Creating Community Employment Pathways

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW TO THE GUIDE

Most people who are homeless are capable of working and want to work. This has been shown time and again from demonstration and research projects such as the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration project, the Ending Chronic Homelessness through Employment and Housing project conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and the Next Step: Jobs initiative conducted by the Corporation for Supportive Housing. These same projects have also demonstrated that the needs of homeless people require services across any number of systems and that obtaining a job alone does not equal economic stability for this population.¹

The housing, employment, and treatment systems are well formed into separate silos, generally without “bridges” for those who need to access services from multiple systems. For example, the majority of homeless assistance providers tend to focus on the most basic needs, like shelter, medical care, and assistance with documentation and benefits. If they deal with employment at all, it is to refer people to mainstream service providers such as One-Stop Career Centers. At the same time, while One-Stops and other mainstream vocational training and employment organizations are often tasked with serving special needs populations, they typically do not track whether clients are homeless and do not refer people to other services like health care or housing. As a result, clients who are homeless may not be getting all of the help they need to obtain and maintain employment. The lack of collaboration and targeted programs leaves homeless people often crafting their own pathway through programs that are complex and, at times, contradictory.

In order to improve outcomes for homeless jobseekers, systems can collaborate to create “Community Employment Pathways”—formalized and routine opportunities for training, job placement, and support. These pathways might take the form of referral procedures, relationships with industry sectors, or other mechanisms to help people who are homeless choose, get, and keep jobs, regardless of which “door” they enter for assistance. The following are all examples of pathways to employment:

- The local operator of One-Stop Career Centers opens a satellite branch at a homeless assistance agency.
- The local One-Stop stations staff at a homeless assistance agency one day a week.
- A homeless assistance agency brings clients as a group to look for jobs at the One-Stop, where a staff member is assigned to work with them.
- Local agencies collaborate with the hospitality industry to pre-screen, drug-test, and provide uniforms and equipment to homeless jobseekers.

A permanent supportive housing program “vocationalizes” its building by adding a “jobs area” with a computer and prominent job listings and by hiring tenants to work onsite.

Creating Community Employment Pathways provides guidance to communities in leading a Community Employment Pathways (CEP) initiative. Although a CEP initiative is likely to be led by a Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agency, it is a collaborative effort involving the workforce development and other systems. A CEP initiative has three primary goals:

- Increase the number of homeless and formerly homeless individuals in the workforce
- Expand access to existing employment services and expand investment of dollars from multiple systems to address education and training needs of homeless jobseekers
- Improve critical cross-systems (housing, treatment services, and employment services) linkages so that homeless jobseekers have the needed housing, support, and training to be successful.

The agencies and individuals participating in the CEP initiative gather data needed to produce a formal CEP report, which sets out a series of action steps needed to create Community Employment Pathways.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The purpose of this guidebook is to provide practical advice to communities seeking to create more effective means of helping people who are homeless obtain and maintain employment. By providing information from both sides of the equation—the homeless assistance and workforce development systems—and highlighting successful examples of programs working together, this guidebook will help communities link the various service systems required for improved employment outcomes. The guidebook also provides step-by-step advice on program planning and design as well as how to manage systems change. It is not intended as an instruction manual for directly supporting people in employment, but is instead focused on systems-level aspects of implementing and promoting employment for people who are homeless. Worksheets are provided in each chapter to help focus your thinking and take you through a CEP initiative step by step.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This guidebook is intended for key stakeholders in the homeless assistance and workforce development systems at the local level. Within these systems, a number of specific individuals and groups will benefit from the information provided, including the following:

- Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agencies
- CoC working groups
- Homeless assistance providers
- State and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)
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• One-Stop Career Center operators and partners

The information will also be helpful for an expanded set of partners that are likely to collaborate with the homeless assistance and workforce development systems on creating employment for people who are homeless. These include State mental health planners, mental health and substance abuse treatment providers, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) providers, agencies that serve veterans and youth, and secondary and higher education providers. While State-level decision makers may have an important role, the CEP initiative is essentially a locally driven activity.

WHAT THIS BOOK WILL HELP YOU DO

Creating Community Employment Pathways will help you understand the context in which Community Employment Pathways are created and will help you implement a CEP initiative in your community. This guidebook specifically takes you beyond conceptual information to help you complete the following tasks:

• Clarify and verify the needs of your target population
• Envision an ideal system and create goals for your organization
• Create a CEP report with action steps to address employment for homeless people
• Evaluate current partnerships and clarify what your organization has to offer a partnership
• Think about and “map” resources in your community
• Increase buy-in from mainstream providers and other potential partners
• Create new partnerships with employment providers

If you are unfamiliar with the workings of the homeless assistance or workforce development systems, background information on each system is also provided in later chapters.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS

Helping people who are homeless find and maintain employment is an important link in a community’s ability to go from helping people who are homeless to eliminating homelessness. Income supports and housing subsidies can help people move into housing, but employment can help people support themselves and move away from the isolation that comes from being both homeless and unemployed. Employment can help reduce the risk of future homelessness by generating income, instilling pride, and connecting people to the community. Currently, communities struggle with how to link homeless people with employment, primarily because homeless assistance services and workforce development services have evolved as separate systems with little interaction. As the main sources of funding for services specifically designed for people who are homeless are redirected toward permanent housing, communities need new ways to address employment for this population.
McKinney-Vento Programs

In 1987, Congress passed the Stewart B. McKinney Homelessness Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77) to address the growing problem of homelessness. Commonly referred to as McKinney-Vento, this legislation is to date the only comprehensive Federal legislation to address homelessness. It authorized funding for homeless assistance programs administered by Federal agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (HHS), Labor (DOL), Education (ED), and Veterans Affairs (VA).

In 1994, with the involvement of stakeholders around the country, HUD introduced the Continuum of Care (CoC) planning process to encourage communities to address the problems of housing and homelessness in a more coordinated and strategic fashion. This comprehensive approach helps enable communities to identify and prioritize gaps in the housing and services available for people who are homeless. Coordinated by a lead agency, the CoC working group allocates funding for HUD’s homeless programs at the local and State levels.

The McKinney-Vento Act originally consisted of 15 programs providing a range of services to homeless people, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing for people with disabilities, primary health care, education, and job training. Examples include the following:

- Four HUD-administered programs focus primarily on housing: Emergency Shelter Grants Program, Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care Program, and Section 8 Single Room Occupancy Moderate Rehabilitation Program for Homeless Individuals.

- Two programs related to employment are authorized by the act but have not been funded for several years: Adult Education for the Homeless, administered by the Department of Education, and Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Program (JTHDP), administered by DOL. Findings from a study of JTHDP suggest that job training and placement services are most effective when combined with additional services that people who are homeless need to overcome obstacles to employment, including comprehensive assessment and ongoing case management.2

Within the Continuum of Care, homeless assistance providers have used funding available under the housing programs as a base to provide outreach, shelter, and other services to homeless people, including linking people with vocational services. More information about services for people who are homeless and their employment needs is available in Chapter 6.

Mainstream Workforce Programs

Over the years, the mainstream workforce development system has frequently targeted disadvantaged populations, in particular through the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) superseded JTPA in 1998 and provides workforce development activities through statewide and local organizations. While these programs provide assistance to anyone, they

can target populations such as veterans and people with disabilities, including people who are homeless. The purpose of WIA programs is to improve the quality of the workforce and promote employment, job retention, and an increase in earnings and occupational skills by participants.

WIA requires that each State create a Workforce Investment Board (WIB) made up of representatives from businesses, labor organizations, educational institutions, and community organizations. One function of the State WIB is to develop a statewide plan. In addition, local areas that administer WIA services have established local Workforce Investment Boards (local WIBs) that develop and submit a local area plan to the State. The local WIB also may select which local organizations are eligible to provide services. Through WIBs, Federal workforce funds flow from the Federal government to the State to local communities.

At the local level, WIA organizes the delivery of services through One-Stop Career Centers. These services are offered at three progressive levels: core services, intensive services, and training services. Core services include the provision of labor market information, skill level assessment, job search and placement assistance, and other self-service options. Intensive services are available to eligible individuals who have completed at least one core service, but have not been able to obtain employment, or who need additional services to obtain or keep employment that will lead to self-sufficiency. Training services are available to individuals who have received intensive services and have not been able to obtain or keep employment. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are established to finance training and allow individuals to obtain services from a variety of training programs in the community that have been approved by the local WIB. More information about the workforce investment system is included in Chapter 7.

**Targeted Programs**

Finally, a number of specialized programs exist for the purpose of improving employment outcomes specifically for homeless and disadvantaged populations. These can be categorized as prevention programs, re-entry programs, and intervention programs. Each of these programs focuses on addressing the employment needs of a specific group, like youth or prisoners re-entering communities. Funded primarily by DOL, these programs have included Job Corps, Ready4Work, Youth Offender Demonstration Grants, the Prisoner Reentry Initiative, and the Homeless Veteran’s Reintegration Program (HVRP). A more complete discussion of these resources is provided in Chapter 7. Although the primary focus of a CEP initiative is to bring together the homeless assistance and mainstream employment sectors, targeted programs have valuable organizational expertise to offer in planning and implementing Community Employment Pathways. Additionally, in many communities, the One-Stop Career Centers have reciprocal relationships with many other organizations that offer employment services and other supports. Figure 1 illustrates some of these relationships.
Partnerships for Success

Community Employment Pathways are essentially a network of systemic links between homeless assistance providers and mainstream employment services. Community Employment Pathways are developed with the willing participation of both the homeless assistance and workforce development systems, which work together for the purpose of creating better employment outcomes for people who are homeless while meeting the workforce needs of employers. A CEP initiative is a systems change initiative that uses field research to analyze a community’s workforce needs and establishes avenues for homeless jobseekers to enter and advance in the labor market.

In many communities, Community Employment Pathways will be built on employment and training efforts that already have been in operation. McKinney-Vento funds have been used in
many communities to provide employment training and support for homeless persons, and mainstream workforce programs have been valuable partners in community efforts to end homelessness. In some communities, the development of Community Employment Pathways may be an issue of expanding existing efforts to a larger scale or linking efforts across the two systems.

A demonstration project conducted by DOL indicates that the workforce development system can benefit from community partnerships. The Community Audits Demonstration Project (CADP) provided support to 34 local and State WIBs to collect supply and demand data and to help communities plan for workforce shortages and surpluses. Among the goals of CADP was encouraging partnerships with community stakeholders and industry sectors, and the evaluation of the project found that significant progress was made on these goals and that many grantees reported that the new relationships developed through the project were among the most substantial benefits of the project.³

Through a CEP initiative, communities can seek to capitalize on the positive experiences of partnership development in the CADP. By bringing stakeholders together, the CEP initiative helps the homeless assistance and workforce development service systems improve their outcomes. A 2005 survey conducted by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) found that 75 percent of its members currently rank hiring, retaining, and maintaining the skills of their workforce as their most significant problem. In the same survey, 85 percent of NAM members said they were compelled to hire non-traditional populations to fill job vacancies, and more than 50 percent indicated they needed help in hiring, training, and retaining those workers.⁴ Meeting these workforce needs creates an important opportunity for people who are homeless and for the service systems charged with supporting them.

FROM PROGRAMS TO PATHWAYS

Communities have programs for addressing the needs of people who are homeless and for connecting potential workers to employers with hiring needs. However, even with these resources, the pathways for people who are homeless to meaningful employment might be limited or nonexistent. Pulling together new and existing resources into coherent Community Employment Pathways is a task that can only be successful when considering unique local conditions. However, an example of how this might work in a hypothetical community might prove helpful.

Anytown, USA has identified 350 people who are homeless on any given night, and estimates that nearly 800 become homeless over the course of a year. Eighty percent of the individuals interviewed stated that they either are working or want to work. The lead agency for the Anytown Continuum of Care and the local WIB decide to start a committee to create employment opportunities for this group. The research committee takes a closer look at the homeless population, and discovers that 12 percent of the individuals homeless over the course of a year meet the definition of chronic homelessness, and that 45 percent are homeless families. The research committee also investigates the local market, looking for needs within the business sector that can be met by this group. The committee's research shows a severe labor shortage in the nursing home industry and a general lack of mid-range job opportunities ($10 - $20 per hour wages). The community is successful in attracting a new auto parts assembly plant to the community, but planners for that activity are not thinking about people who are homeless.

The Anytown planners identify the following three targets:

1. Create a sector initiative with business leaders in the nursing home industry.
   Design industry specific training and certification for care aides, clerks, cooks, and groundskeepers. Make it accessible to people who are homeless. Provide it, if possible, on site at homeless shelters. Allow individuals multiple ways to meet performance benchmarks to streamline access to industry jobs. Obtain funding through the WIB and the nursing home industry. Set targets of 250 people trained and 100 jobs retained after six months.

2. Create job training programs that will lead directly to mid-range jobs offered by the new auto assembly plant.
   Set a target of employing up to 60 people (including homeless families and people who are chronically homeless within this number). Use WIB funding, with city/county support.

3. Create or provide access to transitional jobs for up to 35 chronically people who are homeless.
   Apply for funding from the WiB to support transitional jobs in the construction industry, using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to secure individualized supports for individuals, which might include job coaches. Partner with SSA and other agencies administering benefits to ensure that homeless jobseekers understand the impact of work on their eligibility for benefits and take full advantage of available work incentives.

As you prepare to create Community Employment Pathways for your community, think about which homeless subpopulations exist in your community, what their needs are, and what resources are available to assist you.

**HOW THE GUIDEBOOK IS ORGANIZED**

The remaining chapters are organized so as to facilitate the use of this guidebook as a step-by-step protocol for creating Community Employment Pathways in your community. In order to focus your attention on action, Chapter 2 begins with concrete steps rather than background information.

Readers who want additional background about homelessness or workforce development are encouraged to read the background chapters toward the end of this guidebook. Those who need additional information about the vocational and support needs of homeless jobseekers are directed to Chapter 6: Understanding the Needs of Homeless Jobseekers, while those who want...
more information about mainstream and targeted employment resources are directed to Chapter 7: Building Blocks for Community Employment Pathways.

For those who are ready to begin creating Community Employment Pathways, Chapters 2 through 5 lay out a step-by-step process, beginning with organizing a CEP initiative and setting the stage for collaboration, and on through researching needs and resources, producing a report with action steps, and finally implementing those action steps.

A brief overview of the chapters is provided here.

**Chapter 2: Preparing for Change**

Creating Community Employment Pathways for your community can be a significant change in the way your community provides services. Chapter 2 focuses on managing this change in an organized way and will help the reader understand how to initiate the collaborative process. It presents models for collaboration between homeless assistance and workforce development systems. The chapter also provides practical strategies to engage stakeholders, build support for new practices, find resources to implement change (such as through philanthropic institutions), and build consensus on a chosen approach. Chapter 2 discusses possible challenges that may arise during the CEP initiative and provides methods for building an infrastructure that can meet those challenges. Practical advice on identifying key stakeholders, establishing a steering committee, and building consensus is provided.

**Chapter 3: Researching Community Needs and Resources**

To implement an effective CEP initiative, communities need to make a significant investment in research and planning. Chapter 3 provides step-by-step guidance on gathering the data needed to develop a CEP report. Readers from both the homeless assistance and workforce development systems will learn which sources of information are needed for a CEP report and will understand where to obtain this information. Guidance is provided on how to interpret the data collected and how to move from analysis to program development. Numerous examples and worksheets for managing the research process are provided.

**Chapter 4: Developing a Formal CEP Report**

Chapter 4 offers guidance on preparing a CEP report by creating a framework for analyzing data and creating outcomes and action steps. The CEP report documents research findings but also sets out action steps for creating Community Employment Pathways. Readers will receive guidance on identifying gaps and setting priorities, mobilizing support for the plan, and locating funding and securing resources for Community Employment Pathways.

**Chapter 5: Implementing Action Steps from the CEP Report**

Continued attention is needed to ensure that the CEP report does not simply sit on a shelf. Chapter 5 describes some of the barriers that might arise to implementation of the action steps set out in the CEP report and describes some of the strategies to overcome these barriers. Of particular concern are means of meeting performance goals while serving a group who needs additional supports to attain and maintain employment.
Chapter 6: Understanding the Needs of Homeless Jobseekers

Chapter 6 is a background chapter that can be read before beginning a CEP initiative or for additional information. Designing Community Employment Pathways requires knowledge about the needs of people who are homeless. This chapter provides information needed to understand the unique and specific needs of different homeless jobseekers. It examines several homeless subpopulations and describes some of the experiences of homeless jobseekers. This chapter will help members of the workforce development system understand how the homeless population differs from other jobseekers. Readers who work in both the homeless assistance and workforce development systems will gain a clearer understanding of the barriers that homeless people encounter when seeking assistance and how they can better accommodate this population.

Chapter 7: Building Blocks for Community Employment Pathways

Chapter 7 is also a background chapter. Through the Workforce Investment Act and funding from various Federal agencies, your community may offer a number of programs for helping people choose, find, and keep jobs, but people who are homeless are not always a priority for these programs. This chapter discusses some of these programs and explains how the workforce development system is organized.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The guidebook concludes with Chapter 8. Chapter 8 can be reread periodically as a reminder of the key guiding principles for collaboration between homeless assistance and workforce development, keeping in mind that these principles are applicable to further collaboration with the housing and treatment systems as well. This chapter also addresses activities that will help the CEP initiative stay on track. Enthusiasm and momentum need to be sustained, but there also needs to be recognition that communicating progress among stakeholders and partners is critical, as is the management of expectations, particularly with regard to the length of time it will take to achieve system changes and behavior.
CHAPTER 2: PREPARING FOR CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

What the Chapter Is About

The process of creating Community Employment Pathways (CEPs) starts with building a climate for change. Change will involve adopting a model of collaboration between systems that have not traditionally worked together. In chapters 2 through 4, the guidebook takes you through a set of steps toward creating CEPs, though the process might not always be linear. This chapter describes how to develop a structure that will support the CEP initiative and offers guidance about tasks for a steering committee and community leadership within that structure. In order to develop Community Employment Pathways, a key piece is creating more effective approaches to supporting the employment of homeless jobseekers. Simply improving access to existing services is not likely to be successful: new and evidence-based practices are needed.

The lead agency for a community’s Continuum of Care (CoC) is typically well-positioned to take the lead in building a climate for change and a structure for the CEP initiative. As a group, CoC organizations have worked together to create a governing structure with a steering committee or governing board. Moreover, the CoC planning process, ideally, is inclusive and involves a broad range of stakeholders that include government and business representatives, homeless assistance providers, providers of mainstream services (including housing, employment, and mental health and substance abuse treatment), advocates, and consumers of services, among others. In some CoCs, the planning group already includes a representative of the State and/or local Workforce Investment Board.

What the Reader May Expect to Gain from This Chapter

This chapter will help you do the following:

- Understand how to build a climate for change
- Assess and structure effective partnerships
- Develop an infrastructure to support change
- Locate funding for the initiative
- Establish guidelines that help the initiative stay focused and on track

Building Community Employment Pathways in your community requires coordination among systems that traditionally have had little interaction in many communities. However, at all levels of government, coordination among systems is becoming increasingly common as agencies seek to address the needs of people with complex needs. Experience in other systems change efforts has shown that when change is approached in a systematic manner, it can be successful.
STEP 1: BUILD A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

Creating Community Employment Pathways to improve employment outcomes for people who are homeless represents a significant change involving multiple services systems. Most people who are homeless cannot make the leap to employment without the participation of many stakeholders. Broad participation across traditional agency and service boundaries is therefore essential. Most communities address homelessness through the Continuum of Care system, using McKinney-Vento funds, and have traditionally linked homeless jobseekers to jobs without using mainstream employment system programs. Over the past few years, McKinney-Vento funds have been targeted more and more towards housing and away from services, causing a funding crisis for employment services specifically designed for people who are homeless. In order to continue to meet the needs of homeless jobseekers, communities need to look to mainstream resources (see Chapter 7 for a brief overview).

Managing change of this magnitude requires an organized approach. This section explains strategies for engaging stakeholders across service systems that might have different or competing interests, building support for adopting exemplary practices, finding the resources to implement change, and building and reinforcing consensus on a chosen approach.

Identifying Key Stakeholders

The input of many stakeholders is important to the success of the CEP initiative. The contributions expected from these stakeholders might include changes in their program design, the reshaping of attitudes, or contributing expertise. Use Worksheet 2.1 to help you to identify key stakeholders.

Within the stakeholder group, it is important to have a cadre of individuals who share a common mission to work at the core of the consensus-building effort. These individuals should be capable of acting as “change agents”—people who are interested in changing the status quo in order to achieve results and who are willing to advocate for these changes. Some of the qualities needed by these change agents are as follows:5

- Experience providing service to people with complex needs
- Supervisory experience
- Participation in training in integrated approaches to service
- Written and verbal communication skills
- Consensus-building skills
- A good political sense

Chapter 2: Preparing for Change

A single change agent cannot accomplish change across several systems. Rather, change agents are needed at multiple levels and with multiple functions. Ongoing close communication, whether through meetings or electronically, is necessary to ensure that people remain on the same page and that problems that arise can be addressed as a group.

Continuum of Care

Within the Continuum of Care system, the greatest system change needed for the development of Community Employment Pathways is a fundamental change of attitude about the possibility of work for people who are homeless. Often homeless assistance providers comprising a CoC system are focused on short-term needs, and they are good at providing shelter, meals, emergency or short-term medical services, and case management. Many providers are skilled at outreach and engagement for people who are chronically homeless. Some providers are effective at helping people transition to permanent housing and mainstream services. However, staff and provider administrators might underestimate the desire and ability of people who are homeless to accept meaningful employment.

Some ways to change misconceptions about the employment potential of people who are homeless are to provide successful examples from other communities, home-grown examples of individuals who have “made it” into real jobs and housing, and good ideas about how to introduce the notion of work into the early stages of interaction with people who are homeless. For example, including an assessment of job desires and skills into the first interviews with an individual helps ensure that employment is on the treatment or service plans that are developed. It also serves to help engage people who want to work, but don’t want to join a “program.”

As funding for employment programs within the CoC system shrinks, the content of these programs should change from direct provision of services to effective methods of linking homeless jobseekers to mainstream services. For example, the program design might change from job finding and job coaching to linking to mainstream services and providing case management through a three- to nine-month transition to mainstream services.

In order to plan and implement these changes, key stakeholders must be on board. First, agencies that are providing job-related services within the CoC must be convinced of the need to revise their mission. Close attention to Federal direction regarding the housing emphasis might help persuade providers to adjust their mission to changing conditions. Other groups of stakeholders who must be involved are case managers and direct service staff. These groups can describe barriers to mainstream service involvement, offer advice about how to use CoC resources across agencies, and develop plans for ongoing supports to increase job retention.

Do not overlook involving the stakeholders who are at the heart of the CEP initiative—people who are homeless or who have been homeless. Consumer involvement is particularly important in ensuring that, as plans develop, they are responsive to real-life needs. Often, stakeholders who have both personal experience and experience working with the systems can be identified

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6 For more information on vocational assessments, see Lecture 1: Integrating Vocational Assessment in Client Service Planning located on HUD’s Homelessness Resource Exchange (HRE) at www.hudhre.info. This lecture is one in a series on employment-related topics.
Chapter 2: Preparing for Change

through tenant councils, mental health or substance abuse constituent groups, or advisory groups of social service organizations.

**Mainstream Employment System**

Mainstream systems are designed to meet the needs of employers for well-trained, qualified job candidates. Often referred to as a demand-driven system because of its focus on meeting the workforce needs of area employers, the system assesses the job market, considers industry needs, and looks at jobseekers’ interests and abilities. In general, systems meet the needs of many jobseekers but have difficulty serving individuals with multiple, complex needs. Unless specific accommodations can be made and target strategies devised, people who are homeless will not benefit from the mainstream workforce system.

The good news is that the mainstream workforce system has built-in features that allow for the necessary accommodations to meet complex needs. For example, while the mainstream system offers standard training packages, it is possible to offer more flexible approaches, such as through contracted services. For people who are homeless, it might make more sense to have training completion contingent on performance benchmarks over time rather than written tests and attendance at classes by a certain deadline.

Additionally, the workforce system might have resources specifically designed for people with disabilities, which could benefit people who are chronically homeless. An example is the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) program, jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration. DPNs provide employment assistance and help with understanding Social Security work incentives.

Broad participation is essential to defining the mainstream employment program design changes that must be made. Service providers, people who are homeless, case managers, and shelter administrators can identify the accommodations needed to make mainstream workforce system effective for people who are homeless. Mainstream system representatives need to be engaged in the process. In many communities, both homeless assistance and mainstream workforce staff need education about how mainstream programs have successfully served homeless jobseekers in other communities, and the kinds of accommodations that have been made in program design and funding schemes.

Beyond program design changes, such as requirements for training completion, the mainstream system can make accommodations at the system level. These accommodations should be made where unintentional barriers have blocked people who are homeless from using the services. For example, requiring proof of residency is a requirement that can be waived for specific populations.

Presumptive eligibility is a tool that mainstream systems can use to grant immediate, “presumptive” access to mainstream system services. In order for this to work, CoC outreach workers and case managers must be trained in the mainstream workforce system’s requirements and resources. They must be able to make a skilled determination about eligibility, often with very little concrete information or documentation. Once this training is completed, the mainstream system then would accept the determination of the CoC workers and provisionally accepts individuals for services. In most systems, the presumptive eligibility gets the individual in the front door. A more complete assessment is done once services have begun. The requirements of the mainstream system for documentation must still be met, but they can be
delayed until the person is already in service. Such an arrangement requires the broadest participation possible—a merging of two systems for one purpose.

It is possible for the mainstream workforce system to use the flexibility and tools already available at the system level to allow changes favorable to people who are homeless. For example, a community with a very traditional job training and placement system could plan and create a transitional job program for people who are homeless. This change requires input from the CoC to highlight the need for the new program and the knowledge and expertise of mainstream representatives in setting up and funding the new initiative.

Employers

Although engaging employers in the CEP initiative might be difficult for many reasons, employers’ involvement is nonetheless critical to ensuring the success of your project. Employers are not social service agency staff nor are they workforce service providers, but they do care about the fabric of the community and the role their businesses play in it. They might offer a different perspective on how best to include homeless jobseekers in their businesses. Employers are busy and often reluctant to become involved with public sector initiatives, perhaps because they do not see an immediate benefit. The people involved in creating Community Employment Pathways who are not employers should think about how employers might see the CEP initiative and be prepared to talk about the project from that point of view.7 8

How can employers be engaged in the CEP initiative? Conducting focus groups with businesses can be an excellent and relatively inexpensive method for involving employers in a CEP initiative and gaining their perspectives on key labor force issues. Business visitations (one-on-one visits with employers) are another method for obtaining input from employers. Though such visits are relatively labor intensive, they can yield proportionate results, with the individual employer gaining new information along with the visitor from the CoC. Perhaps hosting an event at the invitation of the Mayor or other community leader that includes members of the local Workforce Investment Board and leaders in the CoC can promote cross-systems collaboration.

Useful tip: Invite employment and training service providers with existing relationships with employers to participate in the CEP initiative. Their contacts might increase access to employers and help to solicit their important perspectives.

Allies

In addition to engaging the homeless assistance and workforce development systems in your community, there are other ways in which you can mobilize support for your CEP initiative. Identifying people and agencies in your community that care about employment, especially for disadvantaged populations is a good place to start. Approaching the regional supervisor for your State Vocational Rehabilitation agency and employment and training providers in your community to describe the common ground between their missions and the reasons for your

8 For more information on this topic, see Lecture 6: Homelessness and Hiring: Employer Perspectives located on HUD’s Homelessness Resource Exchange (HRE) at www.hudhre.info. This lecture is one in a series on employment-related topics.
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CEP initiative can help to encourage their participation. In many medium and large urban centers, a Business Improvement District (BID) cares about ending homelessness in the interest of preserving and expanding downtown economic activities. BIDs can help build momentum for your project through their connection with local officials and downtown employers. You can find information about BIDs at www.idal-downtown.org.

