

**Chesapeake
Ten Year Plan
To
End Homelessness**

Adopted by Chesapeake City Council
February 26, 2008
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Chesapeake Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness

Prepared by
The Planning Council

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Introduction

The City of Chesapeake joins a growing number of cities across the United States that are developing and implementing Ten Year Plans to End Homelessness. While homelessness itself has been characterized by hopelessness, in past years there has also been a sense of hopelessness for communities in dealing with the issue. However, in recent years, a growing body of research has shown that it is possible to end homelessness with proactive plans, not just manage it. In communities that have developed and worked their plans, enormous strides have been made.

The Urban Institute is one of the organizations that has produced numerous studies on various aspects of homelessness. It has cited research that shows that homeless children, when compared to poor children who are housed, have worse health, more behavior problems and poorer school outcomes. These same issues arise for children in families experiencing housing instability characterized by several moves.

Research has shown that homeless adults also experience poorer health and are more likely to have serious illnesses. In the United States, about one in 10 poor people experience homelessness each year.

The cost of homelessness to communities can be enormous. Dennis Culhane, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, studies homeless persons in New York City. He estimated the annual cost of homelessness at over \$40,000 per person. This included the cost of shelter, emergency room visits, hospital stays, outpatient services, and incarceration. Malcolm Gladwell wrote an article for The New Yorker magazine that documented a man he called Million Dollar Murray. His homelessness, in Reno, Nevada, cost a million dollars over a decade.

A plan for ending homelessness not only demonstrates a community's compassion, but also is cost effective delivery of human services. The purpose of this plan is to lay out a strategy that will prevent and end the experience of homelessness for families and individuals in Chesapeake.

Methodology

In 2006, the City of Chesapeake engaged The Planning Council to help in the development of a Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. The Planning Council reviewed several documents, including the City's Consolidated Plan (FY 2006), the Affordable Housing Task Force Final Report (July 2006), previous Continuum of Care Strategies submissions for federal funding, and various documents from the Chesapeake Coalition for the Homeless.

In addition, a series of focus groups was held with various organizations. This included the Chesapeake Council of Civic Organizations, the Chesapeake Coalition for the Homeless, the faith community, City of Chesapeake department heads, and consumers.

The information from these groups along with information on best practices around the country, helped to form the recommendations for the plan.

Homelessness in Chesapeake

Each January, the Chesapeake Coalition for the Homeless conducts a one-day Point in Time count of the number of homeless persons in Chesapeake. The count includes people in shelters and transitional housing, those presenting for services and those counted by street teams that spend the day outside looking for homeless persons. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has a very strict definition of homelessness. Those counted under this definition totaled **129** during the 24-hour count period from January 24 to January 25, 2007. That number included 52 persons in families with children, and 77 single adults. Of the 129 persons who were homeless that day, 43 (33%) were unsheltered. A second count of street homeless persons was conducted in August 2007. That number included 40 persons and families with children, and 32 single adults. Of those 72 persons who were homeless that day, 37 (51.3%) were unsheltered.

In addition, the Coalition counted two populations that cannot be included in the HUD count. Hotels and motels in the City were surveyed to determine the number of persons living there because they cannot afford to get into permanent housing. This number totaled 174 persons (90 adults and 84 children). They represented 38 families, with 71 of the children attending Chesapeake Public Schools. There were additional persons who presented for services but who could not be considered homeless by the HUD definition. These included persons staying with family or friends (25) and those discharged from jail (2).

The 2000 Census shows the number of households whose income is below 30% of the Median Family Income and who are paying greater than 50% of their income towards housing. This would indicate the number of low income families experiencing very high housing costs. The following shows this information for Chesapeake:

Renter households	1,909
Owner households	1,018
Total	2,927

This means that nearly 3,000 households in Chesapeake are at risk of experiencing a housing crisis because more than 30% of their income (the threshold recommended by HUD) is needed for housing cost.

Resources for Persons Homeless in Chesapeake

There are several organizations that provide shelter for homeless persons in Chesapeake as shown in the following table.

Beds for Homeless Persons

	Emergency Shelter		Transitional Housing		Permanent Housing		Total
	Individuals	Families	Individuals	Families	Individuals	Families	
Our House		10		17			27
House of Esther			3				3
Victory Home			20				20
Ches. Community Services Board					4		4
Total	0	10	23	17	4	0	54

The Chesapeake Redevelopment and Housing Authority (CRHA) offers nearly 700 rental units of which 467 are federally subsidized Public Housing and the remainder are CRHA's own affordable housing program. CRHA has about 1,400 Section 8 Vouchers. CRHA maintains waiting lists for both programs since the Public Housing units remain full except for occasional vacancies and the vouchers are all in use.

