

# Proposal to End Homelessness

Heading Home —

Jeffco Community Steps to Housing



**Research Committee Report**

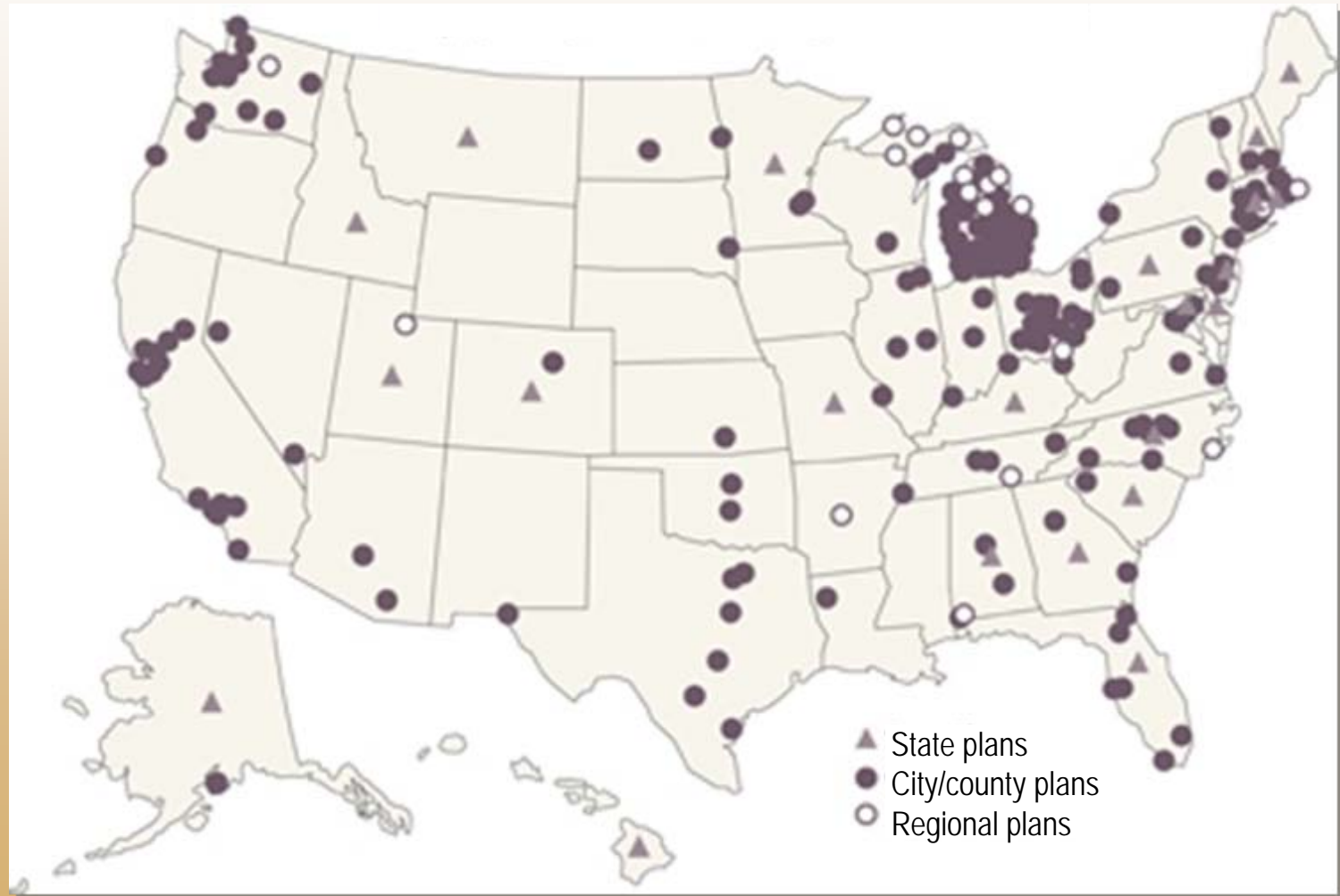
# Introduction

*What was unthinkable just a few years ago is now emerging as common sense. What seemed naive is now sound policy. What was thought of as intractable is now subject to strategies. After 20 years of response, we now realize that homelessness won't go away on its own. If it's ignored, it only gets worse.*