Additionally, faith-based and community organizations serving disadvantaged people more generally might be engaged in serving homeless jobseekers. Some of the larger faith-based organizations, such as Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, and Jewish Vocational Services, as well as smaller faith-based groups might provide employment services. Community groups serving minority populations, migrant workers, people with low incomes, or people with disabilities also offer employment services or might be interested in participating in the initiative.

Service consumers and consumer advocacy groups also might emerge as strong allies and advocates as the process evolves. Although many view the participation of service system consumers as a "thorn in the side," this perception is often based on the fact that consumer advocates are so often pushing systems to change. During systems change efforts, however, this can work to the advantage of those working for change from within the system. Consumer participation can help to convince those within the system who are resistant to change that changes are needed to meet consumer needs.

Additional resource: The CoC planning group might have more experience with the details of soliciting and using consumer feedback.

Gaining the perspective of people who have been homeless and are currently working will also be of particular value in moving the change efforts. They will have unique insight not only into the barriers that people who are homeless face when they are seeking employment, but also into what worked and what did not work when they were seeking employment. Additionally, people who have used the mainstream workforce system are likely to have strong opinions on how to make services more accessible generally.

STEP 2: BUILD LINKAGES BETWEEN SERVICE PROVIDERS AND ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS

Communities throughout the country are recognizing the importance of creating better linkages between homeless assistance providers and the One-Stop Career Centers (One-Stops), and they are taking substantive steps to achieve this goal. Many communities are in the early stages of this process and are evolving as they try to learn from other communities and find their own way. As communities work to create partnerships and bring together homeless assistance providers and workforce assistance providers, these communities are demonstrating that progress is attainable.

Essential to Community Employment Pathways is a working relationship between the local Continuum of Care (CoC) planning group and the local One-Stop Career Center. How well these two systems work together predicts the success of your CEP initiative. This section offers a look at three models for working together. The discussion of the models is supplemented with examples of how communities are building partnerships to demonstrate practical lessons for your community to consider. You can use this information to evaluate where you are now in your partnership, and use the information to improve or expand these partnerships. Use Worksheet 2.2 as an assessment tool.
The three models or approaches range from informal and ad hoc levels of partnership and cooperation to a formalized approach characterized by close coordination of activities and perhaps a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). These approaches represent the level of interaction at the community-wide level and reflect how the CoC and local WIB direct funding and guide programs to better integrate employment services for people who are homeless. However, communities, especially during the initial stages of enhancing partnerships, might find that some providers in the community have created linkages with One-Stops, while others have not. In addition, elements of more than one model might be present in a community. For example, within a community there might be some “cooperation” between the housing and employment service providers in that they provide referrals to each other for their respective service, but the two sectors might not have established formal processes for sharing information.

The purpose of highlighting these three approaches is not to “grade” a community or to highlight areas of weakness in their level of partnerships, but to serve as a guide for a community to examine where it is relative to these approaches, identify areas where they can make progress in enhancing partnerships, and identify steps to accomplish its objectives. While an ideal situation might be for all communities to achieve the highest levels of the collaborative approach, each community will need to set its goal for increased linkages, recognizing that it will likely fall somewhere in this range from the cooperative to the coordinated or collaborative approach. A number of factors might drive the level of collaboration, such as the availability of resources, the regulatory environment, funding mandates, staff capacity and skills, and the “management will” in both systems to establish a partnership.

There are approaches that should be avoided. For example, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or Health and Human Services (HHS) funds might go directly to community-based agencies without any collaboration with One-Stops. Similarly, McKinney-Vento funding might pass from the Continuum of Care through a Workforce Investment Board and have no effect on the linkage between the One-Stop and the community-based agency receiving those pass-through funds. Because One-Stops are the local agencies with expertise and a mission to provide employment and training services that meet the needs of both jobseekers and employers, the workforce development system should be a partner, if not a leader, in services to this population.

The following are models for possible partnership.

**Cooperative Approach**

The cooperative approach is the least formalized approach and is characterized by ad hoc or informal linkages between homeless assistance providers and One-Stops or the workforce development system. Staff of each system understand the basics of the other system and recognize its benefits. They understand the need to identify opportunities to create better linkages. Additional characteristics of this approach include the following:

- Periodic meetings between providers and One-Stops. For example, representatives from the CoC attend local workforce group meetings and workforce providers attend CoC meetings.
Occasional information sharing between the CoC and the WIB, but on an inconsistent or ad hoc basis. For example, presentations about one sector are made at meetings or conferences targeting the other sector.

Homeless counselors or assistance providers might refer clients to One-Stops, but with minimal follow-through or coordination between the two organizations as a result of the referral.

Homeless assistance providers and workforce providers share information regarding funding, but generally do not undertake joint funding efforts.

Kicking Off Better Communication in Raleigh, North Carolina

In the fall of 2006, Continuum of Care providers in Raleigh, North Carolina met with organizations operating One-Stop Career Centers as a first step to share information and learn about the services each provides. The meeting occurred with the leadership of the North Carolina Employment Service Security Commission, with hopes that this meeting could serve as a model for other communities across North Carolina. Raleigh has opened the lines of communication between providers and One-Stops and has made a commitment to build on this start.

So far, participants in the meeting have taken some specific actions to improve employment opportunities for people who are homeless:

- They developed and submitted a proposal for an “Employment Works Center” project to Wake County, City of Raleigh, and a private funder. Employment Works Center will offer a comprehensive center with training and wrap-around support services to people who are homeless.
- They conducted an employer focus group to better understand barriers to hiring people who are homeless.
- They garnered commitment from business leaders to hire people who are homeless. The Raleigh Chamber of Commerce is heavily involved in this initiative.
- They compiled a comprehensive list of education and training programs available to the people who are homeless.
- They implemented the “Get to Work” Initiative which provides transportation and child care for people who are homeless.³

Coordinated Approach

The coordinated approach includes frequent interaction and clearly defined roles and responsibilities related to coordination between homeless assistance providers and the workforce development system. These processes are not formalized in written agreements. Additional characteristics include the following:

• Regular meetings or communication between homeless assistance employment staff and One-Stop staff

• A clear process for referring homeless individuals to, and meeting with homeless individuals at, the One-Stop to help them access and use mainstream services

• Agreement on using the same assessment and referral instruments

• Employment specialists located on a consistent basis at the One-Stop, with funding and supervision provided by the homeless assistance agency

• WIB representation on the local Ending Chronic Homelessness (ECH) planning team and on the CoC committee, with responsibility for strengthening the interface between the homeless services and mainstream employment sectors

• Training by employment specialists and Disability Program Navigators (DPNs) for One-Stop staff on the impact of homelessness on employment

• Expectation that employment specialists maintain a link between case managers and the One-Stop and might participate as a member of the integrated services team

• Employment specialists meeting with DPNs and participating in One-Stop training or planning efforts on ways to address the needs of people who are homeless

• In the absence of formal cooperative agreements between the providers and the workforce development system, seeking funding to support a joint effort

Southeast Tennessee – Consortium of Providers

The seven-county region around Chattanooga, Tennessee, has taken several steps that enhanced coordination between homeless assistance providers and workforce development organizations. As an example, the Southeast Tennessee Career Center has a Disability Program Navigator (DPN) who works with workforce counselors, employers, and other agencies to make them aware of the resources available for special needs clients, and develops connections between the Career Centers and the Chattanooga Housing Authority, Mental Health Agency, and other local resources. The DPN also provides training, often for free, to assist workforce counselors in understanding how to effectively interact with special needs clients and comply with laws protecting the rights of people with disabilities. Second, several consortia comprise a wide range of organizations, including career centers, homeless assistance providers, mental and physical disability service agencies, employers, and other key partners. The consortia meet monthly, and a key objective of the consortia is to work together to refer clients to each other to ensure that clients are receiving the services they need. Third, with the leadership of Chattanooga’s mayor, the city is in the process of building a new One-Stop Career Center in the city’s downtown that will focus on serving homeless clients. Several housing providers, as well as Social Security staff and others, will have representatives located at this One-Stop.
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Salt Lake City, Utah – No Wrong Door

In Salt Lake City, Utah, the community has moved from a cooperative approach to a coordinated approach. The Department of Workforce Services (DWS), along with its many community partners, is working on a Homeless One-Stop Model. The goal of this model is to provide a service delivery process placing individuals and families who are homeless in housing with supportive services from various points of entry. The idea is that when an individual who is homeless walks into any one of the partner agencies, a worker would use a self-sufficiency matrix to triage in determining priorities of needs for developing a stabilization plan. Thereafter, in this “No Wrong Door” approach, a referral would be made to the appropriate agency. Ongoing efforts have included a plan to have all partners use the same Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Furthermore, based on the experience that some people who are homeless prefer not to go into government agencies to apply for services, the Director of the Central Region of the Department of Workforce Services stationed an eligibility counselor, an employment counselor, and a veterans outreach worker at the local day center, which is across the street from the main homeless shelter in Salt Lake City. Not only do these workers conduct outreach to people who are homeless in attempts to connect them to mainstream services, but they also receive direct referrals from the shelter staff, and they meet bi-weekly with the shelter’s case management staff. In essence they have set up a “mini One-Stop” at the day center.

Lastly, DWS has placed mini One-Stops at two housing sites built by the Housing Authority to serve people who have been chronically homeless. The mini One-Stops are part of a comprehensive array of wraparound services available onsite. Based on this successful model, DWS has planned for a mini One-Stop for a third housing site to be built by the Housing Authority.

Collaborative Approach

The collaborative approach is the highest level of integration between the homeless assistance system and the workforce investment system and other One-Stop partners like Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). MOUs clearly define the relationship and how each sector partner will address chronic homelessness. Other key characteristics might include the following:

- Collaboratively securing public and private funding for outreach, access, and use of mainstream services
- One-Stop staff accepting referrals and working with referral staff to create a job and support plan for homeless jobseekers who are all WIA-enrolled
- VR State plans including flexible strategies to engage, enroll, and serve people who are chronically homeless
- WIA performance criteria waived to reflect increased numbers of people who are homeless served
- Special funding sought for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for homeless jobseekers
- Regular planning within both Ending Chronic Homelessness initiatives and CoCs
- DPN ensuring that the systems are working together
• Steering committee with responsibility for overseeing strategic planning, outcomes, data collection, and sustainability

**Seattle, Washington YWCA – Integration of Housing and One-Stop**

The YWCA in Seattle, Washington is a recipient of McKinney-Vento funds through Seattle’s Homeless Intervention Project (HIP), which is overseen by Seattle’s Workforce Development Council. The YWCA is also one of the largest housing providers in King County, with hundreds of emergency and transitional units. In 2003, the YWCA built the Opportunity Center, which is located in downtown Seattle and offers 145 housing units for low-income and formerly homeless individuals; a One-Stop Career Center; a Healthcare for the Homeless clinic; and other services. Within the One-Stop, the HIP funding supports two full-time employment specialists as well as an employment specialist who is out-stationed at a large transitional housing facility. Their partnership with other providers and One-Stops (called “Work Source Centers” in Washington State) has allowed them to work toward a “no wrong door” approach so that clients can be properly referred, no matter where they first turn for assistance. Within the One-Stop at Opportunity Center, the YWCA has made an effort to provide a higher level of service than typically seen in a One-Stop. For example, a greeter meets people entering the One-Stop to assist them and work with them to assess their needs. The entire Seattle community is working to enhance its levels of collaboration, but the YWCA illustrates how communities with the right partners can integrate housing and employment services for the homeless.

Table 2.1 summarizes the models for partnership discussed above.
## Table 2-1: Key Characteristics and Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Cooperative Model</th>
<th>Coordinated Model</th>
<th>Collaborative Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information sharing</strong></td>
<td>Homeless assistance provider and workforce providers have a basic understanding of the resources that the other sector can provide. Information sharing occurs periodically and might not reach front-line staff.</td>
<td>Homeless assistance provider and workforce providers have a good understanding of the resources that the other sector can provide. Information sharing occurs regularly and usually reaches front-line staff.</td>
<td>Homeless assistance provider and workforce providers have a thorough understanding of the resources that the other sector can provide. Information sharing occurs frequently and always reaches front-line staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Referrals</strong></td>
<td>Referrals between homeless assistance and workforce providers do occur, but the referral process varies between providers or staff, and follow-through to ensure that the client connects with the other provider is limited.</td>
<td>Referrals between homeless assistance and workforce providers occur on a regular basis, the referral process between providers is consistent, and there is some degree of follow-through.</td>
<td>Referrals between homeless assistance and workforce providers appears seamless to clients, the same data collection form is used and shared, and follow-through is routine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programs/Activities</strong></td>
<td>Homeless assistance providers have their own employment specialists or programs, some of which might have limited interaction with workforce providers. Leaders are open to new activities that create better linkages.</td>
<td>Homeless assistance providers use employment specialists who work to connect homeless clients with appropriate One-Stop services. Homeless assistance providers and workforce providers coordinate to establish programs targeted to homeless clients. Leaders are actively seeking new ideas or activities that create better linkages.</td>
<td>Employment specialists and programs are readily accessible by homeless clients and clients move smoothly between the two sectors. One-Stops have activities and programs specifically designed for homeless clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding/Resources</strong></td>
<td>Providers from both sectors are aware of resources the other sector has available and is pursuing. Interest or ability in pursuing funding activities jointly is limited.</td>
<td>Providers from both sectors share information about key funding sources and coordinate resource allocation to avoid duplication of activities.</td>
<td>Providers from both sectors agree on key funding priorities, allocate resources in a collaborative manner and creative funding solutions are sought and achieved together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
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<th>Coordinated Model</th>
<th>Collaborative Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreements</td>
<td>No formal agreements exist between homeless assistance providers and workforce providers.</td>
<td>Some formal agreements might exist among providers, but cooperation is primarily a result of a mutual agreed understanding to create better linkages and informal agreements.</td>
<td>Memorandums clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership comes from individuals from both sectors who champion increased linkages.</td>
<td>Leadership comes from directors of key organizations. Local CoC or WIB provide direction and information, but not formal direction or guidance.</td>
<td>Leadership is formally established through the creation of a steering committee or body that comprises CoC and WIB members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STEP 3: BUILD A STRUCTURE FOR CHANGE

Moving the CEP initiative forward requires steps to formalize the collaboration across stakeholders. A practical structure is as follows:

- The initiative is led by a **steering committee** that sets the tone for the initiative, promotes it to important stakeholders, and ultimately sets the agenda for change.

- Three **workgroups** conduct research on the community’s employment outlook, characteristics of homeless jobseekers, and services and supports available in the community. These workgroups report to the steering committee.

- A **boundary spanner** is assigned by his or her employer to staff the initiative, building bridges across agencies and systems.

- A **community leadership group** meets less frequently than the steering committee or workgroups, and includes stakeholders who are less involved in the initiative but provide valuable perspectives—local employers or faith-based organizations might participate, for example. This group advises the steering committee.

In most instances a CEP initiative will take six to twelve months to complete. The steering committee manages the CEP initiative during this timeframe and has oversight responsibility for project activities. It oversees the work of the various Research Workgroups (described below), synthesizes the information collected, identifies next steps for the CEP initiative, and has ultimate responsibility for the final CEP report. The steering committee ensures that these activities are relevant and represented in other homeless and workforce planning in the community. For example, a member of the committee might present to the Continuum of Care, the local WIB, or a local task force with either a mission to end homelessness or to increase workforce development options. The committee ensures that other members of the community.
with a stake in employment and training services or in ending homelessness are informed about the CEP initiative.

**Being Inclusive**

It is important to invite all key stakeholders to participate in the CEP initiative early on. For systems change to be successful, top management in each system must be behind the change. However, people at other levels of management and front-line providers are critical to the success of the change efforts. Do not underestimate the level of networking that takes place among line staff or middle management—employees in many organizations may network using electronic media.

*Additional resource:* It is possible to use the steering committee to guide overall implementation and recruit agency staff, industry representatives, and others for specific tasks linked to workgroups.

Devote some thought to selecting people to participate in change efforts. In many organizations, certain people stand out as being particularly interested in trying new approaches.\(^\text{10}\) Try to identify these people and include them in workgroups. As you develop the membership of the CEP initiative’s steering committee, it is essential to identify “change agents”—people who are invested in changing the status quo, as well as people who can make policy and funding changes for the systems they represent. **Use Worksheet 2.3 to identify potential change agents.**

**Getting Buy-in**

For the CEP initiative to succeed, it is important that the steering committee act with authority. In order to effect change, the following types of buy-in are needed:

- The stakeholders convened at the start of the initiative must support the formation and the composition of the steering committee.

- Participants in the steering committee must be given authority by their agency or organization to make binding decisions, or they must have a straightforward mechanism for their employer to ratify their decisions.

- The steering committee must have some sort of external authority to create Community Employment Pathways. It might receive its mandate from the CoC working group, the local City housing agency, a local funding collaborative, or from the Mayor’s Office, the local WIB or the City Economic Development Office. In short, the steering committee needs the blessing of local government or the agent responsible for meeting the needs of people who are homeless in the community or the agent for the local Workforce Investment Board, charged with meeting the employment and training needs of the community.

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\(^{10}\) Hyde et al. (2003, p. 83).
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Forming the Steering Committee

The steering committee should comprise seven to ten people who are leaders in the community and champions for serving homeless jobseekers. Job titles of those on the steering committee might include: senior planner, workforce development agency; manager, One-Stop Career Center; manager, business development, city office of economic development; deputy director, city office of housing; executive director, local intermediary; Continuum of Care Contact; director, city office of homeless services; regional coordinator, State Vocational Rehabilitation agency; senior project officer, philanthropy; or the chairperson for the city’s Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

This group should have a mix of skills, influence, and background including the following:

- An understanding of the homeless system in the community and the views, capacity, and direction of government
- Knowledge of the workforce development system, including its membership, funding, requirements, and limitations
- A view of the larger picture of how systems can successfully integrate services despite different rules and mandates
- Familiarity with the services systems, the agencies delivering services, and the key staff working in them
- Access to decision makers regarding funding and policy making

The membership of the steering committee needs to include respected leaders from the CoC and local WIB. Members should be knowledgeable about their local systems to end homelessness, including Continuum activities, local ten-year planning efforts, and funding of services. Depending on the steering committee members’ individual interests and talents, it might be helpful for the steering committee to form standing or ad hoc subcommittees with staff who have similar skills and can deal with some of the initiative’s broader tasks, such as securing funding for the CEP initiative or drafting the formal CEP report.

A neutral intermediary’s service as chair of the committee can help maintain an unbiased image to the various stakeholders, ensuring that various points of view are heard and that the eye is kept on the prize—creating avenues for homeless jobseekers to succeed in the labor market while meeting the needs of employers.

Forming Workgroups

It is useful for the steering committee to form workgroups to gather information upon which the steering committee can develop a formal report and recommend action steps. The following workgroups are recommended, although the first two can be combined if necessary:

- The demand side workgroup researches employers’ needs, identifying jobs that are in high-demand, for which the future outlook is good, or which are easily attainable without specialized skills or training.
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- The supply side workgroup researches the characteristics of homeless jobseekers, which can include demographic information, information about their homelessness (chronic, transitional, family, etc.), information about skills and interests, and information about support needs.

- The services and supports workgroup provides information on the services and supports in the community that are available to help homeless jobseekers take advantage of employment and career development opportunities—housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment, child care, transportation assistance, etc. This workgroup also "maps" resources in the community that are designed to link jobseekers to jobs or help them advance their careers.

**Identifying a Boundary Spanner**

Leading a CEP initiative will require staff time to coordinate the activities of the people involved in the effort as well as for information gathering, analysis, and report writing. The staff assigned to the CEP initiative participates in steering committee meetings and activities, receives instruction from it, and acts as the face of the project in spanning the boundaries or intersections of the various systems that will influence the project and the success of homeless jobseekers.

The boundary spanner engages members of the different systems to set into motion activities that bear on the vision of a better system. He or she works with and between partners to implement the CEP initiative’s goals and plans, troubleshoots when things are not going right, and keeps the process moving. If your CEP initiative wants to make a presentation to the local WIB, it is the boundary spanner who not only brings the groups together but also makes sure the follow-up gets done. To span the organizations and agencies in different systems, the boundary spanner must not only have the knowledge of each system, but also be respected by leaders in those systems. In practice, boundary spanning encompasses a number of key functions, including strategic planning, managing and leveraging resources, advocating and educating, monitoring for results, bringing policy concerns to policy makers, convening new collaborators, and disseminating information. These are significant duties, and one of the partners in the CEP initiative must commit to funding a staff member to devote a significant portion of his or her time to boundary spanning duties.

**Convening a Community Leadership Group**

Apart from the steering committee and the various workgroups, a CEP initiative should consider the value of convening a community leadership group that includes the department heads in government and key workforce agencies. Such a leadership group provides access to key players in the community, validates the work of the CEP initiative, and ultimately determines what gets implemented. The leadership group might include an employment representative from the CoC, a deputy mayor; commissioners for social services, economic development, and housing; and the executive directors of the local WIB, the United Way, or other foundations in the community. The community leaders group might meet three times—to launch the CEP initiative, midway to review progress, and at the culmination of the research efforts to facilitate implementation of program recommendations. A CEP initiative depends on securing the "blessing" of those who have the power to help make the changes that are needed or to secure the funds to create Community Employment Pathways.
As noted above, an effective strategy for developing Community Employment Pathways includes linking local efforts with State and county officials to work for better coordination across service-providing agencies. With many change efforts, financial considerations—particularly compartmentalized funding streams—pose the most significant barriers to success. While some funding sources are controlled at the Federal level, other funding policies are set at local or State levels. Two-way communication early in the change effort is important, so that those enacting the change can understand any public policies that might impact change, and so that public officials gain insight into the types of change that are necessary to increase the success rate for employing people who are homeless and how current policies might stand in the way of this success.

Useful tip: Include State agency representatives as part of the steering committee, in positions in which their unique perspectives will be particularly important. For example, the State workforce representative might be helpful as a member of the demand side workgroup.

**STEP 4: SECURE FUNDING AND RESOURCES FOR THE CEP INITIATIVE**

A CEP initiative is not likely to rely totally on volunteers or the contribution of staff time to the initiative. Under most circumstances agency staff time, whether from the workforce development or homeless assistance agencies, is allocated to existing activities and expensed to other projects. In some instances, the CEP initiative could be coordinated with a process already underway in a community that is parallel or overlaps with the aim of the CEP initiative, thereby reducing costs. Similarly, in many communities, some agencies can make some contribution to the CEP initiative because it is consistent with other work.

**Estimate a Budget**

In the DOL community audit demonstration projects, a maximum of $50,000 was available for locally-led community audit projects. Depending upon the size and complexities of a community, a two-year period could require $100,000 in funds to conduct the CEP initiative and to implement early activities or stimulate local partnerships to pilot a service through improved cross-system collaboration. The following are typical expenses:

- Organizing, hosting and facilitating meetings at multiple levels – leadership group, steering committee, research workgroups, etc.
- Organizing, conducting, analyzing, and writing a report of focus groups with employers, service providers, or homeless jobseekers
- Stipends for focus group participants
- Gathering and analyzing labor market data
- Writing, editing, and printing the summary report of findings
- Expert consultation regarding governance and field research
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- Organizing, conducting, analyzing, and writing a report of any surveys groups with employers, service providers, or homeless jobseekers

- Expert consultation regarding information gathering tools or other needs

- Funding for cross-systems training for staff in the workforce development, homeless assistance, housing, or treatment systems

- Funds to conduct a site visit to a model program integrating housing and employment

A sample invitation to bid or request for proposals aimed at securing assistance to conduct analysis and report writing services for the CEP initiative is included in Appendix 1.

Possible Sources of Funding

As an activity benefiting some of a community’s most disadvantaged members, the CEP initiative is an excellent project for philanthropic support. Alternatively, a local or State government agency might support the initiative as part of the agency’s mission. Although a single funding source would be desirable, a steering committee might consider a leveraging strategy that would include contributions of the partners matched by a local government agency or community foundation.¹¹

Philanthropy

A 2006 meeting of the Council on Foundations¹² considered philanthropy’s role in workforce investment. Grantmakers and experts from public and private sectors considered critical activities where foundation leadership, funding, and catalytic functions can make a difference, not only in building regional economic engines for global competition, but also by investing in services and strategies to address the needs of low-wage and other disadvantaged workers. Among the critical activities philanthropies could do is bring together relevant parties, such as those in a CEP initiative, to build bridges across siloed systems; identify and disseminate best practice information (including training); fund pilot projects that show potential for impact—ideally in partnership with government; and work with post-secondary institutions and community-based agencies to build the skills of jobseekers and the workforce.

¹¹ For more detailed information on potential funding strategies, see HUD’s Financing Employment Programs for Homeless People, located on HUD’s Homelessness Resource Exchange at www.hudhre.info


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“Foundations can work as catalysts to bring groups together to form workforce partnerships.”

- Jack Litzenberg, Senior Program Officer, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

“Foundations have to measure outcomes if they want to learn. It’s about learning – not for accountability, but to understand what works.”

- Robert Giloth, Director, Family Economic Success, Annie E. Casey Foundation

Many individual foundations, such as the Joyce Foundation in Chicago, recognize that many industries nationwide are currently facing skill shortages, and these shortages might worsen by the end of the decade as baby boomers retire. Contributing to the shortages is the serious skills deficit that plagues the existing workforce, especially low-wage workers. The Employment Program at the Foundation supports policy analysis and development, research, and advocacy that help low-wage, low-skilled people connect to the labor market, stay employed, and advance to higher-paying jobs.

Other foundations like the Northwest Area Foundation (NWAF) focus on a region of the country and make grants related to certain priorities or program areas. The NWAF is committed to helping communities reduce poverty. Through three programs—Ventures, Connections, and Horizons—the Foundation works in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, providing knowledge, financial resources, products, and services. The Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation, like other community foundations, targets the resources it raises to address problems and needs in a given community or region.

13 A directory of community foundations is available through http://www.communityfoundations.net.
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**Sample Community Foundation Mission Statement**

Think about how a CEP initiative is in line with this sample mission statement from a community foundation:* 

The mission of the Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation is to participate actively in shaping the well-being of the region by identifying the pressing needs of the community and responding with appropriate initiatives and financial support.

In support of the Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation's overall mission, our grantmaking is guided by five key principles. Together with our organizational partners, we seek to:

- Support programs which respond effectively to current needs and emphasize community strengths
- Encourage collaboration and build or strengthen bridges among stakeholders
- Build nonprofit capacity
- Increase access to opportunities and resources, and improve and enrich the lives of individuals and the communities in which they work and live
- Increase community knowledge regarding effective programs and strategies

We are able to achieve our grantmaking through a range of grantmaking programs.

* Taken from the Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation website, [www.gbafoundation.org](http://www.gbafoundation.org). Note that this organization has now merged with the Fairfield County Community Foundation, [www.fccfoundation.org](http://www.fccfoundation.org).

The Partnership to End Long Term Homelessness[^14] is a National network of funders dedicated to ending long term homelessness in America. Members are committed to policies and programs that build permanent housing and provide services to prevent and end chronic homelessness. The Partnership is a resource for effective grant making, providing opportunities for collaboration and contact with other funders on the local and national levels. It was created to galvanize the philanthropic leadership and dollars needed to end long-term homelessness in America. Serving as an open knowledge network for funders, the Partnership shares strategic thinking, wide-ranging experience, and expertise to prevent and address long-term homelessness.

Foundations focusing their giving to reduce homelessness at the national, State, and local level are potential supporters of a CEP initiative that has energized local stakeholders across systems to increase the income and vocational activities of homeless people. CEP initiative leaders can locate foundations in their area at the Foundation Center website[^15]. Established in 1956, and today supported by more than 600 foundations, the Foundation Center’s mission is to strengthen the nonprofit sector by advancing knowledge about U.S. philanthropy.

