

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS STATE PLAN TO END FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

A Report of the Policy Academy on Family Homelessness

Massachusetts Family Policy Academy

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ENDING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

To the Reader:

Forty-five years ago, President John F. Kennedy challenged this nation to put a man on the moon within ten years. That notion was beyond much of the thinking and science at that time. Nevertheless, just eight years later, a sufficiently resourced collaborative effort of government agencies, private contractors and Congress resulted in an answer to the challenge and achieving President Kennedy's goal almost two years ahead of schedule.

Now, thirty-seven years after landing on the moon, our challenge is closer to home – ending family homelessness within the next ten years.

Today in America one out of every ten children live in poverty. It has been estimated that as many as 20,000 Massachusetts children will experience a housing emergency or actual homelessness.¹ The average age of these children is eight.

“A growing body of medical and public health evidence indicates that non-medical factors, such as housing, profoundly influence child health and well-being... A child's physical living environment, comprised of the housing and neighborhood in which she resides, has a crucial impact on health and well-being.”²

Homeless children and those living in poor housing conditions experience significantly higher rates of asthma.³ Children with asthma require more frequent emergency room visits and hospital admissions due to their asthma.⁴ Yet, 27 percent have no health insurance⁵ and are, therefore, most likely being covered by the state's free care pool. In addition, asthma is a leading cause of lost school and workdays.⁶ However, homeless children face educational challenges as well.

Within a year, 41 percent of homeless children will attend two different schools, 28 percent of homeless children will attend three or more different schools.⁷ This school mobility leads to lower achievement.⁸ Homeless children are set back academically on average 4-6 months with each change of school.⁹ In addition, at any given time, at least 20 percent of homeless children are not attending school.¹⁰

When they are attending school, the challenges facing our public school systems can be difficult and expensive to address. First, it is highly likely that the children are hungry since homeless children go hungry at twice the rate of other children.¹¹

Second, there are educational challenges: 18 percent of homeless children have developmental delays – four times the rate for other children; children who are homeless are diagnosed with learning disabilities such as

¹ UMASS Boston, McCormack Institute, Situation Critical, Report 2000, Meeting the Housing Needs of Lower Income Massachusetts Residents, 2000

² Child Health Impact Working Group, June 2005

³ Weinreb L, Goldberg R, Bassuk E, Perloff J. Determinants of health and service use patterns in homeless and low income housed children. *Pediatrics*, 1998

⁴ McLean DE, Bowen S, Drezner K, Rowe A, Sherman P, Schroeder S et al. Asthma among homeless children – Undercounting and under treating the underserved. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 2004

⁵ Burt et al. Homelessness: Programs and the people they serve: Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients, a technical report prepared for the Interagency Council on the Homelessness, 1999

⁶ Matte TD, Jacobs DE. Housing and Health – current issues and implications for research and programs. *J Urban Health*, 2000

⁷ Homeless Children: America's New Outcasts, National Center on Family Homelessness, 1999

⁸ United States General Accounting Office, *Elementary School Children: Many change schools frequently, harming their education*, Washington, DC, 1994

⁹ Bowman, National Center for Homeless Education, Meeting the Educational Needs of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness – Pre-K to 12, 2005

¹⁰ Homeless Children: America's New Outcasts, National Center on Family Homelessness, 1999

¹¹ Burt et al. *Ibid.*

dyslexia or speech and language impediments twice as often as other children; and children who are homeless are twice as likely to repeat a grade as other children.¹²

Behavioral challenges exhibit themselves in that 16 percent of preschoolers and 36 percent of school-age children exhibit behavioral problems including severe aggression, hostility and delinquent behavior. The experience physical and sexual abuse at 2-3 times the rate of other children. It is not surprising that 12 percent of preschoolers and 47 percent of school-age children who are homeless have anxiety, depression, withdrawal and other clinical problems.¹³

Finally, while individually these statistics should cause concern, together they present huge financial challenges to local school systems in the form of remedial services and demands on the special education services. The average cost of a special needs student in Massachusetts is \$14,592. Of those costs, 70.5 percent (\$10,284) are for special education expenditures. Special education services average 18.6 percent of school district's total budget in MA.¹⁴

Failure to address homelessness will continue to cost school districts scarce resources.

The current "sheltering" approach to solving homelessness has not been successful. It has not solved the issue and has caused unintentional adverse side effects. "Side effects of the current system are increased depression among parents and children, an increased nomadic tendency, an increase in poor academic performance and an increased chance the family will be split up," said Marybeth Shinn, PhD, New York University, as she privately spoke with the Massachusetts Policy Academy.

Dr. Shinn challenged us to think about what Massachusetts' goal was for ending family homelessness. "If the goal is just about ending homelessness, then no services are needed. If the goal is self-sufficiency, then you will need services."

The Policy Academy unanimously agrees that ending family homelessness is about helping each family move closer to self-sufficiency by reaching their full potential. We recognize that asset-based strategies may offer solutions by building the individual and family assets of our homeless population. Sound housing policy should reflect not only economic and environmental factors; it should consider desirable child health outcomes as well.¹⁵

Responding to the challenge of ending family homelessness with nothing more than a "bricks and mortar" solution will fail to address these side effects and will therefore perpetuate family instability, contribute to stubborn academic achievement gaps, and miss an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty.