Philip Mangano

**The National Alliance to End Homelessness underwent the examination of 90 Plans to address homelessness.**

# Geographic Representation of Completed Ten-Year Plan



# Primary Strategies Outlined in the Plans

- ❖ **Creating data systems:** 91% of the plans outlined strategies to create Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS).
- ❖ **Homelessness prevention:** 79% of the plans addressed emergency prevention and outlines systems prevention activities.
- ❖ **Outreach:** 79% of plans provided outreach efforts to engage people living on the streets.
- ❖ **Shortening time of homelessness:** 67% of plans worked to shorten the time that people spend homeless by providing permanent housing.
- ❖ **Links to services:** 81% of plans outlined strategies to link individuals and families with mainstream services.

# A Wide Range of Stakeholders Should Be Involved in the Community Planning Process

## Private Stakeholders

- ❖ Hospitals/Health Care Providers
- ❖ Banks
- ❖ For-Profit Housing Developers
- ❖ Formerly or Current Homeless People
- ❖ Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Landlords
- ❖ Philanthropists

## Public Stakeholders

- ❖ Department of Human Services
- ❖ Housing Authority
- ❖ Department of Community Development
- ❖ Police
- ❖ Mayor's Office
- ❖ Department of Mental Health
- ❖ Department of Public Health
- ❖ Department of Corrections

- ❖ Office of Planning
- ❖ Department of Education/School District
- ❖ Department of Child Welfare
- ❖ City Council
- ❖ Courts
- ❖ Housing Finance Authority
- ❖ State Legislature
- ❖ Fannie Mae Partnership Office
- ❖ Governor's Office
- ❖ Tribal Organizations

## Non-Profit Stakeholders

- ❖ Community Based Non-profit Organizations
- ❖ Faith Community
- ❖ Non-profit Housing Developers
- ❖ United Way
- ❖ Academia

# How to End Homelessness in 10 Years

- ❖ **Plan for outcomes:** Communities should collect data at the local level on who is homeless, why they became homeless, what assistance they receive, and what is effective in ending their homelessness. The plan should be focused on outcomes based on this data and the planning process should include representatives from the public, private and non-profit sectors.
- ❖ **Close the front door:** A crucial part of ending homelessness is preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place. Public systems must take responsibility for ensuring their clients do not become homeless and these efforts should be supplemented by emergency prevention strategies.
- ❖ **Open the back door:** People experiencing homelessness should move into permanent housing as quickly as possible.
- ❖ **Build the infrastructure:** Communities must address the root causes of homelessness by working toward livable incomes, affordable housing and access to services.

# Ten Essentials to Ending Homelessness

(All Plans include at least 1 of the 10 essentials and 56% address all 10)

1. Creating a plan
2. Creating a data system
3. Establishing emergency prevention programs
4. Making system changes to prevent homelessness
5. Outreach to homeless people on the streets
6. Shortening the time people spend homeless
7. Rapid re-housing so people do not become homeless
8. Treatment and other services for homeless people
9. Creating an adequate supply of affordable housing
10. Ensuring homeless people have incomes to pay for housing

# Implementation and Funding Sources

- ❖ An organizational body that is responsible for overseeing plan implementation is crucial to making sure that the plan gets off the ground and does not become a piece of paper on a shelf.
- ❖ 54% of the plans identified a body that would take up responsibility for overall implementation once the plan was completed. In most cases the body was made up of a combination of nonprofit, governmental and other stakeholders — such as a local interagency council on homelessness.
- ❖ 48% of the plans identified funding sources for implementation. Examples of funding sources include:
  - Grants through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Programs
  - Housing funding through CDBG, HOME and LIHTC
  - U.S. Department for Health and Human Services
  - TANF funds
  - Local housing trust funds created through tax revenues
  - Philanthropic funding
  - Business funding

# Best Practices

# Housing Outcomes: *Denver's Road Home* — The 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness

- ❖ Over the past three years, Denver's Road Home has increased the total housing stock for the homeless by 1,243 housing units.
- ❖ A number of these units are targeted to the chronically homeless. While living on the streets, the chronically homeless use the most expensive city services. Detox admissions have been reduced by 76% over the past year for a savings of over a half a million dollars.
- ❖ Denver also added 5 new respite beds to alleviate the use of emergency services and reduce costs.