[^14]: See [http://www.endlongtermhomelessness.org](http://www.endlongtermhomelessness.org)
[^15]: See [http://foundationcenter.org](http://foundationcenter.org)
CEP initiatives seeking foundation support should know the priorities of that grantmaker, its application procedures, and timeframes. Proposals to support a CEP initiative or to fund recommendations would do well to leverage government resources and include a cross-system partnership with the mainstream workforce agency to address workforce needs in a given geographic area and the anticipated outcomes.

Government Agencies

Some of the government agencies that might participate in the CEP initiative also can provide financial or in-kind support. In-kind support might include the assignment of a staff member to fill the boundary spanner role, assigning staff to participate in the steering committee and workgroups, or offering access to data. Financial support might include making departmental funding available through a grant or contract or passing through Federal funding.

**STEP 5: SET GUIDELINES FOR THE CEP INITIATIVE**

Six to twelve months is an ambitious timeframe for an initiative spanning multiple programs and systems; therefore, quickly moving toward action is essential. The steering committee has clear-cut initial tasks to ensure that the process is focused and then must move on to identify resources and practices to include in the plan. During these initial stages, building consensus around the chosen approach is crucial to success.

Part of starting on the right foot is providing information to the steering committee on the details of the planning processes in the homeless assistance and workforce development systems. The information should include types of activities currently funded, the resources available, the timing of the planning process, and limits imposed by State or Federal mandates.

The steering committee should plan on meeting on a regular basis, as often as weekly at first, and at least twice monthly until the final findings are complete. After that, the steering committee might meet less frequently, or if the CEP initiative is adopted by a more permanent group, the committee might meet quarterly or as needed to ensure the continued focus on employment for people who are homeless.

Members of the steering committee also serve either as the chairs of the working research groups or as liaisons in order to maintain continuity, leadership, and communications between the steering committee and workgroups as well as across the working research groups.

The steering committee should identify members to play the following key roles:

- Chair or co-chairs
- Liaisons to the demand side, supply side, and services and supports workgroups
- Boundary spanner
Sample Agenda for a Steering Committee Meeting

- Comments on minutes from last meeting
- Report from the demand side workgroup on the focus group held with employers; decide whether or not we should draft a brief interim report on what employers said
- Discussion of how the CEP initiative’s recommendations might be integrated with our community’s Ten-Year Plan effort and in the local WIB two-year strategic plan
- Partnership with the Department of Mental Health’s transformation agenda—report from the meeting with the DMH Transformation Committee
- Report on using the Food Stamp Employment and Training component to pay for job training for the homeless and review of the State’s current FSET plan
- Other items, updates, and the next meeting date and place

Initial Tasks for the Steering Committee

Defining the Geographic Area

Early on, the steering committee should define a logical geographic area for the CEP initiative. The initiative is likely to experience difficulty if the area is not specified or if it is too large for the resources available. In determining the geographic scope of your CEP initiative, it is important to consider existing planning or service areas of the CoC, the WIB(s), the Consolidated Plan, and that of treatment agencies, such as Departments of Mental Health.

The geographic scope of the CoC is defined by an application process that might be initiated by local government, nonprofit organizations, or coalitions. Additionally, some CoCs are organized into “Balance of State” CoCs—i.e., an application that covers all of a State’s regions that are not part of a defined CoC.

A local Workforce Investment Area (local WIA) is a region with 200,000 or more residents and a common labor pool. Local WIAs in most States are defined by county or multi-county regions. The 600 local WIAs nationally are served by 3,500 One-Stop Career Centers. Activities are overseen by State Workforce Investment Boards (State WIBs) and local WIBs. By law, each local WIB is chaired by a business person and comprises a majority of private sector representatives, business owners, chief executives, managers, and policy makers. Other local WIB members are drawn from public job service, education, social services, rehabilitation, and economic development agencies; organized labor; and community-based organizations. The local WIB cooperates with local employers and government to select the workforce development programs most beneficial to the region, and to tailor programs to meet the local employment training needs.

State mental health authorities typically have service regions that are defined by county or multi-county areas. Large urban counties might be further subdivided into service units. In some States, private organizations have contracted to serve regions that might differ from traditional geographic boundaries, serving only the western part of a county, for example.
As much as possible, the CEP initiative should share or overlap with these areas, and stakeholders from all parts of the geographic area should be involved in the process. Information about the CoC, One-Stop Career Centers, local WIBs, and State WIBs can be obtained readily on the Internet (see inset).

### Online Resources for Defining the Geographic Area

- Contact maps and information for CoCs: [http://www.hudhre.info](http://www.hudhre.info)
- Information about State Workforce Investment Board (State WIB): [http://www.subnet.nga.org/workforcecouncilchairs/Links.StateWDC.asp](http://www.subnet.nga.org/workforcecouncilchairs/Links.StateWDC.asp)
- Counties served by local Workforce Investment Board (local WIB): [http://www.doleta.gov/reports/CensusData/area_definitions.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/reports/CensusData/area_definitions.cfm)
- One-Stop Career Centers and the areas they serve: [http://www.servicelocator.org](http://www.servicelocator.org)

### Communicating within the Initiative

It is important to develop a structure for communication. The steering committee members will need to communicate among themselves, as will members of various workgroups. The steering committee will also need to communicate with the workgroups and various stakeholders about the CEP initiative’s activities. Establishing a “virtual workplace” using a commercial product such as SharePoint or a free service such as Yahoo groups allows the steering committee to set a protocol for e-mail communication and a place to share files (such as meeting minutes or working drafts of reports). The steering committee can set permissions for sending e-mails to the group, such as by having a moderator approve all messages. In order to make sure constituents’ views are heard, there must be some sort of alternative means of communicating with them, such as having service providers print and post meeting announcements.

Once the workgroups begin their research, as described in the following chapter, it is important to make sure that tasks are coordinated and that opportunities are shared. Keeping all of the participants informed of the process and the general work of each workgroup builds cohesiveness across the CEP initiative. Making mini-reports or sharing information within and across the workgroups throughout the duration of the initiative promotes inclusiveness and a better understanding of the contributions members are making to the effort. Each workgroup should take meetings minutes, even if they are bulleted points from the discussion. If a workgroup comes across pertinent information of interest to all members of the CEP initiative, that information should be shared in a brief format. For example, if the results of a focus group with employers are written up, this information can be shared immediately rather than held until the CEP initiative issues a final report or makes recommendations.

In addition, interim reports and briefings provide a way to actively engage other partners in the community, such as local WIB members, and gain tangible input on the project. Draft versions of findings and recommendations should be well circulated with the full range of partners involved in ending homelessness in your community, as well as (if possible) outside experts and stakeholders in the community. Making periodic slide presentations to stakeholders is a good way to communicate CEP initiative activities and explain the importance of earned income and quality jobs in the lives of people who are homeless. In one community, after a slide presentation, two formerly homeless individuals who were employed and living in permanent
housing spoke to key city and county government and leaders from philanthropic and nonprofit organizations.

**Engaging Consulting Researchers or Experts**

For a number of reasons, a CEP initiative might choose to contract with appropriate outside experts to conduct data collection, analysis, and report preparation activities. Designing survey instruments (particularly question structure), developing sampling strategies, ensuring high response rates, and analyzing survey results require specialized knowledge and experience. The steering committee might be able to secure a labor market analyst from the local WIB as a volunteer member of the demand side workgroup but need assistance to understand secondary sources of labor market data. The use of research experts might also lend added credibility to study findings and recommendations. A project might also secure such assistance from a local community college or university, perhaps engaging graduate students in the CEP initiative to provide additional staffing to the steering committee.

**Setting Concrete Plans**

People respond positively to well-articulated deadlines and timeframes for the project, rather than vague discussions of the need to change. Much of the resistance to change is based in fear of the unknown, and being able to present a clear picture of when change will take place and what tasks will be involved will help people to understand their roles. It is also likely to elicit more specific concerns that can be addressed more easily.

*Useful tip:* Develop an “outline for change” that describes the steps in the process, who needs to participate, what products are expected, and when each step will be completed. This document can then be used for project benchmarking and to orient new members to the group’s work.
An outline for change developed by the steering committee might look like this:

1. Research the labor market
   a. Responsibility: Demand Side Workgroup
   b. Describe product: detailed description of local labor market, including recommendations for action
   c. Deadline: six months from start date

2. Research homeless jobseeker characteristics
   a. Responsibility: Supply Side Workgroup
   b. Describe product: detailed description of homeless subpopulations, barriers to work, and support needs
   c. Deadline: six months from start date

3. Develop Resource Map
   a. Responsibility: Services and Supports Workgroup
   b. Describe product: detailed list of resources, including eligibility requirements, benefits, performance requirements, etc.
   c. Deadline: six months from start date

4. Identify funding
   a. Responsibility: Steering Committee (form ad hoc subcommittee if needed)
   b. Describe product: funding sources identified and secured, with a plan to expand available resources definite
   c. Deadline: nine months from start date

5. Identify models from other communities
   a. Responsibility: Services and Supports Workgroup
   b. Describe product: short paper describing models that seem appropriate to local conditions
   c. Deadline: nine months from start date

6. Create written CEP report
   a. Responsibility: Steering Committee (form ad hoc subcommittee if needed)
   b. Describe product: specific and detailed plan, including who will be served, how to engage and assess the needs of that group, how to coordinate resources, who will authorize expenditures, and how to track outcomes
   c. Deadline: 12 months from start date
Adopting Exemplary Practices

Adopting exemplary practices, including evidence-based practices and promising practices is an essential part of a CEP initiative. For those who are homeless and who have mental illnesses or substance abuse disorders, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has identified evidence-based and promising practices (EBPs). These EBPs offer communities proven methods of helping individuals with significant functional impairments to overcome challenges and obtain employment. The most relevant EBP for this guidebook is Supported Employment.

Supported Employment is an approach and a set of techniques designed to help people with serious mental illnesses find, obtain, and keep competitive jobs. According to SAMHSA’s evidence-based practice “KIT” on Supported Employment, “Supported Employment is an approach to vocational rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities that emphasizes helping people obtain competitive work in the community, and providing the supports necessary to ensure success at the workplace. The emphasis in supported employment programs is on helping individuals find jobs paying competitive wages in integrated settings (i.e., with others who don’t necessarily have a disability) in the community.”[^16]

The following are the six key principles of Supported Employment:

- Eligibility is based on consumer choice.
- Supported employment is integrated with treatment.
- Competitive employment is the goal.
- Job search starts soon after a consumer expresses interest in working.
- Follow-along supports are continuous.
- Consumer preferences are important.[^17]

Implementation of evidence-based and promising practices can present a unique set of challenges. Usually, these practices originated elsewhere, often leading to a feeling within the organization or system that the practice might work in that setting but “not here.” Additionally, people often feel resentment against the idea that what they have been accustomed to doing is not the “right way,” because it devalues their hard work. Implementation materials, such as the Supported Employment KIT, usually suggest methods for overcoming staff resistance by winning over both staff and the constituents served by the organization or system.

Active liaison with experts and prospective applicants is an important component in the planning process. Written information is available for some exemplary practices, such as the evidence-based practice of Supported Employment. However, successful outcomes require adhering to certain key principles—in other words, “maintaining fidelity” to the practice. Maintaining fidelity is


[^17]: Center for Mental Health Services. (2005).
difficult without personalized technical assistance from people who have experience implementing the practice. When services are provided by a network of organizations, it is important for the technical assistance activities to include representatives of those organizations that are likely to be selected to provide these services, rather than limiting exposure to the contracting agency.

Planning for Broad Coverage

Any exemplary practices selected should reach the broadest possible constituency, but, as a practical matter, Community Employment Pathways and the selected exemplary practices might be designed for specific subpopulations. The homeless population is not a homogenous group: it comprises people who are temporarily homeless (often because of lost employment) and people who are chronically homeless and are likely to have significant mental health and substance abuse issues. Further, youth transitioning out of adolescent services, single adults, and families all can be homeless and have vastly different employment needs. When evaluating an exemplary practice, it is important to account for the characteristics of the people who are homeless in the community in order to make plans to provide services to as many of them as possible.

*Useful tip:* Community Employment Pathways can include interventions for identified subpopulations, and, in that case, research needs to include specialized services and supports available to the subpopulation. For example, single men who have mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders could be identified as a priority group for a CEP initiative, and therefore the workgroup researching services and supports would need to identify both exemplary practices and available services for this population.

Highlighting Cultural Competence

The CEP initiative should strive to include culturally sensitive features when presenting the strategy to people of different cultures. During initial planning, it is important both to identify the cultural groups to be served by Community Employment Pathways and to make inquiries as to services, if any, available for these cultures. Additionally, attention should be paid to cultural competence from the beginning of the CEP initiative. The steering committee might even decide to establish a cultural competence workgroup including both providers and consumers familiar with the cultural issues likely to arise during implementation. Depending on what is available, a workgroup might recommend changes such as developing additional materials or instruments that make the service culturally appropriate, even if these changes deviate from standard practice. *Use Worksheet 2.4 to help stimulate discussion of cultural issues.*
WORKSHEET 2.1: CONVENING STAKEHOLDERS

1. Who are the key stakeholders in your community? Use the following checklist to ensure that you have included everyone who may control resources, use resources, or have a stake in employing people who are homeless. Add additional categories as needed.

- [ ] Shelter Staff
- [ ] Service Providers
- [ ] Continuum of Care Lead Agency
- [ ] Supportive Housing Staff
- [ ] Outreach Workers
- [ ] Vocational Training Providers
- [ ] Local Community Development Staff
- [ ] Food Pantry Workers
- [ ] Local Clergy or Church Representatives
- [ ] State Agencies
- [ ] People Who Are Homeless
- [ ] One-Stop Staff
- [ ] Health Care Providers
- [ ] Mental Health Authority
- [ ] Education Providers
- [ ] Local Government Officials
- [ ] McKinney-Vento Grantees
- [ ] Potential Employees
- [ ] WIB Members

2. Do you have contacts at all of these places? Jot down specific names. Check to make sure you have a variety of people at all levels of work—for example, some funders and administrators, and some people who work directly with those who are homeless or seeking employment.

3. What are some of the barriers you face in getting these stakeholders to the table?
WORKSHEET 2.2: ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOMELESS ASSISTANCE AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS – WHERE IS YOUR COMMUNITY?

This worksheet provides an overview that can be used to evaluate the present level of partnership between the homeless assistance and workforce systems. Circle the elements that most closely approximate activity in your community. The column with the most circles most likely describes the level of relationship in your community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Cooperative</th>
<th>Coordinated</th>
<th>Collaborative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Periodic meetings; can be informal.</td>
<td>Regular, scheduled meetings.</td>
<td>Structured meetings; might include routine assessment of how two systems are working together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Sharing</td>
<td>Informal.</td>
<td>Formalized; may be part of a standing agenda; electronic media might be used.</td>
<td>Electronic data sharing; could be mutual participation in Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or other existing system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Coordination</td>
<td>Mutual referrals.</td>
<td>Routine presence of workers at One-Stops and homeless assistance providers; cross-system training for workers.</td>
<td>Workforce system changes program rules to accommodate needs of people who are homeless. Electronic or other streamlined system of making appointments and tracking outcomes are used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Activities</td>
<td>Information about planning is shared.</td>
<td>Representatives from the homeless assistance system participate in workforce planning and vice-versa.</td>
<td>CEP initiative is fully developed and formalized with a written plan and procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Information about funding is shared, especially how to access funds to serve clients.</td>
<td>Funds may be set aside in each system to meet the needs of homeless jobseekers. For example, a homeless assistance system might hire an employment specialist, and the workforce system might provide outreach staff to work at shelters.</td>
<td>Funding is blended or coordinated to create one program integrating resources from both systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKSHEET 2.3: IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL CHANGE AGENTS

In planning for systems change, the identification of change agents at various levels of responsibility is crucial to the success of the efforts. Think about the following questions concerning management and staff:

1. Who shows a particular interest in innovative approaches?

2. Who is viewed as a leader among his or her peers or is often consulted when problems arise?

3. Who has participated in training on evidence-based practices or model programs?
WORKSHEET 2.4: ADDRESSING CULTURAL ISSUES

Consider the following questions regarding people served by the organization:

1. What cultural differences exist among the people served by the homeless assistance and workforce development systems?

2. What barriers (including, but not limited to, language) exist to serving these groups, and what strategies have been used in the past?

3. What constituent groups have traditionally been involved in advocacy in the system, and are these groups culturally representative?
INTRODUCTION

What the Chapter Is About

Chapter 3 moves the reader into the details of researching community needs and resources. There is an overview of quantitative and qualitative research methods, with guidance about how to use these tools. The chapter offers information on the services and supports needed by homeless jobseekers, and how to provide access to these services. Also, the chapter revisits the issue of resources and describes ways to influence planning processes controlling resources. Finally, the chapter highlights successful examples from around the country.

What the Reader May Expect to Gain from This Chapter

This chapter will help you do the following:

- Understand how to research the labor market
- Develop an understanding of services and supports
- Identify and obtain resources to support Community Employment Pathways
- Influence planning processes that control needed resources
- Learn about successful examples from around the country

STEP 6: RESEARCH YOUR LABOR MARKET

Collecting the information necessary for a CEP initiative is a significant effort that requires information from many different sources. The best way to collect such diverse data is to create field research groups that can pursue the information, explore all possible sources, and summarize it for others involved in the CEP initiative.

Partners in the CEP initiative can undertake critical roles and activities in and outside the workgroups, including the following:

- Serving as members of the initiative’s workgroups or contractors
- Providing resources (cash or in-kind support)
- Generating community support or lending credibility to the effort
- Providing researchers in the workgroups with access to employers or other individuals for surveys, focus groups, or other data collection efforts
• Reviewing research findings and/or deliverable products, providing feedback to researchers or the steering committee

• Disseminating research findings and reports to local stakeholders

• Ensuring that findings and recommendations are used across ongoing existing strategic planning efforts such as the WIA plan of the local WIB, the local Consolidated Plan, or the planning led by the CoC

Ideally, two workgroups would gather information on the local labor market: a demand side workgroup studying labor conditions and a supply side workgroup focused on characteristics of homeless jobseekers. Depending on the size and composition of your CEP initiative’s team, you might not be able to staff both of the workgroups and might consider merging the responsibilities of two workgroups into one.

The steering committee also needs to consider whether or not assistance is available with the right expertise to support the research activities, particularly in gathering information about the demand and supply sides of the labor market. The first place to explore the availability of such expert assistance is with the local WIB’s administrative agency or with the manager of the local One-Stop Career Center.

Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

Information to create Community Employment Pathways can be most useful and relevant when based on a combination of quantitative data collection (e.g., large-scale surveys and/or analyses of large-scale existing databases, such as Census and BLS databases) with more qualitative data collection methods (such as focus groups, business visitations, and stakeholder meetings). Qualitative and quantitative data collection and analyses should be complementary of one another. For example, qualitative analyses can provide illustrations and help to ensure that quantitative analyses are well-grounded in reality. Employment data is most helpful to users if it is understood in the context of human circumstances. Reports with tables and charts might support a better understanding of the landscape in your community, so your project should include them. For example, not only might it be helpful to planners and service providers in multiple systems to understand the kinds of positions homeless jobseekers were helped to secure, but it also might help to contrast those positions with either the types of jobs they prefer or with those jobs in demand in your community that offer growth potential.

Table 3.1 lists positions secured through the employment services staff at a permanent supportive housing project in Chicago. In this sample, individuals were mainly African American males with an average age of 40 and less than 12 years of formal education. It should be noted that just over half the population worked during the year, and earned wages were just above $7.00 per hour. Forty-five percent worked part-time or temporary jobs. Of those working, 95% did not earn above 150% of the poverty level, and two-thirds earned less than 100% of the poverty level.
Table 3.1: Jobs Obtained through a Permanent Supportive Housing Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Classification</th>
<th>Percent of 1,025 Tenants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashier</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk Clerk</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver-Messenger</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Service</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitor/Maintenance</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demand Side Research

Gauging the needs of area employers and developing workforce development strategies to address employers’ needs are important activities during the CEP initiative. In this section of the guidebook, we refer to the employer side of the equation as the demand side. The demand side workgroup seeks to answer the question, “what do local employers need and who are they most likely to hire?” The workgroup conducts new research and uses existing data to answer these questions. It examines workplace skills needed, outlooks for industry sectors, resources supporting employment and career advancement, initiatives within industry sectors, and established career pathways.

Gathering Data

A CEP initiative can gather two types of data:

- New data (or “primary data”) based on a variety of gathering techniques such as interviews, surveys, site visits, or focus groups
- Existing data (or “secondary data”) from regional labor market reports, U.S. Census Bureau data, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis
Chapter 3: Researching Community Needs and Resources

reports, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), or program reports on job placements from local nonprofit job training and placement providers

Because it is usually more time-consuming to gather primary data, a project might want to first gather information from secondary sources that are relevant to the goals and objectives of the CEP initiative. Appendix 2 contains a chart of sample data sources at the Federal, State, county, and city levels. Most State labor departments maintain data files that will be useful when undergoing a CEP initiative.

**Employment Trends among Homeless Jobseekers**

The demand side workgroup can start gathering information about the industries and employers that are hiring by looking at the jobs that people who are homeless in your community secured or were placed in during the previous two years. This research can yield information about the experience of job placement providers, the kinds or types of industries and occupations people are entering, and the extent to which people seeking work are placed. Along with the job titles and types of employment, the demand side workgroup should find out the wage people earned at entry to those jobs, and if available, whether or not prerequisite skills or education were required. From a few studies and reports from certain communities, we frequently see homeless jobseekers entering service sector occupations such as in the food service industry. In the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Program, it was determined that 72 percent of homeless jobseekers secure work in three primary occupational categories. These are: service worker positions (35 percent); laborer positions requiring no specialized training (27 percent); and office/clerical positions (10 percent).18

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### Seattle's Homeless Intervention Project

The Homeless Intervention Project (HIP), a partnership with the Community Psychiatric Clinic, FareStart, The Seattle Conservation Corps, and the YWCA at Seattle’s Workforce Development Council, reports serving 502 people who are homeless in their last service year at a cost of approximately $2,700 per person per year. Seventy-eight percent of people who are homeless are placed in jobs for 40 hours a week or more. The project reported an average wage at initial placement of $10.92 for program years 2004 to 2006. Seventy-two percent had retained their placements after three months. Jobseekers were placed in unsubsidized employment in a variety of occupational groupings and occupations, however, 75 percent of HIP participants over two years worked in the top five occupational clusters indicated in Table 3.2.

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Table 3.2: Most Common Occupational Clusters in HIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Cluster</th>
<th>Percent Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food preparation and serving-related</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and extraction</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and material moving</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CEP initiative should consider whether or not the occupational groups in which people are placed reflect the interests of homeless jobseekers and represents the needs of the local labor market. Are these the jobs people want? Is the need for these jobs expanding, shrinking or remaining the same? Is there any growth potential for homeless jobseekers to advance their career and wages in these fields, and if so, how might they do so? These are pertinent questions for the demand side group to answer based on both primary and secondary data.

**Occupational and Skills Analysis**

Occupational and skills analysis research is intended to provide employers, workers, and workforce professionals with in-depth data and analyses of the changing characteristics of jobs and skill requirements. Such studies have focused on particular industry sectors or a select group of occupations and have had either a regional or local geographic focus. Among the most useful data sources for this type of study is the O*NET data set.19

O*NET offers an interactive online application that allows for searching skills needed for more than 800 occupations. The skills and responsibilities have been distilled into standard categories allowing for comparison. This feature allows the user to identify skills that might be transferable from one job to another, or to identify particularly versatile skills to possess.

O*NET, however, does not identify skill trends for occupations or provide information on the ways that the same occupation might differ in its demands across industries. To flesh out information about local industries and employers, gathering information through focus groups and/or surveys from employers and workers in the targeted occupations (and industry sectors) would enhance the data you gather from O*NET.

**Identifying Jobs and Estimating Job Outlook**

Demand side research includes not only current demand, but also the future demand in industry sectors. Recommended data to consider include earnings, educational attainment, and work

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19 See [http://www.onetcenter.org](http://www.onetcenter.org)
experience (which measure accessibility to low-skilled workers), the number of projected openings (which measures availability of jobs), and the income differential between low earners and high earners (which measures the potential for advancement within the occupation).

Factors that negatively affect job outlook include the following:

- Outsourcing of jobs overseas or out of the geographic area of the CEP initiative
- Technology changes that might render the work obsolete or require additional technical expertise
- Other competitive factors leading to industry downturns, such as foreign competition or decreased demand for a product or service

Secondary information resources at various levels might provide this kind of information, particularly reports from your State department of labor. Your local WIB also monitors this kind of data: many local WIBs have a labor market specialist on staff or access to this information through regional sources. A CEP initiative can also engage consultants to help analyze the data to isolate the most relevant information for your CEP initiative.

Most State departments of labor maintain data files that can tell the demand side workgroup the occupational need and outlook for certain occupations. For example, we can readily find labor demand and supply updates at the Tennessee Department of Labor website, http://thesource.tnui.net/default.asp.

As the data is gathered, the workgroup should look at narrowing their list of high priority opportunities for homeless jobseekers. Jobs for the Future (JFF), a national workforce intermediary, used quantitative research to identify occupations showing promise for disadvantaged jobseekers. From the 16 occupations identified, JFF recommended six occupational clusters for further investigation: nursing, customer service representative, automotive and truck technician, computer support specialist, building trades, and commercial drivers.20

Tennessee Department of Labor – Labor Demand and Supply Updates

The following is a sample from the State of Tennessee labor outlook:

CLUSTER 4600 FOOD PREPARATION & SERVICES
The outlook for this occupational cluster in Workforce Investment Area 11 in Jackson and surrounding counties is very good. Occupations in this cluster are expected to be in demand with employers. The growth rate is positive, but not above the average for all occupations. There are more job openings expected annually than there were training completers in a recent year. No placement data available.

In addition to the information about the growth of jobs, their requirements, and wages, the demand side workgroup should also pursue data specifically relevant to homeless jobseekers

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and their present circumstances. **Worksheet 3.1 includes some pertinent questions for demand side research.**

There is no one best source of data to answer these questions. In fact, answers to these questions are more likely to come from current training programs and employers themselves. This means gathering data from these primary sources through focus groups, surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. Of these, focus groups and interviews with a sample of employers in key industries or occupational clusters are most likely to yield useful, detailed information, but on a limited scale. Trade associations and unions might be helpful here, as well as local human relations department (HR) networks. For example, the Chicago Stepping Project held an early morning breakfast meeting to solicit assistance from area employers.

**Sector Initiatives**

Sector initiatives are strategic partnerships between entities in a specific industry and entities (e.g., nonprofits, community colleges, and labor unions) with links to people in need of employment, such as those who are unemployed, low-wage workers, and groups of people who have not traditionally been in the labor pool.²¹

Over the past decade, more than 150 programs run primarily by nonprofit organizations have been addressing the needs of workers and employers in specific industries. These industry-specific approaches have created an expanding, leading-edge field nationwide. A sectoral focus in a CEP initiative would consider the entry level rungs of a career ladder, how homeless jobseekers can grasp that rung to enter the particular sector and what training and supports are available to support the inclusion and advancement of homeless jobseekers in that sector, whether it is the construction trades; logistics; information technology or environmental services. Identifying whether such initiatives exist in your community can help to reveal a valuable resource. More information on sector initiatives is included in Chapter 7.

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Supply Side Research

Supply side research looks at the market from the jobseekers’ side. This is where we summarize the skills and needs of the homeless jobseekers. Worksheet 3.2 contains question to guide the collection of demographic information about homeless jobseekers. Sources of data include the following:

- Job training programs
- HMIS
- Focus groups with tenants in supportive housing
- CoC data and point-in-time counts

Demographic Characteristics

While it is important to gather information about the characteristics of a community’s homeless population in order to plan services and comprehensively meet their needs, it is also difficult to collect detailed information specific to employment. Many communities are challenged by the absence of reliable regional demographic data on the nature and extent of homelessness. Instead, community planning efforts have relied largely on the point-in-time counts along with information that can be accessed through service providers, which at least provides a starting point for identifying needs and services. However, people who are chronically homeless, homeless families, and people who are transitionally homeless might have very different needs and assets. To be more effective, a CEP initiative needs a strategy to assemble information about the people who are homeless in its communities, particularly about those who currently are seeking employment or a better job, as well as projecting, the number of people who might do so in the future.