Forty-five years ago, President Kennedy asked us to think boldly and be innovative in our approach. The result was putting a man on the moon. We need to think just as boldly today and be as innovative in our approach to ending family homelessness in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Policy Academy Team
April 2006

¹² Burt et al. Ibid.

¹³ Burt et al. Ibid.

¹⁴ MA Department of Education website, [School Finance: Statistical Comparisons](#) (FY04)

¹⁵ Child Health Impact Working Group, June 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This “State Plan to End Family Homelessness” resulted from work by the Policy Academy on Family Homelessness to fulfill its vision of ending family homelessness in the Commonwealth within ten years.

The Policy Academy includes representatives from private charities and foundations, the medical community, state executive offices and departments, and the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness in a collaborative effort to address both the critical issue of family homelessness in Massachusetts and the need to increase access to permanent housing and mainstream resources. The report is structured to address priorities through project management-based implementation strategies, including action steps, benchmark reporting, and projected completion dates.

Priority One is to create and facilitate access to permanent housing through the completion of an inventory of existing housing resources, developing methods of tenancy preservation and stabilization, identification and removal of barriers to housing production and access, and adoption of new models of housing subsidization and production.

Priority Two is to develop and implement a tenancy establishment and maintenance strategy that will engage localities in prevention and stabilization efforts through uniform needs-assessment tools and housing-crisis intervention teams.

Priority Three is to design a coordinated responsibility and accountability system of service delivery resulting in better access to mainstream and specialized services through better identification and definition of eligibility standards and requirements, adoption of “no wrong door” policies, funding development, and efforts to better inform families and youth of services and benefits for which they may be eligible.

Priority Four is to address the need for standardized data collection and management, development of a comprehensive inventory of data elements and resources, identification of barriers to good data collection, improved cooperation statewide in data management, cost-benefit analysis, scientific research, and program assessment.

Priority Five is to engage those who support the Policy Academy’s efforts in both the public and the private sectors, in all professional and vocational fields, and at all levels of government, in the decision-making, strategies, and promotion of these efforts.

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PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW OF THIS REPORT

This report was prepared by the Massachusetts Policy Academy on Family Homelessness and is intended as a comprehensive plan to end family homelessness in the Commonwealth. The Policy Academy's vision is to end family homelessness by implementing a coordinated plan of prevention that would expand access to permanent affordable housing, mainstream services and other supports that move the family closer to economic self-sufficiency.

The Commonwealth's five priorities and their related implementation strategies, as recommended by the Policy Academy, include concrete action plans and necessary outcomes to achieve the ultimate objective. Each Action step identifies:

- Agency/owner, who will assume the lead for the task;
- Outcomes, which are the direct result of the task;
- Benchmarks, which represent the approximate mid-point for the task; and,
- Timeframe, which is the estimated completion date for the task.

This plan, while focused on families, will dovetail with and complement Massachusetts' Chronic Homelessness ten-year plan.

The priorities and strategies are as follows:

PRIORITY ONE: To Create and Facilitate Access to More Permanent Housing Opportunities for Homeless Families/Youth

Strategy 1.1: Develop and understand a baseline of existing housing resources.

Strategy 1.2: Develop preservation/stabilization strategies for existing housing stock (family public housing, project-based, private, tenant-based, expiring use).

Strategy 1.3: Identify and remove barriers to housing production and access, e.g., zoning, permits, legislation, cost and time.

Strategy 1.4: Investigate and adopt new models to apply in Massachusetts, in both housing subsidy and production.

PRIORITY TWO: To Implement an Early Warning System, i.e. Prevention and Stabilization Strategies That Will Enable Families to Retain or Secure Stable Housing

Strategy 2.1: Engage community in prevention and stabilization efforts.

Strategy 2.2: Create Intervention Teams.

Strategy 2.3: Create uniform needs assessment tools.

PRIORITY THREE: To Design a Family-Centric Model Focused on Family Stabilization and Economic Self-Sufficiency to Access Mainstream and Specialized Services and Coordinate Responsibility and Accountability for Service Delivery

Strategy 3.1: Define the continuum of service providers, including eligibility, for homeless and at-risk families/youth.

Strategy 3.2: Promote and adopt "no wrong door" policies for accessing local services by homeless families.

Strategy 3.3: Develop coordinated funding strategies for mainstream services

Strategy 3.4: Maximize homeless families'/youth's understanding of services and benefits.

PRIORITY FOUR: To Improve and Standardize Data Collection, Coordination of Data Management and Reporting on Homeless Families/Youth

Strategy 4.1: Create comprehensive inventory of data elements and data resources: people, programs, and resources.

