

Maryland Policy Academy Team:
Initial Report on
Mainstream Services for Homeless Families

Team Members

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| ▪ Kay Casstevens* | ▪ Greg Shupe* |
| ▪ Mike Drummond* | ▪ Harry Sewell |
| ▪ Charles Henry* | ▪ Jeff Singer* |
| ▪ Laura Howell* | ▪ Calvin Street* |
| ▪ Kathryn King* | ▪ Debbie Verbillis* |
| ▪ Paula Lewis* | ▪ Linda Zang* |
| ▪ Denese Maker* | |
| ▪ Lynda Meade | *attended Policy Academy in Santa Fe |
| ▪ Dennis Nicholson* | |

Vision Statement

We envision a Maryland where residents experience homelessness rarely and only for brief periods of time.

Guiding Principles

- 1) All Marylanders have access to
 - Housing Opportunities
 - Adequate Income
 - Comprehensive Health Services
 - Quality Education
 - Supportive Services
- 2) All homeless individuals and families have access to mainstream services as well as services designed to end the condition of homelessness.
- 3) Governments, civic agencies, faith communities, citizens, consumers, and advocates are all committed to the effective and efficient use of resources through collaboration and integration of services.
- 4) Marylanders seeking services are treated with dignity and actively participate in the decisions affecting their lives.
- 5) Education and outreach are key to increasing community awareness and accountability.

Priorities

The Policy Academy Team identified areas of priority with a view to the feasibility of short-term and long-term efforts. The areas selected as most amenable to action in the short-term were:

1. Outreach and Education:
2. Coordination across Agencies:
3. Coordination of Case Management Services:
4. Holistic Assessment:
5. Assessment Screening Tool:
6. Fatherhood Issues:
7. Education Access:
8. Training Case Managers:
9. Hostile Environment/Customer Dignity:
10. Vocational Services:
11. Tracking Information (Short-term):
12. Access to SSI:

Areas requiring more time and resources to implement were:

1. Increased Funding for Eviction Prevention/Mortgage Assistance:
2. Affordable Housing:
3. Childcare:
4. Increased Supply of Shelter Resources:
5. Criminal History and effect on TANF/Food Stamps/Housing/Employment:
6. Transportation:
7. Living Wage:
8. TEMHA benefit level:
9. Increased supply of case managers:
10. Co-occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues:
11. Tracking Information (Long-term):
12. SSI Supplement:
13. Welfare Grants:

The Action Plan developed reflects categories where the Team believed immediate action would have the highest impact.

Action Plan

Goal One: Outreach and Education

To increase the utilization of existing programs, persons who are homeless, and those who work to assist them, must have access to key information about such services. Information must be made available through traditional and non-traditional avenues.

Strategy 1: Public Education Campaign

- Outcomes:

- Create public sensitivity and knowledge
- Dispel fear about utilization of services
- Remove stigma
- Recruit volunteers

- Action Steps:

- Convene key actors
- Define audiences
- Craft targeted messages
- Develop budget
- Create dissemination plan

Strategy 2: Program Education

-Outcomes

- Increase knowledge of prevention programs
- Increase knowledge of homelessness remediation

-Action Steps

- Secure inventory of programs/services
- Define audience
- Convene key audience members
- Develop budget
- Create dissemination plan

Goal Two: Coordinating Agencies

To address the fragmentation of services, to increase the impact of current expenditures, and to seek resources for gap-filling services, coordination of programs at the state level is essential.

Strategy 1: Broaden the base of the Policy Academy Team and establish an Interagency Committee

-Outcomes

- Involve other agencies and organizations in the development of state actions to prevent and remediate homelessness in Maryland
- Create an Interagency Committee on Homelessness involving public and private organizations, advocates, and consumers

-Action Steps:

- Identify other stakeholders

- Prepare summary report of Academy with a recommendation to the Governor for creation of a standing Interagency Committee on Homelessness
 - ◆ Request will ask for an Executive Order establishing the Committee
 - ◆ Committee will be based on the structure and membership of the Policy Academy Team
 - ◆ Scope of duties will include making recommendations on budget, policy actions, legislation
- Conduct informal outreach within organizations/agencies represented in PA
- Send report and invitation to stakeholders

Goal Three: Coordinating Case Management Services

A major point of contact between homeless people and the range of existing services is the case management system in place in many agencies and organizations. Unfortunately, the case managers often focus only on a narrow range of services defined by the agency in which they work. Comprehensive assessment of families, sharing of resources and information, and coordination of services among involved case managers is minimal.

Strategy 1: Create inventory of CM services and existing interagency interaction

-Objective

- Develop a system of coordinated case management across programs and agencies

-Action Steps

- Review Medicaid inventory process & tool
- Identify best practices in CM coordination
- Identify agencies to conduct inventories
- Policy Academy agencies conduct inventories
- Ask other agencies for inventories
- Identify areas of overlap, conflict, potential collaboration

Strategy 2: Benchmark Assessment Processes and Instruments

-Objective

- Develop a coordinated approach to the assessment process to serve as a basis for coordinated case management

-Action Steps

- Review assessment instruments
- Identify best practices in assessment
- Identify agencies to conduct inventories
- Policy Academy agencies conduct inventories
- Ask other agencies for inventories
- Integrate multi-disciplinary aspects of holistic assessment

Key Challenges

- Resources
- Consumer participation & organization
- Collaboration among complex systems
- Entrenched cultures
- Building strategic alliances

Technical Assistance

- Best practices in interagency coordination
- Best practices in case management coordination
- Social marketing
- Best practices in assessment
- Facilitation