

HOMELESS ENUMERATION NARRATIVE REPORTS ALEXANDRIA 2010

DESCRIPTION OF HOMELESS SERVICES

The City of Alexandria's Continuum of Care (CoC) is a collaboration of a cross section of community stakeholders comprised of 27 member agencies from the public, private non-profit, faith-based, educational, and advocacy sectors as well as individual citizens and "formerly homeless" consumers. Cooperatively, continuum members have worked to address the immediate and long-term needs of the persons at-risk of homelessness and the homeless, with a goal of promoting permanent affordable housing.

Alexandria's Continuum of Care was developed and is managed by the Homeless Services Coordinating Committee (HSCC). The CoC includes the following components: outreach, prevention, winter and emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and permanent housing. Outreach program include intake and assessment, service linkage and coordination, eviction storage, day shelter, meal programs, and the distribution of information. Preventive services include: financial assistance, landlord-tenant intervention, and budget and housing counseling. Emergency Shelter includes housing and case management services for single men and women, and families, with programs specifically targeting victims of domestic violence. Transitional Housing includes housing and case management services for single men and women and families. The transitional housing programs target single persons with substance abuse and/or mental health issues and female ex-offenders. These programs help consumers develop the skills they need to live in permanent housing. Permanent Supportive Housing includes housing with comprehensive supportive case management services designed to allow single persons and head of households with substance abuse and/or mental health issues to live in the community as independently as possible. Permanent Housing support includes publicly-assisted housing, "affordable" housing units, financial assistance, and support services.

This year the HSCC revised Alexandria's *Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness and Other Forms of Homelessness* that was approved by City Council in March 2005. This Ten Year Plan set an ambitious agenda for the City of Alexandria's homeless services providers to end homelessness by implementing strategies outlined in the Plan's chapters such as, Planning for Outcomes-Data Collection and Analysis; Closing the Front Door-Preventing Homelessness; Opening the Back Door-Creating Permanent Housing; and Building the Infrastructure-Maximizing Mainstream Resources. Having reached the midway point of the Ten Year Plan, the HSCC resolved to modify and simplify the goals and strategies, making them more realistic and achievable by 2014, and to integrate the Ten Year Plan with the City Council's Strategic Plan initiatives. The *Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness and Other Forms of Homelessness* identifies goals in the following three areas, Prevention, Coordination, and Advocacy. Action plans for these three goals will be developed annually and will be incorporated into the city's Consolidated Plan action planning process.

The HSCC conducted the 2010 point-in-time count by collecting data through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), as well as through manual surveys completed by shelter staff and volunteers. The Emergency Shelters such as Alexandria Community Shelter, ALIVE! House, Christ House, Carpenter’s Shelter, and Domestic Violence Shelter provide 192 emergency shelter beds for singles, couples without children, and families. From November 2009 thru April 2010, an additional 67 beds are provided for winter shelter. On the night of the count, Transitional Housing administrators such as Alexandria Community Services Board, Guest House, Salvation Army, Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless, Carpenter’s Shelter, and Community Lodgings provided 58 beds for singles and 94 beds for families.

YEAR-ROUND AND WINTER INVENTORY OF BEDS				
	Beds for Individuals	Beds\Units for Persons in Families	All Year- Round Beds	Winter Beds
Hypothermia/Overflow/Other (Additional winter Capacity)	67	0	0	67
Emergency Shelter Beds	88	104	192	0
Transitional Housing Beds	58	94	152	0
TOTAL	213	198	344	67

Permanent supportive housing programs, also operated by the Alexandria Community Services Board (ACSB), provide 25 beds for singles and 8 beds for families who meet HUD’s homeless definition. Compared to 2009, there has been a 2.9% decrease in the number of year around available beds. The Safe Haven facility is currently in its last stages of construction and is projected to open before the end of 2010. Operated by the ACSB, it will serve 12 individuals, eight of whom must meet HUD’s definition of chronically homeless.

HOMELESS POINT-IN-TIME RESULTS

For Alexandria’s 2010 count, 359 individuals and families were identified as homeless. This number does not represent a significant change from the 2009 enumeration when 360 total people were counted. In terms of individuals versus families, the 359 persons represent 208 single men and women and 151 persons in families. In comparison to 2008, Alexandria’s homeless population increased by 3.1 percent from 348 to 359 people. Twenty-eight percent of the city’s homeless single men and women met the HUD’s definition of chronically homeless. Equally notable, 66 percent of all households were persons with mental illness, substance use, and chronic health problems, which are high risk factors for homelessness. From 2009, the number of unsheltered single men and women increased by 15.7 percent from 32 to 38 people. There was also a 36 percent decrease in the number of individuals accessing emergency shelter. That

number fell from 87 people in 2009 to 64 people in 2010. The number of families also increased this year by 10.2 percent. Additionally, the City of Alexandria experienced a 14.5 percent increase in the number of adults in families and 7.3 percent increase in the number of homeless children.