Strategy 4.2: Identify and address gaps, redundancies and barriers in data collection

Strategy 4.3: Improve coordination of data management to maximize program effectiveness

Strategy 4.4: Develop specific information on the costs of homelessness and the cost-effectiveness of the solutions

Strategies 4.5: Promote ongoing assessment and evaluation of service effectiveness

Strategies 4.6: Promote research that evaluates program design and measures outcomes of homeless strategies for families by conducting longitudinal studies.

PRIORITY FIVE: To Develop and Sustain Strong Leadership to End Family Homelessness

Strategy 5.1: Identify and engage stakeholders that support the Policy Academy objectives, e.g., the legislature, courts, private philanthropy, advocates, providers, consumer organizations, academia and business.

Strategy 5.2: Support Agency heads and other representatives of the Administration in the implementation of the plan.

Strategy 5.3: Approach the Legislature to encourage flexible funding tied to reduced reliance on shelter for services and housing for the homeless, including programs that fund public and private non-profit agencies.

Strategy 5.4: Encourage local/regional adaptation of the PA plan by local/regional elected officials.

Strategy 5.5: Promote awareness of and provide assistance for the use of existing resources (include 40R, 40S, and 40B).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AG	Attorney General
Building Blocks Coalition	A coalition of housing advocates that works together on state housing legislation
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
CHAPA	Citizens' Housing and Planning Association
Chapter 40B	State statute, which enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals (ZBAs) to approve affordable housing developments under flexible rules if at least 20-25% of the units have long-term affordability restrictions.
Chapter 40R	State statute, which encourages smart growth and increased housing production in Massachusetts.
Chapter 40S	State statute, which provides a "school cost insurance policy" for local communities passing Smart Growth Districts under the provisions of Chapter 40R, indemnifying them against school costs that exceed the amounts available from increased property and excise tax revenue generated by new housing units in smart growth districts.
DHCD	Department of Housing and Community Development
DOE	Department of Education
DTA	Department of Transitional Assistance
DWD	Department of Workforce Development
EEC	Department of Early Education and Care
EOHHS	Executive Office of Health and Human Services
GBREB	Greater Boston Real Estate Board
HBAM	Home Builders Association of Massachusetts
LHA	Local Housing Authority
MACDC	Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations
MassHousing	Provider of affordable housing resources in Massachusetts
MassNAHRO	Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
MBHP	Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership
MBHP	Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership
MHFA	Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency
MHSA	Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance
MHP	Massachusetts Housing Partnership

MICHH

Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness

One Family

A not-for-profit organization devoted to ending family homelessness in Massachusetts

UWMB

United Way of Massachusetts Bay

Virtual Gateway

The Virtual Gateway provides a single point of access for providers and consumers to conduct business with EOHHS and learn about EOHHS programs and services.

Massachusetts Action Plan

Priority One: To Create and Facilitate Access to More Permanent Housing Opportunities for Homeless Families/Youth.

Strategy 1.1: Develop and understand a baseline of existing housing resources for Homeless Families/Youth.

Action steps:

- a) Create inventory of existing housing resources
 1. *Agency/owner:* DHCD
 2. *Outcomes:* Inventory of all housing stock
 3. *Benchmarks:*
 - Inventory of all public housing stock by June 2007
 - Inventory of all project-based housing by June 2007
 - Inventory of all expiring use housing by June 2007
 - Inventory of all tenant-based housing by June 2007
 - Inventory of all private housing by December 2008
 4. *Timeframe:* December 2008

- b) Identify gaps in housing resources
 1. *Agency/owner:* MICHH Task Group
 2. *Outcomes:* Inventory of all gaps by category
 3. *Benchmarks:* Inventory of housing gaps in two inventory categories June 2008
 4. *Timeframe:* March 2009

- c) Determine how to fill the gaps in housing resources
 1. *Agency/owner:* MICHH Task Group
 2. *Outcomes:* Plan to fill the gaps by category
 3. *Benchmarks:* Plan to fill the gaps in two inventory categories by June 2008
 4. *Timeframe:* December 2009

- d) Conduct an impact analysis on the loss of housing stock on family homelessness
 1. *Agency/owner:* An appointment from the Interagency Council
 2. *Outcomes:* Evidence, analysis and recommendations
 3. *Benchmarks:* Complete a preliminary analysis of potential housing stock loss by December 2007
 4. *Timeframe:* June 2009

Strategy 1.2: Develop preservation/stabilization strategies for existing housing stock available to families (family public housing, project-based, private, tenant-based, expiring use).

Action steps:

- a) Develop preservation/stabilization strategy for existing family public housing; cost analysis
 1. *Agency/owner:* DHCD, CHAPA, MassNAHRO

2. *Outcomes*: Inventory of capital and operating needs. Better understanding of regulatory vs. legislative relief
 3. *Benchmarks*: Target percentage for pilot with temporary voucher support by December 2007
 4. *Timeframe*: December 2008
- b) Develop preservation/stabilization strategy for existing project-based, affordable housing; cost analysis
1. *Agency/owner*: DHCD, MHP, MHFA, MACDC, CHAPA
 2. *Outcomes*: Preservation/stabilization strategy for each type of expiring use contract
 3. *Benchmarks*: Analysis of expiring use, including risk assessment for prepayment or nonparticipation by private landlords by June 2008
 4. *Timeframe*: June 2009
- c) Develop preservation/stabilization strategy for existing tenant-based subsidies; cost analysis
1. *Agency/owner*: DHCD, MBHP, CHAPA, MassNAHRO
 2. *Outcomes*: Preservation/stabilization strategy for each type of tenant-based subsidy
 3. *Benchmarks*: Assessment of historical trends and development of a plan to retain existing tenant-based subsidy programs by subsidy type by September 2008
 4. *Timeframe*: September 2009

Strategy 1.3: Identify and remove barriers to housing production and access, e.g., zoning, permits, legislation, cost and time.