# Prevention: Community Care Grant Program — Washington, D.C.

- ❖ **1997:** 350 families on wait list for emergency shelter with average shelter stay of 4-6 months.
- ❖ **Vision:** Intervene early to help families obtain permanent housing without ever entering a shelter.
- ❖ **Goal:** To use existing resources such as public and community based providers and existing housing opportunities in the private rental market.
- ❖ **Eligibility**
  - Serves families at imminent risk of homelessness — including families that are doubled up or with a pending eviction notice.
  - Adult family member(s) must be employed or employable.
  - Assessed for ability to become and remain permanently housed and self-sufficient in a short period of time.
- ❖ **Funding:** D.C. has committed \$1.43 million to the program over a three year period — primarily state TANF resources.

# Prevention: Community Care Grant Program — Washington, D.C.

## ❖ Services

- Family receives an in-depth assessment and case plan. Must agree to follow plan.
- A grant of up to \$7,000 is provided for each family in program.
- \$4000 is used to finance case management that may include development of a financial plan and help in accessing community resources.
- Case managers also serve as to help families in event of future family crises.
- Remaining \$3,000 to help re-house families. Can cover costs such as security deposits, first month's rent, a short-term housing subsidy, furniture, utilities, or needed household items.
- Some service providers have housing specialists on staff to develop on-going relationships with landlords in the neighborhood and the housing authority.
- Housing specialists keep track of available housing, help with paper work, credit history issues, etc.
- No final payment from grants until the families actually obtain housing.

# Prevention: Community Care Grant Program — Washington, D.C.

- ❖ **Cost effectiveness:** Each family housed at a cost of \$7,000 prevents a “typical” homeless stay in the shelter system.
- ❖ Typical shelter stay is 186 days at \$62 a day or \$11,439.
- ❖ **Outcomes (1998-2002)**
  - 275 families participated
  - 231 exited
  - 165 successfully housed (71%)

# Project Check-Out Atlantic County New Jersey

- ❖ Evolved from concerns around high number of families living in motels.
- ❖ Families were receiving TANF cash assistance with motel stays paid for with EA resources.
- ❖ Most families received no services, nor any assistance in finding permanent housing.
- ❖ Some motels in the county entirely filled with homeless families.
- ❖ **Project Check-Out strategies**
  - “Evening Snack Program” to foster relations with families at motels.
  - Relocated staff from welfare office to work intensively with families.
  - Ensured quick access to EA resources for security deposits and other costs’.
  - Linked families to N.J.’s Temporary Rental Assistance Program that provides a rent subsidy to welfare families for up to 12 months.
- ❖ **Results**
  - In 2003, approximately 75 families were living in motels. In 2004, only 4 families were living in motels on any given night.
  - Over an 18 month time period, the agency moved 254 families from motels to permanent housing.

# Westchester County, New York

## ❖ Three goals

- Prevent homelessness
- Shorten shelter stays
- Move families back to stable housing

## ❖ Key initiatives

### • Prevention

- Staff in TANF offices to explore alternatives to entering shelter with incoming families
- Eviction prevention services to at-risk families

### • Intensive services to families in shelters

- Housing First Services to help families in shelters to find housing, negotiate with landlords and case management to help families become stable in their new homes
- Case managers work to link families with needed services such as domestic violence, mental health and substance abuse programs

# Westchester County, New York

## ❖ Income support

- TANF funded increase in welfare payments to help homeless families pay for housing
- Rent assistance payments for families leaving welfare

## ❖ Outcomes

- Family homelessness decreased 57% from 697 families in shelters in 2002, to 297 in 2006. 95% of families have not returned to shelter system.
- Westchester County is exploring the need to downsize their shelter system as the need for shelter beds and transitional housing has decreased.
- County looking at shifting to permanent housing models and providing mobile services to families in private rental housing throughout the county.

# Conclusion

*Just a few years ago, such plans were thought to be risky and naive. But with the new technologies and an emphasis on ending homelessness, maybe the new naïveté is not to have a plan. Naive to think you don't need a plan.*

*The risk may be in not creating a plan.*

Philip Mangano