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THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT



FLEXIBLE RESOURCES, DATA-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS:
USING HMIS AND HEARTH TO END HOMELESSNESS

Prevention Strategies in Rural Areas





Moderators:

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Panelists:

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Learning Objectives

- Learn and share strategies that increase the capacity of rural communities to implement effective homeless prevention strategies
- Improve planning and support of pioneering developments that can be implemented in rural localities





Rural America – Changing Landscapes

- Rural communities comprise 75 percent of U.S. land mass, 17% of total population.
- 1 in every 6 Americans live in rural area
- Today, only 6.5% rural labor force involved in farming
- Shifting Federal Attention, increased focus on specific needs of rural America; lessons learned from HPRP funds now spreading across urban and rural regions.
- Sources: *Rural Homelessness*, [Toward Understanding Homelessness: The 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research](#) and [Strengthening the Rural Economy - The Current State of Rural America](#) www.whitehouse.gov





Rural-specific Challenges

- Community perceptions about homelessness
- Geographic disbursement of rural service systems/resources
- Resource constraints – Organizational capacity limit
- Difficulty creating regional leadership structures and regional networks
- Limited access to transportation and services





GAO Rural Homelessness Findings July 2010

- Comptroller General of the United States conducted a study to examine homelessness and homelessness assistance in rural areas and rural communities to outline:
 - Numbers and need of rural homeless
 - Existing rural services and gaps
 - Differences in funding streams between urban and rural areas





NAEH Report: Critical Success Factors in High Performing Rural Areas

- “Connector” - person who maintains high level understanding and details of activities, and policy changes
- “Champion” for ending homelessness - has trust, respect, skills to build relationships inside/outside homeless system
- High level stakeholder leadership in CoC planning process
- Coordinated implementation strategies that reinforce inclusion and collaboration across agencies / programs
- Willingness to think “outside of the box” to achieve goals





Presentations: Successful Prevention Strategies in Five Rural CoC Regions

- Maine Balance of State Continuum of Care
- Utah Balance of State Continuum of Care
- Wood, Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky (WSOS) Continuum of Care
- Lancaster County Pennsylvania Continuum of Care
- Ohio 17 Rural Continuums of Care





Presentations in four domains of effective prevention strategies:

1. Collaborative policy-making leadership body
2. Centralized referral and assessment system
3. Shared belief/values that prevention and ending homelessness is a critical priority
4. Cross-agency collaboration to interconnect innovative practices and standardize service delivery





Utah - Leadership

- Collaborative group of relevant decision makers critical
- Chaired by local political leader (mayor, county commissioner)
- Includes business, government and non profit service providers
- Develop a shared focus and project to address local needs





Clallam County WA - Leadership

- State legislation requiring local Ten Year Plans- Governor, State Interagency Council and Dept of Commerce
- Local plan approved & adopted by county commissioners, assent from city councils
- Implementation task force includes business, government, non profit service providers, housing authorities
- Strong commitment to Ending Homelessness





FLEXIBLE RESOURCES, DATA-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS:
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Ohio BOSCOC - Leadership



Ohio

Department of
Development



Coalition on Homelessness
and Housing in Ohio

COHHIO





Maine - Leadership

- Statewide Homeless Council
- 3 Regional Homeless Councils
- 3 Continuums of Care
- Working Group: Housing Finance Agency and Health & Human Service Agency





Lancaster County: Leadership

- Political “buy-in”/leadership from county officials - Recognize homelessness & prevention a “county-wide” issue
- Co-chaired by the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners and a local business leader
 - bi-partisan support and shared vision for ending homelessness
 - business leader recognized throughout the county
- Diverse group of leaders with common focus
 - County government and United Way provide staff support





Utah - Centralized Assessment

- Use 2-1-1 as initial contact point
- Build a standardized assessment process across a Continuum for focused projects identified by local committee
- Identify roles and responsibilities of non profit and government agencies in the assessment process





Clallam County, WA - Centralized Assessment

- Walk-in Housing Resource Centers in all three cities
- Standardized intake and assessment of housing vulnerability and eligibility, focus on prevention, rapid re-housing, proportionality of services
- Community and mainstream resources
- No wrong door to assistance





Ohio BOSCOOC - Centralized Assessment

- BOSCOOC HMIS System
- Rapid Re-Housing Ohio Demo Project





Maine – Centralized Assessment

- Common Housing Application
- New Plan for Funding Shelters: Resource Centers in Key Locations





Lancaster County: Centralized Assessment

- Central call in center thru United Way LINC
 - Lancaster Information Center expanded with HPRP
- Developed single screening/assessment tool for all prevention services
 - Targets prevention/resources to meet individual needs
- Partner with two recognized social service agencies
 - Community Action Program/Tabor Community Services





Utah - Collaboration Across Boundaries

- Shared vision of local committee and support from political leader key
- Focus on community benefits to overall goal and tailored to audience being addressed
- Measure Results
- Be Consistent in messaging