In addition, many agencies provide support services to homeless persons. These include soup kitchens, food pantries, mental health and substance abuse treatment, health care, and mainstream resources (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families [TANF], Foodstamps, Medicaid, Unemployment Benefits, Veterans Benefits, etc.). The City of Chesapeake has contracts with shelters outside of the City for housing some homeless families.

What We Learned from the Focus Groups

Six focus groups were held to get broad participation in the development of the plan. A total of 64 persons attended. The following groups participated:

- Chesapeake Council of Civic Organizations
- Faith community
- City of Chesapeake Department Heads
- Chesapeake Coalition for the Homeless
- Homeless persons
- Chesapeake Chamber of Commerce

Each of the focus groups was asked to respond to six questions.

1. Where have you heard that there are homeless people in Chesapeake?
2. What is the extent of homelessness in Chesapeake?
3. What are the characteristics of people who are homeless in Chesapeake?
4. Who should be the community partners in ending homelessness?
5. What barriers do you see that keep people from ending their homelessness?
6. What are the gaps in services to those who are homeless?

Most focus group participants feel there is a concentration of homeless persons in the South Norfolk area of the City. Other areas of the City frequently mentioned as places where there are homeless people are the Walmart parking lot, in wooded areas around the City, in the Indian River area, libraries, parks, the jail, under bridges, in motels, and in churches. Many participants spoke of people on the verge of being homeless, either living doubled up or in a house with all the utilities turned off.

Each group mentioned that they felt there was more homelessness than we know about. Many homeless people are hidden, either because they do not want to be found, for safety reasons, or because they blend in with others most of the time.

When asked to describe the characteristics of those who are homeless, most groups mentioned mental illness and substance abuse, ex-offenders, dropouts, health issues, and lack of family support. Others spoke of the lack of life skills, uninsured, domestic violence victims, working poor, single parents, lack of identification, former foster care children, lack of transportation, lack of job skills, and needing a place to clean up.

In the discussions about who should be the community partners in ending homelessness, most groups agreed that everyone needs to be part of the effort. Specific entities named include the various levels of government (local, state and federal), those organizations that most often come into contact with homeless persons

(shelters, the Community Services Board, health care providers, corrections, human service providers), the faith community, the schools, emergency services, and businesses. Many groups cited the need for a regional approach to achieve an end to homelessness.

Participants often cited as barriers the two sides of one coin: lack of affordable housing and lack of jobs that pay a wage sufficient to meet housing costs. In addition, there are the barriers that keep people from acquiring well paying jobs, such as substance abuse, mental illness, lack of education and job skills, and health problems. Each homeless person is often facing an overwhelming number of problems and this is compounded by a services system that is difficult to negotiate, for both consumers and other service agencies.

The service gap most often identified was the lack of affordable housing. Some also feel there is a need for more shelters, specifically noting that there is no emergency shelter in Chesapeake for single adults. There was also discussion of the need for a clear starting point in the service system, both for the providers and consumers, on a 24-hour basis. This would allow for a comprehensive assessment of the needs of homeless persons in Chesapeake and a coordinated approach to providing services.

Research and Best Practices

There are a number of organizations that have been conducting research on ending homelessness. These include the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Urban Institute, the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the National Coalition for the Homeless. Some of the most compelling research is being done by communities that are implementing their plans. One community in particular, Hennepin County (Minneapolis), has had a sustained commitment to ending homelessness since the early 1990s. The county has seen a drop in the number of persons presenting for homelessness and a drop in their length of stay in shelters. The implementation of the plan has three main features:

- Comprehensive
- Coordinated
- Continuous evaluation

The approach involves all facets of the service delivery system and includes all non-profits willing to participate. It coordinates the delivery of all services. There is ongoing evaluation of the system to respond to changes in the environment, changes in the population or needed improvements.

Hennepin County has had good success in ending family homelessness. The County is putting renewed emphasis on ending homelessness among single adults as well.

The lessons of Hennepin County, Minnesota, as well as what other research has shown is that the following elements lead to success in preventing and ending homelessness:

- aggressive prevention services
- coordinated funding tied to a common outcome
- central intake
- housing broker team
- rapid exit from shelters
- permanent supportive housing
- housing first

Aggressive prevention services

Many people who request emergency shelter are housed (precariously) at the time they make their request. Aggressive prevention means working with a family or individual to keep them housed where they are until case management and other services can be provided that will enable homeless persons to be safely housed permanently. Buying a few extra days time allows the service system to respond rapidly and avoid placing a family or homeless person in a shelter.