It might be useful to consider other sources of data about people who are homeless and their employment that come from studies, programs, or professional literature. Studies such as the following can be useful in changing the minds of people who do not see the potential for the CEP initiative:

- The National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients indicated that as many as 44 percent of people without shelter and without permanent housing worked in the previous 30 days. Of those who reported working, 20 percent did so in a job lasting or expected to last at least three months, 25 percent worked at a temporary or day labor job, and 2 percent earned money by peddling or selling personal belongings.22

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• A supportive housing project housing 175 formerly homeless individuals in New York City and maintaining a strong emphasis on employment saw employment rates increase for its tenants from 30 percent at intake to 67 percent two years later.23

From these reports, we know a significant percentage of the homeless population is interested in working and once housed, a majority of people seek employment, when given support and assistance. Anecdotally, it seems that once homeless clients move into transitional or permanent housing about 15 percent go to work without any special employment services. As targeted services are made available to such tenants and tenants use vocational services, the percent of those entering employment can increase significantly. With vocational interventions and job placement services, rates can climb from 15 percent to 60 percent, even for individuals who have been homeless for long periods of time or whose homelessness occurs frequently.

Further defining the extent of the homeless jobseeker population might be accomplished in the point-in-time count of people who are homeless on the street and those in shelters by including questions about employment in the survey. However, because many people cycle in and out of homelessness, point-in-time counts provide unreliable measures of the true extent of homelessness and are subject to a gross undercount of the raw number of people who are homeless over the course of the year. Count information and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) information can provide data about the demographic features of the homeless population seeking or likely to seek employment. An HMIS is a computerized data collection tool designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. It is designed to aggregate client-level data to generate an unduplicated count of clients served within a continuum. An HMIS can also be statewide or regional, possibly including several continuums. If the One-Stop Career Centers can track and share information about homeless jobseekers, this information could help complete the picture presented by the point-in-time count and HMIS.

In Denver the point-in-time count asks respondents if they have a job, if unemployment was the reason for their homelessness, the number of hours a week they work, income sources, and their amount of annual household income, but it does not ask about educational characteristics. Some communities do not collect information about employment, but do survey for education status, such as the 2005 South Carolina count which found 65 percent of the homeless population have completed high school or college. The sheltered and unsheltered populations do not show many differences on education other than a slight difference in the percent with less than 12th grade completed (31 percent sheltered, 39 percent unsheltered). The definition of unsheltered people who are homeless is “adults, children and youth sleeping in places not meant for human habitation. Places not meant for human habitation include streets, parks, alleys, parking ramps, parts of the highway system, transportation depots and other parts of transportation systems (e.g. subway tunnels, railroad car), all night commercial establishments

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(e.g. movie theaters, laundries, restaurants), abandoned buildings, caves, campgrounds, vehicles and other similar places).²⁴

Focus Groups

A good source of qualitative information about homeless jobseekers in your community would be focus groups held with homeless jobseekers, homeless people who are working, and formerly homeless people who are working. Questions could address topics such as barriers to employment, type of work engaged in, and jobs providing opportunity for advancement.

Facilitating a focus group to gather information from formerly homeless individuals now living in permanent supportive housing requires use of interpersonal interviewing skills to solicit the ideas, experiences, and stories of people who may want to pursue a pathway to competitive employment or who may already be working. This includes listening, responding to participants, asking open- and closed-ended questions, acknowledging participant feelings about their situations/experiences, and facilitating a group process. The focus group size should be five to eight people.

This particular focus group is aimed at soliciting the perspective of individuals who have work experience and who may have a goal of returning to the workforce and/or seek to advance their work lives. Sample questions include:

- Career Advancement
  - What does career advancement mean to you?
  - If you are working now, what opportunities exist for you to advance in your current job or jobs?
  - Are you notified about job openings, and if so in what manner are you notified?
  - Can you describe how you would like to see your career move forward?
  - Why do you think this is or is not happening for you?
  - In order to advance in your career, what actions do you feel that you need to take?
  - What, if anything, is holding you back?

- Training and Supports
  - In what kind of training would you participate to advance?
  - What kinds of supports do you feel you would need to complete a training program?

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- What were your experiences previously in training or education?
- If you were to develop a training program that would help you advance in your career, what three elements should you include in this program?

- Business Ownership
  - Have you ever considered working for yourself or running your own business?
  - What types of courses and skills do you feel you need to acquire in order to run your own business?
  - What other thoughts do you have regarding running your own business?

Readiness for Work

Based on information gathered about the workforce, the supply side workgroup should try to determine numbers of people who might be ready, willing, and able to pursue the types of employment and training opportunities available. To do so, the supply side workgroup could consider the range of employment opportunities that ideally would be available to people who are homeless and have a variety of different skill levels and degrees of readiness for work.

- One type of work to consider is occasional part-time employment, at the (irregular) times that people are ready and want to work. Existing opportunities for this type of work in a community might include Labor Ready (a national day labor company). Not many employers will hire individuals who only want to work “when they feel like it,” but this is an important category or level of work for many individuals, especially those entering the work force for the first time or after a long delay related to absence or disability. A CEP initiative might learn about contingent workforce programs successful with people who are homeless such as Primavera Works in Tucson, AZ, or Assurance Staffing Services at Mission Global Ministries in Jackson, TN, where case management services and connections with housing are linked to the employment service.

- A second type of work is part-time work on a regular schedule at known locations and with specific work activities. Part-time work of this nature offers a pathway into the mainstream workforce and can lead to full-time employment over time. These part-time positions can be with temporary placement agencies, but are more likely to result from the efforts of employment program staff and others going into the field to recruit employers and negotiate the terms on a placement-by-placement basis. This work can include seasonal work at sports arenas, janitorial/cleaning crew work, positions in nonprofit agencies, partnerships with employers, etc. Transitional jobs are growing as a strategy to engage disadvantaged populations in competitive employment.25

- Third, the workgroup should consider full-time employment. This type of work might be an immediate goal for the population of people who are homeless who are most ready for competitive employment or where the level of support (e.g., transportation, child care, and job coaching services) is sufficient to allow people to work 35 or more hours per

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25 See http://www-transitionaljobs.net/
week. This could be a longer-term goal for some of the individuals who initially enter the work force initially through occasional or regular part-time work.

- A fourth option is **Customized Employment**. Customized Employment is a process for individualizing the employment relationship between a jobseeker or an employee and an employer in ways that meet the needs of both. It is based on a match between the unique strengths, needs, and interests of the job candidate with a disability, and the identified business needs of the employer or the self-employment business chosen by the candidate. It is a business deal.

Successful employment means that there is a match between the employer demands or requirements for a job position in a business or company and the skills and supports the worker possesses to meet those expectations. In some instances homeless jobseekers are highly skilled and need little support to work full-time. Other individuals have the needed level of skills but lack the supports or resources to work. In other cases an individual might need assistance to develop job skills and to secure the needed level of support in order to meet the employer’s requirements. In general, employment programs consider key baseline behaviors, skills (soft and job-specific), and supports as minimally necessary to enter and succeed in a work environment.

The workgroup should develop standards for readiness to work, mindful that traditional notions of readiness might not be justified, and that rapid entry into employment can be as successful as “train-then-place” approaches. For example, the supply side workgroup in one community identified the following considerations:

- People must be sheltered or housed in a setting they can depend on, which could include a shelter, “couch surfing,” “tent city,” transitional or permanent housing, etc., with clear strategies to promote movement towards more stable housing over time.

- Those who are eligible for ongoing treatment services should be linked to some form of case management that can help to promote housing stability and support employment over time, with the vocational, housing, and treatment systems linking their activities to avoid duplication and promote recovery.

- Those who are not eligible for ongoing services (which might include people who do not qualify for mental health services, who are without other case management supports, who are without criminal justice system oversight and supervision, etc.) should have some support through VR, TANF, or the One-Stops.

- The individual expressing an interest in employment should have a willingness to participate in the development and implementation of a plan that incorporates work-related goals and should be willing to listen and take advice.

- Those who are not yet receiving services are being assertively targeted through outreach and engagement.

26 See [http://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/workforce/cust_emp.htm](http://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/workforce/cust_emp.htm)
Assessing Job Desirability and Accessibility

At some point, the CEP initiative must analyze the demand side and supply side research to assess the outlook for the homeless jobseekers in the community. In order to better understand the interest in and desirability of jobs to people who are homeless and the accessibility of these positions to the different categories of homeless jobseekers, the Desirability/Accessibility Quadrant Chart contained in Worksheet 3.3 might be helpful to a CEP initiative in several ways. It could be used as a tool to solicit jobseeker preferences in a focus group, to depict the considerations jobseekers need to make, to identify available jobs in a given sector of the local economy, and to plot both the accessibility and desirability of these jobs to different categories of homeless jobseekers.

The following are examples of accessibility dimensions:

- Number of jobs in the industry or sector
- Availability of transportation to and from the job location that complement the work schedule hours
- Extent of on-the-job stress and vulnerability of the jobseeker
- Educational requirements demanded by the employer
- Availability of training to perform the job
- Availability of support, e.g., case management and child care

What makes a job desirable depends on the perspective of the jobseeker, but common considerations include the following:

- Amount of pay for the job
- Opportunity for increasing earnings on the job
- Flexibility of the work schedule, from full-time to part-time employment

The Quadrants are as follows:

- Quadrant 1: High job desirability and high accessibility. People want these kinds of jobs, and they are there for the asking.
- Quadrant 2: High job desirability and low accessibility. People want these kinds of jobs but cannot get them.
- Quadrant 3: High job accessibility and low desirability. These jobs are plentiful, but people do not want them.
- Quadrant 4: Low job accessibility and low desirability. People do not want these jobs, and there are not many available anyway.
See Worksheet 3.3 for a detailed graphic representation.

Within the context of the quadrant chart, the concept of a “livable wage job” means work at a specific and measurable wage level. Some years back, workers in some of Baltimore’s homeless shelters and soup kitchens had noticed something new and troubling about many of the visitors coming in for meals and shelter: they happened to have full-time jobs. In response, local religious leaders successfully persuaded the City Council to raise the base pay for city contract workers to $6.10 an hour from $4.25, the Federal minimum wage at the time. Since then, jurisdictions across the country established wage targets for workers employed through local government contracts.27

The employment quadrant suggests a different way to look at what jobs are offered to homeless jobseekers and what kinds of pathways you want to create in your community. Ideally a jobseeker wants to find Quadrant 1 jobs, which are hypothetically superior to the other three. We recognize that all jobseekers will not end up in pathways that lead to jobs in Quadrant 1, but it is what we strive for in our planning and systems change strategies.

STEP 7: LEARN THE SERVICES AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO HOMELESS JOBSEEKERS

The workgroup on services and supports gathers information about the resources, services, and other supports that can help people work. It seeks to answer the fundamental question: Are supports, resources, and services available and accessible to the extent necessary for homeless jobseekers to secure and maintain employment?" "Available" means that the type of service or resource is present in the community or at specific community-based agencies in sufficient quantity for all homeless subpopulations, including homeless female heads of households with children, people with disabilities and histories of long-term homelessness, single adults who are not chronically homeless but have substance use issues, single adults with serious mental illnesses, and youth with and without special needs. “Accessible” means that no barriers prevent the homeless jobseeker from getting these services should they choose to use them.

The services and support workgroup should have representation both from the homeless assistance and workforce development sectors, in order to identify the range of services that must be integrated in order to form Community Employment Pathways. The range of services includes substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, affordable permanent housing, transportation, child care, occupational skills training, job readiness training (soft skills training), and basic education. The services and supports workgroup seeks to determine the range of existing services and the gaps where services are missing. Services can be available, but not accessible because of categorical eligibility requirements, waiting lists, requirements to enter a program, lack of funding to pay for the service, and a host of other possible reasons. Worksheet 3.4 includes questions to consider when researching services and supports.

27 See http://www.livingwagecampaign.org/
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Identifying Employment Supports

Many communities have a wide range of employment supports and social services available, but navigating the system can be complex for the homeless jobseeker. Cataloging these opportunities and identifying how people take advantage of them—a process that can be thought of as “resource mapping”—is a crucial step in creating Community Employment Pathways. Resource mapping presents a way for the CEP initiative to assess existing infrastructure, analyze how existing systems are working (or could be working better), and identify concrete policy direction for the future.

Resource mapping is not the same as developing a systems inventory or a programs directory. Resource mapping is a process that helps answer critical questions about their systems, and, if done well, can become a tool for joint planning, resource and cost sharing, and performance-based management of programs and services. Resource Mapping studies seek to identify programs and services already in the community that are or could be supportive to homeless jobseekers.

Mapping activities begin with as full and recent a list of existing programs within the region as possible, including employment and training programs and a full range of support services agencies (e.g., job training, child care providers, mental health services, substance abuse treatment providers, older workers programs, services for the people with disabilities, transportation assistance programs, and housing assistance programs). Using this listing as a basis, the workgroup would conduct mail or telephone surveys to obtain updated and similar data on each service provider.

Increasingly, agencies conducting these types of projects have used Internet-based applications both so that agencies with listings in directories could easily update data on their agencies/programs and so that a wider range of employers, human services providers, workers, and other individuals within the region can easily access referral information. Given the nature of how programs describe themselves and the structures of categorical funding, it is useful to determine how these agencies actually serve homeless jobseekers, their current experiences with homeless populations (chronically homeless, homeless youth, family homelessness, etc.) and what they might consider doing in the near future to support the community goal of ending homelessness through employment.

Resource mapping can be made part of a successful strategic planning process or used in other contexts. It can inform the development of policy recommendations and help project how system changes will impact existing infrastructure. Resource mapping can also be used to provide a clearer picture on how systems are funded and administered, often identifying programs that can be modified to serve more consumers and maximize funding.

Career Pathways

Any study of employment supports should include “career pathways,” or mechanisms to help people advance in a particular field. Community colleges, industry groups, workforce development organizations, or community organizations can help to establish a series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector, and to advance over time
to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector. Each step on a career pathway is designed explicitly to prepare for the next level of employment and education.\(^{28}\)

A project called Stepping Up in Chicago targeting homeless individuals and tenants of supportive housing seeks to improve the vocational circumstance of these populations by providing career advancement interventions in partnership with the local community college, nonprofits, and the workforce development system.\(^{29}\) One activity of Stepping Up is a career pathways project that created a certificate program, working with affordable housing and supportive housing organizations in the city to design a career ladder in property management. The project recognized that no clear path to employment as a property manager was accessible to homeless and formerly homeless jobseekers. Stepping Up and Wright Community College established a two-level course sequence with certificates issued at both levels and is working with the housing industry to use this structure in hiring property management staff.

As an illustration of the concept, Figure 2 shows a career map for jobseekers interested in the field of accounting used by Portland Community College. The key to increased responsibility and rate of pay is based on obtaining credentials recognized as valuable by employers and satisfactory performance on the job.


\(^{29}\) For more information, contact John Rio, Advocates for Human Potential, jrio@ahpnet.com.
Figure 2: Accounting/Bookkeeping Career Map—a Partnership between Portland Community College (PCC) and Mt. Hood Community College
Determining Availability of Community Supports

The workgroup needs to explore the range of services that might be necessary to support the employment of people who are homeless. To start, it can consider the following supportive services and identify which ones are provided by what agencies in the community. In particular, consider whether the workforce development agencies offer any of these services or if they routinely partner with community agencies for these services.

- A stable living environment—a place to sleep, eat, store belongings, etc.—that has no time limit, although it might encourage people to move to permanent housing
- Inpatient or outpatient substance abuse treatment, including detoxification, without waiting periods and for which lack of insurance is not a barrier
- Mental health services and treatment for co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders, including appropriate outpatient treatment, Assertive Community Treatment, psychopharmacology services, psychiatric evaluation services, and inpatient treatment, without waiting periods and for which lack of insurance is not a barrier
- Flexible service coordination or clinical case management at the intensity, duration, and quantity needed by the jobseeker
- On the job site job coaching by trained job coaches to assist jobseekers with adjusting to the work environment and managing interpersonal relationships on the job; analyze job tasks; structure such tasks to enable the worker to complete them successfully; and maintain regular contact with the employer
- Off the job site job coaching by trained job coaches to assist jobseekers without disclosing to the employer information about the worker and his or her relationship to the job coach

A workgroup might find secondary sources such as a services directory that lists the service and support agencies in the community and describes the kinds of services available. The CoC in conducting its required gaps and needs analysis of community-based services might identify if these services are available and how they support employment.

In most communities the services and support workgroup will need to gather information from primary sources, most likely through a survey or by conducting focus groups with selected providers. In Seattle, the CEP initiative conducted an online survey using readily available free software at www.surveymonkey.com. A sample survey is included as a resource in Appendix 3.
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Evaluating Accessibility and Eligibility

In some circumstances a service might be available and appear accessible; however, upon closer examination the provider of a needed service might exclude certain homeless jobseekers, such as those with active substance use issues or with certain felony offenses. There are readiness features that reflect a program’s ability to support a homeless jobseeker, particularly those with complex problems such as chronic health conditions, criminal justice involvement, or active substance use issues.

Employment Services

When estimating the availability and accessibility of employment services for homeless jobseekers, it is important to consider the readiness of programs to accomplish the following tasks:

- Test skill levels of jobseekers and provide training to address skills that might be lacking, particularly in relation to math skills relevant to their job context and language skills, which might include English as a Second Language as well as soft skills
- Assist clients to resolve outstanding legal issues such as expunging felony convictions that limit employment options and making court appearances without disrupting their employment
- Locate employment settings that have access to transportation so clients can get from their homes to and from work at the times they are scheduled to work or provide off hours transportation
- Assist clients with voicemail and getting work clothing and supplies needed for the work environment
- Provide opportunities for jobseekers to develop positive, consistent work habits, (e.g., showing up for work on most days), and to practice and learn new routines in a fashion that promotes success over time

Homeless Assistance and Housing

Ultimately, the success of the CEP initiative depends not only on employment services being more accessible to homeless jobseekers, but on support for people who are homeless to choose, get, and keep jobs. In setting the stage for creating Community Employment Pathways, determining the attitudes of housing providers toward employment will be important to crafting action steps. Inevitably, the services and support workgroup will need to consider the extent to which homeless assistance services and their organizations have “vocationalized” their services and how they are delivered. “Vocationalizing” refers to changing the culture of the housing and services to support employment goals on par with the services supporting people in housing. A vocationalized housing project would routinely ask applicants about their work history and preferences, would post job listings in common areas, would have staff knowledgeable about
work incentives on their staff, would have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the One-Stop Career Center, and would affirm the importance of employment in its culture.\(^{30}\)

Additionally, it is important to evaluate what the homeless assistance system is doing to support employment—from outreach onward. We have learned repeatedly in evaluations and surveys that people who are homeless want not only housing but also a job. We learned from research that the more vocational services are made available to support people in their vocational pursuits, the more likely people are to work or work more. Researchers advise programs that work with homeless people with mental illnesses might better serve their clients by placing as great an emphasis on providing employment services as on providing housing and clinical treatment.\(^{31}\) Because the number of case management service contacts was not significantly associated with residential outcomes in one study, the authors noted that the use of specific types of services was important in reducing the use of homeless shelters. These findings suggest that case management efforts should focus on developing vocational and psychosocial rehabilitation services to reduce the risk of recurrent homelessness among people with serious mental illnesses.\(^{32}\)

**STEP 8: IDENTIFY FUNDING STREAMS FOR COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS**

Very few funding streams have been established specifically for serving homeless jobseekers. Assistance to homeless jobseekers has therefore relied on either funding designated for homelessness or funding designated for jobseekers more generally. The background chapters later in this guidebook provide detailed information about these funding programs.

**Housing Assistance System**

The homeless assistance system refers to those programs and resources funded under the McKinney-Vento Act and other related programs, including the following: Supportive Housing Program (SHP), including Supportive Services Only; Shelter Plus Care; SRO Mod Rehab; Emergency Shelter Grants; HOME Investment Program; Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA); and Section 811 for people with disabilities. Chapter 7 provides more detail about the homeless assistance system for readers who are not familiar with the topic.

The McKinney – Vento Act has been and remains a key funding source for employment services for homeless population. In 2007, over 70,000 people assisted by HUD homeless assistance programs obtained employment.\(^{33}\) However, overall, HUD funding for service-only

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\(^{33}\) Prepared Statement of Mark Johnston to House Subcommittee on Transportation, HUD, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations (Feb. 28, 2008).
projects has decreased in response to prioritizing permanent housing and in response to the Federal homeless policy that directs people who are homeless and service providers to secure resources from Federal mainstream programs, including the mainstream labor programs.

**Workforce Development System**

The mainstream workforce development system includes those programs and resources organized under the five titles of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, which is pending reauthorization.

Programs in the "mainstream system" include: WIA Adult; WIA Dislocated Worker; WIA Youth; Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser); Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs; Veterans’ Employment and Training Programs; Unemployment Insurance; Job Corps; Welfare-to-Work Grant-Funded Programs; Senior Community Service Employment Program; Employment and Training for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers; Employment and Training for Native Americans; Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation Program; Adult Education and Literacy; Vocational Education (Perkins Act); Department of Health and Human Services Community Services Block Grant; Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-administered Employment and Training; and the Department of Agriculture’s Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) service. These are described further in Chapter 7.

**“Braiding” Funding**

Local WIBs access and use a variety of funding streams to provide services and supports to meet the needs of customers. These might include HUD’s Community Development Block Grant or McKinney-Vento programs and discretionary grant funding such as DOL’s Work Incentive or Customized Employment grants. Other funding either does not require the local WIB to be the applicant, such as the Special Projects and Demonstration grants from the Department of Education, or is targeted and does not include local WIB coordination requirements, such as SAMHSA’s PATH or Homeless Treatment grants.

We have learned that no one funding stream meets the employment service and support needs of people who are homeless or for all One-Stop Career Center customers in general. The challenge for communities is how to “braid” the various funding streams into a coherent program of services uniquely tailored to the individual needs of customers but whose complexities are invisible to service users. Braided funding means linking two or more funding streams paying for discrete component parts of a service, in this case employment services, while allowing for separate tracking and reporting of outcomes as these programs require. Linking resources permits the use of funds together to provide the total funding needed for that service. For example, State departments of mental health (DMH) might partner with State departments of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), with DVR paying for short-term employment services and DMH paying for long-term job retention services. Developing Community Employment Pathways involves identifying employment services funding levels for your city, region, State; how those funds flow from its source to its ultimate customer; and the limitations or possibilities for using these resources to support employment services for people who are homeless.

In the early steps of the process, you should lay the groundwork for accessing these resources to support Community Employment Pathways. For example, you should seek to have State or local WIB funds committed to this project during the planning process, with a start date that coincides with services and supports available through the CoC.
Braiding funds from multiple sources for seamless services reflects collaborative planning and partnerships across systems. In some instances, funds might need to be pooled rather than braided. For example, FSET allows States to engage third-party match resources to draw down Federal funding based on a 50-50 match. This means a nonprofit agency receiving local revenue can pool these local funds with the Food Stamp State agency funds to fund employment and training services for Food Stamp recipients who are homeless. To match Federal FSET funds, the funds need to be non-Federal resources pooled with the State, and the outcomes or results of this service would be pooled in the report to the USDA.

Influencing Workforce Planning Processes

Your CEP initiative will not be successful unless you can tap into existing resources and create new strategies to support your efforts. The best method for gaining access to resources in your community is to understand which resources are available in your area, whether or not a planning process exists, and who controls the resources. This applies both to mainstream workforce system and CoC system resources.

Many of the resources available to homeless jobseekers are guided by locally controlled planning processes. For example, the mainstream workforce system conducts two and sometimes three primary planning processes. The State WIB and the local WIB conduct biannual planning. The primary focus of this planning process in most States is to do the following:

- Identify the workforce needs of all residents, especially low-income people
- Identify the labor needs of employers
- Identify key areas of growth for the labor market across the State and in the community
- Encourage stronger links between the community college, university, and vocational training communities and workforce system
- Identify methods for recruiting more employers and diverse industries into the State
- Coordinate with certain populations, such as youth and people with disabilities

Rarely do these plans include specific plans for serving people who are homeless. More commonly, plans identify people who are homeless as eligible for services but do not prioritize this group or set aside resources for their use. One of the most effective strategies for obtaining resources is to influence these plans. It requires active participation in the planning process. Instituting changes in the plan will require a commitment of time and energy, but it is essential to bringing resources to the work-related needs of homeless jobseekers.

It is helpful to understand the requirements of the planning process before you begin. For example, WIBs are not required to explicitly address homelessness, but they are required to address the needs of people with disabilities. This requirement presents an opportunity to

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34 For more detailed information on this topic, see Coordinating Community Plans located on HUD’s Homelessness Resource Exchange (HRE) at www.hudhre.info.
Chapter 3: Researching Community Needs and Resources

approach key players with information about people with mental disabilities who are chronically homeless. You could put together a fact sheet including the number of people who are chronically homeless, how many of them have mental or other disabilities, and information about their need for workforce services. Know what you want before you begin. Do you want the workforce board to set aside resources? Then your fact sheet should include a request for a specific dollar amount or a specific source of money—40 percent of job training funds, for example. Identify your likely allies. In this example, providers and advocacy groups working on workforce services for people with disabilities are likely to share your interests.

In making the case for an allocation of resources to people who are homeless, you should be careful to support and endorse the work that the mainstream system is doing. It is not always effective to attack that system and demand a disproportionate share of resources for your special interest group. It might be more effective to ask for a fair share of resources, while calmly pointing out that the current way of doing business does not always serve the needs of people who are homeless.

Influencing Local Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific steps you can take to influence local plans include the following:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify at least one key player in the planning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify allies or potential allies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Present data (fact sheets; short, written testimony at public hearings; participation in planning committee meetings; etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Present the goal of Community Employment Pathways, including the benefits of making this happen in your community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ask for specific, feasible changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the planning process, use a “fair share” argument. It is usually accurate to make the following points:

- Workforce resources in this community have been used historically to provide training and placement to people who are most “ready to work” and who need the least intensity of services.
- Historically, there have been no accommodations to the services offered that would make those services more effective for people who are homeless.
- We need a fair share of these resources targeted specifically to people who are homeless. This includes a specific dollar amount, an identified percentage of resources in certain categories, and/or the creation of specific requirements to serve this population in the workforce plans.

STEP 9: LOOK FOR MODELS IN OTHER COMMUNITIES

After completing the field research and the analysis of the information gathered, workgroups and the steering committee should consider how other communities might have addressed similar problems or needs. By reviewing models or promising practices from other communities, the steering committee and its workgroups can start to create a vision or to consider different approaches to addressing the findings and needs identified in the research effort. For example, you might discover that a day labor agency or contingent worker service might not serve
Chapter 3: Researching Community Needs and Resources

homeless jobseekers or might charge workers for transportation, meals, check cashing, etc. Contingent labor programs such as Primavera Works (see inset) have addressed these problems and might offer a solution for your community.

CEP initiatives might be focused on identifying sources of new funding or ways in which existing funds can be used to help end homelessness through employment. Although McKinney-Vento appropriations will continue to pay for supportive services, including employment services, communities are encouraged to access mainstream employment programs for services to homeless jobseekers or for funds to create new programs. Through partnerships with their State agencies and leaders, some communities benefit from WIA funds that are set aside for governors’ priorities and from innovative ways to use the FSET program. Project T.E.A.M. (see inset), a partnership of local community-based agencies in Boston, MA, the City of Boston, and the State has tapped the FSET to provide employment services to homeless Food Stamp recipients in the city. In California, the governor has set aside a portion of the State’s WIA funds to benefit workers with barriers to employment including minimum wage workers and people who are homeless or who have histories of homelessness.

