

RHISCO Project

Ten-year plan outline/template

Introduction

Hint: Compose an opening paragraph(s) introducing; framing; and briefly describing your plan.

Background

Hint: The NAEH staff has done the background writing on national and regional homelessness and poverty for you. You just need to fill in information on your community.

Homelessness

Twenty-five years ago there was not widespread homelessness in America. Tonight approximately 750,000 men, women and children will be homeless, despite a two billion dollar a year infrastructure designed to deal with the problem.

While the seeds of homelessness were planted in the 1960s and 1970s with deinstitutionalization of people living with mental illness and loss of affordable housing stock, widespread homelessness did not emerge until the 1980s. Several factors have affected its growth over the last two decades. Housing has become scarcer for those with little money. Earnings from employment and from benefits have not kept pace with the cost of housing for low income and poor people. Services that every family needs for support and stability have become harder for very poor people to afford or find.

In addition to these systemic causes, social changes have exacerbated the personal problems of many poor Americans, leading them to be more vulnerable to homelessness. These social trends have included new kinds of illegal drugs and more single parent and teen-headed households with low earning power and thinning support networks. These causes of homelessness must be addressed. People who are homeless must be helped. The current system does this reasonably well for many of those who become homeless. But the homeless assistance system can neither prevent people from becoming homeless nor change the overall availability of housing, income and services that will truly end homelessness.

Many people think of homelessness as strictly an urban phenomenon because homeless people are greater in number and are more visible in urban areas, but homelessness, including people who live in housing not meant for habitation, is pervasive in rural areas. The number of people who experience rural homelessness is unknown, but the last national count of homeless people found that 9 percent live in rural areas. In actual raw numbers, this translates into roughly 67,000 people on any given night. (Burt, 1996) Evidence suggests that if the number of people who experience homelessness in rural areas was viewed and counted more accurately, the number would be far greater.

Rural Homelessness

Advocates and researchers often refer to people who experience rural homelessness as the “hidden homeless.” Many people who experience housing instability in rural areas go unnoticed and uncounted because rural homelessness takes shape differently than urban homelessness. Most rural homeless people live in doubled up situations with friends or family or in motels, in cars, campgrounds and other places not intended for habitation. This is largely because most rural areas do not have large emergency shelters systems.

While those doubled up households do not meet HUD’s definition of homelessness, people living temporarily with friends and family are essentially homeless and they experience similar problems with housing instability. Many researchers and advocates argue for expanding this view of homelessness to capture the unique situations rural homeless people face. If the view of homelessness included households who double up, the numbers of people who experience homelessness in rural areas would increase exponentially.

The same structural factors that contribute to urban homelessness, such as a lack of affordable housing and inadequate income to pay for housing, cause rural homelessness. Other predictors of homelessness, such as mental illness and drug abuse, while still present among the rural homeless, are not pervasive. However, people who experience rural homelessness do report higher rates of alcohol abuse and domestic violence than their urban counterparts.

Rural Poverty

Rural poverty has some unique characteristics. Areas concentrated with rural poverty can be identified throughout the South, West and the Midwest of the United States. The scarcity of jobs, goods, and services has caused an outward migration of rural populations to places with more opportunities. As a consequence, the rural communities with high rates of poverty are sparsely populated and their poverty populations are severely impoverished.

High rates of poverty and unemployment in rural areas also drive homelessness. Rural homelessness is most dramatic in areas that experience high rates of unemployment because of declining industries, for example farming, timber, mining, or fishing. (Aron and Fitchen, 1996) The lack of available jobs and steady incomes means that poverty rates are higher in rural areas; the poverty rate in non-metropolitan areas is 14 percent, almost 11.6 percent less than in metropolitan areas. It is not surprising that one in five children living in rural areas is below the poverty line. (USDA Economic Research Service, 2004)

The RHISCO Project area

Counting and estimating the number of people who experience homelessness is extremely difficult and costly, and even more so in rural areas. Statewide estimates from the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio report that 179,718 people experience homelessness in Ohio over the course of a year and 27,867 Ohioans are homeless on any given night. At this time, estimates from the seventeen rural counties

that comprise the RHISCO Project area, the Rural Homeless Initiative of Southeast and Central Ohio, are becoming available.

Counts of homeless people in Southeastern and Central Ohio are being planned and executed presently. The poverty and unemployment rates in these areas suggest that homelessness is prevalent. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (See Table 1, below), poverty rates in the counties of Southeastern and Central Ohio range from 3.8 percent in Delaware County to as high as 27 percent in Athens County. The poverty rates in Appalachian counties tend to be higher than other counties. About half are higher than the national poverty rate of 14 percent. Unemployment rates in rural Ohio counties are also high, ranging from 7 percent to 20 percent. In Meigs and Morgan Counties, the unemployment rates reach 20 percent, 15 percentage points higher than the national average of 5 percent. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005) People who live in poverty are at higher risk of homelessness. Although relatively few people of the region are homeless, the problem affects the entire community as a persistent and debilitating social issue.

