting support in asking the Appropriations Committee for \$55 million in HHS services funding for FY2005. This includes \$45 million for ELSHI itself and \$10 million for the HHS portion of the Samaritan Initiative.

Samaritan Initiative-

As you may recall, the Bush administration and the Interagency Council on Homelessness have proposed authorization of \$70 million to fund the Samaritan Initiative, which like the Interagency Initiative on Chronic Homelessness two years ago, would support local comprehensive, innovative housing-services strategies on chronic homelessness and would promote federal interagency collaboration among HUD, HHS and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Representative Renzi (R-AZ) has indicated he will soon introduce Samaritan Initiative legislation in the House of Representatives. Included will be \$50 million for HUD, \$10 million for HHS, and \$10 million for VA.

ELSHI and the Samaritan Initiative are related and complementary. Both provide funding for ending chronic homelessness. The Samaritan Initiative will fund ten to twelve comprehensive innovative programs like those funded in San Francisco and Contra Costa County under the Interagency Initiative on Chronic Homelessness. ELSHI will fund services in connection with permanent supportive housing in many communities.

At the next RSC meeting, HomeBase will be prepared to provide a comprehensive overview of the proposed Samaritan Initiative bill, if it moves forward.

Actions you can take ...

You can write to your Congressional representative (before mid-April) and ask her or him to support new funding for ELHSI and the Samaritan Initiative. A model letter is attached. HomeBase will post an electronic version of the letter in our newly updated web home at <http://www.homebaseccc.org> under the Policy Change and Actions page. The letter asks them to sign on to a support letter being circulated by Representatives Simmons (R-CT) and Capito (R-WV). If you need help finding your representative's contact information, please call HomeBase at 415.788.7961 and we would be happy to help.

Please call Senators Boxer (202.224.3553) and Feinstein (202.224.3841) as soon as possible and ask them (and their staff) to attend Senator DeWine's hearing on ELSHI and the Samaritan Initiative in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Subcommittee. The hearing was set for March 23, but will now be rescheduled for a date in the near future.

Contact your Mayor and ask her or him to support ELHSI and the Samaritan Initiative. The U.S. Conference of Mayors will be circulating a support letter to be sent to Congress.

April 5-16 is the Congressional recess. That would be a great time to visit your representative locally to ask their support for ELHSI and the Samaritan Initiative, to describe supportive housing efforts in your community, and to invite them to visit supportive housing sites.

Please let Tony Gardner, or any other HomeBase staff person, know about any actions you take. We will report these actions and represent RSC views to the ELHSI National Organizing Committee, which holds regular conference calls.

If you want to stay informed, in addition to calling HomeBase, you can also check the National Alliance to End Homelessness's website at <http://www.endhomelessness.org>, ELHSI page, or the Corporation for Supportive Housing's website at <http://csh.org>, Policy/Action page.

Issues to Consider

What additional legislative actions, if any, would support you community's current efforts toward ending homelessness?

Action

HomeBase will:

- Update and circulate the attached Homelessness Issues Brief.
- Represent RSC views in conference calls of the ELHSI National Organizing Committee.
- Post useful information on our website.
- Take any other action adopted by the RSC today.

For further information, please contact General Counsel Tony Gardner at HomeBase at 415.788.7961 ext. 320 or tony@homebaseccc.org.

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE ON
HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING**

Draft Homelessness Issues Brief

Vision for the Ending Long-Term Homelessness Services Initiative

The Northern California Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSC) strongly supports the Ending Long-Term Homelessness Services Initiative (ELHSI), which is a proposal by national homelessness advocates to create a new source of needed supportive services funding to bolster national efforts to end chronic homelessness in ten years. Funding would provide for a flexible range of health and supportive services in permanent supportive housing and would be coordinated with housing (and services) funding from HUD's Continuum of Care and the Bush administration's new Samaritan Initiative.

To be administered by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), ELHSI would be a major step toward establishing a companion services funding stream within HHS to complement HUD's housing funding under the Continuum of Care (long a goal of the RSC, national homelessness advocates, and many local communities). Services funding of the requested \$55 million would fund ten to twelve innovative projects around the country and would provide services for an additional 8,000 critically needed housing units in many more communities.