You might also want to consider public-private partnerships such as sector initiatives and career pathways. These strategies often benefit disadvantaged jobseekers, though not necessarily homeless jobseekers. The following are examples of approaches that could be replicated:

- The District of Columbia Workforce Investment Council, seeking to increase the percentage of District jobs filled by District residents, identified several fields—such as hospitality, construction, and “green” technology and services—with significant employment opportunities and analyzed how District residents could be connected to those jobs. Recommended strategies for launching sector initiatives included raising public awareness of opportunities, partnering with the school system, and formalizing apprenticeship programs.

- A community college in the Seattle area, which had a successful associate’s degree program for automotive technicians, established a career pathway for disadvantaged adults to obtain entry-level mechanic positions. While auto dealerships had a great demand for the degreed and certified positions, they also had an unmet need for lower-paying positions that nevertheless paid well above wages for unskilled jobs (approximately $17 per hour). As a result of the career pathway, a number of unemployed adults and youth in transition were able to gain entry-level jobs with good pay, and some of them were later accepted into the associate’s degree program, with the opportunity to advance their careers.

Models or promising practices of employment services for homeless jobseekers continue to emerge and offer examples of how to address different challenges to serve this population. CEP steering committees can find out more about additional models through their project consultants; on the internet, at sites such as the National Alliance to End Homelessness Best Practices, the Chronic Homelessness Employment Technical Assistance Center, or the U.S. Department of Labor Homeless Services. In addition, organizations that specialize in consulting and training on homeless and employment issues include Advocates for Human Potential and the Corporation for Supportive Housing.
Quick Access to Employment: Day Labor with Supports

Primavera Works, Tucson, Arizona

Local activists formed Tucson's Primavera Foundation in 1983 to address the systemic causes of homelessness and poverty. Its sector initiative, Primavera Works, is a nonprofit day labor enterprise that helps homeless laborers who have typically been trapped in exploitative manual labor jobs find a better-paying and supportive alternative. In 2001, Central Arizona Shelter Services (CASS) in Phoenix adopted the same day labor program model. Along with CASS and numerous other community and state-level partners, Primavera's strategy has extended beyond market intervention to include public policy work. A coalition successfully passed State legislation prohibiting day labor companies from charging their workers check-cashing fees or any other fees that would reduce workers' wages to below the Federal minimum wage or interfere with offers of permanent employment. The coalition launched a regional program, entitled Day Labor Incorporated, which will sustain and build upon day labor sector impacts throughout the southwestern United States.

Primavera WORKS/Temporary Day Labor Option pays workers a minimum of $5.75/hour while providing supports such as free lunches, work equipment, and assistance with transportation. Skills are assessed to match workers to jobs, allowing individuals to earn money while looking for full time work or establish a stable work/tax history. The goal is permanent employment and independent living. This program connects motivated homeless workers with employers in the community. Work-ready participants are referred from the Men's Shelter, Relief and Referral, and other programs serving the homeless. Job readiness classes assist participants with interviewing, applications, skill identification, and job search planning. Additional work support includes free lunches, bus passes, appropriate clothing for the job, housing and more.

For information, contact:

Primavera Works
151 W 40th St
Tucson, AZ 85713

http://www.primavera.org/
Funding Employment Services with the FSET Program

Impact Employment Services
at the Friends of the Shattuck Shelter, Boston, Massachusetts

In 2005, the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) began a new initiative called Project T.E.A.M – Training and Employment As a Means to end homelessness – to identify people who are homeless eligible for food stamps and facilitate their ability to both enroll in the food stamp program and successfully access employment and training services. To accomplish this mission, the DTA collaborated with the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation in the City of Boston, and the Boston Private Industry Council, the designated Workforce Development Service Delivery Agency for the City of Boston, which selected three of its vendors, IMPACT Employment Services of the Friends of the Shattuck Shelter and Community Work Service, and the WorkPlace, one of the City’s One Stop career centers.

The partners, who have extensive experience working with homeless assistance providers and One Stop Career Centers, employers, and community-based training programs, enroll eligible people who are homeless in the food stamp program, screen them for job readiness, and make appropriate referrals to training and/or employment opportunities and provide job placement through the WorkPlace. Employment outcome data for Project T.E.A.M. reveals that the average length of time between enrollment and job placement has been 4 weeks with an average hourly rate earned of $9.78. From October 2005 to the end of March 2006, the project served 163 people, 44 of whom went to work. Eighty percent of Project T.E.A.M. clients have retained their employment for at least 30 days.

Lessons learned from Project T.E.A.M. include the value of making monthly and even weekly outreach visits to emergency shelters, transitional programs, treatment facilities, and day programs; providing daily “walk-in” hours to enroll self-referred clients, as approximately 30 percent of the clients have been referred to the program by other program participants; and utilizing a rapid engagement approach which entails responding quickly to client’s expressed interest.35

Employment Services for People Facing Barriers

N’STEP, Richmond, California

Through a two-year WIA funding award of $500,000, Rubicon’s N’STEP helped people with multiple barriers to employment, such as homelessness, chemical dependency, basic skill deficiencies, limited work history, and criminal justice background, to attain self sufficiency. Rubicon targeted two high-growth sectors – life science and allied health - offering entry-level jobs leading to career growth. By working in collaboration with community colleges offering short-term, industry-specific educational components, and with local employers, offering work experience, this initiative addressed basic skills deficiencies and industry-specific barriers. Customized work experience, case management, supportive housing, and behavioral health care addressed the special needs of the individuals to be served. Occupations included medical assistant training, hospital scheduler, admitting clerk, medical interpreter, bakery production, commercial property management, manufacturing associate, clerical support, and laboratory maintenance support.

For more information, contact:

Rubicon Programs Incorporated
2500 Bissell Avenue
Richmond, CA 94804

[www.rubiconprograms.org](http://www.rubiconprograms.org)
WORKSHEET 3.1: QUESTIONS FOR DEMAND SIDE RESEARCH

- Which jobs require less than 6th grade reading and math levels?

- What reading and math levels are required?

- Do the jobs available provide health benefits for part-time as well as full-time workers?

- Are employer business sites accessible by public transportation or are there transportation assistance plans?

- How do employers perceive hiring homeless jobseekers?

- Have employers had experience with special needs populations?

- Are there any “champions” of special needs employment in the community?

- What kinds of skills might employers require for new hires?
WORKSHEET 3.2: GATHERING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- What are the jobseekers' demographics?
  - How large is this population?
  - What are their ages?
  - What are their education levels?
  - What are their current incomes?
  - What skills do they have?
  - What were their last jobs?

- What are their interests?
  - What jobs do homeless jobseekers consider desirable?
  - What were their best past jobs?
  - Are they interested in particular types of work or occupations?
Chapter 3: Researching Community Needs and Resources

- Are they interested in job training?

- What do they identify as their needs for training?

- Are they ready for employment?

  - What percentage worked in the past 90 days?

  - How many jobs were held in the last two years?

  - Are growth-oriented jobs available in the industry in which they choose to work?

  - How would they demonstrate their readiness for employment?

  - What barriers do they face to employment?

- Are jobs accessible to homeless jobseekers?

  - Are supports such as case management or child care available?

  - Do employer educational or credential requirements exclude homeless jobseekers?
♦ Are homeless jobseekers located in the suburbs or downtown, dispersed or concentrated?

♦ Are entry level jobs dead end jobs or are there advancement pathways?

♦ Does public transportation support worker job schedules?
WORKSHEET 3.3: DESIRABILITY/ACCESSIBILITY QUADRANT CHART

High Desirability

1. Wage level meets or exceeds livable wage
   - Opportunity for wage growth
   - Career advancement pathway
   - Work hours are inflexible
   - Unlimited number of jobs in sector
   - Excellent transportation connection
   - Manageable level of job stress
   - No or limited loss of entitlement support
   - Educational requirements match job seekers
   - Training available to perform job
   - Case management and supportive services available
   - Child care available

2. Wage level meets or exceeds livable wage
   - Opportunity for wage growth
   - Career advancement pathway
   - Work hours are inflexible
   - Unlimited number of jobs in sector
   - Excellent transportation connection
   - Manageable level of job stress
   - No or limited loss of entitlement support
   - Educational requirements match job seekers
   - Training available to perform job
   - Case management and supportive services available
   - Child care available

Low Accessibility

3. Wage level is minimum wage and below livable wage
   - No opportunity for wage growth
   - No career advancement pathway
   - Work hours are inflexible
   - Limited number of jobs in sector
   - Poor transportation connection
   - Anticipate high level of job stress
   - Loss of entitlement support
   - Educational requirements exceed job seekers
   - No training available to perform job
   - No or limited case management available
   - Child care unavailable

4. Wage level is minimum wage and below livable wage
   - No opportunity for wage growth
   - No career advancement pathway
   - Work hours are inflexible
   - Limited number of jobs in sector
   - Poor transportation connection
   - Anticipate high level of job stress
   - Loss of entitlement support
   - Educational requirements exceed job seekers
   - No training available to perform job
   - No or limited case management available
   - Child care unavailable

Low Desirability
WORKSHEET 3.4: KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT SUPPORTS, RESOURCES, AND SERVICES

• Which supportive services might be needed by homeless jobseekers?

• Are these services available and accessible?
  ♦ How do we find out what is and is not available?
  ♦ How do we determine if they are accessible?

• How well integrated (referral relationships to co-located staff) are these services with the One-Stop Career Center and State Vocational Rehabilitation agency?

• Does front-line staff in the workforce and homeless systems share common values about employment, information about the types of services each other offers and an understanding of what works and doesn’t work?
CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPING A FORMAL CEP REPORT

"You’ve got to be very careful if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there."

Yogi Berra

INTRODUCTION

What the Chapter Is About

Increasing employment opportunities for people who are homeless requires raising awareness and changing minds. The success of a CEP initiative depends on developing a formal report including research findings and recommendations for action, as well as using this report as the basis for presentations to key people in the community. While no particular format is absolutely essential, the material should be well-organized and arranged keeping in mind that the purpose is to convince people to take action and open opportunities for people who are homeless to get and keep jobs. The steering committee should give ample time and effort to consider how its recommendations will become goals and objectives in local plans such as the local WIB plan, Consolidated Plan, Plan to End or Reduce Homelessness, or the local mental health plan.

In Chapter 4 we offer guidance on preparing a report, describing recommendations and strategies, prioritizing recommendations, and mobilizing support for the plan. Lastly, the chapter offers you thoughts about the role of key supporters, particularly those in government.

What the Reader Might Expect to Gain from This Chapter

This chapter will help you do the following:

- Prepare a report of findings from the field research
- Develop a map of high priority recommendations and strategies to implement your findings
- Garner support for implementing Career Employment Pathways in your community
- Identify and obtain resources to support needed employment services

STEP 10: SET THE STAGE FOR ACTION

The CEP initiative is not a planning process in its own right so much as it is an attempt to bring together the activities of various public and private entities and systems. As we noted in Chapter 2, the CEP initiative represents a systems change effort, and therefore effective communication is essential to its success.

Hopefully, people from both homeless assistance and workforce investment systems have been engaged in your CEP initiative long before you begin writing the report. New relationships were started during the workgroups and can continue as you ask people to contribute or read drafts of your CEP report. Make sure that representatives from the various systems participate in reviewing drafts of the report as a way not only to strengthen the content of the report, but also enrich cross-system relationships. However, don’t be afraid to challenge the systems involved in
Chapter 4: Developing a Formal CEP Report

the process: In order to ensure that the report is implemented, the boundary spanner might need to continue efforts to making the systems work together in new ways.

Provide Context for the Report

Your community’s purpose in creating Community Employment Pathways and how the initiative relates to other relevant activities should be described in the introduction to your report. Here are some of the numerous reasons and rationales for conducting a CEP initiative:

- Gain a better understanding of how existing employment and training programs work for homeless customers and providers
- Identify how the State and local government can target resources to draw down more Federal funds to support employment and training programs
- Develop shared policy recommendations across State and local agencies to promote a more comprehensive approach to employment for people who are homeless, including those with disabilities
- Integrate values and practices, such as linking employment and housing, into implementation and improvements to programs
- Coordinate and prioritize recommendations so that these can be included in existing strategic plans for creating sustainable infrastructure
- Identify gaps in services and needs among customers and program evaluation

Your purpose might be linked to specific reasons emerging in your community. For example, the local ten year plan to end homelessness might not have fleshed out an employment strategy, or your community’s Workforce Investment Plan might not consider homeless jobseekers as a disadvantaged population in need of targeted interventions. Your purpose might be to address these issues. The ultimate goal, however, is to reduce homelessness by increasing access to employment services for homeless people and supporting their attachment to the workforce.

Present Material Effectively

For the CEP report to influence action in various systems and planning processes, the report must communicate its findings and recommendations in a way that can be comprehended and acted upon by the key people who have the ability to lead change. Additionally, the report must be credible and appeal to the interests of the systems involved.

- **Language.** The audience for the CEP report comes from different systems, including the housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment, workforce investment, and homeless assistance systems. Each has its own language with unique terms and definitions as well as rules and regulations that drive their practices. When writing a cross-systems report, use language that can be universal and define terms that require clarity. Consider adding a glossary of terms as an appendix to your report. A glossary is included in this guidebook and can be reprinted or modified in your report.
Chapter 4: Developing a Formal CEP Report

- **Philosophy and orientation to workforce development.** Keep in mind that the workforce system is a demand driven system designed to help employers meet their workforce needs with qualified workers. Employment is a business transaction, not a charity event. It makes good business sense to consider homeless jobseekers as an untapped pool of workers that is needed to meet the needs of employers. This orientation should also be kept in mind when developing recommendations and strategies in the CEP report. Use Worksheet 4.1 to help ensure the report covers the needs of the workforce development system and employers.

- **Perceived roles.** The workforce investment system does not necessarily see its role as part of the solution to ending homelessness in your community, and many case managers in homeless assistance or supportive housing agencies do not see employment services as a core service activity. Building partnerships across these systems is the most likely way to garner the expertise and resources of both systems to meet the vocational needs of homeless populations. The report should not point the finger at either system as solely responsible for helping homeless jobseekers.

- **Usability.** Senior staff and community leaders will not have a lot of time to thoroughly read all of the details in your CEP report. Make sure you prepare an executive summary that describes salient features of the report and that communicates to decision makers and other stakeholders the essence of your results and your recommendations. Also keep in mind that the significant complex reasons for homelessness and why things are the way they are in your community do not have to be spelled out in exhaustive detail. Provide enough detail to get your data and messages across, but not so much detail that readers and potential users of your CEP report become lost.

**Acknowledge Stakeholders and Partners**

The CEP report is an opportunity for the steering committee to recognize the contributions of volunteers, community leaders, funding sources, and others to the CEP initiative. Including a list of names, titles, and affiliations as part of the report as well as highlighting the results of a community program that has helped homeless jobseekers can add value and supporters to the initiative. Additionally, recognizing the contributions of homeless and formerly homeless jobseekers who participated in the development of the report, through focus groups or as members of workgroups, is an important recognition of the value of their input.

In some measure, the future of your CEP initiative is dependent upon the support from your CoC members and the local WIB. Acknowledging their leadership in the report might be appropriate. You might also acknowledge them by offering to conduct a presentation on your CEP initiative at one of their meetings or suggest a joint meeting for both entities to hear about your CEP report’s results and recommendations.

As you document your results, keep in mind the various audiences who are interested in or affected by the CEP report. The report will need to meet the various requirements of different users. Most likely, you are not only writing to service providers from the homeless assistance, housing, treatment, and workforce investment agencies in your community, but to a host of stakeholders. Your audience might include elected officials, government agency leaders and staff, funders, employers, and those who sit on various boards in your community such as the local WIB or Economic Development Council. Consider what information and messages are important to these various readers. As the findings are likely to be lengthy and complex, you
should prepare an executive summary of your report that highlights the CEP initiative, findings, and recommendations.

Describe What You Discovered in the Field Research

The workgroups' findings make up the main body of the report and will describe the current needs of employers and homeless jobseekers, as well employment opportunities and supply of your workforce investment system as it pertains to homeless populations. Appendix 4 contains a sample outline for documenting findings from field research. The report will logically flow if it reflects the results of each workgroup. Within the current situation section, each subsection of the report contains the findings of the respective workgroup. The subsection of the report about the homeless jobseekers in your community, their vocational interests and capacities, and their experiences in the labor market represent the findings of the supply side workgroup; labor market data, the occupational outlook in your region for key job classifications, and the employer-related information subsection would describe the findings of the demand side workgroup; and so on.

Information from both primary and secondary sources of data should be integrated to present the facts as they unfolded over the months of field research. As you describe your findings, take notice of possible discrepancies. For example, if the results from the demand side workgroup identify certain occupations as having significant growth potential with access to entry level jobs that are linked to career growth, but the supply side workgroup reports that very few jobseekers were placed in those occupations, raising questions about the lack of placements is appropriate.

Presenting results from the demand side workgroup—particularly data about labor market information—is most likely to include numbers and charts. It will be important to show this information along with explanations that will be useful to the audiences of the CEP report. Interpreting or describing the meaning of data—especially where the report includes numerical data—will be important so that lay readers can understand the possible implications.

In some instances it might be useful to include alternate interpretations if they are possible. For example, a workgroup might report finding that retention of jobs in which homeless jobseekers were placed decreased from 72 percent after three months to 44 percent after 12 months. Adding possible explanations or interpreting what this might mean for employment service planning can help users of the CEP report. Loss of employment after three months might suggest the need for job retention services such as job coaching or attending to personal problems (loss of transportation, changes in medication regime, change in personal relationships, etc.) or dissatisfaction resulting from a poor client-to-job match. On the other hand, the retention figures might reflect placement in low-wage jobs in an industry with high turnover and in which worker job retention overall is no better or is worse than the retention rate for workers who have been homeless.

The findings of your CEP initiative might be supported by other research about employment and homeless jobseekers. Appropriate, limited use of citations can substantiate your results, recommendations, and strategies. Annotated bibliographies can provide a head start for your research.

- The National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness posts a number of bibliographies, including one on education and employment, at [http://www.nrchmi.samhsa.gov/](http://www.nrchmi.samhsa.gov/).
The Chronic Homelessness Employment Technical Assistance Center, a partnership between the Corporation for Supportive Housing and Advocates for Human Potential, developed an extensive homeless employment research bibliography, which is located at www.csh.org/cheta.

STEP 11: RECOMMEND SPECIFIC ACTION STEPS

As the title of this guidebook implies, the aim of a CEP initiative is to create “pathways” to employment for various subpopulations of homeless jobseekers. Remember that these pathways can take several forms, including but not limited to the following:

- Career pathways, in which specific skills, education, and credentials present opportunities for progressive success
- Co-location, such as locating a satellite One-Stop or One-Stop employee in a homeless assistance agency
- Referral and engagement, such as routinely busing homeless jobseekers to a One-Stop, where they interact with a designated contact
- “Vocationalizing” permanent supportive housing through promoting employment opportunities and hiring in-house
- Sector initiatives with industries with specific hiring needs

The CEP report is like a roadmap, with appropriate signage, mile markers, and rest stops along the way as well as opportunities for easy exit and entry ramps. For most homeless jobseekers, the path to sustainable employment is not linear, and access to employment assistance does not seem readily apparent. Beginning with outreach, the process of engaging homeless jobseekers into services might be different from the process of engaging other jobseekers in the services of the workforce development system, and responsibility might lie with alternative or additional parties. Similarly, responsibility for other tasks throughout the pre-employment, job search, job placement, and job retention phases must be carefully thought out and assigned. See Figure 3 for an illustration of how to organize and define tasks to assign responsibility to the most well-suited providers, organizations, and agencies.
Changing the system to be more inclusive and to address the unique and frequently complex needs of homeless jobseekers is not easy, and some practices might be at odds with what people might need. Some activities or tasks emerging from your research will require longer periods of time to take affect than others. Your recommendations should include long-term as well as more immediate or short-range recommendations. These recommendations or goals should be something that is measurable, observable, and action-oriented that will impact the delivery of employment and training services or supportive services. The recommendations might be upstream, such as those that relate to using employment assistance as part of outreach and engagement to people who are street homeless or living in shelters and who need immediate access to earned income; or further downstream, such as bolstering the supports needed for people to keep their jobs and retain employment through such interventions as the addition of job coaching services. Other recommendations might address financing and administrative concerns, such as redirecting the use of existing dollars to creating a new employment service or adjusting a community trust fund to allow for trust fund dollars to support economic development activity or to pay for a targeted jobs program in partnership with employers in a growth industry.

Figure 3: Assigning Responsibility
Chapter 4: Developing a Formal CEP Report

Each recommendation should consider what needs to be done, who needs to do it, when it should be done, and how it gets done. The range or types of recommendations vary according to the needs of your community. The following are categories in which you might consider setting goals or making recommendations as part of your CEP report:

- **State and local policy**: suggesting new policy that encourages multiple systems to recognize work as a priority for homeless populations and to establish a cross-system culture that supports employment for homeless populations

- **Program development**: designing new programs or modifying existing ones to serve homeless jobseekers

- **Access**: increasing access to employment and training services at One Stop Career Centers and other community-based organizations

- **Job placement**: aligning job training and placement with employer needs and occupational opportunities

- **Staff training**: improving cross-system staff relationships and increasing staff knowledge and skills in various areas of employment services, such as using motivational interviewing in a vocational context, alternative vocational assessment strategies, and case management

- **Cross-system linkages**: working across the workforce, treatment, housing and social service systems

- **Existing funding and expanding investments**: redirecting them from multiple systems to address work-readiness development, job training, placement, and retention services

**Prioritizing Recommendations**

The CEP report needs to include a few action activities for which available resources support immediate or rapid implementation. If the report sends a message that there are employment service needs, gaps, and solutions, then, to be a credible initiative, the CEP initiative must demonstrate that the community intends to be responsive to the findings of the report. If this is not to be just another report on the shelf, then something has to happen that is recommended in the report. Immediate activities support the message that services to homeless jobseekers is important and that providers of workforce services are part of the solution to ending homelessness.

The steering committee should look for the “low-hanging fruit” that is readily plucked and propose these opportunities to the community as an early implementation activity. In other words, look for ways to achieve early success to build trust in the systems change initiative, showing that it can be done through incremental change. Early accomplishments create a foundation for tackling the long-term or more arduous goals.

Among the possibilities for immediate action are training, streamlining referrals, and co-location of staff. Training, particularly cross-systems training for personnel in homeless assistance agencies and One-Stop Career Centers, initially might focus on learning about each others’ language, eligibility, processes, orientation, and outcome expectations. Other strategies might
include helping those with less intensive needs to access the One-Stop rather than employment services at the homeless assistance agency or co-locating a One-Stop Disability Program Navigator one afternoon a week at the homeless shelter.

In setting high-priority recommendations and strategies, the steering committee would do well to consider a number of factors:

- **First, consider urgency.** Does the failure of a goal threaten the project or a particular aspect of the project? For example, a resource might expire if not used in a timely way for a particular goal or strategy, or a champion in a key position might be changing jobs in the near future.

- **Second, consider opportunity.** Can a goal from the CEP report be linked to an external event or activity that already has been planned? For example, the local WIB might be planning a sectoral initiative in the logistics industry, and the CEP report might suggest to the local WIB that career ladder jobs accessible to homeless jobseekers be addressed. The workforce agency might have a board vacancy for a community representative that could be filled by a CoC member, or vice-versa.

- **Third, consider awareness and commitment.** Do key people have a high level of awareness and information about a certain goal and appear committed to change or improving that situation?

- **Finally, consider availability of resources.** Do Federal discretionary funding programs provide opportunities for a joint application by the local WIB and CoC? Would an existing initiative such as local Medicaid Infrastructure Grants, Mental Health Transformation initiatives, or RRCEPs pay for initial training sessions?

Federally-funded employment training and resource centers provide support through training to community-based organizations. These centers include US Department of Education-funded Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs (RRCEPs)
http://www.rrcepnationalconsortium.org/resourcesdir.htm

Use Worksheet 4.2 to help prioritize activities.

Develop a Presentation

In preparing the CEP report, consider which findings and recommendations should be part of a presentation on the CEP initiative. A presentation can serve as a way to gather support for the CEP initiative, disseminate key findings, and further educate stakeholders in your community. A simple slide presentation, given by a member of the workgroup, can help to educate others about the need for Community Employment Pathways and how the stakeholders can support their development.

The presentation should inform an audience about the process for your CEP initiative, namely establishing the steering committee, recruiting workgroup members, collecting data,
synthesizing information, and reaching consensus about the findings. The results from the process can be highlighted on a presentation and conclude with the opportunities for action as well as next steps in your project. Remember, too, that presentations can help develop interest and momentum when delivered during the course of your CEP initiative, providing stakeholders with periodic updates of activities and findings.

To whom might you make such presentations? In addition to your CoC and local Workforce Investment Board, you might consider garnering support through presentations to the local Chamber of Commerce or Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) or interfaith councils or consumer groups.

**STEP 12: MOBILIZE SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN**

Armed with a formal report of factors influencing the employment prospects of people who are homeless and a set of recommendations, the steering committee can begin to influence some of the formal planning processes that take place in the community with regard to homelessness services and employment. Examples include the ten-year plan to end homelessness and the local WIB plan. When employment-related goals and objectives for homeless jobseekers are included in WIA and Ten Year Plans, there is the potential for the authors, funders, and sponsors of these plans to invest in the CEP initiative. In addition, the findings and recommendations could help shape the development or updates to the plans.

**Plans to End or Reduce Homelessness**

Across the country, more than 200 communities initiated or completed plans to end or reduce homelessness. A recent review of 90 of these plans found that more than two-thirds (68 percent) of plans call for creating job training opportunities for homeless people; these are usually through government assistance programs funded through the Department of Labor. The steering committee should be familiar with the community’s plan to end homelessness, as well as the State plan to end homelessness, and whether or not it includes references or strategies to address the income needs of people who are homeless. If it does, this information can provide support for the CEP initiative; if not, the steering committee should consider a strategy for how goals, objectives, and strategies about employment and training could be added to the plan to end homelessness or how the CEP initiative can be embraced by the authors and sponsors of the ending homelessness plan. If your State and community do not have ten year plans, the CEP initiative can be included as a featured activity of the ten year planning process right from the start.

The following examples reveal how communities address employment needs in different ways in their ten year plans:

- The Austin, Texas, plan outlines a number of activities to increase income—both earned and income from benefits—for homeless people once they access housing. The plan calls for increasing income through benefits acquisition by expediting access to SSI and expanding the number of representativ payment for homeless people. Austin’s plan calls for increasing access to mainstream

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employment programs through designated funding or slots for homeless people in local workforce contacts and for working collaboratively with the workforce investment board to address the employment needs of homeless people. In addition, the plan calls for developing partnerships with Austin Community College and other postsecondary education institutions to expand access to job training and placement.

- In Denver’s plan, two goals target specific needs of homeless and at-risk clients, committing to providing better access to support services such as transportation and mental health care, as well as education, training, and employment services to promote long-term stability. Denver’s plan includes developing 580 employment opportunities for homeless and formerly homeless people during the 10-year plan period.

- The Contra Costa County, California, plan states that essential to housing stability is employment that provides a “housing wage,” the wage level that allows people to pay no more than 30 percent of their income to rent. Enhancing the ability of homeless people to access and maintain housing wage employment in order to increase their level of self-sufficiency is a priority. Among the action steps Contra Costa County has included in its strategy are enacting a “Hire Homeless First” policy for all local government, entry-level employment opportunities as well as a housing wage ordinance that links minimum wage to housing costs.

- Raleigh, North Carolina’s ten-year plan sets an objective to create education, job training, and competitive employment opportunities specific to the needs of individuals and families who are homeless, recently homeless, or at risk of homelessness, including those with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders and youth ages 16-21. A survey of homeless assistance providers revealed that their clients cited “help finding a job” as their number one need, followed by help finding affordable housing, and help paying for housing. The “Employment Action Team” includes, among others, Capital Area Workforce Development, Wake Tech, Triangle United Way, Wake County Public Schools, JobLink, Wake County Human Services, Wake Continuum of Care, Vocational Rehabilitation, Greater Raleigh and other Wake County Chambers of Commerce, top area employers, Wake County Public Libraries, and consumer and advocacy groups.

