



**Minneapolis / Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness**  
 Research, Planning and Development Department  
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## The Picture of Homelessness in Minneapolis/Hennepin County

*On any given*  
**NIGHT**

- approximately 3000 people are homeless in Hennepin County.
- 47% are children.
- 25% of men are veterans.
- 25% of adults are long-term users of shelters.
- 33% of the women are victims of domestic violence
- We have a public/private shelter system that serves families (290), single adults (780), and youth (48).
- In January, 2009, our outreach team identified 235 individuals unsheltered, living on the streets, in cars, or in other places unfit for human habitation

### Our Plan

In March of 2006, nearly 70 leaders representing the business, faith, government, and non-profits sectors and people experiencing homelessness came together for 100 days to create Heading Home Hennepin, our 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Our collective vision, approved by the Minneapolis City Council and the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, is that:

By the year 2016, all people facing homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County will have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing and the resources and supports needed to sustain it.

Implementation of our plan began in January, 2007 and involves over 300 people from 125 public, private, and non-profit agencies. Over 30 working groups meet regularly to implement the five major goals in the plan.

### The Goals

#### Preventing Homelessness:

- We are working to keep people in their current housing whenever possible by providing short-term financial assistance and landlord mediation.
- We are improving discharge planning from public institutions, including foster care, corrections, military service, and the hospital.

#### Providing Coordinated Street Outreach:

- Our street outreach team is partnering with the police to provide housing and services to those most frequently engaged with the police in downtown Minneapolis. In the first year of this initiative, 70 individuals were housed and the police reported a 14% reduction in arrests of people who are homeless in the downtown area.
- A non-profit collaboration of 12 youth-serving programs is engaged in street outreach to both urban and suburban homeless youth. Outreach has been expanded to focus on sexually exploited youth.

- An additional street outreach position has been established to serve homeless veterans and to teach other service providers how to better assist veterans.

### Developing Housing Opportunities:

- Our goal is to create 5000 new housing opportunities by 2016 for people experiencing homelessness. In the first two years of implementation, 1100 opportunities have been created. These include both new construction and the use of the existing market. We have been able to house hundreds of households in the existing market by building supportive relationships with landlords and providing rental assistance and mobile supports to tenants.
- Hennepin County's Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) has been rapidly housing families out of shelter for many years. Between July 2007 and June 2008, 2,782 households were served through this program. FHPAP has been expanded to serve unaccompanied youth and single adults.
- The Hennepin County Housing First Partnership works with 12 non-profit agencies to target housing and support to the longest-term homeless individuals and families in our community. Currently, 245 households are in housing through this program. These households have an average length of homelessness of over 6 years.
- The Frequent Users of Systems Engagement (FUSE) program targets housing and support services to people most often in our shelters and jails. In its first year, this program has housed 32 of the top 50 users of our jail and shelter system. 80% have maintained their housing, 90% have not returned to shelter, and 56% have not reoffended.

### Creating System Changes through Better Service Delivery:

- Community providers have formed a coordinated network of services for families, youth, and single adults who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
- We have held seven Project Homeless Connect events in Minneapolis. At each event, we bring together over 400 service providers and 1500 volunteers in one location to serve between 2,000-3,000 homeless and near-homeless individuals and families. Services range from housing and employment to health care and legal assistance.
- The county has funded two one-stop-shop Opportunity Centers that will operate like Project Homeless Connect, but on a daily basis. These two centers will open in early 2010.

### Building Capacity for Self-Support:

- We are implementing several strategies to help connect people to employment, educational opportunities, health care, and the benefits that they are eligible for, including the Earned Income Tax Credit.

### The Challenges

- Increasing numbers of families and individuals are falling into homelessness because of the economy, foreclosures on rental property, and the loss of employment. These families and individuals are remaining homeless longer, primarily due to the lack of employment opportunities and the tight housing market.
- There is a shortage of both affordable housing and of rental assistance to assist with housing affordability.
- While supportive housing is a proven model for ending homelessness for all populations, we cannot find an ongoing and reliable source of service funding.
- Transportation assistance is needed to help people connect to jobs and services.

**Heading Home Hennepin works in concert with the Minnesota State Plan to End Long-Term Homelessness and nine regional/county plans. We are proud of this statewide commitment to ending homelessness in Minnesota.**

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