Coordinated funding tied to a common outcome

Hennepin County has a small staff that implements its coordinated approach to ending homelessness. The staff contracts with non-profits to provide case management, shelter and other services. The County has one outcome measure that it applies to all agencies with which it contracts: The homeless person assisted will not present for homeless services from the County within one year of the completion of services.

Central intake

This is one point of contact for all homeless persons to enter the homeless service system 24 hours a day. Clients who enter the system through Central Intake are assigned a case manager and are tracked through their engagement with the service system. This is a critical piece for ensuring that no homeless person slips through the service system, that clients do not have to call every service provider and that providers do not have to continually take calls from clients when they have no capacity. It is necessary for an efficient and effective service delivery system.

Housing broker team

Hennepin County contracts with an organization whose business it is to continually identify housing opportunities for clients in the homeless service delivery system. Through incentives and developing a close working relationship with landlords, a Minneapolis non-profit has been able to identify a continuous supply of available low cost housing. Any problems that arise can be addressed by the housing broker team and the tenant's case manager.

Rapid exit from shelters

The sooner people get into permanent housing, the sooner they can address and resolve the issues that caused their homelessness. Children can get settled into a new school if necessary and appropriate transportation arrangements can be made. Rapid exit carries with it the expectation that intensive support services will follow the homeless family or individual.

Permanent supportive housing

The National Alliance to End Homelessness has a concept called closing the front door and opening the back door. Closing the front door means keeping people from becoming homeless by aggressive prevention and better and rapid service provision for those at risk of homelessness. Opening the back door means providing housing with support services for those already homeless. The support services are case management, substance abuse treatment and mental health treatment and counseling, among others. The housing can be scattered site, where a service provider rents a housing unit that is sublet to a client, or it can be project based, such as a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) facility that accepts only homeless persons.

Housing first

Housing first is a relatively new concept that means getting people into permanent housing before they have resolved all the issues that caused them to become homeless. New York City has a very successful program called Pathways to Housing that houses severely mentally ill persons and those with addictions in scattered sites. Intensive support services follow. Once safely housed, people can begin to address their needs. This particular program has an 88% success rate of keeping people permanently housed.

Elements of a Ten Year Plan

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness has identified the elements of great plans to end homelessness. The elements listed below constitute the ingredients for a successful plan to end homelessness.

1. Plans must receive widespread endorsement from the elected leadership, with a commitment to following through on the plan for the entire 10-year period.
2. Plans must engage all the necessary partners in ongoing relationships.
3. Plans must be based on achievable benchmarks with annual progress reports to the community.
4. Plans must first emphasize prevention.
5. Plans must use research-based best practices.
6. Plans must identify the financial and personnel resources to be committed.
7. Plans must be continually evaluated and updated as necessary.

Chesapeake: A Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness

As is common with many cities, Chesapeake has some elements in place to address homelessness. This plan draws on those capacities and outlines the additional elements needed to put together a comprehensive array of services to end homelessness. Each of the steps noted here should include the City of Chesapeake working in concert with the established human service delivery system. The City of Chesapeake will continue to be a full partner in the Continuum of Care process conducted by the Chesapeake Coalition for the Homeless and will coordinate plan activities with the Coalition and other human services providers.

Year 1			
Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in Chesapeake is adopted by City Council, with a commitment to work the plan throughout the ten years.	City Council	Plan adoption	Contract with The Planning Council to develop a plan
The City Manager hires a Housing Program Coordinator for the City. This person will coordinate services offered by City agencies to homeless persons, as well as coordinate activities with non-profits working with homeless persons in Chesapeake. In those instances where the City contracts with a non-profit for partnering in this process, the City and non-profit will agree on robust outcome measures for evaluating program success.	City Manager	Housing Program Coordinator is hired	Community Development Block Grant funds or General Funds

Year 1 (cont.)