Clallam County, WA - Collaboration Across Boundaries

- Creating common vision, approach; consolidate funding across multiple providers around “Housing First”
- Fidelity Study performed by state
- HMIS Measurements / Report Results
- Strong ties to landlords/property managers
- Innovative partnerships to make projects work (Whatcom County/Family Therapeutic Court)





Maine - Collaboration Across Distance/Agency Boundaries

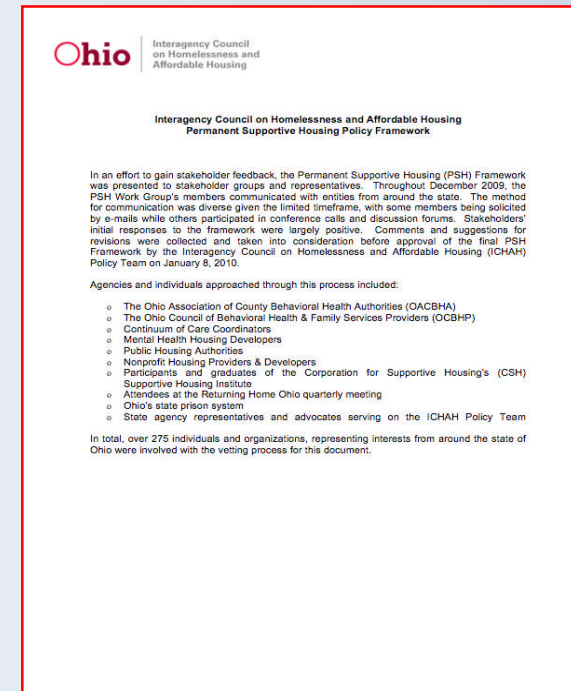
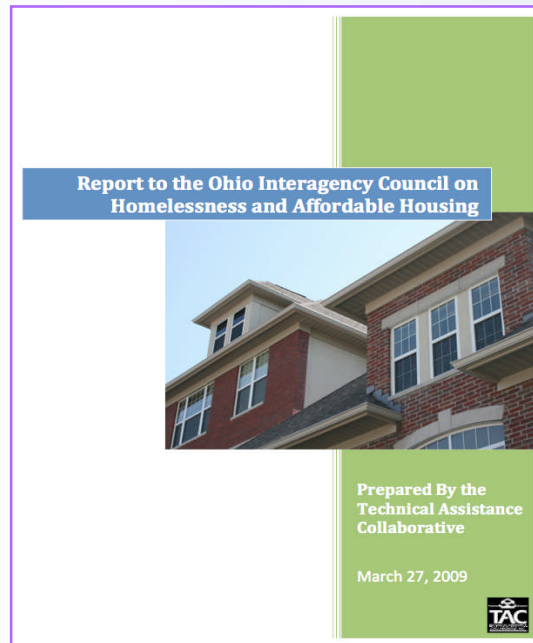
- Decisions About Use of HPRP Resources
- Two Target Groups
- Use of HPRP Resources in Rural Areas -- Allocating Factors, i.e. which areas receive funding and how much
 - Best Practice Examples from Rural Counties





Ohio BOSCOC - Shared Belief

- Ohio Interagency Council on Homelessness and Affordable Housing





Lancaster County: Shared Vision

- Basic shared principals part of the messaging
 - Shift from system that “shelters and manages” to system that “prevents, diverts, rapidly re-houses”
 - County wide issue translates to county wide strategies
 - Everyone citizen in the county has a stake
- Develop clear communication strategy to relay the message across a rural community
 - Develop the “elevator speech” with key message
 - Tweak presentation to fit the audience/key targets
 - Identify who takes the message to whom





Maine - Shared Beliefs

- Our job will be done when the last person is housed. We know what to do and how to do it We end and prevent homelessness as resources become available
- Leadership from the top, political capital, and grassroots passion/frontline expertise are equally important
- Rural Cost Study





Utah - Champion and Connector

- Local areas need a “go to” person to staff the initiative
- Connectors are critical in operationalizing various aspects of the initiative and bridge gaps between non profits and government agencies
- Must build sustainable models for implementation





Clallam County, WA - Champion and Connector

- Recognized, active partner to talk about the plan, report results to government, build new partnerships
- Housing Authority critical “Champion” to further goals of Ten Year Plan.
- Champion and connector work effectively to increase resources /capacity throughout county





Ohio BOSCO - Champion/Connector



**Trainings &
Technical
Assistance**

Advocacy

**Information
Dissemination**

**Systems
Change**





Lancaster County: Champion and Connector

- The Champions- (Co-Chairs of Council)
 - Message out across systems, People trust & listen to
 - Large circle(s) of influence
- The Connector –
 - “go to person” builds bridges/connections across systems
 - Knowledge base person – stays on top of best practice and research
 - Connects with strategic partners in rural areas
 - Community Homeless Advisor Position created by Commissioners to play this role in Lancaster County





Questions/Comments?





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