**Local Workforce Investment Plan**

Similarly, the local Workforce Investment Plan might offer opportunities to mobilize support for the CEP initiative. Under WIA, these plans are developed locally and submitted to the State, which in turn submits the Governor’s WIA State plan to the U.S. Department of Labor. Most WIA plans do not include specific goals or strategies to serve homeless jobseekers. However, many plans address services to disadvantaged populations, inclusive of people who are or have been homeless. Here again, communities might address the needs of certain populations in different ways.

- The City of Los Angeles WIA plan declares that the workforce development system shall invest in alternative training programs such as transitional work for those who are

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37 Burt et al. (1999).
homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, including, among others, offenders at re-entry and veterans.

- In order to further Boston’s objectives for jobseekers, the workforce development system in Fiscal Year 2007 will focus on making effective use of other funding streams to help support capacity to serve special populations with extraordinary barriers to employment including the chronically homeless, people with disabilities, limited English speakers, and ex-offenders.

### Involving Government Agencies

Government agencies at the local and State level are a logical partner in advancing a CEP initiative. In addition to provide direct or matching funding for the project’s activities, government can create incentives for local service providers to use existing resources in ways that move programs to serve homeless jobseekers in new, more effective ways. Incentives can include tax breaks for participating businesses, rewards for employment outcomes or service targets, penalties for failing to meet minimum performance thresholds, and awarding extra points to applications for funding that serve homeless jobseekers.

Additionally, government officials can provide leadership to build bridges between systems. Strengthening ties between government officials and local service providers can also advance the interests of the CEP initiative. In addition to specific agencies that have an interest in employment and providing services to people who are homeless, many communities have interagency councils on homelessness.

### Interagency Councils on Homelessness

Like the Federal government, in recognition that homelessness has many causes and affects many facets of society, many communities have created interagency task forces or standing councils to address homelessness. These councils can support the CEP initiative in many ways, such as:

- Identifying employment as a priority in ending homelessness
- Establishing an employment subcommittee
- Monitoring homeless employment outcomes
- Requesting agencies to report their homeless employment support activities
- Requesting that the CEP report’s findings and recommendations be part of the community’s plan to end homelessness
- Developing a cross-agency initiative to fund a combined employment and housing project with resources from public health, mental health, economic development/labor, and housing
- Identifying legislative and administrative reforms that address mainstream workforce services to homeless jobseekers
• Holding the State VR agency and labor departments accountable for their role in meeting the vocational needs of homeless populations

• Convening foundations to support an employment initiative for homeless populations in partnership with government

Other Key Agencies

Some of the key agencies that can support a CEP initiative can also help to support implementation. Possible roles for these agencies include the following:

• Labor and economic development
  ♦ Identifying best practices to serve homeless jobseekers
  ♦ Accessing Federal funding for homeless targeted employment services, including Governor’s WIA set-aside funds
  ♦ Addressing the needs of homeless populations in the WIA plan (State and local);

• Housing
  ♦ Establishing employment outcomes as a measure of housing success, consistent with HUD’s GPRA goal
  ♦ Ensuring that housing providers comply with HUD Earned Income Disallowance (EID) regulations, which allow certain HUD tenants to earn income without rent increases
  ♦ Including employment services in the Consolidated Plan as well as other local homeless or housing plans

• Education
  ♦ Increasing linkages between community college workforce training programs and employment programs serving homeless jobseekers
  ♦ Considering career advancement training for formerly homeless workers

• Human services
  ♦ Exploring partnership with labor/economic development department to access Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) for a targeted jobs initiative for homeless food stamp recipients

Media

As you roll out the CEP initiative’s action steps, it might be of interest to local media, including radio, newspapers or journals who want to inform the public about activities helping the community. A well-timed newspaper article about a homeless jobseeker who starts a job and
the start up of a specific action to create more employment for homeless people can advance your effort to make cross-systems strategies work better.
WORKSHEET 4.1: EXPRESSING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

For a CEP report to have an impact, the goal of helping people who are homeless find employment should be framed in part in the interests of the business sector and the workforce investment system.

- What findings from the research might help the workforce investment system meet its goal of providing employers with qualified workers?

- What activities are proposed to help the workforce investment system meet its goal?

- What findings have economic implications that might be of interest to Business Improvement Districts and other business interests?
WORKSHEET 4.2: PRIORITIZING ACTIVITIES

The CEP report should prioritize “low-hanging fruit,” or activities that can be accomplished on a relatively short timeframe, in order to demonstrate that the initiative is serious.

Questions to consider include the following:

- Do any ongoing or upcoming training activities in the homeless assistance or workforce development systems provide opportunities for cross-training?

- Do any upcoming projects within the homeless assistance sector provide an opportunity to focus on employment?

- Do any upcoming projects within the workforce development sector provide an opportunity to serve people who are homeless?

- Can the duties of staff within either system be reassigned to help people who are homeless connect to job opportunities?

- Are there any local government officials who have a particular interest in specific issues related to employment or homelessness?

- Can existing funding streams be used to provide training or services?
“People who work together will win, whether it be against complex football defenses, or the problems of modern society.”

Vince Lombardi

INTRODUCTION

What the Chapter Is About

Chapter 5 provides guidance about strategies to implement your CEP report’s action steps, determine if it is moving in the right direction, and address common problems or shortcomings. The strategies offered here are aimed at preventing your CEP report from sitting on the shelf; they will help CEP initiatives’ steering committees, workgroups, and stakeholders build on the momentum of the CEP report and realize successful results. The real work begins after the report is written and embraced by your community. Now is the time to “roll up your sleeves” to build on the work that has been done so far. This chapter can help you anticipate challenges and pitfalls that are likely to arise in the cross-system collaboration necessary to create Community Employment Pathways. It also provides suggested activities to create improved employment services for homeless populations across the systems in your community.

What the Reader Might Expect to Gain from This Chapter

This chapter will help you do the following:

- Increase support for employment and training services for homeless populations in your community
- Anticipate challenges in implementing the plans and goals described in the CEP report

PILOT PROJECTS

In some communities, pilot projects provide not only an opportunity to capture the momentum created by the collaborative effort behind the CEP report, but also the chance hopefully to demonstrate some success that can be used to interest stakeholders in expanding the effort. In Chicago (see sidebar), the ACT Resources for the Chronically Homeless (ARCH) Project, an interagency initiative, has teamed with a One-Stop Career Center to pilot a project in which supportive housing tenants who had demonstrated engagement in integrated services will participate in the One-Stop’s services. Because the tenants will have a single One-Stop case manager and will attend as a group whenever possible, efficiencies for the One-Stop will be created.
Chapter 5: Implementing Action Steps from the CEP Report

Pilot Project: ARCH

Given the negative impacts of long-term homelessness, prolonged poverty, and behavioral health disorders among the chronically homeless population, project leaders recommended the pilot contain several key features. The pilot started with the identification of an individual who would function as service linkage navigator between ARCH and to the Mid-South Center, a One-Stop Career Center. Mid-South then identified an employment case manager to be the single point of contact for ARCH clients and to work with the ARCH employment specialist through periodic meetings, email correspondence as well as telephone consultation. ARCH clients were recruited in two cohorts to maximize peer support, enhance confidence, and mediate the natural fear of engaging in a new process.

ARCH staff recruited a total of 18 individuals with histories of homelessness and behavioral health disorders from their caseload of 59 who were interested in using Mid-South services. All clients are living in subsidized housing and are offered supportive services including psychiatric interventions, case management and substance use counseling. More than half of those recruited for the pilot project had a positive vocational outcome. In the first cohort of three clients, all three entered employment, one after completing a training program.

For the second cohort, ARCH engaged 14 clients in a series of 3 half-day orientation sessions that was designed to prepare these jobseekers to use the support at ARCH, address their personal issues and to access services at Mid-South. Sessions were held on August 14, 17 and 21, 2007 covering a variety of topics including an exploration of my dream job, how people identify their job goal, getting high on work, Mid-South Career services, understanding your work personality, and managing substance use issues. The Mid-South case manager participated in two sessions and each of the three sessions including a testimonial speaker – a peer who had used employment services or training or who was currently employed.

Seven ARCH clients completed the orientation sessions at ARCH and subsequently attended both the Mid-South orientation and took the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE). These same 7 clients failed to independently attend the Mid-South Job Readiness Training (JRT), a pre-requisite to participation in the Center’s Job Club which is a direct support service for jobseekers to access job leads, apply for jobs and interview with employers. Four of the 7 clients missed the JRT because of schedule conflicts with their Community College coursework. These ARCH college students are clients of the IL Division of Vocational Rehabilitation which supports their vocational rehabilitation to achieve an employment outcome. Of the three remaining clients, they reported that they did not understand that the JRT was required in order to access the Job Club.

In summary, of the 18 ARCH clients recruited, 12 were seen at Mid-South Career Center, of whom:

- 3 entered employment
- 1 is doing day labor
- 5 are in training/school
- 3 are prepared for Mid-South Job Readiness Training

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Even if small successes take place early in the process, maintaining the momentum can be difficult for sustained periods of time, especially when an infrastructure specifically designed for

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the type of activities envisioned does not exist. During the process of developing your CEP report, you undoubtedly became increasingly aware of the complexities of the systems that must come together to address the unemployment of homeless populations. As one State workforce development leader said, “It’s no surprise that when you bring together different service systems with their unique ways of operating, their own philosophy, their own mandates, their own language, we should expect that they will chafe at the edges of collaboration.”

As a CEP initiative is about aligning programs and services to increase access to employment services for homeless jobseekers and result in jobs for the population, the focus is on changing systems. It is about changing the ways in which the mainstream workforce development system, including One-Stop Career Centers and State VR services, serve people who are homeless. From the research literature, we have learned that homeless people are poorly served by mainstream programs39 and face barriers to accessing Workforce Investment Act services, such as performance measures.40

In changing systems, we are concerned about moving the current arrangements for funding, services access and provision, performance measures and outcomes tracked (particularly those resulting in disincentives to help hard-to-serve populations), rules, and evaluation to an arrangement that results in homeless jobseekers being served more effectively. Rarely does making changes in the way in which services are offered and funded to serve a particular population happen overnight. While legislation could mandate a new program that more effectively serves homeless jobseekers, we must remember that it often takes a long time to build momentum to get legislation passed and then, of course, time is needed to create rules based on the legislation before a new program actually starts, and this assumes the funding for such a new program is appropriated.

The homeless and housing field knows well that passing legislation that changes system requirements often takes years, and that in the interim, we must work innovatively within the systems as they are currently structured. For example, the proposed Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act (SELHA) has been introduced in each session of Congress since 2004 but has not made it past Congressional committees to be voted on by either house. SELHA is a legislative initiative, proposed by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Corporation for Supportive Housing, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National AIDS Housing Coalition, and Enterprise, to fund supportive services for the permanent supportive housing necessary to end long-term homelessness. In the meantime, advocates of permanent supportive housing have sought to increase housing opportunities by blending funding streams currently available.

Bringing multiple systems together creates challenges for each system because of their histories, statutory mandates, values and beliefs, rules and regulations, funding restrictions, and other factors. Many of these limits are predictable and can be addressed as part of developing a


working relationship to address homelessness as a community problem or from other venues of common ground to these systems.

The following are issues that are likely to come up in the process of implementing Community Employment Pathways:

- Concerns over the additional costs of employment and training services targeting or inclusive of people who are homeless
- Lack of motivation to focus on an activity that is not specifically mandated by statute or funding requirements
- Concerns about meeting established performance measures
- Questions about the lack of clear, convincing evidence to support a particular retention or advancement strategy (i.e., whether an approach will succeed)
- Questions about the benefit of the strategy (i.e., if it does succeed, whether the investment of time and resources is worth it)
- Insufficient information about the capacity and goals of other systems
- Different priorities (questioning whether hiring people who are homeless benefits employers, questioning whether employment should be prioritized versus housing, substance abuse treatment, etc.)
- Lack of a champion or leader with a vision to engage members of both systems in a dialogue to develop relationships and collaboration
- Too many or too few stakeholders or wrong stakeholders selected
- Lack of involvement of people who are (or who have been) homeless in the initiative
- Basic problems of stigma around mental illness, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, or homelessness
- Lack of capacity among supportive housing providers to support homeless jobseekers or working homeless individuals

ADDRESSING BARRIERS

Although the barriers discussed above can be significant, a number of strategies can be employed to address one or more of these barriers and issues.
Improving Working Relationships Among Stakeholders

The most common barrier cited by providers when interviewed for this guidebook was the mutual lack of information that homeless assistance providers and workforce development providers have about each other. Without a conscious effort to share information, homeless assistance providers report that they do not have a clear understanding of what resources are available from One-Stops, and One-Stops indicate that they do not know what resources are available from homeless assistance providers. Providers need to know that they can access resources and they do not need to do it all on their own. Without a sufficient understanding of each other and what each sector can and cannot provide, any attempt at enhancing linkages will almost certainly fail.

The two systems might have very different expectations. For example, a homeless assistance provider stated that One-Stops tend to be more bureaucratic and one-size-fits-all in their approach. He expressed reluctance to refer homeless clients to One-Stops because they will not get the level of attention or service they need to be successful. On the other hand, a workforce provider noted that the mission of a One-Stop is to provide services to all people, and it does not have the resources necessary to provide specialized attention to each customer. Furthermore, individuals who are homeless very often require more intensive services using up more resources, both in terms of money and staff time. The provider noted that homeless assistance providers cannot expect One-Stops to be their “employment branch” without bringing some resources to the table to help provide the extra services the One-Stop needs to effectively work with homeless clients.

These common barriers are also relatively simple to address once a commitment is made to enhance linkages. In an earlier example, organizations in Raleigh, North Carolina, came together to share information and learn from each other. However, organizing a special meeting is not necessary. Adding presentations during local affordable housing group meetings or at WIB meetings is a good start. In Minneapolis, the local affordable housing and homeless coalition had its meeting in a One-Stop and arranged for a tour of the One-Stop as part of its meeting.

Providing cross-training to staff of homeless assistance agencies, Vocational Rehabilitation, and One-Stop Career Centers can help familiarize the staff and leadership of each agency with the goals, services, and capacities of each other’s agencies. An example of the type of training that might be useful in furthering collaboration would be a seminar on the needs of homeless jobseekers, both in terms of employment services and support services such as housing and substance abuse treatment. In New York City the strategy to develop relationships between supportive housing providers and the State Vocational Rehabilitation agency succeeded in that supportive housing providers became vendors for the State agency, specializing in employment services for people with disabilities who were homeless.41

Through such training, management of workforce development systems can learn to start thinking of homeless jobseekers as a potential untapped source of labor to meet employers' needs.

needs. Similarly, management of homeless assistance agencies learn strategies for addressing the employment needs of people who are homeless in a funding environment that has led to reductions in many types of services.

Staff of the workforce development system can learn that people who are homeless, though facing multiple obstacles, want to work and often can work if obstacles are addressed. Staff of homeless assistance agencies can learn about the benefits of addressing employment needs early in the process of helping people—as early as intake—rather than waiting to achieve certain service or treatment benchmarks—such as stable housing or sobriety periods—to begin the employment discussion.

**Maintaining Focus**

In order for the CEP initiative to be successful, the community must stay focused on the goals of the plan, even while working on smaller tasks within the overall effort. The CEP initiative has a number of discrete tasks, and it is helpful to create committee structures with a predetermined format for products and deadlines. This structure can be helpful in maintaining focus. For example, it is helpful to have representatives from the demand and supply sides chairing efforts in researching the labor market. They have a sense of responsibility and focus on the outcome that they might not have as mere participants.

Whether concerns are legitimate or based in fear or resistance, it is important to recognize these concerns and set up a method of addressing them without allowing the objections to sidetrack the planning for change. Methods for acknowledging concerns might include noting concerns during discussions and committing to follow up on these concerns by acquiring additional information. However, it is important to keep the discussion focused on the steps needed for change, and one method to keep this focus is to portray the change in terms of the impact that it will have on improving employment outcomes. In many communities, political leaders have sanctioned the planning activities, and their support is helpful in engaging reluctant stakeholders. In other communities, leadership from State or Federal funding sources is useful in persuading local players to participate.

*Additional resource:* The CoC planning group might have confronted and solved leadership challenges. If so, that group might have an existing system of discussing concerns, making decisions, and appealing decisions that can be adapted for use in creating Community Employment Pathways.

Successful collaboration involves heading off “control through participation” issues that arise when certain stakeholders attempt to take over the entire process when they are asked to participate as part of a group. This can be a problem when a small group of individuals or a particular organization becomes accustomed to making decisions affecting a constituency. In most collaborative efforts, but particularly those that cut across systems, some people or individuals might have greater knowledge of the constituents’ needs. CoC providers concerned with homelessness will have greater knowledge of the particular issues facing people who are homeless, while those in the workforce development system will have greater knowledge of employment resources and techniques. Shared decision making requires an acknowledgment that different participants bring different concerns, experience, and resources to the table.
Involving New Voices

A particularly effective method for emphasizing both the importance of employment to people who are homeless and their ability to work is to introduce key stakeholders from both systems to people who have been homeless and are now working. Their success stories can serve as a source of inspiration, and the personal contact helps to diminish the stigma that surrounds homelessness, substance abuse, mental illness, and HIV/AIDS. Seeing someone who is homeless and might continue to face other barriers but nevertheless has attained some employment success helps staff see people who are homeless both as people and as potential employees.

Bringing people who have been homeless into workgroups is another strategy for keeping focus on the importance of serving the needs of homeless jobseekers. Recruiting such people might be difficult, especially when people are working in jobs that do not give them paid time off to participate in the group’s activities. Some supportive housing projects have attempted to improve leadership among tenants by holding leadership training sessions. Additionally, many agencies in the homelessness assistance sector have hired former clients to work in the programs, and these staff members might be able to participate in workgroups.

Bringing in outside experts who can speak to the effectiveness of particular strategies and the challenges that are associated with these approaches can help to move forward with a strategy when momentum appears to be stalling. National organizations such as the Chronic Homelessness and Employment Technical Assistance Center (CHETA) and the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) might be able to provide recommendations of experts inside or outside your region who might be able to provide technical assistance on your program’s ongoing efforts.

Networking with people involved in CEP initiatives around the nation is another possible way to get feedback on the initiative and get ideas for keeping the project moving. The annual NAEH conference provides an excellent opportunity for networking nationally. The Internet provides many low-cost networking opportunities. For example, CHETA sponsors an e-mail discussion group for those interested in ending chronic homelessness through employment and housing. The discussion is about practice, research and policy concerns. Subscribers may share ideas, information or strategies, ask questions, post job listings, etc. You can subscribe to this discussion list at http://lists.topica.com/lists/ChronicHomeless

Do not overlook the role that employers can take in advancing the CEP initiative’s goals. Some socially conscious employers might be interested in hiring homeless jobseekers, but most employers are interested in meeting their hiring needs, particularly in positions that are hard to fill or have high turnover. A “success story” focusing on the benefit to the employee might not be as impressive to employers as a success story in which the employer is the focus—for example, an employer that partnered with an employment initiative that identified and trained potential candidates for positions that the employer had a great need to fill. For example, the Safer Foundation, which helps place ex-offenders in Chicago, promotes its services through an employer success story (see sidebar). The experiences of employers who hire homeless jobseekers can be valuable to influencing the perception of hiring homeless people among other employers.
Chapter 5: Implementing Action Steps from the CEP Report

A Long-Time Safer Employer Tells His Story

Frank, the plant manager of a privately owned furniture manufacturing company that employs about 60 workers, remembers the day in 1984 when Mike, a Safer employment specialist, called him unexpectedly to ask if he would be interested in interviewing any Safer clients. Frank said he would. Since then, he has hired more than 50 Safer clients, 12 during a single 6-month stretch in 1996, with most employees staying 1 or 2 years.

"Some are good and some aren't," Frank says, adding, "They're as good as what I could hire off the street. But Mike screens them carefully." Frank says if he places an ad in the paper, "I could get 15 people and none are any good; in the meantime, I've wasted my time filling out all these forms on each one. And employment agencies don't send me good people, either. So Mike saves me time. And he provides people quickly."

On occasion, Frank has called Mike regarding an employee who arrives late. "Mike calls right back and takes care of the problem—he's rougher on these guys than I am. After that, the guy comes on time. And Mike comes here to check on them and calls me to see if I'm having any problems. He came three times in the last 2 weeks."

Building a Case for Collaboration

Often, leadership of systems involved in collaborative efforts is interested in seeing evidence to support a suggested approach. To date, limited efforts to serve people who are homeless through the workforce development system have not resulted in a strong body of evidence to clearly support specific strategies. However, the workgroups can use other research to make a case for implementation of Community Employment Pathways. Sources of information that might be useful to support the initiative include the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Project, the Chronic Homelessness Technical Assistance Center, and the National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness (see sidebar).

Research on Homelessness and Employment


Chronic Homelessness Employment Technical Assistance Center: http://www.csh.org/cheta


Finding Champions

Moving the CEP initiative forward will be much easier if a well-respected leader becomes enthusiastic about the initiative. Communities that are able to successfully create linkages and overcome barriers to these linkages often have champions who make the extra effort to find a


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way to develop and implement Community Employment Pathways. A champion does not have to be a leader of an organization, although the ability to commit resources to the effort is valuable, but a champion is someone who can effectively articulate a vision and a path for achieving that vision. A champion can pull a community through the “slow” times when people’s attention is focused on other issues and keeps the process of enhancing linkages moving forward. A champion is also someone who is effective in navigating “both worlds” of homeless assistance and workforce development. Champions provide the persistence and leadership necessary to enhance linkages. Although they might not always be patient for change to occur, they have a long-term perspective and will continue to advocate for Community Employment Pathways.

Momentum is often boosted when outside pressure is applied. For example, involving local officials who believe that the local government has a responsibility to improve the employment prospects of all residents, including those who are homeless and have special needs, can help solidify the need for the projects suggested by the CEP report. Members of mayoral cabinets with responsibilities for addressing homelessness or services and accessibility for people with disabilities are possible participants. Gaining attention from people whose opinions the stakeholders value, or on whose support the systems depend, at the State or Federal level (for example, by inviting them to participate in coalition meetings) can further help to push planned projects forward.

**Supporting the Boundary Spanner**

In most CEP initiatives boundary spanning will be necessary to implement the project. Because the position is likely to unsettle standard operating procedures in multiple organizations, the boundary spanner can fall out of favor quite readily. To succeed, a boundary spanner needs to be supported by the agency or funder so as to insure the position’s integrity in the face of unpopular activities. As suggested in Chapter 4, agencies such as departments of labor or housing can be called upon to financially support a boundary spanner position. The position should be a permanent one, given a job description separate and distinct: boundary spanning tasks are not something you add on to an already overburdened manager or direct service worker. Whether the boundary spanning activities are focused at the service delivery level or the policy level, the position must have mechanisms to hold service providers accountable and be recognized by senior community officials as a valued contributor to solving community problems.43

**Addressing Concerns about WIA Performance Measures**

One concern that inevitably will come up in discussions of serving people who are homeless through the workforce system is the performance measures to which the workforce system is subject by DOL regulations. Currently, DOL does not allow the workforce system to exempt a group from counting under performance evaluations, and therefore—while the workforce system has a duty to serve all Americans—the system creates a disincentive to serve groups who are statistically less likely to find or maintain employment using the workforce development system’s services. Estimates based on previous studies of employment services for people who are

homeless suggest that even if effective programs to address the needs of homeless jobseekers are in place, the success rate for employment placement among people who are homeless would be 20-45 percent below a State’s performance goal and that the success rate for employment retention would be 20-60 percent below a State’s performance goal.

The overall impact of serving people who are homeless depends, of course, on the number of people who are homeless who are served by the workforce development system and the number of people overall served by the system. Although adopting best practices and collaborating with the homelessness assistance system to provide follow-along supports might help to close the gap between performance levels for the homeless population served and established performance levels, workforce development systems do have some additional options for addressing the possible negative impact on performance measures that a CEP initiative might have. First, if the workforce development system commits to active outreach to people who are homeless, resulting in an increased number of homeless clients, system leadership can renegotiate performance measurements by demonstrating that a change in circumstances (i.e., the increased number of homeless clients) is likely to lead to decreases in the percentage of clients who obtain and maintain employment. Alternatively, the system can seek alternative sources of funding, from the State, private interests, or other Federal programs, that are not subject to WIA’s performance requirements to serve homeless clients, thereby not reducing the performance against WIA requirements.
CHAPTER 6: UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF HOMELESS JOBSEEKERS

INTRODUCTION

What the Chapter Is About

Successful collaboration between the homeless assistance and workforce development systems requires that both systems understand the needs and experiences of homeless jobseekers. In applying for McKinney-Vento funds, Continuums of Care (CoC) lead agencies collect much of this information through a comprehensive community assessment that is part of the broader CoC planning process.

CoCs conduct point-in-time counts of homeless people and assess their housing and service needs. Also, many communities have a functioning Homeless Management Information System (HMIS,) which offers a community-wide perspective on who is being served, by whom, and for how long, as well as referral patterns and outcomes for individuals.

The information collected by CoCs provide a natural starting point for organizations engaged in a Community Employment Pathways (CEP) initiative. The organization most likely to spearhead the CEP initiative is the local Continuum of Care lead agency, but regardless whether the organization is a provider within the homeless assistance, workforce development, or other system, Chapter 6 provides crucial background information that will help refine information gathering and data analysis activities.

What the Reader May Expect to Gain from This Chapter

This chapter will help you do the following:

- Increase your understanding of the needs of homeless jobseekers
- Recognize the additional needs of subpopulations
- Identify personal, program, and system barriers
- Consider successful approaches to address barriers in your community

HOMELESS SUBPOPULATIONS

Homelessness is evident in major urban areas, smaller cities, and in rural communities across America. Since the 1980s, HUD and other Federal agencies have sponsored research on the phenomena of homelessness. Research topics have included the causes of homelessness, the characteristics of individuals and families who are homeless, service utilization patterns, service and housing costs, and the needs of people who are homeless. In addition to academic research, HUD has required communities to conduct local investigations into homelessness, resulting in point-in-time counts and estimates of annual numbers of people who are homeless from most of our communities. All of this has led to a comprehensive understanding of homelessness, and with it, the identification of homeless subpopulations with distinct needs.
When community planners have data on the local distribution of these subpopulations, they can make informed decisions about policies and programs. This information allows communities to target specific groups, such as people who are chronically homeless and homeless families, and design Community Employment Pathways to meet their needs.

Nearly 800,000 people experience homelessness at any point in time in America, including 200,000 homeless children. In the late 1990s, research demonstrated an emerging picture of subpopulations within this larger group. About 80 percent of the people who become homeless over the course of a year receive help from emergency shelters and other service providers, exit homelessness, and don’t return to streets and shelters. This group can be called transitionally homeless.

Another 20 percent are chronically homeless. It should be noted that, for purposes of Continuum of Care (CoC) planning, an individual who is chronically homeless is defined as “An unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabiling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.”

Families represent a significant and growing subpopulation among the homeless. Over the course of a year, 1.3 million children experience homelessness, and families with children are the fastest growing subpopulation among the homeless. The causes of family homelessness include poverty and a serious lack of affordable housing in most communities. These factors are often complicated and made more acute by family violence.

In analyzing service utilization patterns of these subpopulations, it was discovered that the chronically homeless group, about 10-20 percent of the total, used almost 50 percent of the resources in the homelessness service delivery system. Use is greater because individuals who are chronically homeless have multiple needs, and also because their length of stay in the system is longer. Serious mental illnesses and/or chronic substance abuse disorders are more frequent among the chronically homeless group than among other groups, and people who are chronically homeless often need specialized outreach and engagement strategies.