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
<p>The Housing Program Coordinator publicizes the elements of the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness and engages all sectors of the community in the process. This includes city agencies, non-profits, the faith community, local philanthropies, the business community, advocacy groups, and all levels of government.</p>	<p>Housing Program Coordinator</p>	<p>Various sectors of the community have accepted a role in the implementation of the plan</p>	<p>Staff time of Housing Program Coordinator</p>
<p>The City continues to be a full partner in the Regional Task Force to End Homelessness and to commit reasonable resources to the efforts of the Task Force. Current regional efforts include the operation of a regional affordable housing database, the advocacy of the development of one SRO (Single Room Occupancy) facility in each city in the region, the development of a regional facility for residential substance abuse treatment, and hosting conferences to keep up with the latest research and best practices.</p>	<p>Housing Program Coordinator</p>	<p>Full ongoing participation on Regional Task Force to end homelessness</p>	<p>Staff time of Housing Program Coordinator</p>
<p>The City will advocate that Virginia establish a Housing Trust Fund to start a pipeline of resources to address low cost housing needs.</p>	<p>City Council</p>	<p>Recommendation is included in City's annual legislative package until the Housing Trust Fund is created</p>	<p>City Manager's staff</p>

Year 1 (cont.)

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of families living in motels in Chesapeake.	Housing Program Coordinator	Survey is completed, results are analyzed, a report is issued	Staff time

Year 2

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City evaluates the accomplishments and challenges of the previous year and makes adjustments to the Ten Year Plan as necessary.	Housing Program Coordinator	Coordinator issues report on accomplishments	Staff time
The City will begin Central Intake, initially for families only. This will involve establishing a single point of contact in the City for homeless families to call on a 24-hour basis. This will begin the tracking of that family through the services system. Case management will be provided to make sure the family gets the services needed to obtain and maintain permanent housing. Central Intake is also characterized by aggressive prevention that keeps families housed until services can get started. As this system becomes workable for families, it will eventually broaden to also be Central Intake for single adult homeless persons.	Housing Program Coordinator will convene a task force including the Chesapeake Department of Social Services, shelters, and others to use existing resources to develop this program.	All homeless families in Chesapeake receive shelter and services only through Central Intake.	Initially, staff time. Other resources may need to be applied for the additional case management services.

Year 2 (cont.)

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
<p>Based on the results of the needs assessment of families living in motels, the City will implement a process for getting these families into permanent housing. This will build upon resources available through City departments, other government agencies and non-profits. For City agencies this will include Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps, Medicaid, FAMIS, etc. It may also include resources from Safe and Stable Families and the Comprehensive Services Act. Other government agencies will be able to offer Veterans' Benefits, employment services, etc. Non-profits can offer shelter and help with rent and deposits. It is anticipated that additional funds will be needed for first month's rent and security deposits to help families break this cycle of homelessness. The majority of the calls received by the regional 211 Human Service Information and Referral Line are from families and individuals requesting emergency financial assistance, often related to housing. Often there are no resources to which to refer these callers. Case managers assigned to this population will have to work through issues of bad credit or a bad housing history with many of those who need assistance.</p>	<p>Housing Program Coordinator</p>	<p>Families temporarily housed in motels will find permanent housing.</p>	<p>Existing benefit programs will be used to implement the program. Other resources may be needed if the demand outweighs the resources.</p>

Year 2 (cont.)

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City should review existing policies to ensure that there are no barriers to accessing affordable housing.	City Manager	Appropriate codes are adopted.	City Manager's staff
The City begins the planning process for the development of permanent supportive housing, possibly a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) for single homeless adults.	Housing Program Coordinator	The City of Chesapeake works with the Regional Task Force to End Homelessness to identify an appropriate site for the SRO and to dedicate the necessary funding streams.	City staff, donation of site or funds for site acquisition and/or construction.

Year 3

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City evaluates the accomplishments and challenges of the previous years and makes adjustments to the Ten Year Plan as necessary.	Housing Program Coordinator	Coordinator issues report on accomplishments.	Staff time
The City begins an effort based on a model developed in Hennepin County to work with landlords to make apartments available to people exiting shelters and those who are being diverted from the shelter system. This model relies on incentives for landlords and intensive case management for the clients so that any problems that arise for the landlords are then resolved and the clients remain housed. This ties in with a policy of rapid exit from shelters. Homeless persons are found permanent housing as quickly as possible to shorten the stay in emergency shelters.	Housing Program Coordinator develops model, including staffing plan	A staff person is hired to implement this program.	City grant funding

Year 4

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City evaluates the accomplishments and challenges of the previous years and makes adjustments to the Ten Year Plan as necessary.	Housing Program Coordinator	Coordinator issues report on accomplishments	Staff time
The City and the Chesapeake Community Services Board implement a housing first approach to housing the seriously mentally ill and/or addicted homeless persons. This will be patterned after the Pathways to Housing program that is successfully operating in New York City, with an 88% success rate of keeping people in permanent housing once they are placed. Planning for the funding of this approach will take place in previous years.	Housing Program Coordinator and staff from the Chesapeake Community Services Board	Homeless persons with mental illness, mental retardation, or an addiction are placed in scattered site housing with supportive services	Federal funds if available. Otherwise, a new funding stream will be developed for this project.