Action steps:

- a) Conduct an analysis to identify barriers to housing production and impediments to housing access
 1. *Agency/owner*: One Family, CHAPA, Building Blocks Coalition, HBAM
 2. *Outcomes*: Deeper understanding of alternative models
 3. *Benchmarks*: Research shared with Interagency Council and Legislature. Identification of regulatory barriers to housing production by June 2009.
 4. *Timeframe*: June 2010
- b) Review analysis of barriers to housing production, and adopt recommendations to mitigate obstacles
 1. *Agency/owner*: DHCD, CHAPA
 2. *Outcomes*: A plan to remove barriers through regulatory change, legislation, incentives and enforcement
 3. *Benchmarks*: Preliminary plan to address the removal of barriers to housing production by January 2010
 4. *Timeframe*: September 2010
- c) Review analysis of impediments to housing access, and adopt recommendations to mitigate impediments
 1. *Agency/owner*: DHCD, DTA, Fair Housing Advisory Working Group
 2. *Outcomes*: A plan to remove impediments; Better access to existing inventory, including streamlined application process for affordable housing
 3. *Benchmarks*: Preliminary plan to address the impediments to housing access by March 2010
 4. *Timeframe*: December 2010

- d) Promote awareness and enforcement of Fair Housing laws and practices.
 - 1. *Agency/owner*: DHCD, DTA, Fair Housing Advisory Working Group, AG
 - 2. *Outcomes*: Increase awareness and stricter enforcement
 - 3. *Benchmarks*: Conduct 4 of 9 regional public meetings by January 2008 to increase awareness of and enforcement of Fair Housing laws and practices
 - 4. *Timeframe*: December 2009

Strategy 1.4: Investigate and adopt new “family-focused” housing models to apply in Massachusetts, in both housing subsidy and production.

Action steps:

- a) Research national best practices of alternative housing subsidy and production models
 - 1. *Agency/owner*: One Family, CHAPA, Building Blocks Coalition, DHCD, MassHousing
 - 2. *Outcomes*: Develop models of alternative housing subsidy and production models
 - 3. *Benchmarks*: Complete preliminary draft of alternative models by June 2008
 - 4. *Timeframe*: June 2010

Priority Two: To Implement an Early Warning System, i.e. Prevention and Stabilization Strategies That Will Enable Families to Retain or Secure Stable Housing

Strategy 2.1: Engage community in prevention of family homelessness and stabilization efforts.

Action steps:

- a) Identify stakeholders, which may include health clinics, public/subsidized housing, LHAs, private landlords, public schools, One-Stop Career Centers, early education and care, utility companies, Food Banks, courts, tenancy preservation programs, etc.
 1. *Agency/owner:* DTA
 2. *Outcomes:*
 - List of agencies engaged in homelessness prevention and stabilization by region;
 - Educate stakeholders on the value of prevention and stabilization interventions for families
 3. *Benchmarks:* Identify possible stakeholders in 4 of 9 regions by June 2008
 4. *Timeframe:* December 2009

Strategy 2.2: Create Intervention Teams.

Action steps:

- a) Identify an agency or agencies that will provide intensive case management to ensure homeless families/youth are receiving the services that they need with a focus on rapid intervention with children including an emphasis on meeting their needs for early education, and care, school and after-school based programs
 1. *Agency/owner:* MICHH
 2. *Outcomes:*
 - Regionally-based experts identified to support intervention teams
 - Family-centric intervention model developed
 3. *Benchmarks:*
 - Measure the number of families that are prevented from losing their housing on a regular basis
 - The number of parents and children experiencing increased personal stabilization as a result of the services
 4. *Timeframe:* December 2008
- b) Assemble Intervention Teams
 1. *Agency/owner:* MICHH
 2. *Outcomes:* Creation of multiple regional organizations of community-based stakeholders
 3. *Benchmarks:* Create 4 of 9 regional organizations by December 2009
 4. *Timeframe:* December 2011
- c) Develop and implement a geographic mapping methodology
 1. *Agency/owner:* DTA, One Family
 2. *Outcomes:*
 - Mapping will indicate where homelessness originates
 - Resources will be targeted for homelessness prevention and intervention services to those areas
 3. *Benchmarks:* Chart how effective we are at prevention services in 4 of 9 regions by December 2009
 4. *Timeframe:* December 2011

- d) Cross-train Intervention Teams on the various prevention/stabilization resources available for families and their children
 - 1. *Agency/owner*: MICHH
 - 2. *Outcomes*:
 - Sufficiently broad, well-informed, cohesive team
 - Accountability for referrals through follow-up services
 - 3. *Benchmarks*: 4 out of 9 regional Intervention Teams trained by June 2010
 - 4. *Timeframe*: June 2012

- e) Develop a comprehensive service plan evaluative tool to include children's services
 - 1. *Agency/owner*: MICHH (Research & Development)
 - 2. *Outcomes*: Creation of an Evaluation Matrix
 - 3. *Benchmarks*: Field test preliminary matrix for reliability and accuracy
 - 4. *Timeframe*: December 2010

Strategy 2.3: Create uniform needs assessment tools.

