

# SIGHT UNSEEN: THE NEGLECTED PROBLEM OF RURAL HOMELESSNESS



Diana T. Myers

Diana T. Myers & Associates, Inc.

[dtmdtma@hotmail.com](mailto:dtmdtma@hotmail.com)

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# Ending Homelessness Requires:

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- ◆ Prevention strategies
  - ⇒ Discharge Planning
  - ⇒ Linkages to Mainstream Resources
- ◆ Consistent outreach and engagement
- ◆ A range of appropriate housing options
- ◆ Available support services

# Rural Areas Face Special Challenges:

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- ◆ Population is Dispersed, Hidden, Doubled-up
- ◆ Transportation is Limited
  - ⇒ Outreach and Coordination are difficult
- ◆ Federal Priorities Favor Urban Areas
  - ⇒ Programs Prioritize Chronically Homeless
  - ⇒ Doubled -Up Don't Meet HUD Definition of Homeless

# Rural Areas Face Special Challenges:

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- ◆ Affordable Housing for Homeless is Virtually Nonexistent
- ◆ New Site-based Housing is Difficult:
  - ⇒ NIMBYism
  - ⇒ Lack of Infrastructure
- ◆ Resources Lacking for Rental Assistance

# Rural Areas Face Special Challenges:

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- ◆ Financial and Technical Resources are Shrinking or Nonexistent
  - ⇒ Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services Funding
  - ⇒ Multi-purpose Agencies become Primary Providers
  - ⇒ Little Capacity for Resource Development including:
    - Grant Writing and Management

# To Meet These Challenges Rural Communities Need:

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- ◆ Formal Coordination
- ◆ Access to Information on Best Practices
- ◆ Access to Financial and Human Resources
  - ⇒ Increased Expertise in Housing Development
  - ⇒ Trained Outreach and Engagement Teams
  - ⇒ Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services
- ◆ Grant Writing and Management Assistance

# Models/Best Practices: LHOTS



## What is an LHOT?

- ◆ A Local Housing Options Team
- ◆ Collaboration/Consortium/Coordination
- ◆ Key stakeholders coming together on the county or multi-county level

# Models/Best Practices: LHOTS

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## Who are the members of an LHOT?

- ◆ Key stakeholders in participating county or counties:
  - ⇒ Disability
  - ⇒ Housing
  - ⇒ Human Service
  - ⇒ People with Disabilities/Family Members

# Models/Best Practices: LHOTS

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## LHOT Activities?

- ◆ Networking
- ◆ Educating other members
- ◆ Troubleshooting/problem solving (case studies)
- ◆ Conducting needs assessments

# Models/Best Practices: LHOTS

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## LHOT Activities?

- ◆ Developing housing strategies
- ◆ Creating partnerships to address problems
- ◆ Planning and financing specific housing programs or projects

# Models/Best Practices: LHOTS

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## Notable Accomplishments?

- ◆ New Housing Opportunities
  - ⇒ Shelter Plus Care Programs
  - ⇒ Supportive Housing Programs
  - ⇒ Local Housing Authority Set-Asides and Preferences
  - ⇒ HUD Section 811 Programs

# Models/Best Practices: LHOTS

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## Notable Accomplishments?

- ◆ Innovative Housing Options
  - ⇒ Cooperative
  - ⇒ Fairweather Lodge
  - ⇒ Shared Housing
- ◆ Educational Forums (Fair Housing, Home Modifications, Section 8)
- ◆ Landlord Outreach Programs

# Best Practices: Digest of Model Programs for the Homeless

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- ◆ Common Themes for Successful Outreach and Engagement: Staff
  - ⇒ Understand structural barriers and personal vulnerability
  - ⇒ Treat people with dignity and respect
  - ⇒ Dedicated and sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity
  - ⇒ Don't engage individuals until ready

# Best Practices: Digest of Model Programs for the Homeless

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- ◆ Common Themes for Successful Outreach and Engagement: Agencies
  - ⇒ Collaborate and pool resources
  - ⇒ Demonstrate commitment to education and training
  - ⇒ Engage in good public relations with the community

# Best Practices: Digest of Model Programs for the Homeless

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- ◆ Common Themes Successful Housing First
  - ↑ Must be tied to successful outreach and engagement
  - ↩ Encourages, but does not require acceptance of services as prerequisite to housing
  - ↩ Requires a range of housing options and flexible subsidies
- ◆ [www.pahousingchoices.org](http://www.pahousingchoices.org)- Click on Information

# Best Practices: Digest of Model Programs for the Homeless

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## ◆ Common Themes for Successful Housing First Programs

- ↪ Recognize importance of intensive support services, such as Assertive Community Treatment Teams
- ↪ Require strong partnerships between housing providers and service providers
- ↪ Tap into all available Federal and State funding streams

# Best Practices: Technical Assistance and Training

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## ◆ Pa Technical Assistance Model

### ↳ PA DCED

Best Practices Conference

TA to Rural Housing Providers

### ↳ PA OMHSAS

Form and Assist LHOT's

Work Directly with County MH Offices

# Best Practices: Technical Assistance and Training

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## ◆ HUD SHP TA

⇒ Contact your HUD Regional Office

⇒ [HUD.gov](http://HUD.gov)

## ◆ Projects to Assist in the Transition for Homelessness

⇒ [pathprogram.samhsa.gov](http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov)

## ◆ HAC