Year 5

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City evaluates the accomplishments and challenges of the previous years and makes adjustments to the Ten Year Plan as necessary.	Housing Program Coordinator	Coordinator issues report on accomplishments	Staff time
The City establishes a process for working with agencies that discharge people to ensure that they do not become homeless. This includes those who are leaving hospitals, both primary care and mental health facilities, incarceration, and foster care. Some people are homeless at discharge which needs to be prevented with pre-release planning and coordination of services. Many people leaving institutions have an immediate destination that will keep them from being homeless. However, after a short period of time, the arrangements are not sustainable and the recently discharged person becomes homeless. This needs to be prevented as much as possible and resources need to be made available to those who become homeless. The Chesapeake Coalition for the Homeless does have a discharge policy. However, there are organizations not covered by the policy and in other instances, people discharged become homeless after a brief period of stability after discharge.	Housing Program Coordinator	Persons discharged from institutions have follow-up services in place to ensure that they do not become homeless	Staff time initially; other resources may be needed to fully accomplish this task

Year 6

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City reviews the accomplishments and challenges of the previous years and makes adjustments to the Ten Year Plan as necessary.	Housing Program Coordinator	Coordinator issues report on accomplishments	Staff time
The City sees its first Single Room Occupancy (SRO) facility open. Developed by a non-profit, this is part of the regional effort to have one in each city. Norfolk's Gosnold Apartments was the first; Virginia Beach is building the second one, Cloverleaf Apartments. Participation from these two cities as well as Portsmouth will continue the regional commitment to these projects. The Chesapeake Redevelopment and Housing Authority will be asked to contribute Section 8 vouchers to the project, which will become project based Section 8 units. Additional funds from the City will be needed to be put toward the purchase price.	Housing Program Coordinator and Regional Task Force to End Homelessness	60-unit regional SRO opens in Chesapeake	Staff time
It is the intent of the City of Chesapeake to work with the other jurisdictions in South Hampton Roads to develop a common approach to providing residential substance abuse treatment for homeless persons with addictions.	Housing Program Coordinator	Regional residential substance abuse treatment becomes available	A mix of public and private funding

Year 7

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City reviews the accomplishments and challenges of the previous years and makes adjustments as necessary.	Housing Program Coordinator	Coordinator issues report on accomplishments	Staff time
The City assesses the need for additional permanent supportive housing now that all the other services are in place. If additional units are needed, the City should work with non-profits to develop the needed units.	Housing Program Coordinator	New units are planned as needed	Staff time and other resources as needed

Year 8

Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City reviews the accomplishments and challenges of the previous years and makes adjustments as necessary.	Housing Program Coordinator	Coordinator issues report on accomplishments	Staff time
The City proceeds with the development of additional permanent supportive housing as needed.	Housing Program Coordinator	Additional units are developed as needed	Staff time and other resources as needed

Year 9			
Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City reviews the accomplishments and challenges of the previous years and makes adjustments as necessary.	Housing Program Coordinator	Coordinator issues report on accomplishments	Staff time
New permanent supportive housing units are opened.	Housing Program Coordinator	Additional units are opened	Staff time

Year 10			
Action	Responsibility	Benchmarks/ Performance Measures	Resources
The City reviews the progress made on the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. Any needed adjustments are made.	Housing Program Coordinator	Coordinator issues report on accomplishments of Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in Chesapeake	Staff time

Summary

Up until the last few years, most cities found the task of trying to end homelessness overwhelming. Research and the ability to learn from the experience of other cities and non-profits that have successfully implemented programs shows us that making a commitment to ending homelessness pays off and makes our cities better places to live.

Internet Resources for Further Research

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, www.hud.gov
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.hhs.gov
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, www.hrsa.gov
 U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, www.usich.gov
 National Alliance to End Homelessness, www.naeh.org
 Urban Institute, www.urban.org
 Pathways to Housing, www.pathwaystohousing.org

St. Stephen's Housing Services, Hennepin County, www.ststephensmpls.org
The Healing Place, www.thehealingplace.org
Corporation for Supportive Housing, www.csh.org
Affordable Housing Database for South Hampton Roads, www.housingconnect.org

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