Hint: You may extract data from this table for your county. We'll be using this for the regional plan as well.

Table 1

County	Type	Population		Pop over 65		Pop at or below 100% poverty		Median income	Household not in the Labor Force
		N		N	%	N	%	\$	
Delaware	Rural	125,399		9,833	7.80%	4,118	3.80%	\$67,258	7%
Fayette	Rural	28,176		4,048	14.40%	2,810	10.10%	\$36,735	12%
Knox	Rural	56,037		7,496	13.40%	5,159	10.10%	\$38,877	13%
Licking	Rural	148,731		17,872	12.00%	10,602	7.40%	\$44,124	13%
Madison	Rural	40,365		4,498	11.10%	2,790	7.90%	\$44,212	11%
Pickaway	Rural	53,437		5,842	10.90%	4,402	9.60%	\$42,832	15%
Union	Rural	43,010		4,066	9.50%	1,763	4.60%	\$51,743	10%
Athens	Appalachian	63,266		5,860	9.30%	14,728	27.30%	\$27,322	16%
Fairfield	Appalachian	129,161		14,058	10.90%	7,064	5.90%	\$47,962	12%
Hocking	Appalachian	28,481		3,737	13.10%	3,711	13.50%	\$34,261	18%
Jackson	Appalachian	32,854		4,362	13.30%	5,286	16.50%	\$30,661	17%
Meigs	Appalachian	23,111		3,377	14.60%	4,506	19.80%	\$27,287	20%
Morgan	Appalachian	14,749		2,302	15.60%	2,691	18.40%	\$28,868	20%
Perry	Appalachian	34,408		4,110	11.90%	3,970	11.80%	\$34,383	16%
Ross	Appalachian	74,469		9,048	12.20%	8,120	12.00%	\$37,117	15%
Vinton	Appalachian	13,128		1,597	12.20%	2,529	20.00%	\$29,465	17%
Washington	Appalachian	62,561		9,622	15.40%	7002	11.40%	\$34,275	17%

Hint: Athens County

Each county should add county-specific information on homelessness and poverty in this section.

You may include results from counts and/or other surveys.

Needs statement

(Specific to your community)

Prevention

What prevention services are currently available in your community?

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What are the gaps or unmet prevention needs?

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What strategies will you use to fill these gaps?

(Include who will do what, when?)

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Coordination of services

How are agencies currently coordinating services in your community?

(Including intervention at the point of crisis; benefits income; shortening homelessness, rapid re-housing, and discharge planning.)

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What are the gaps or unmet needs in coordination of services?

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What strategies will you use to fill these gaps?

(Include who will do what, when?)

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Outreach

What outreach activities are currently taking place in you community?

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What are the gaps in outreach activities?

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What outreach activities will you initiate to fill those gaps?

(Include education to the broader community around housing and homelessness, and who will do what, when?)

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Workforce development

What workforce development and training are currently available in your community?

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What are the gaps or unmet needs in workforce development?

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What strategies will you use to fill those gaps?

(Include who will do what, when?)

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Building support and liaison strategizing

(Including building political and community will)

What liaison efforts are currently taking place in your community?

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What liaison work needs to be developed? How, who and when will you do it?

Hint: Work with Marci McCauley, RHISCO Project liaison consultant

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Data collection

(Including Point- in-Time Count survey methodology)

Does your community have a sound survey methodology?

How was the methodology developed?

What efforts will you make to hone, revise, enhance this methodology?

(Including who will do what, when?)

Hint: See HUD's, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*

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Sustainability planning

From what resources will you seek funding? For which components of your plan?

Hint: The NAEH will provide more guidance on available resources and what they are likely to fund.

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Permanent Housing

Part of your strategy to sustain you plan will be to develop a Permanent housing development strategy.

Hint: For example: if you have determined there are 75 homeless people in your community, you may write: with an estimated 75 homeless people in Knox County there need to be developed 50 affordable housing units. @ 85K/unit= \$4,250,000.of which you might seek x %from the Ohio Department of Development.

This is the part where you delineate you needs, attach a dollar amount to what it will cost to meet those needs, and demonstrate that you have researched possible resources that will help fund your strategies.

Hint: See the funding resources list on Project Spaces; call on sources that have already funded your programs/projects; consider how you might collaborate and pool resources with neighboring counties. Can you write each other into your plans?

Implementation strategy

Hint: Create a grid/work plan delineating tasks, who will do them, and when. Don't forget to include the monitoring role. It's not necessary to map out ten years worth of tasks at this point. Think in terms of doing a count each January; reviewing the plan every February; applying for funding annually. Then, each year you may map out a

more detailed work plan revising it as needed. Build in strategies to keep you focused and on track.

Regionalism

Each county writes a few paragraphs on collaborating across county lines, utilizing a regional approach, etc.

Hint: You may include benefits, challenges, and strategies.

Conclusion

Hint: Compose a closing paragraph(s) summarizing and providing rationales for your plan.