It seems logical that if a community focused its efforts on ending homelessness among this group, significant progress would be made in alleviating the crisis of homelessness in that community. This notion has helped drive national public policy to a focus on ending chronic homelessness.

For all subpopulations, it should be remembered that homeless people need to increase their income and level of skill in the job market in order to gain self-sufficiency and move out of homelessness. Employment and job training services are one of the few ways to address

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45 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance, 71 Fed. Reg. 12,056 (March 8, 2006).
poverty, a root cause of homelessness, and can help prevent a return to homelessness for all subpopulations. However, employment service needs will differ among homeless subpopulations.

In considering the employment needs of homeless people, this information has practical implications. If 80 percent of the individuals who are in the Continuum of Care system are transitionally homeless, for example, then an effective response for this group is to design interventions that help return these households to the mainstream of jobs and services as quickly as possible. For example, individuals in this group might receive a vocational assessment and a link to job placement services in the mainstream employment system.

Individuals who are chronically homeless often have a strong desire for a job, but helping them obtain employment requires different strategies. By definition, people who are chronically homeless have a disabling condition. They enter the system with more complex needs, and strategies to address those needs often require coordination of services across multiple systems. With the goal of obtaining a job, the person who is chronically homeless might need a longer period of outreach and engagement, followed by case management, access to substance abuse services, attention to physical health care needs, and access to supported employment services.

Similarly, homeless families have specific needs related to acquiring new job skills and retaining employment after placement. The lack of affordable child care is a significant barrier to these households. Often, the complication of family violence and the need to find housing and employment undisturbed by the perpetrator of that violence are factors that must be considered in addressing the employment needs of homeless families.

Worksheet 6.1 will help you identify the homeless subpopulations in your community, examine their needs, and think about ways to meet those needs.

EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESS JOBSEEKERS

People who are homeless have significant difficulty in getting and keeping jobs that will allow them to exit homelessness. Even when people who are homeless have a job, the income from that job often is insufficient to afford housing. Homeless people in general experience personal, program, and system barriers to effective employment. Although each person’s barriers are unique, mental health and substance abuse issues often pose barriers to those who are chronically homeless, while the need for child care or for protection from a violent batterer often poses obstacles to homeless families.

Community Employment Pathways can provide access to services that address personal barriers. For example, because many homeless people have legal problems, access for all homeless people to free or low cost legal services is an essential component. Most homeless people face program barriers to job training and job placement. The lack of flexibility in most workforce programs makes it impossible for a homeless person to meet the performance outcomes commonly required of all participants and “graduate” from a training program or retain a job placement. At the system level, all homeless people suffer from the lack of coordination across systems. This might be even more of a barrier for homeless families or people who are chronically homeless. This section describes the experiences of homeless jobseekers, including the special problems of homeless subpopulations. An understanding of these issues is essential to the design of Community Employment Pathways.
Chapter 6: Understanding the Needs of Homeless Jobseekers

Underemployed and Unemployed

The majority of people who are homeless are unemployed. In your community, this unemployment might be due a number of factors: a tight job market; competition for entry level and unskilled jobs from other low income, but housed, individuals; and changes in the marketplace, such as corporate downsizing, or the growth of high-tech industries.

The traditional response to unemployment has been job training and job placement. For workers with marketable skills, job placement assistance is offered. For workers with few marketable skills, the strategy is typically job training. Job training is available in communities through One-Stop Career Centers and other mainstream employment programs.

Some homeless jobseekers find themselves underemployed rather than unemployed. Fifteen percent of people who are homeless have jobs.48 However, these jobs frequently have one or more of the following characteristics: minimum wage or below, part-time, unskilled, and temporary. The traditional strategy to address underemployment is job training, either to improve the level of skill in the person’s current industry or to provide access through training to a new industry.

Barriers to Employment

Beyond the opportunities and limitations offered by the local job market, people who are homeless face additional barriers to work. These barriers fall into the categories of personal barriers, program or provider barriers, and system barriers. The creation of Community Employment Pathways allows individuals, programs and communities to overcome these barriers and address directly one of the root causes of homelessness – poverty.

Personal Barriers to Employment

All people who become homeless are, by definition, without housing and are suffering significant instability in their lives. Many shelters do not permit people to stay for long periods of time, making it more difficult for people to attend job training, show up for work on time, perform well at work, or remain employed for any length of time.

For people who are chronically homeless, these conditions might be exacerbated by personal disability such as mental illness or chronic substance abuse. People who are chronically homeless might have significant functional impairments that hamper their ability to make decisions, keep appointments, comply with program or shelter rules, and perform well in training or job placement programs.

Program Barriers to Employment

Employment programs do not customarily offer outreach and engagement services. The employment system provides “one-stop” centers that offer a variety of services, often self-directed by the customer, but access to the services is self-directed or as the result of a referral by service system professionals. Most programs do not have the capacity to engage potential

customers who are more difficult to serve. This lack of outreach is a barrier for homeless people, especially people who are chronically homeless. People living in unstable shelter or street situations and people struggling with significant functional impairments are less likely to seek out employment training and placement programs.

Employment training programs are often very structured, with attendance and performance requirements and firm deadlines for program completion. While this is an effective approach for most people, individuals who are homeless might have difficulty meeting these program requirements.

Job placement programs often present a number of barriers. First, many homeless people are not seen as “job ready” by employment professionals. Even if the homeless person attempts to access the services, he or she might be turned away or required to complete some form of training to demonstrate job readiness. Because most homeless jobseekers want a job, not a program, these program approaches constitute a significant barrier.

System Barriers to Employment

One barrier that transcends individual programs is the system-level requirement for documentation and assessment. People who are homeless often lack documentation. If the process requires multiple levels of documentation, such as birth certificates and social security cards as well as medical documentation of disability, the process becomes overwhelming for the individual. Also, people who are homeless might not tolerate a lengthy assessment process. If the eligibility assessment requires multiple appointments and probes for personal information regarding substance abuse and mental health, individuals might abandon the process.

A related barrier is the fragmented nature of the mainstream service system. The process of accessing services is complicated when individuals have needs that cross agency boundaries. Too often, mainstream systems are oversubscribed, and the goal of intake workers is to refer individuals to other systems whenever possible. This leaves homeless people in a service vacuum. For example, a person with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders might experience barriers from both the mental health and substance abuse treatment systems. The mental health system might demand that the individual receive substance abuse treatment before accessing psychiatric services, and the substance abuse system might insist that the individual be “stable” prior to entering treatment. When the workforce development system requires stability as well, the individual has little chance for an exit from homelessness.

Another barrier is restrictive eligibility requirements. The workforce development system must demonstrate success, but this mandate sometimes results in the exclusion of individuals with multiple needs and significant functional impairments. This is often true for homeless people.

Addressing Barriers to Services

Creating Community Employment Pathways for homeless jobseekers requires planning for and addressing the personal and program barriers identified above. However, the most significant changes can be made at the systems level. Some homeless jobseekers could use mainstream services as presently organized, if the mainstream system adapts its standard practices and requirements to accommodate this special population. Other homeless jobseekers cannot benefit from employment services without the additional resources and expertise of the homeless assistance, housing, and treatment systems.
Chapter 6: Understanding the Needs of Homeless Jobseekers

The mainstream system can become more accessible to homeless people if modifications are made to the “front doors” of the system. The Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Program (JTHDP) helped to identify a number of front door issues and suggest accommodations that the mainstream system can make to ease access to services for people who are homeless. Use Worksheet 6.2 to list the barriers to employment in your community and brainstorm ideas for how Community Employment Pathways can eliminate or reduce those barriers.

**Access to Mainstream Services – Issues and Accommodations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Possible Accommodations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Recruitment:  
Mainstream employment systems expect people to request services, rather than conduct outreach to disadvantaged groups. | • Target people who reside in homeless shelters.  
• Create outreach partnerships with CoC service providers. |
| Assessment:  
• Mainstream system might not assess homeless jobseekers as ready for job placement or training.  
• Assessment process might be long, complex, and personally sensitive. | • For specific subpopulations among the homeless, adjust mainstream system expectations of readiness to allow entry into services.  
• In this scenario, assessment must be able to identify who is eligible for the streamlined access to services.  
• Assessment process can be abbreviated or accomplished in stages. Individuals can be admitted to services without a full assessment package. |

### Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Service Packages:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mainstream services offer standard packages of training, usually basic skills training and occupational skills training. Classes are structured and have start and end dates along with specific attendance and performance requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homeless people might state a preference for job placement over job training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The standard path through the mainstream system involves trying and failing at several levels. For example, core services are tried first, followed by intensive services if core services alone fail, followed by training services if intensive services fail.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Possible Accommodations

| • For identified subpopulations, the mainstream system can create flexible service packages, with eased exit and entry and flexible attendance and performance requirements. |
| • Assist with and/or take into account that access to child care is needed for some homeless families. |
| • Identify ways that job placement can occur first. |
| • For identified subpopulations, presumptive eligibility for intensive or even specialized training services can be granted. This is helpful to people who are chronically homeless because this group often has significant difficulty with standard service packages. |
WORKSHEET 6.1: HOMELESS SUBPOPULATIONS

In thinking about homelessness in your community, answer these questions. Good data sources are your community’s Plan to End Chronic Homelessness and Exhibit 1 of the Homeless Assistance Grant Application.

- How many individuals are homeless in your community at any given point in time?

- How many persons are homeless over the course of a year?

- What is the relative percentage of each subpopulation that constitutes the homeless population in your community?
  - People who are transitionally homeless?
  - People who are chronically homeless?

- What are the needs of individuals within your community?
  - Which needs are shared by both transitionally homeless and chronically homeless groups?
  - Which needs are specific to people who are chronically homeless?

- Within your community, what are the implications for public policy and Continuum of Care planning?

- Describe specific employment interventions that might be effective for different subpopulations in your community. Please base your answer on services and supports that are available and that might be made available to assist these groups.
WORKSHEET 6.2: EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESS JOBSEEKERS

In thinking about homelessness in your community, answer these questions. Good data sources are your community’s Workforce Development Plan and HUD’s Consolidated Plan.

- For your community, what are the top three barriers to employment for people who are homeless?

- Thinking about the barriers specific to your community, what specific actions would help to address those barriers?
CHAPTER 7: BUILDING BLOCKS FOR COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

INTRODUCTION

What the Chapter Is About

Creating Community Employment Pathways in your community requires that the homeless assistance and workforce development systems are well-informed regarding the funding resources and services within both systems. The Continuum of Care (CoC) in particular needs to understand the basic building blocks available within the workforce development system, as the CoC lead agency is likely to start the CEP initiative. More specifically, the CoC should have a relationship with the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the One-Stop Career Center (One-Stops).

Every community has access to workforce funding, and some communities benefit from large-scale sector initiatives or already have workforce funding targeted to homeless people. In describing the services available within the workforce development system, this chapter distinguishes between mainstream programs, which provide assistance to any jobseeker in the community, and targeted programs, which provide assistance to people who are homeless.

Beyond resources, a successful CEP initiative requires a meaningful partnership between homeless assistance providers and the local One-Stop Career Center. The CoC lead agency may be the entity through which more formal processes for sharing information are established, but individual homeless assistance providers are likely to develop relationship with the One-Stop. This chapter takes an in-depth look at ways to structure that relationship, including an informal cooperative approach, a more focused coordinated approach, and a highly integrated collaborative approach. All of this is pulled together at the end of chapter in an example of how to use the building blocks to create Community Employment Pathways.

What the Reader May Expect to Gain from This Chapter

This chapter will help you do the following:

- Understand the available resources within the workforce development system
- Assess and improve the working relationship between the homeless assistance and workforce development systems
- Begin to think about how to pull these elements together into Community Employment Pathways
Members of the workforce development system who want to learn more about the homeless assistance system can go to HUD’s Homelessness Resource Exchange at www.hudhre.info.50

RESOURCES FOR HOMELESS JOBSEEKERS

This section provides a brief overview of available resources and services for homeless jobseekers. The discussion is divided into an overview of mainstream services and an overview of employment services targeted to people who are homeless. These resources are the building blocks of Community Employment Pathways.

For example, if a community identifies people who are chronically homeless as a primary target for employment training and placement, the CEP initiative will need to draw on specialized services available within the Continuum of Care (CoC), and resources from the mainstream employment system, in order to create a lasting opportunity to seek, obtain, and keep a job.

As you read, think about which mainstream and targeted resources are available in your community that could help meet the needs in your community. Worksheets 7.1 and 7.2 are designed to help you think through the primary resources available in your community and identify key stakeholders for the CEP initiative.

Many communities have funded employment services with McKinney-Vento funds. These programs, funded through the Supportive Housing Program (SHP), can provide outreach, engagement, case management, and employment services including supported employment, job training and job placement. Many communities have done an excellent job of providing services within these funding streams, but there are many more resources for these services in communities. These additional resources are known as the mainstream workforce system.

The term “mainstream workforce system” is inclusive of those programs organized under the Workforce Investment Act and other programs serving broad classes of jobseekers including the following entities:

- One Stop Career Center Programs
  - WIA adult programs
  - WIA dislocated worker program
  - WIA youth programs
  - Targeted programs
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency programs (VR)
- TANF work programs

50 In particular, see the Coordinating Community Plans guidebook. This guidebook is directed at providers who may have expertise regarding either the homeless assistance or workforce development system, but who have only a rudimentary knowledge of how the other system operates.
Chapter 7: Building Blocks for Community Employment Pathways

- Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET)
- Job Opportunities for Low-Income Individuals (JOLI)
- Community Development Block Grant funded programs
- Community Services Block Grant programs (such as Community Action Programs with employment and employment supports)

A variety of supportive services are also present in some communities that are tightly linked with permanent housing to form a permanent supportive housing approach. Such supportive services are often necessary to assist individuals with multiple barriers to work by providing the wrap-around case management to address critical but not necessarily vocational needs of clients.

Mainstream Services

The mainstream employment system can respond to the needs of people who are homeless, especially if accommodations are made. The accommodations are designed to increase the probability of employment success for people who are homeless, and also allow the mainstream system to function as a community partner in ending homelessness. All of the mainstream programs can be useful for people who are homeless, and the mainstream system can be a powerful leader in helping to create lasting solutions for individuals and communities. Use Worksheet 7.1 to identify mainstream services in your community.

Workforce Investment Act of 1998

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998\(^5\) changed the way that States and communities address the needs of jobseekers and businesses for job training and employment services. WIA created the One-Stop Career Center system, which is the single point of contact for employers and jobseekers in communities. The One-Stops, operating under the auspices of employer led local Workforce Investment Boards (local WIBs), provides three sets of services:

- Core services are available to adults without eligibility requirements and include job search and placement, information about job vacancies, assessment of skills and needs, and information about available services.
- Intensive services are available to adults who cannot find jobs using just the core services menu and include case management, in-depth assessment, individual employment planning, counseling, and pre-vocational services.
- Training services linked to job opportunities are provided to adults who receive intensive services and are still unable to find jobs; services include occupational skills training and on-the-job training.

WIA established the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) which allow adults to make decisions about training and “purchase” such training from community providers. Decisions about eligibility and priority for training services are left to local WIBs. It allows flexibility in the purchase of services and supports that are specific to the needs of the individual. This could work particularly well for homeless subpopulations. For example, a homeless family can add child care to the package. Local WIBs can also contract with employment and training providers to flexibly serve special needs populations. This approach has great promise for people who are homeless.

The One-Stops represent an important component of any CEP initiative. They provide an identifiable access point to well-designed training and placement services tied to local markets. One of the most effective strategies within a CEP initiative is to engage the One-Stops in addressing homelessness. This might include streamlined access to services for all homeless subpopulations, and a direct link to intensive services for people who are chronically homeless.

**Transitional Jobs**

Some communities have used transitional jobs to help people who are hard to employ become successful at work. Transitional jobs are defined as “…short-term, publicly subsidized jobs that combine real work, skill development, and support services to help participants overcome substantial barriers to employment….”\(^52\) Populations that have been served through this approach include individuals exiting the welfare system, people who are homeless, ex-offenders, and youth.

Transitional jobs are an appropriate part of Community Employment Pathways because they allow individuals the opportunity to work while still in shelter or short-term housing. This allows the person to have some degree of housing stability while establishing a job history, learning important work behaviors and skills, and earning money towards more permanent community integration.

Transitional jobs can be funded through ITAs established under WIA. Other funding for transitional jobs can come from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, funded through HUD, or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Also, communities have used local funds to support transitional job programs.

**Sector Initiatives**

Sector initiatives are employment activities involving multiple employers within a specific industry. A sector initiative might focus on workforce problems within an industry, such as high employee turnover, need for more skilled workers, and need for improved operations. Sector initiatives have benefits for jobseekers, including industry-specific training and streamlined job placement.

One study found that “the sectoral approach to workforce development offers strategies to improve outcomes for low-income workers that are based on understanding the labor market system within a particular industry and region and developing tactics that both benefit workers

and make economic sense in today’s business environment. This dual nature of the approach, together with some indications of positive outcomes for workers and businesses, has engendered enthusiasm for the work and the adoption of a sector framework among a variety of actors.\textsuperscript{53}

A sector initiative is implemented through the services of an intermediary such as a trade organization. For example, local hotels and restaurants might have an association that promotes tourism and tries to advance the industry’s interests. Home builders provide another example of an industry often organized at the local, regional, or State level. The intermediary organization knows the industry and employers in the community, analyzes market trends and makes recommendations for changes to industry practices, and plans and provides workforce development activities to support the sector initiative.

Sector initiatives can become part of Community Employment Pathways. If a sector initiative is underway in your community, introducing the needs of homeless jobseekers might be a simple matter of inclusion in ongoing activity. If a sector initiative is in the planning stages, the initiative can plan to include homeless jobseekers and make accommodations to training and support needs after job placement. The key to utilizing sector initiatives as Community Employment Pathways is to explicitly include people who are homeless as part of the pool of potential workers, and to accommodate the needs of these individuals in planning training.

Targeted Programs

In addition to mainstream employment resources, DOL and other Federal agencies regularly award grants targeted toward specific groups of disadvantaged jobseekers. While some grants specifically target people who are homeless, other programs are broader but can be used to serve people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Programs that target youth in foster care provide an example of a program serving people at an increased risk of homelessness, while programs serving ex-offenders can be used to serve both people who are homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness upon re-entry.

The Job Corps program, serving young people ages 16-24 nationwide and in Puerto Rico since 1964, is an important partner for the CEP initiative. Youth in foster care and youth who have been homeless are targeted within the Job Corps program, and more than 2,000 youth in these categories were served by the program in 2004. The Job Corps program offers residential placement – a genuine benefit for individuals who are homeless. The program also provides intensive academic and vocational training services.

Limited term Federal grants are also available on a regular basis. Information about DOL’s targeted grants that might be relevant to the CEP initiative can be found on the agency’s page for audiences interested in homelessness, at http://www.dol.gov/dol/audience/aud-homeless.htm. Additionally, http://www.grants.gov/ provides a comprehensive system for finding and applying for Federal grants, as other Federal agencies offer grants that can support employment-related activities.

The following examples illustrate the types of targeted funding that have been available in recent years:

- In 2007, DOL awarded grants totaling $5 million under the Preparing Ex-Offenders for the Workplace through Beneficiary-Choice Contracting program, which gives ex-offenders flexibility in choosing needed services.

- In 2005, DOL awarded grants totaling $25.9 million through the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) and Veterans’ Workforce Investment Program (VWIP).

- In 2005, DOL awarded grants totaling almost $5 million to Workforce Investment Boards to partner with faith-based organizations in providing employment services to disadvantaged individuals.

- In 2003, DOL and HUD funded the Ending Chronic Homelessness through Employment and Housing Demonstration Grants. Fiscal Year 2006 funding for the five DOL grants was $2,298,148. HUD funding of this initiative for FY 2006 was $10,000,000. DOL funded the Chronic Homeless Employment Technical Assistance program for $1.5 million in FY 2004 to provide ongoing technical assistance to the five grantees.

Other programs that have been available in recent years include the following:

- Youth Offender Demonstration Grants
- Ready4Work (for ex-offenders)
- Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative (SVORI)
- Foster Youth Demonstration Grants
- Prisoner Re-entry Initiative
- Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP)

Coordinating employment services for eligible jobseekers within the community requires identifying organizations that might have received these or other grants and coordinating access to funded services. Use Worksheet 7.2 to assess targeted resources in your community.
How to Use Targeted Programs

DOL and other funders have created a set of demonstration and national programs designed to help end homelessness. Specific information on grant recipients can be found on agencies’ websites, such as the following:

- http://wdcrbcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/grantaward/start.cfm

Questions you should ask include the following:

- Which of these programs is available in your community?
- Which of these programs is available in your State?
- Who is administering these programs?
- When does the assistance end? How can your State/community sustain these activities after the Federal funding ends?
- Are these programs available to provide services to homeless clients? If not, what lessons can you learn from the experience of these programs to guide your planning and program implementation?
WORKSHEET 7.1: RESOURCES FOR HOMELESS JOBSEEKERS – MAINSTREAM RESOURCES

Given the list of resources that might be available in your community, think about where those resources are available, i.e., which organization or agency controls the resource, who is the contact person, and how the resources/contact person can be helpful in addressing the needs of homeless jobseekers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workforce Investment Act</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Where are these resources available in your community?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Which community-based organization(s) control the resources?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How can this resource be useful in addressing the needs of homeless jobseekers?</td>
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## Transitional Jobs

- Where are these resources available in your community?

- Which community-based organization(s) control the resources?

- Are these resources linked to a planning process? If yes, who controls the planning process?

- What is the timeline of that planning?

- How can you provide input to the plan?

- Who is the best contact person?

- How can this resource be useful in addressing the needs of homeless jobseekers?
### Sector Initiatives

- Where are these resources available in your community

- Which community-based organization(s) control the resources?

- Are these resources linked to a planning process? If yes, who controls the planning process?

- What is the timeline of that planning?

- How can you provide input to the plan?

- Who is the best contact person?

- How can this resource be useful in addressing the needs of homeless jobseekers?
WORKSHEET 7.2: RESOURCES FOR HOMELESS JOBSEEKERS – TARGETED RESOURCES

Given the list of resources that might be available in your community, think about where those resources are available, i.e. which organization or agency controls the resource, who is the contact person, and how the resources/contact person can be helpful in addressing the needs of homeless jobseekers. Helpful websites for targeted resources include the following:

- http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/grantaward/start.cfm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Targeted Resource)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Where are these resources available in your community?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How can this resource be useful in addressing the needs of homeless jobseekers?</td>
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</table>
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

“It's more important to do the right thing than to do things right.”

Peter Drucker

INTRODUCTION

This chapter brings the guidebook to an end, with a summary of key principles and activities as well as a preview of possible next steps for a community to consider after completing a CEP report and beginning to implement action steps.

The purpose of developing cross-system Community Employment Pathways is to maximize resources to increase the employment outcomes of homeless jobseekers, especially those with significant barriers to employment. Neither the homeless assistance system nor the workforce development system working independently can routinely succeed in meeting the needs of these jobseekers.

KEYS TO COLLABORATION

Ending homelessness requires collaboration between the homeless assistance, mainstream employment, and other systems. The following principles were drawn from the experiences of One-Stop Career Centers providing employment and training services to homeless jobseekers:

- **A high value is placed on employment services for homeless jobseekers, and this is shared by agencies in the local system.** For example, stakeholders concur that providing employment services is a high priority and state that the activities of their agencies reflect that high priority.

- **The effort is inclusive.** The lead agency in the CEP initiative acts as a central coordinator and facilitates collaborative relationships among community-based agencies to end homelessness, focusing on homeless assistance providers and workforce development organizations, but also including housing and supportive services providers. Organizations in all systems commit to work with each other across the multiple systems in the community.

- **Someone with influence stands behind the goals of the initiative.** A local champion connects the housing/homeless assistance system and the workforce development system and either has the influence and responsibility to direct this collaborative effort or has a supervisor who has invested this in the champion.

- **The goals of the initiative are woven into existing planning processes.** Planning and monitoring the implementation of employment services occurs because the local Continuum of Care (CoC) includes a representative from the mainstream workforce system as a full participant, and the mainstream workforce system includes either representation of the homeless assistance system on the local WIB or in its committee structure, or on an advisory council.
• Employment services are inextricably tied to housing for homeless individuals in the community. Practitioners and leaders see the need to connect employment and housing to end homelessness.

• Funding streams are “braided.” Stakeholders understand that financing the employment services for people who are homeless requires the allocation of funds from a variety of funding sources, including mainstream and targeted funding under the WIA and the McKinney-Vento Act.

• Mainstream employment services are made accessible to people who are homeless. The mainstream workforce system might consolidate resources and services in a particular One-Stop Career Center that is specifically designed to attract homeless individuals or disperse the necessary resources and services across all of its One-Stop Career Centers so that people who are homeless can receive the services they need at any center in the jurisdiction.

• Efforts to serve homeless jobseekers are incorporated into ongoing efforts to serve disadvantaged jobseekers more generally. The mainstream workforce system reaches out and collaborates with faith-based and community organizations to meet the needs of homeless jobseekers. The faith-based and community organizations might provide WIA core services enrollment, basic computer literacy training, or such concrete services as negotiated between the One-Stop and the faith-based agency.

• Co-case management practices (coordinated across the workforce, housing/homeless assistance, and mental health/substance abuse treatment systems) follow agreed-upon protocols and are monitored by systems leaders regularly.

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**Project Advent**

A partnership of the Pima County, Arizona, Workforce Board’s Jackson Employment Center, Christian Faith Center, Salvation Army, and Comin’ Home, Project Advent is a comprehensive employment and transitional housing program targeting the county’s “harder-to-serve” and chronically homeless individuals and families. It blends the expertise and resources of local government, nonprofit agencies, and the faith-based community with funding from HUD’s Supportive Housing Program. Between July 2005 and June 2006, Project Advent served 83 clients, of whom 69 completed the program. Of the 69, 76 percent of the completers entered competitive employment at an average wage at placement of $9.51 per hour. Of those chronically homeless jobseekers placed, 81 percent retained their employment after six months.

Contact: Steve Nelson
Jackson Employment Center
300 East 26th Street
Tucson, AZ 85713
snelson@csd.pima.gov
KEY ACTIVITIES

Transforming Organizational Relationships

The CEP initiative is about transforming systems, not just creating an employment service. The goal is to contribute to community efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness. The heart of the matter is the way in which the organizations and people in the workforce investment and the homeless assistance system can work differently than they have been and direct their joint resources to support the inclusion of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in the labor market. It is about using best practices and the technology we have among community agencies in new or redirected partnerships. Community Employment Pathways for homeless people are more likely to be created and sustained when the community institutions recognize work as a priority for homeless populations, leverage partnerships, integrate services, and secure financial support.

Sometimes we need to include organizations or agencies that in the past have not been active in addressing this community problem or have not formalized relationships. For example, the Continuum of Care or the local 10-year plan committee could create a position for one or more members of the workforce community to become a member of that entity. A local WIB can also include a homeless focus on its program committee and include ad hoc members from homeless assistance agencies. In other instances, the CoC might approach the local community college about partnerships to address the job training needs of homeless individuals. The Stepping Up project in Chicago illustrates the potential of collaboration with the community college system.

Collaboration to Extend a Career Ladder

The Stepping Up project in Chicago is a collaboration of supportive housing and homeless assistance agencies partnering with the Wright Community College, the Illinois Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS), the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development, and others to create a career-ladder pathway that prepares individuals as qualified workers for the entry-level jobs or initial “rungs of the ladder” in property management. Developing the knowledge and skills as a property management clerk is the first rung, followed by a series of courses to prepare people for jobs as occupancy and leasing specialists, the second rung. Earning certificates after completing a series of college-based courses funded by WIA individual training accounts or ORS sponsorship, students are seeking career-oriented employment in the housing industry. From here, clerks and leasing specialists can move on to supervisory positions or assistant and property manager jobs while pursuing advanced training.