Having reviewed available information and heard expert presentations, and processed the issue across three meetings over six months, the RSC has articulated the following perspectives, which should be touchstones for legislative framing and program design as we move toward realizing this important new funding source:

New Funding and Coordination with Other Federal Homelessness Funding

- Support creation of ELHSI as a permanent and critically needed new funding stream to be used in coordination with HUD Continuum of Care and Samaritan Initiative funding.
- This should not be a demonstration program; we know what works and simply need to bring it scale.
- No HUD service dollars should be eliminated until equal or greater *replacement* service dollars are available through ELHSI or other federal mechanism. This should be true not only at the national level, but also at the local Continuum and project levels. For instance, service dollars from an existing HUD Continuum of Care grant should not be removed unless specific replacement dollars for that grant are provided from ELHSI or other federal mechanism.

- Communities' HUD Continuum of Care funding should be held harmless, meaning renewal adjusted pro rata share from HUD should not be reduced when service dollars from HUD renewal grants are moved to ELHSI or other HHS sources.
- Ultimately, ELHSI funding should create homeless funding at least 25% above what is currently available to each community through HUD's Continuum of Care.

Key Program Provisions

- The match requirement should be no more than 20%, or what HUD currently requires. The proposed much more challenging match requirements are simply not realistic, especially given the current steep cuts to potentially matching services funding sources that are happening at state and local levels. The RSC does recognize that higher match requirements could lead to more new supportive housing units, but feels that current budget realities require a lower match bar.
- The match requirement should also be interpreted more broadly than HUD currently does. It should include not only cash, but also non-cash contributions and in-kind services. In addition, the match should not be limited to contributions only during the program contract period, but should include all contributions outside this period that support the program (for example, program start-up funds expended before a federal contract).
- As now included in the proposal, the definition of "chronically homeless" should include families. Northern California regional and local data make clear that a high percentage of chronically homeless people in our region (e.g., 40% in Santa Cruz) are in family groups.

Application Process

- There should be no cumbersome new application process (no reprise of the Chronic Homelessness Initiative's heavily burdensome application!).
- The application should be simple and be integral with the annual McKinney-Vento Continuum of Care application.

A Word About the RSC...

The RSC is a 13-year-old network of local government personnel, non-profit service providers and housing developers, scholars, advocates for the homeless, and homeless people, spanning Continuums of Care throughout Northern California. The RSC meets bi-monthly, and through a 5-hour agenda facilitated by HomeBase staff, engages in three categories of collaborative work: (1) identifying barriers in public policy, and gaps or problems in homeless programs; (2) guiding staff through research and analysis necessary to develop policy initiatives and recommendations to overcome the barriers,

problems, and gaps identified; and (3) developing advocacy and implementation strategies to ensure the solutions found by the RSC are considered by all those working in the region to end homelessness.

Issues to Consider

Please feel free to share this draft issues brief with members of your Continuum of Care and community. We want to hear people's views on this proposal! Please don't hesitate to provide your ideas of those anyone else in your community to Tony Gardner, contact information below. We will revise this brief as needed and forward your views to those who need to hear them.

How could ELHSI be made most helpful to your community?

What provisions would you like to see included or excluded from ELHSI?

Thank you for your consideration of the views of the RSC on these important homelessness matters. If you have any questions about this Issues Brief, please contact HomeBase General Counsel Tony Gardner at 415.788.9961, extension 320, or tony@homebaseccc.org.

TO: Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and Housing
FROM: HomeBase
DATE: March 19, 2004
RE: Connecting with the Department of Veteran Affairs: Next Steps

Background and Status

The sizable portion of the homeless population who are veterans has caused the Department of Veteran Affairs to develop programs and funding streams to meet their needs. The RSC has reviewed veterans issues at least once in each year; the DVA has been our partner in BARI, and the DVA convened the first federally sponsored national conference on homelessness under Secretary Brown. DVA programs are not just funding streams, but include a significant research component that has generated solid information to inform policy and program structure. DVA funding streams were reviewed one year ago in the Mainstream Resources conference we held in Oakland, sponsored by HUD.

At our January meeting, Bobbie Rosenthal, Chief of Social Work Service at the San Francisco Department of Veteran Affairs, spoke to the RSC about DVA structure, funding, and programs available to homeless veterans in Northern California. After the meeting, she compiled a list of DVA Homeless Coordinators in Northern California, which HomeBase emailed to RSC members. With the hope of strengthening our connections between homeless and housing service providers and our local VA programs, RSC members expressed a desire to keep this relationship strong.

Action

The January conversation would allow the following action to take place.