Action steps:

- a) Develop and adopt uniform needs assessment tools to accommodate both community-based agencies, state agencies, schools and other relevant entities in assessing among other things, the financial, educational, and emotional needs of all individuals in the family
 - 1. *Agency/owner*: EOHHS
 - 2. *Outcomes*: Uniformity of prevention and stabilization assessment
 - 3. *Benchmarks*: Field test uniform assessment tools for reliability and validity by June 2009
 - 4. *Timeframe*: June 2010

- b) Create a web-based application for uniform needs assessment
 - 1. *Agency owner*: MICHH
 - 2. *Outcome*: Deployment of a web-based application for uniform needs assessment data collection
 - 3. *Benchmark*: User acceptance testing by February 2009
 - 4. *Timeframe*: December 2009

Priority Three: To Design a Family-Centric Model to Access Mainstream and Specialized Services and Coordinate Responsibility and Accountability for Service Delivery.

Strategy 3.1: Define the continuum of multi-disciplinary service providers, including eligibility, for homeless and at-risk families, youth and children.

Action steps:

- a) Inventory of all resources, providers and stakeholders, including early education and care, Head Start, and after school care for children and youth (leverage work done by DTA-DMH Interagency Workgroup on Chronic Homelessness Task Groups)
 1. *Agency/owner:* EOHHS
 2. *Outcomes:* A comprehensive inventory of services and providers across the state, broken down by locale
 3. *Benchmarks:* An inventory of services and providers in 4 of 9 regions across the state by June 2008
 4. *Timeframe:* June 2009

- b) Create service delivery linkages between intake and referral agencies throughout the Commonwealth.
 1. *Agency/owner:* MICHH
 2. *Outcomes:* Established service delivery relationships between identified stakeholders by geographic area
 3. *Benchmarks:* develop 50 percent of service delivery area linkages by February 2009
 4. *Timeframe:* February 2010

Strategy 3.2: Promote and adopt “no wrong door” policies for accessing local services by homeless families/youth.

Action steps:

- a) Research national best practices for “no wrong door” policies and practices for common entry points such as health, education, childcare, workforce and mental health.
 1. *Agency/owner:* MICHH
 2. *Outcomes:* Identify and adopt the “no wrong door” best practices
 3. *Benchmarks:*
 - Identify national best practices for single point entries by June 2008
 - Adopt and implement the best practices by stakeholders by December 2008
 4. *Timeframe:* December 2008

- b) Develop a more universal information and referral system, e.g., “211”, beehive.org, the Virtual Gateway and cross-training for providers and consumers at the state and local level.
 1. *Agency/owner:* UWMB, One Family, EOHHS, DWD, DOE, EEC
 2. *Outcomes:* More and better quality information available to those in need; Comprehensive electronic inventory of human services and workforce development services with the capacity to be easily updated
 3. *Benchmarks:* Soft and Hard launches of 211 starting July 2006, MA beehive.org starting January 2007, and additional modules of Virtual Gateway starting June 2007
 4. *Timeframe:* December 2007 and ongoing

- c) 211 project rollout
 1. *Agency/owner:* UWMB
 2. *Outcomes:* Comprehensive electronic inventory of human services with the capacity to be easily updated and accessed with ease by the public (by dialing 211)
 3. *Benchmarks:* July 2006 rollout
 4. *Timeframe:* December 2005

- d) Create a “101” training through e-learning tools and “train the trainer” models to provide front-line workers across agency and CBO programs on the services available for families experiencing homelessness or in need of prevention services.
 1. *Agency/owner:* UWMB, One Family, EOHHS, DWD, DOE, EEC
 2. *Outcomes:* Training capacity and increased, timely referrals for customers between state and local services.
 3. *Benchmarks:* E-learning or training product completed.
 4. *Timeframe:* March 2007

Strategy 3.3: Develop coordinated funding strategies for mainstream services.