Contact: Joyce Grangent
Corporation for Supportive Housing
203 North Wabash, Suite 410
Chicago, IL 60601

Under-promise and Over-deliver

The CEP initiative can create energy and excitement typical of newly formed relationships or projects in which momentum builds early and ambitions can run high, only to loose ground when challenges seem to confound the process and answers are in short supply. The steering committee as well as the workgroup and stakeholders would do well to anticipate these bumps.
in the road and exercise caution on what it promises to do for the community. Delays, funding problems, and changes in leadership are all hazards to a CEP initiative that can be expected and dealt with over time. Making sure that your plan is achievable within the timeframes you set is important. As the old adage goes, it is better to under-promise and over-deliver than make promises you can't keep. After all, a CEP initiative or any system change effort is also about managing expectations throughout the process.

**Reporting Progress**

We have learned from experience that many system change efforts are not successful because they fail to keep stakeholders informed. Your CEP initiative should track and report activities that benchmark your productivity, while not overburdening stakeholders with too much information. You want to encourage the will and the support of leaders in the workforce investment and homeless assistance systems as well as local government to take your CEP initiative seriously and to implement your results.

Certain signs or signals tell you when changes in the system are happening in the desired new direction. For example, you may see an increasing amount of employment services becoming available to homeless jobseekers, through the announcement of new requests for proposals (RFPs). The RFPs may even have an appropriate amount of funding to reach goals stated in the CEP report. You might get word that positions were established in the local One-Stop Career Center to help homeless jobseekers access and enroll in WIA training services. You might also recognize a changing system if employment outcomes are being monitored as an expected outcome of supportive housing. In other words, you would see changes in the money available to support services at the scale needed; helping homeless people work would be a habit or regular activity of service providers; you would see organizations prioritize employment and value the task of helping people work; and you would routinely see effective practices used by skilled practitioners in employment services.⁵⁴ Thus, a sign of real change in a system is one in which people habitually do the new thing, using resources, authority, technology, and ideas that are routinely associated with the new activity.

* * *

Change will not occur overnight, but commitment across sectors is needed to ensure that it happens soon. Ending homelessness will be possible only by providing opportunities for economic advancement. Launching a CEP initiative puts a community’s resources behind the idea that many people who are homeless can exit homelessness through employment if given the opportunity and support.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Boundary Spanner: A boundary spanner is a change agent working across multiple organizations or systems. He or she works with and among partners to implement goals and plans, troubleshoots when things are not going right, and keeps the process moving. A boundary spanner seeks to facilitate integration and coordination of the workforce investment, homeless assistance, housing, and treatment systems at the community level and to improve the employment services that are provided to homeless people with multiple needs.

Braided Funding: Braided funding means linking two or more funding streams paying for discrete components of a service while allowing for separate tracking and reporting of outcomes as these programs require.

Business Improvement District (BID): A business improvement district is a public-private partnership in which businesses in a defined area elect to make a collective contribution to the maintenance, development, marketing, and promotion of their commercial district.

Career Pathways: Career Pathways is a specialized field research activity that can provide greater clarity on the ways that homeless jobseekers and formerly homeless workers move along a career path within occupations to higher-skill and higher-paying jobs. Career Pathways is a term for a series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector, and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector.

Chronically Homeless: A person who is “chronically homeless” is an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years. In order to be considered chronically homeless, a person must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency homeless shelter. A disabling condition is defined as “a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions.” A disabling condition limits an individual’s ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living. An episode of homelessness is a separate, distinct, and sustained stay on the streets and/or in an emergency homeless shelter. A chronically homeless person must be unaccompanied and disabled during each episode.

Community Audit: A community audit is a mechanism used by a community or region that collects “real-time” data from regional employers regarding actual and projected short-term and longer-term labor surpluses and needs, to determine which skills are or are not in demand. This enables the regional workforce development system to plan for future workforce needs.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): The Community Development Block Grant program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Beginning in 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest continuously run programs at HUD. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to more than 1,100 local and State governments.

Community Employment Pathways (CEP): Community Employment Pathways (CEP) are mechanisms for people who are homeless to find, acquire, and retain jobs. They are based on systemic links between homeless assistance providers and mainstream employment services.
CEP initiative, led by a steering committee and workgroups, requires the willing participation of both the homeless assistance and workforce development systems, which work together for the purpose of creating better employment outcomes for people who are homeless while meeting the workforce needs of employers. A CEP initiative is a systems change initiative that uses field research to analyze a community’s workforce needs and establishes avenue for homeless jobseekers to enter and advance in the labor market. The steering committee produces a CEP report summarizing the research and offering specific action steps that can be implemented in the community.

**Continuum of Care (CoC):** A Continuum of Care is a community effort to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. A written CoC plan includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness. A CoC is an ongoing coalition that often involves public and private entities.

**Customized Employment:** Customized employment means individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both. It is based on an individualized determination of strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability and simultaneously employing strategies designed to meet the specific needs of the employer, resulting in a new job description that benefits both employer and employee.

**Demand side:** When discussing employment issues, employers or industry sectors represent the demand for labor.

**Disability Program Navigator (DPN):** A position funded as a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration to help facilitate the employment of people with disabilities. A DPN acts as a resource at One-Stop Career Centers for jobseekers, employers, and service providers.

**Exemplary Practices:** To be exemplary, a practice must have been implemented successfully in at least two different communities in a different geographic area by different service provider organizations and it must be fully documented in manual or other written forms that describe all key operational components. In this guidebook, exemplary practices include evidence-based practices and promising practices. The term exemplary practice connotes that the proposed practice has a reliable record of improving outcomes for those receiving the service.

**Evidence-based practices (EBP):** Evidence-based practices are interventions that have been rigorously tested; have yielded consistent, reputable results; and have proven safe, beneficial, and effective. EBPs are often rated according to the number and type of studies conducted and the conclusiveness of the results.

**Food Stamp Employment and Training Program (FSET):** The Food Stamp Employment and Training Program is a no-cost employment program designed to give food stamp recipients the assistance and support they need to find a job. The program strives to meet the needs of participants in gaining skills, training, work, and experience that will increase the program participants' ability to obtain total self-sufficiency. The FSET program is funded annually through grant provided by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
Fidelity Tool: A fidelity tool is used to verify that an intervention is being implemented in a manner consistent with the treatment model or the research that produced the practice. The tool or scale must have been shown to be reliable and valid.

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA): GPRA requires Federal agencies to set certain goals by which their performance will be measured. A Federal agency’s GPRA standards often extend to its grantees.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): A HMIS is a computerized data collection tool designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. It is designed to aggregate client-level data to generate an unduplicated count of clients served within a Continuum of Care. An HMIS can also be statewide or regional, possibly including several continuums.

Homeless: Sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., on the streets) or in an emergency homeless shelter.

Housing Wage: The housing wage represents the hourly wage that a household must earn (working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year) in order to afford the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom unit at 30% of income.

Individual Training Account (ITA): An individual training account is a voucher that allows adult and dislocated workers served by a One-Stop Career Center to purchase occupational skills training they need to become gainfully employed or re-employed. The State or local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) approves eligible training providers who accept an ITA and creates a list of these providers so clients can choose the provider that best meets their needs. The State or local WIB sets the dollar amounts and duration for an ITA.

Job Coaches: Job coaches provide assistance to individuals engaged in Supported Employment. In the majority of cases, this assistance is provided on the job site with the goal of helping employed clients maintain employment. Duties performed include consumer assessment, job development, placement, training, and long-term follow-along.

Local Workforce Investment Area (local WIA): A local Workforce Investment Area is a region with 200,000 or more residents and a common labor pool. Local WIAs in most States are defined by county or multi-county regions. The 600 local WIAs nationally are served by 3,500 One-Stop Career Centers.

Local Workforce Investment Board (local WIB): Local areas that administer WIA services have established local Workforce Investment Boards that develop and submit a local area plan to the State. The local WIB also may select which local organizations are eligible to provide services. Federal workforce funds flow from the Federal government to the State to local communities.

Mainstream Programs: Mainstream programs are publicly funded programs that provide services, housing, and income supports to people whether they are homeless or not, based on financial need. Mainstream programs include housing, food, health care, transportation, and job training designed to help low-income individuals achieve or retain economic independence and self-sufficiency.
Mainstream Workforce System: The mainstream workforce system is inclusive of those programs organized under the Workforce Investment Act and other programs serving broad classes of jobseekers.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Named after its sponsors, Representatives Stewart B. McKinney of Connecticut and Bruce F. Vento of Minnesota, this 1987 law established programs and funding to serve homeless people.

One-Stop Career Center: A One-Stop Career Center is a facility that is designed to provide a full range of assistance to jobseekers under one roof. Established under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the center offers training, referrals, career counseling, job listings, and similar employment-related services. Designated agencies that traditionally have provided services to different groups—such as welfare recipients, youth, and people with disabilities—are required to integrate access to their services through the One-Stop Career Center.

Point-in-time Counts: As a condition of McKinney-Vento funding, homeless assistance providers are required to conduct an unduplicated point-in-time count of homeless persons. Individuals to be counted include: all persons living in emergency shelters (1-90 day stay limit); all persons living in transitional housing (91 day to 2 years stay limit where being homeless is a prerequisite for eligibility and case management services are required as part of the program, such as THOR and HOME TBRA); all persons living outside or in a place not meant for human habitation; all persons living in a dwelling lacking any of the following: ability to cook hot food, drinking water, restroom, heat, or ability to bathe. Anyone who self identifies as homeless should be considered homeless, unless there is compelling evidence indicating otherwise. A point-in-time count includes only those who are homeless at the time the count is conducted and might not reflect the number of people who become homeless or acquire housing over the course of the year.

Promising Practices: Promising practices are clinical practices for which there is considerable evidence or expert consensus and which show promise in improving client outcomes, but which are not yet proven by the highest or strongest scientific evidence.

Resource Mapping: Resource mapping is a strategy to understand the myriad of programs and supports—the resource environment—that exists within a State. It is a way for a State to assess existing infrastructure, analyze how existing systems are working (or could be working better), and identify concrete policy direction for the future. Resource mapping is a process that helps answer critical questions about systems, and, if done well, can become a tool for joint planning, resource and cost sharing, and performance-based management of programs and services.

Sector Initiatives: Sector initiatives are employment activities involving multiple employers within a specific industry. A sector initiative might focus on workforce problems within an industry such as high employee turnover, need for more skilled workers, and need for improved operations. Sector initiatives have benefits for jobseekers, including industry-specific training and streamlined job placement.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI): A monthly benefit paid to individuals who are unable to work because of a disability (as determined by SSA) and who have made contributions through payroll deductions or self-employment contributions.
Glossary

**Soft skills:** Skills that are not job-specific but aid greatly in finding and maintaining employment, such as professionalism, teamwork, time management, work ethic, and communication.

**State Workforce Investment Board (State WIB):** WIA requires that each State establish a State WIB made up of representatives from businesses, labor organizations, educational institutions, and community organizations. One function of the State WIB is to develop a statewide plan.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** A “needs-based” program that pays a cash benefit to people who are 65 or older, blind, or disabled (as determined by SSA) and who have little or no income or work history.

**Supply side:** When discussing employment issues, workers and jobseekers represent the supply (or potential supply) of labor needed by employers and industry sectors.

**Supported Employment (SE):** Supported Employment is an employment intervention in which a person receives assistance to choose a job in an integrated setting that matches individual skills and interests and where ongoing support, on or off the job-site, is provided by a job coach from an agency with expertise in providing vocational services to people with complex needs.

**Targeted Programs:** Targeted programs are programs which provide assistance specifically to people who are homeless.

**Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF):** Cash assistance and work opportunities are provided to needy families with children for a total of 5 years maximum, or less at State discretion. Most TANF programs provide cash assistance to help pay for basic needs, employment training and job placement, family education, and childcare. TANF is administered by State agencies, with oversight and funding by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**Transitionally Homeless:** Individuals considered transitionally homeless are those who become homeless over the course of a year, receive help from shelters and other service providers, exit homelessness, and do not return to streets and shelters.

**Transitional job:** Transitional jobs are short-term, publicly subsidized jobs that combine real work, skill development, and support services to help participants overcome substantial barriers to employment. They operate in rural, urban, and suburban areas of the nation. Work placements are often in public or nonprofit organizations.

**Unemployed:** Persons are classified as unemployed if they do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the prior 4 weeks, and are currently available for work. In planning Community Employment Pathways, it is important to recognize that many people who want to work and would be capable of working with the proper supports in place might not be actively looking for work, and thus do not meet Federal and State definitions of unemployment.

**Work Incentives:** Rules associated with public benefit programs that encourage recipients to work, or in some cases, to engage in training that directly leads to employment, while preserving cash assistance and medical benefits. Public benefit programs use a variety of mechanisms to make work more attractive to recipients, including disregard of certain earned income, partial
reduction of benefits, offset of certain expenses, and expedited reinstatement of benefits if employment is lost.

**Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998:** Legislation (P.L. 105-220) that creates coordinated, effective, and customer-focused workforce development and employment services. WIA replaced the Job Training Partnership Act and provides the framework for a public workforce development system designed to (1) help employers find workers, (2) help jobseekers find employment, and (3) train individuals for jobs in demand.

**Workforce Investment Board (WIB):** An appointed body, certified by the Governor to set policy, guide implementation, and provide oversight to the local workforce development system, as authorized by WIA. The WIB attempts to anticipate economic and business trends, develop community linkages and partnerships, and provide a focus on system outcomes. The State WIB creates a 5-year strategic plan to guide workforce development policy for the State. Local WIBs provide policy guidance, designate operators for their area’s One-Stop Career Centers and oversee the job training activities within their local areas.
TO: All Qualified Providers

FROM: Georgia Jones, Project Manager, New City Community Employment Pathways Project

DATE: August 7, 2008

SUBJECT: Invitation for Bid (IFB) for Technical Assistance Services and Community Employment Pathways analysis and report writing.

ADDENDUM: U.S. HUD Community Employment Pathways Guidebook

The New City Workforce Investment Board, in partnership with the New City Continuum of Care, is soliciting bids for assistance to conduct a Community Employment Pathways Project. This bid is to provide services during the time period of October 1, 2008 through March 31, 2009. Bids will be accepted for these services up to the close of business on Friday, September 19, 2008. Four (4) hard copies of the bid with a coversheet (see Attachment A) and a disc are required and may be mailed or hand delivered to (no fax or electronic submissions please):

New City Community Employment Pathways Project
C/O New City Workforce Board
ATTN: Georgia Jones
4357 Main Street Suite 206
New City, NV

Any bid received after the specified date will not be considered unless:

• It was sent registered or certified mail not later than the third calendar day prior to the date specified for receipt.

• It was sent by mail and it is determined that the late receipt was due solely to CWI's mishandling.

Questions concerning this solicitation document should be directed to Georgia Jones,
FAX: 397-421-6999 Phone: 397-421-6998.

A. Organization Overview

The local workforce investment board (local WIB) and Continuum of Care (CoC) for the county manage services for New City and the surrounding county. The local WIB manages workforce development planning, coordination, and resource allocation for the region. This organization is directly related to the Federal legislation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The CoC prepares an annual response based on an assessment of local community needs for homeless assistance to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development request for applications under the McKinney-Vento Act.

B. Statement of Work Requested

1. Planning Analysis
Appendix 1

Develop and carry out the activities needed to develop a common understanding of the supply, demand, occupational trends, and system capacity in New City and Make Believe County resulting in a regional Community Employment Pathways study/state of the workforce report to improve and develop employment and training services for homeless populations.

Identify the specific skill requirements of a critical regional industry such as hospitality in anticipation of projected labor shortages resulting in a detailed job and skills analyses for industry positions most affected by retirements and turnover that are potentially accessible by homeless jobseekers.

2. Community issue identification and resolution

Facilitate two (2) workgroups over a 3 to 4 month period, one to gather labor market data and the other to gather information about supportive services that are available in the community to support homeless jobseeker success. These services include housing, homeless assistance, treatment and other allied services provider who specifically support the employment efforts of homeless populations and their proximity to the One-Stop Career Centers.

3. Planning Development and Writing

Describe how you will develop the state of the workforce report/Community Employment Pathways report informed by a series of community forums and focus groups. The information for this report may have to conform to a template issued by the CEP initiative but could take other report formats. Describe the approach you will use to provide this information to the local WIB.

4. Budget

Provide a detailed budget that breaks down the services by component. The costs should be obvious and when general line items are noted a brief explanation of the make up for that line item should be provided.

5. Timetable

Provide a timetable of events with the understanding that the final report must be delivered by the first week in December to ensure its position on the CoC - WIB’s meeting agenda. This will allow for approvals and processing prior to our overall report deadline of March 31, 2009.

6. Staff for the Project

Identify all staff to be involved with this project. Recognize each by person, role, related experience, and relationship to the project.

C. Bid Format

1. All bids must include a completed Cover Page (Attachment A).

2. All bids must be hand-delivered or received by mail by the close of business on Friday, September 19, 2008. Bids should be sent to the attention of Georgia Jones and include four (4) hard copies and a disc.
3. All bids must be good for 30 days. Notification of outcome will be within 30 days.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Please review the following before preparing a bid, please note that:

1. The WIB reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids/proposals submitted, to negotiate with all qualified service providers/bidders, or to cancel in whole or part, this bid.

2. Issuance of the Invitation for Bid does not commit an award for contract, to pay costs associated with bid development, or to procure or contract for goods and/or services. Payment for services shall be on a Fixed-Unit-Price (FUP) basis.

3. The WIB is an equal opportunity employer/program, auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Service providers/bidders shall be synonymous.

4. Local/small/minority owned businesses are encouraged to respond and shall not be discriminated against during bid review.

5. Service providers/bidders in whole, or in any part of itself, shall be in good standing, is not debarred or suspended or otherwise excluded from, or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs under Executive Order 12549, "Debarment and Suspension".

6. Handling Appeals from Non-Selectees: If an award decision is protested or disputed by a non-selectee, the following appeals procedure should be utilized. The non-selectee must provide, in writing, specific rationales for the appeal to the President of the New City WIB. Non-selectees will have fourteen (14) days following notification of rejection of their proposal to appeal the decision. The President will review the procurement file and issue a written response within ten (10) working days. This appeal process must be exhausted before any further steps are taken.

CRITERIA FOR REVIEW OF BIDS

All bids will be reviewed for completeness and adherence to the stated work requested. Bids will be rated based on the selection criteria and array them in rank order from highest to lowest. Selections will normally be made relative to this rating though other factors such as location, area served or checking of references will be taken into account. The WIB reserves the right to select lower ranked bids when warranted. Such selection of bids shall be made at the sole discretion of the WIB.

The following criteria will be used when evaluating Bid/proposals:

- Completeness and adherence to request = 50 percent
- Budget Cost = 40 percent
- Other factors such as related experience = 10 percent
REFERENCES

Provide at least one reference with contact information for a similar project. The work provided for this reference should be of a similar nature and should be able to provide a perspective on quality of work performed.

COVER PAGE

Attachment A is a cover page to be used with your proposal. Please complete and attach one to the front of each of the four (4) copies submitted.

ATTACHMENT A: COVER PAGE

New City Community Employment Pathways Project

Organization ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

Contact ____________________________________________

Phone ______________________________________________

Proposed Total Cost __________________________________

Typed Name and Title __________________________________

Authorized Signature __________________________________

Date ________________________________________________
### APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE SOURCES OF DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Looking at the “Supply Side”</th>
<th>Looking at the “Demand Side”</th>
<th>Services Supporting Homeless Workers</th>
<th>Braiding Funding Streams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal - National</strong></td>
<td>US Census Bureau Data <a href="http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en">http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en</a></td>
<td>HUD data on employment outcomes of McKinney programs</td>
<td>Boston uses Food Stamp Employment and Training funds for Homeless employment; also Job Net developed enhanced services for homeless employment at one-stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Training for Homeless Demo – typical jobs held by participants</td>
<td>Local Employment Dynamics <a href="http://lehd.dsd.census.gov/led/">http://lehd.dsd.census.gov/led/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State</strong></td>
<td>Departments of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) reports on their work with employers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clark County WDC using WIA Dislocated Worker dollars with Clearview Employment Center-Columbia River MH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County</strong></td>
<td>Plans in Office of Economic Development; studies/reports</td>
<td></td>
<td>Research done for 10 Year Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City</strong></td>
<td>Workforce Development Council labor market data</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seattle Jobs Initiative drawing down FSET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuum of Care; point-in-time count; HMIS</td>
<td>City of Seattle Laborers Apprenticeship Program-Laborers <a href="http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/light/apprentice/ApprenticeshipsOffered/Laborers/default.htm">http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/light/apprentice/ApprenticeshipsOffered/Laborers/default.htm</a></td>
<td>Housing department studies</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Research</strong></td>
<td>Focus groups with homeless and supportive housing tenants; focus group with HIP staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups with employers</td>
<td>Interview about union apprenticeships AFL-CIO <a href="http://www.wslc.org/">http://www.wslc.org/</a></td>
<td>Supportive Housing providers HMIS</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The following questionnaire was adapted from a draft written by Tina Shamseldin, Office of Housing, City of Seattle for the local CEP initiative.

Engaging Work: Ending Homelessness through Employment and Housing

The objective of the CEP initiative is to engage community stakeholders in a three-phased approach to increase employment outcomes for chronically homeless and non-chronically homeless individuals and families in our community. As part of this initiative, a "research workgroup" has been formed to gather information and make a report on the present circumstances of the homeless assistance, supportive housing, and mainstream workforce systems that describes the homeless jobseeker population, the labor market, and the capacity and integration of these systems.

In order to accomplish this objective, we need some additional information from supportive housing providers. We would greatly appreciate your assistance in answering a few questions about your supportive housing services.

Please use the best information you have readily available. If you are unable to answer a question, even with your best guess, please leave it blank and provide a brief explanation at the end. This survey will take less than 15 minutes to complete.

If you would like more information about the CEP initiative, please contact:

1. Please provide your contact information (name, title, agency, phone, email).

   Name and title: ________________________________

   Agency: ________________________________

   Address: ________________________________

   Phone: ________________________________

   Email: ________________________________

2. What is the name of the program(s) for which you are providing responses?
3. Tell us the number of staff who provide some kind of employment services: ________

Please describe (e.g. .5 FTE job developer, 2.5 FTE vocational specialists, etc.).

4. Please describe your agency’s relationships with any outside provider of employment-related services to which you make regular referrals or keep in touch with regarding mutual clients?

Please identify the providers.

How satisfied are you with these relationships?

______ very satisfied
______ moderately satisfied
______ satisfied
______ dissatisfied
______ very dissatisfied
5. Please indicate the services and strategies your agency provides to support and encourage employment among your tenants, those that are available to tenants (self-directed) in the community if they choose to pursue them and those that are provided by an agency with whom you have a service partnership. (Check as many as apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Strategy</th>
<th>Service Supported by Our Program Staff</th>
<th>Available to Tenants in the community(Passive/ Self- Service)</th>
<th>Service Provided by Partner Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career assessments (interests and abilities)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career-specific skills training (flagger, baker, cashier, computer, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job-readiness skills training (soft skills)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment search assistance/placement/job club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work supports (assistance finding/paying for childcare, transportation, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-appropriate clothing and/or tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology access/computer resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives for participation in employment activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalties for non-participation in employment activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
6. How aware are you of housing-based work incentives, such as HUD's Earned Income Disregard?
   ____ very aware
   ____ moderately aware
   ____ aware
   ____ not very aware
   ____ never heard of it

7. Please briefly describe additional services and strategies your agency uses to support and encourage employment among your tenants.

8. Does your program engage tenants in creating a written employment plan as part of your tenant record?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   How soon after moving into your housing do you routinely help tenants with their employment goals?

   Please describe a typical tenant employment plan.
9. In your supportive housing budget, to what extent do you have sufficient line items or targeted funds for employment-related service expenses (other than personnel expenses), such as the following: tokens or bus fare for tenants to get to work; money for work related supplies or tools; money for job search materials; computers that are used for job search activities; consultants to teach staff about employment services; etc.?

   a. No line items and no funds for tenant employment-related expenses
   b. Insufficient funds for tenant employment-related expenses
   c. Barely adequate funds for tenant employment-related expenses
   d. Funding is significant but not enough to meet all of tenant employment-related expenses
   e. Funding is sufficient

About how much money is allocated for these purposes each year?

$ _____________________________________________________________

For how many tenants? _____________tenants

10. Today (the day on which you complete this survey), what percent of your tenants are working? By work we mean engaged in an employer-employee relationship, earning minimum wage or better and working five or more hours a week (includes day labor, but not stipend jobs)

   a. Less than 5%
   b. More than 5% but less than 15%
   c. More than 15% but less than 30%
   d. More than 30% but less than 50%
   e. Between 50% but less than 75%
   f. More than 75%
11. From your view, if tenants were provided the opportunities and supports to work, what percentage of your tenants do you think would work?

a. Less than 5%

b. More than 5% but less than 15%

c. More than 15% but less than 30%

d. More than 30% but less than 50%

e. Between 50% but less than 75%

f. More than 75%

12. Do the following factors present challenges to increased employment outcomes for your participants?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher priority service needs (e.g. substance abuse, mental health)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please describe below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:

13. To what extent does your staff actively inform tenants of the Earned Income Disregard as a work incentive?

a. Not at all

b. Somewhat

c. Very

*If not at all, what is your primary obstacle?*
Appendix 3

14. To what extent do your tenants receive assistance with and are encouraged to use Social Security Administration work incentives for SSI or SSDI recipients?
   
   a. Not at all
   
   b. Somewhat
   
   c. Very much

   *If not at all, what is your primary obstacle?*

15. If training was available to your staff in the area of employment services, would your agency participate?

   a. Yes
   
   b. No

   *If yes, is there a particular aspect of employment services for which training your agency needs training?*

16. Is there anything else you would like the Taking Health Care Home research workgroup to know? For example:
   
   Are there particular services that your tenants need to reach their employment goals that are not available or difficult to access?
   
   Are you doing something that is going well and you want others to know about?
APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR A COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS REPORT

Executive Summary

1. Overview of the Purpose

- Goals
e.g., Increasing the number of people who are homeless or formerly homeless in the workforce
  Creating partnerships, access to employment services, and investment

- Intended audience for the report
e.g., Tennessee Department of Mental Health
  City, County and State agencies
  Committee to End Homelessness

- Cross-systems planning—workforce development, homeless assistance and housing, and mental health and substance abuse treatment

- Limitations of the report
e.g., lacking a reliable, dedicated management information system

2. The Current Landscape: Workers, Employers, and Supports

- Jobseekers’ interests, capacities, and experience in the workforce
  This section could also include the following:
    - Functional categories of jobseeker types
    - Types of occupational interests; typical jobs entered
    - Literature review and possibly focus groups

- Employers’ needs and occupational outlook in the labor market
  This section could also answer the following:
    - What does the labor market offer?
    - What is the occupational outlook?
    - Day labor sector – What’s there? What’s needed?
    - Given the current sectoral approaches in the county, is there room to include homeless jobseekers?
• Supportive services
  For example:
    ♦ Housing support
    ♦ Case management support
    ♦ Other kinds of services being provided by agencies to homeless jobseekers

• Funding streams
  For example:
    ♦ Overview of funding for employment services
    ♦ Opportunities and challenges

3. The Current Landscape: System, Policy, and Political Issues, and the Implications

• Emerging system and policy concerns
  For example:
    ♦ Uncertainty of McKinney employment funding
    ♦ Mainstream resourced programs and performance targets
    ♦ Homeless jobseekers not routinely accessing Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and Mainstream Workforce Investment Act programs

• Political will, aligning values, and funding to end homelessness through employment and housing

• Implications for State and other communities

4. Opportunities and Action Steps: Targeted Strategies to Achieve Early Success
  For example:

• Employment programs at MH agencies
• Programs at One-Stop Career Centers
• Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET)
• Day Labor
• Homeless Veteran’s Reintegration Program (HVRP)
5. Long-term Recommendations

For example:

- State and local policy
- Program development
- Access to mainstream services
- Job placement
- Staff training
- Cross-system linkages
- Funding