- Would you like us to invite all the DVA Homeless Coordinators to attend the RSC? *Would that facilitate your work with them in your community, or are these connections already strong?*
- Many veterans do not realize that they are veterans. Outreach workers and case managers should stop asking “are you a veterans” and start asking “have you served in the military”. Even if a person has been dishonorably discharged, sometimes the DVA can petition to change the discharge status to get veterans benefits. *Can you help spread the word on this in your community?*
- DVA Per Diem grants are available to nonprofits for transitional housing for veterans. This compliments the capital grants available. *Do you know who in your community has secured this funding? Do you need help finding out, or in getting an application submitted?*
- Veterans Industries is a supported employment program that allows veterans to work in a business while they are in treatment. The business that hires the veteran only pays the

veteran's salary, and the VA pays any taxes, workman's comp, or other expenses to the business that result from employing the veteran. *Is anyone in your community hiring homeless veterans through this program? Is anyone sending homeless veterans to this program for job opportunity? Do you need help following up on this strategy?*

- The DVA sponsored research on who homeless veterans are, their needs, successful strategies in meeting those needs has not been presented to the RSC in quite some time. *Would you like a presentation that covers this information?*
- Also, there are national and statewide advocacy and provider coalitions focused just on homeless veterans. *Do you need more information about their work, in order to integrate your continuum of care into all possible avenues?*

Please contact HomeBase Staff Attorney Piper Ehlen at 415.788.7961 ex 304 to respond to this memo or with your questions about vets.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Steering Committee on Homelessness and Housing

FROM: HomeBase

RE: Employing Consumers in Homeless Housing and Service Programs

DATE: March 19, 2004

Background

The RSC and HomeBase have long considered the issue of how best to increase employment opportunities for homeless people. In 1993, HomeBase convened *Regional Roundtables* on employment to examine strategies around this issue. HomeBase also published *Employing Homeless Job Seekers: A Primer for Businesses* to educate private employers about homelessness, the need to provide employment opportunities, and the economic incentives to do so. In addition, the Regional Employment Collaborative, a BARI project, determined, among other things, to fill local employment gaps with homeless individuals after providing key educational, apprenticeship, and job-related skills training. Welfare reform has put more pressure on all sectors of the jobs market to put more people in the workforce. The slow jobs rate of growth has only exacerbated the employment picture, especially for the unskilled and unemployed, who are also often homeless.

Ongoing issues surrounding employment of the homeless, in general, include:

1. How to recruit and retain more homeless people in private and public sector jobs
2. How to assess a person's readiness for the workplace and/or for a particular employment environment or job
3. Types of education or job training/retraining that homeless people need for successful job placement and retention
4. Types of employment support services and/or additional post-employment intervention needed by employed homeless people that lead to successful job placement and retention

In May 1997, the RSC also touched upon certain special concerns for nonprofit service providers hiring homeless and formerly homeless individuals.

Status

HomeBase is proposing to work in conjunction with RSC members to evaluate current nonprofit employment strategies for homeless and formerly homeless individuals in order to determine:

- Identify ongoing challenges for nonprofit agencies in employing homeless and formerly homeless individuals and suggest ways to manage them
- Strategies on how best to incorporate homeless and formerly homeless individuals in nonprofit workplaces
- Identify and disseminate best practices (recruitment, hiring, training, retention) around the Bay Area
- Determine how many Bay Area agencies employ (1) current or former homeless *residents*, (2) homeless or formerly homeless individuals, and provide both numbers and anecdotal evidence of these experiences to the Committee

Possible Subject Areas & Issues for Analysis

1. Should homeless and formerly homeless individuals be employed in agencies serving homeless people?
2. Should *current* homeless clients be employed in agencies that currently serve *them*? In what capacity? What, if any, special concerns are raised in this situation?
3. If yes (to number 2, above), does the type of agency matter? For example, should a homeless individual be employed by the emergency shelter where he/she currently resides? Transitional shelters? Permanent housing programs? Day service centers? Other agency types?
4. Is there additional or different training that homeless and formerly homeless individuals should receive in order to work in the nonprofit workplace?

Possible Action

- How much interest do you have in this issue?
- Who can I talk to in your community about this issue to gain insight, learn about challenges, strategies, successes, and concerns?

For further information or to contribute to the issues we will explore, please contact Lise K. Ström via email at lise@homebaseccc.org or by phone at 415-788-7961, ext. 306.