The employment rate of single men and women directly reflect the city’s stable housing market – a fortunate rarity among the region and nation. Thirty-two percent of single men and women were employed part-time or full-time. In terms of employment by accommodation, 20 percent of winter shelter residents were employed, 44 percent of emergency shelter residents were employed, and 52 percent of people living in transitional housing were employed. All unsheltered homeless persons were unemployed. Fifty-two percent or 107 single men and women reported having a monthly income. The monthly income for fifty percent of the city’s homeless single men and women range from \$501 to \$1000. The primary sources of income were as follows: 57 percent reported income from employment; 35 percent reported income from disability benefits; 5 percent reported income from Social Security retirement, and 3 percent reported their income coming from other sources. There were no significant differences between this year’s and the 2009 enumeration employment rate.

The employment rate of adults in families and household income reflected the setting in which the families resided. Over 63 percent of adult family members were employed part-time or full-time; this figure represents a 10 percent decrease from 2009. Of adult family members, 50 percent residing in emergency shelters were employed and 73 percent residing in transitional housing were employed. Close to 82 percent of family households reported receiving a monthly income of which 37.7 percent is in the \$501 to \$1000 range. The primary sources of income for families are employment 82.2 percent, TANF 13.3 percent, and disability benefits 4.4 percent.

HOMELESS COUNT BY CATEGORY				
Category	2010	2009	2008	% Change 2009 to 2010
Total Number Counted	359	360	348	-0.3%
Total of Singles	208	223	221	-6.7%
Total Number of Families	52	44	42	18.2%
Total of Persons in Families	151	137	127	10.2%
Total Adults in Families	63	55	46	14.5%
Total Children in Families	88	82	81	7.3%

HOMELESS SUBPOPULATIONS				
	Individual Adults	Adults in Families	Children in Families	TOTAL
Chronic Substance Abuser (CSA)	75	0	0	75
Severe Mental Illness (SMI)	26	1	0	25
Dually Diagnosed (CSA & SMI)	44	0	0	44
Chronic Health Problem	62	5	0	67
Living With HIV/AIDS	4	0	0	4
Physical Disability	24	1	0	25
Domestic Violence Victim	3	16	0	19
Language Minority	7	14	0	21
U.S. Veterans	18	1	0	19

This year the HSCC added “reason for homelessness” to the Point-in-Time Survey for shelter families. The purpose was to capture data on the effects of the economic downturn on homelessness and possibly derive an explanation for the increase in number of homeless families in the past two years. The results showed that the primary and secondary reasons for homelessness are the lack of affordable housing and underemployment/low income. This corresponds to the disparities between the salaries offered to work in Alexandria and the lack of affordable housing aimed at the city’s workforce. Mortgage foreclosure was the primary reason for one family.

The City of Alexandria had one of the lowest rates of foreclosure in the Washington region in 2009, with only 1.2 percent of all mortgages in the area’s foreclosure inventory. The number of foreclosures in 2009 declined to 289 from a high of 365 in 2008. The majority of the city’s residential foreclosures occurred in condominium units, representing 65 percent of foreclosures in 2009. The City of Alexandria provides foreclosure prevention counseling services in English and Spanish, primarily through contract services through Housing Counseling Services. Housing Counseling Services offers ongoing foreclosure prevention clinics which may be followed by individual counseling to homeowners facing foreclosure. Limited financial assistance is also available through the Homeless Intervention Program (HIP).

In 2009, prevention and intervention assistance was provided to 815 households through programs such as HIP, Emergency General Relief, and Emergency Shelter funds which are administered by the City of Alexandria. Twenty-four percent more households were assisted this year than were assisted in 2008. The city continues to see the level of need increase and has allocated \$512,214 awarded under HUD's Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) to stabilize housing for renters. Alexandria's HPRP, called Renter's Assistance Plus (RAP), was implemented in August 2009 with the goal of providing homeless prevention assistance to households who would be homeless but for this assistance and can remain stably housed at the end of assistance. The program also focuses on rapidly re-housing persons who meet HUD's definition of homeless. To date, RAP has helped 39 households or 110 persons maintain or obtain stable housing.

PERMANENT AND PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PLACEMENTS

The CSB currently operates 25 permanent supportive housing beds for individuals and three permanent supportive housing units for families with substance use and/or mental health issues who would otherwise be homeless. On the night of the point-in-time, 96 percent of the beds were occupied. At the time of the count, an additional 72 individuals and 2 families were in need of permanent supportive or permanent housing.

The City of Alexandria continues to be faced with the challenge of providing affordable permanent housing options for low income households and the local workforce. From 2000 to 2008, the City of Alexandria lost more than 10,000 affordable rental units due to development and increased rents. The Affordable Housing Initiatives Work Group (AHIWG), created by City Council to recommend tools to be adopted or created to maximize and sustain the production and preservation of affordable and workforce housing, submitted its final report in May of 2009. The Group recommends that the city focus on the preservation of the current inventory of affordable housing. Failing to use this approach, the city could potentially lose another 1,000 affordable housing units over the next five years. One of the action plans in the revised *Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness and Other Forms of Homelessness* specifically includes advocating the City Council to adopt the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Initiatives Work Group May 2009 report.