Action step:

- a) Research best practices from around the country and in Massachusetts to coordinate funding to implement programs that best respond to homeless families’/youth’s needs, including adult education and training, early education and care and after-school care.
 1. *Agency/owner:* MICHH
 2. *Outcomes:*
 - Identify, evaluate and recommend best practices for use in Massachusetts
 - Improved coordination between funding sources and service providers
 3. *Benchmarks:* Identification of models for implementation by January 2008.
 4. *Timeframe:* 2008

- b) Adopt new and innovative models that promote family stabilization and long-term self-sufficiency, including asset-based strategies, e.g. individual development accounts, Earned Income Tax Credits, financial education, etc.
 - a. *Agency/owner:* MICHH
 - b. *Outcomes:*
 - Families will move into the economic mainstream and closer to self-sufficiency
 - Increase likelihood of poverty cycle being broken and generational poverty reduced
 - c. *Benchmarks:* Creation and growth of research based models by 2008.
 - d. *Timeframe:* 2008

Strategy 3.4: Maximize homeless families’ and youth’s knowledge of services and benefits.

Action step:

- a) Inform homeless families/youth of all state, federal and philanthropic grants, benefits and entitlements for which they are eligible.
 1. *Agency/owner:* MICHH

2. *Outcomes*: Instructional material of available resources for homeless families and youth
3. *Benchmarks*: Measure the increase in inquiries on 211, beehive.org, Virtual Gateway, etc.
4. *Timeframe*: December 2007

Priority Four: To Improve and Standardize Data Collection, Coordination of Data Management and Reporting on Homeless Families/Youth

Strategy 4.1: Create comprehensive inventory of data elements and data resources: people, programs, resources and outcomes.

Action Steps:

- a) Collect and inventory data elements from each stakeholder, including identifying data elements, frequency with which it is collected, and who collects/owns/controls it
 1. *Agency/owner:* Subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes:* Inventory of data elements and a process for updating that inventory
 3. *Benchmarks:* Progress report from each stakeholder by September 2007
 4. *Timeframe:* June 2008

- b) Identify methods by which data is stored and accessed
 1. *Agency/owner:* Subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes:* Report of data storage and access from each stakeholder
 3. *Benchmarks:* Progress report from each stakeholder by September 2007
 4. *Timeframe:* June 2008

Strategy 4.2: Identify and address gaps, redundancies and barriers in data collection

Action Steps

- a) Convene stakeholders to conduct a comparative analysis of data and identify strengths and/or deficiencies
 1. *Agency/owner:* Subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes:* Plan which will address deficiencies and advance strengths
 3. *Benchmarks:* Quarterly meetings beginning October 2008
 4. *Timeframe:* October 2008

- b) Develop specific actions to leverage strengths and/or address deficiencies
 1. *Agency/owner:* Subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes:* Comprehensive set of data that meets business requirements
 3. *Benchmarks:* Remediation of deficiencies in data availability or collection
 4. *Timeframe:* June 2010

Strategy 4.3 Data Coordination: Improve coordination of data management to maximize program effectiveness

Action Steps

- a) Eliminate barriers to data sharing
 1. *Agency/owner:* EOHHS, Subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes:* Policies and procedures for accessing various data sets; effects of data requests and uses
 3. *Benchmarks:* Progress report from each stakeholder by June 2008
 4. *Timeframe:* June 2009

- b) Make resources available to facilitate and standardize collection, storage and access of data elements
 1. *Agency/owner*: EOHHS
 2. *Outcomes*: Policies and procedures, documented data collection methodology
 3. *Benchmarks*: Annual audit of users and purposes
 4. *Timeframe*: January 2011
- c) Create data dictionary
 1. *Agency/owner*: Subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*: Common understanding of each data element
 3. *Benchmarks*: Have a partial data dictionary completed by December 2009
 4. *Timeframe*: September 2010
- d) Establish a universal information format
 1. *Agency/owner*: EOHHS, Subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*: Universal information format and integrated reporting
 3. *Benchmarks*: Progress report from each stakeholder by March 2010
 4. *Timeframe*: September 2010
- e) Identify sponsor(s) to support data collection, coordination and reporting
 1. *Agency/owner*: MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*: Dedicated, funded full-time employees/leadership
 3. *Benchmarks*: Progress report from each stakeholder by July 2008
 4. *Timeframe*: December 2009
- f) Develop process for stakeholder access for data use
 1. *Agency/owner*: subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*: Policies and procedures
 3. *Benchmarks*: 50% of stakeholders accessing data by January 2010
 4. *Timeframe*: December 2010

Strategy 4.4: Data Reporting: Develop specific information on the costs of homelessness and the cost-effectiveness of the solutions

Action steps:

- a) Identify data elements needed to measure the cost of homelessness, the cost of solutions/programs, and the return on investment (ROI), including but not limited to health, education, and remedial services
 1. *Agency/owner*: Subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*: Updated inventory elements, standardized methodologies for ROI calculation
 3. *Benchmarks*: Progress report from each stakeholder by June 2008
 4. *Timeframe*: January 2011
- b) Develop reports that link cost of services for homeless families and their children
 1. *Agency/owner*: Subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*: Standardized methodology for tracking cost of services
 3. *Benchmarks*: Progress report from each stakeholder by June 2009
 4. *Timeframe*: January 2012

- c) Create group to reach out to stakeholders about reporting needs
 1. *Agency/owner*: Subgroup of the MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*: Create demand for access to analytic products
 3. *Benchmarks*: Progress report from each stakeholder by June 2008
 4. *Timeframe*: January 2011

Strategy 4.5: Management reporting: Promote ongoing assessment, evaluation and management of service effectiveness and in-service training

Action steps:

- a) Identify key indicators to measure outcomes including the well-being of children, e.g. social/emotional/physical health, academic performance, etc.
 1. *Agency/owner*: MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*: Creation of a key indicator listing
 3. *Benchmarks*: Preliminary list of key indicators by June 2008
 4. *Timeframe*: January 2009

- b) Create standardized program reports to measure resource utilization and outcomes as they pertain to families and children for the purposes of both program evaluation and management.
 1. *Agency/owner*: EOHHS, Subgroup of MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*: Standardized measurement methodologies
 3. *Benchmarks*: Initial production of reports by March 2009
 4. *Timeframe*: June 2010

- c) Develop reports that track homeless families and youth through mainstream services that are provided by multiple agencies for evaluation and training purposes
 1. *Agency/owner*: EOHHS, Subgroup of the MICHH, DWD, DOE, EEC
 2. *Outcomes*: Standardized reporting methodologies
 3. *Benchmarks*: Initial production of reports by June 2010
 4. *Timeframe*: December 2011

Strategy 4.6: Promote research that evaluates program design and measures outcomes of homeless strategies for families by conducting longitudinal studies.

- a) Continue to gather research on state and national homeless initiatives
 1. *Agency/owner*: One Family
 2. *Outcomes*: Deeper understanding of alternative models
 3. *Benchmarks*: Research shared with Interagency and Legislature.
 4. *Timeframe*: June 2013

Priority Five: To Develop and Sustain Strong Leadership to End Family Homelessness

Strategy 5.1: Identify and engage stakeholders that support the Policy Academy objectives, e.g., the legislature, courts, private philanthropy, advocates, providers, consumer organizations, academia and business.

Action steps:

- a) Create a diverse team to carry out the engagement process at the state and local levels
 1. *Agency/owner:* One Family, UWMB
 2. *Outcomes:* Broad coalition speaking with unified message
 3. *Benchmarks:* Growth of members supportive of system change
 4. *Timeframe:* August 2007

- b) Educate potential stakeholders about PA plan
 1. *Agency/owner:* Policy Academy members, MICHH, state agencies and other stakeholders
 2. *Outcomes:*
 - A series of Learning Communities hosted around the state;
 - Joint Committee hearing/discussion in House and Senate generated;
 - PA plan published and distributed for state web site and outreach;
 - Broader stakeholder interest
 3. *Benchmarks:* Progress report by February 2007
 4. *Timeframe:* December 2007

- c) Continually develop and enhance the stakeholders' expertise and feedback
 1. *Agency/owner:* Policy Academy members
 2. *Outcomes:*
 - Progress and accountability reports public on web sites
 - Ongoing improved practice with an eye to improved public policy
 3. *Benchmarks:* Meetings held twice a year for sharing and feedback purposes
 4. *Timeframe:* Ongoing

- d) Develop a public awareness campaign, involving key media persons and/or athletes to advocate for the needs of homeless, with a special emphasis on homeless families with children and youth
 1. *Agency/owner:* One Family, UWMB
 2. *Outcomes:* Increased awareness and understanding of family homelessness
 3. *Benchmarks:* Key partners identified including a media partner, sponsors and spokespeople
 4. *Timeframe:* January 2008 and ongoing

- e) Translate strategies 1.1 and 1.2 into legislative/regulatory change
1. *Agency/owner*: MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*:
 - Better access to existing housing stock for homeless families/youth
 - Better coordination and collaboration among stakeholders for rapid rehousing
 - Changes needed for more streamlined funding and fewer soft cost participants
 - Research and inventory available for public view
 - New approaches to both temporary and permanent voucher support
 - New innovations explored
 3. *Benchmarks*: Review regulations that inhibit rapid rehousing and Housing First initiatives, and propose new initiatives that promote those programs
 4. *Timeframes*: November 2006 and ongoing
- f) Convene and engage boards and/or Trustees of all the public/quasi-public and private organizations.
1. *Agency/owner*: MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*:
 - Reduce the number of soft cost participants (average 9.2 sources/ 3-year production schedule.)
 - Both the Governor and the Legislature enlisted in supporting dollars for innovations in the field
 3. *Benchmarks*: Begin to shift legislative debate to Family Housing First/ Prevention as part of the budget development process
 4. *Timeframes*: June 2006 and ongoing
- g) Institutionalize MICHH through legislative/executive authority, and implement the plan to end family homelessness.
1. *Agency/owner*: MICHH, One Family, UWMB
 2. *Outcomes*:
 - Major topic of discussion in Governor's race;
 - Increased Legislative funding for housing
 3. *Benchmarks*:
 - MICHH membership is expanded
 - Greater awareness and ownership with the Legislature
 - Legislature adopts the plan and participates in the implementation
 4. *Timeframe*: June 2006 and ongoing
- h) Convene Best Practice Conference in MA on Family Housing First/ Prevention strategies; new stakeholders
1. *Agency/owner*: One Family, MHSA, UWMB
 2. *Outcomes*: Greater awareness to a broader audience of stakeholders
 3. *Benchmarks*:
 - Planning in motion by April 2007
 - Raise public awareness
 4. *Timeframe*: January 2008

Strategy 5.2: Support Agency heads and other representatives of the Administration in the implementation of the plan.

Action steps:

- a) Agency heads to create budgets that support the goals of the plan
 - 1. *Agency/owner:* Respective State Agencies
 - 2. *Outcomes:* Improvements in service delivery
 - 3. *Benchmarks:* Meeting implementation schedule created by December 2006
 - 4. *Timeframe:* FY 07 and ongoing

- b) Agency heads to seek out federal grants for programs for the homeless, with a special emphasis on families with children and youth
 - 1. *Agency/owner:* All involved agencies
 - 2. *Outcomes:* Increase financial resources
 - 3. *Benchmarks:* Grant applications submitted, grants obtained
 - 4. *Timeframe:* Ongoing

- c) Team acts as information resource concerning solutions, best practices, cost effectiveness, specific populations and what works
 - 1. *Agency/owner:* One Family, UWMB, MICHH
 - 2. *Outcomes:* Continued exposure to national learning to obtain improved practice and public policy recommendations
 - 3. *Benchmarks:* Ongoing linkage to National Interagency Council best practice sources
 - 4. *Timeframe:* Ongoing

Strategy 5.3: Approach the Legislature to encourage flexible funding tied to reduced reliance on shelter for services and housing for homeless families and individuals, including programs that fund public and private non-profit agencies.

Action steps:

- a) Identify best practices across the country that can be applied to communities in the Commonwealth
 - 1. *Agency/owner:* DTA, DHCD
 - 2. *Outcomes:* Reduced reliance on shelters
 - 3. *Benchmarks:* Continued reduction in shelter bed use
 - 4. *Timeframe:* July 2007 and ongoing

- b) Develop regional, broad-based grassroots support with local stakeholders
 - 1. *Agency/owner:* One Family/ UWMB
 - 2. *Outcomes:* New prevention/ Housing First Coalition
 - 3. *Benchmarks:* Design some recommendations for statewide change by July 2006
 - 4. *Timeframe:* July 2006 through July 2007

- c) Work with legislature to identify laws which inhibit rapid rehousing and Housing First initiatives, and propose new initiatives that promote those programs
 1. *Agency/owner*: One Family, UWMB, various state agencies
 2. *Outcomes*: Education/legislation for change
 3. *Benchmarks*: Legislative language that promotes positive changes to the programs.
 4. *Timeframe*: July 2006 and ongoing

Strategy 5.4: Encourage local/regional adaptation of the PA plan by local/regional elected officials.

Action steps:

- a) Convene local Policy Academies to create and integrate local plans and local commitment to end chronic and family homelessness
 1. *Agency/owner*: DTA, Policy Academy Team Members
 2. *Outcomes*: Adoption and implementation of the plan development process
 3. *Benchmarks*: 50% of regions convening local Policy Academies by January 2009
 4. *Timeframe*: Statewide 2010

- b) Hold periodic conferences to discuss evaluations results and best practices and encourage informal networking and problem-solving
 1. *Agency/owner*: One Family, UWMB
 2. *Outcomes*: Distribution and implementation of best practices
 3. *Benchmarks*: Annual conferences
 4. *Timeframe*: Statewide 2010

- c) Leverage technical assistance pool
 1. *Agency/owner*: MICHH
 2. *Outcomes*: Improved practices and outcomes
 3. *Benchmarks*: Identify and establish working relationships with TA groups
 4. *Timeframe*: 2010

- d) Create flexible incentives that support local/regional PA plans, allowing increased responsiveness and innovations tied to outcome
 1. *Agency/owner*: DTA, DHCD, MICHH (foundations added over time)
 2. *Outcomes*: Data-driven resources
 3. *Benchmarks*: State launches 3-5 community based pilots
 4. *Timeframe*: December 2007

- e) Review the outcomes of the offered incentives and make recommendations for improvement.
 - 1. *Agency/owner*: MICHH
 - 2. *Outcomes*: Proven methods and outcomes
 - 3. *Benchmarks*: Review of all recommendations by June 2011
 - 4. *Timeframe*: June 2013

Strategy 5.5: Promote awareness of and provide assistance for the use of existing resources (include 40R, 40S, and 40B).

Action steps:

- a) Conduct education and outreach to facilitate the use of existing tools, i.e., CHAPA's Housing Handbook, DHCD Technical Assistance Resources
 - 1. *Agency/owner*: DHCD, Homebuilders, Mass Municipal, CHAPA, MassNAHRO, GBREB, MA nonprofits
 - 2. *Outcomes*: Greater awareness, understanding and use of existing resources by developers and municipalities
 - 3. *Benchmarks*: Increased housing production plans; Increased housing units
 - 4. *Timeframe*: Ongoing