

## NCSHA 2007 Awards Entry Description

**Entry Name:** *Campaign to End Homelessness - System Change*  
**Category Name:** *Special Achievement*  
**HFA:** *Michigan State Housing Development Authority*

### Background

Over the past 10 years, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) has initiated demonstration projects to pilot innovative programs that address the housing and service needs of Michigan's poorest citizens. Although we collectively achieved success in the creation of much-needed supportive housing and 60 locally based Continuum of Care planning bodies to oversee the utilization of emergency service funds, we had yet to implement effective statewide strategies to move us from a crisis response system to one that provides permanent solutions for our state's homelessness people.

Through the use of Michigan's Homeless Management Information System (MSHMIS) we are now able to quantify and describe the nature of homelessness in Michigan. The first *Baseline Data Report* was issued in October of 2006 and included information for the first six months of that year, highlighting the extent of the problem and key characteristics about the population. During the examined period, there were 50,692 people homeless in our state. With a mixture of 83 urban and rural counties, it has been a challenge to provide a wide range of programs, services and support to address the diverse circumstances of those who are homeless. Having accurate, real-time data allows us to determine policy, funding priorities and programs to meet the needs of those who are homeless throughout the state. (see all attachments)

### Objective

As significant relationships continue to be formed and plans implemented, communities will be evaluating resources already allocated to emergency and transitional programs. We'll develop strategies that refocus efforts toward a "housing first" approach. **Our goal is to homelessness in Michigan within the next 10 Years.** In response to the growing need, MSHDA:

- created the Office of Supportive Housing and Homeless Initiatives made up of 14 full-time staff, deployed throughout the state.
- provided \$10,000 planning grants to local counties that agreed to complete a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness by October 2006.
- created an organizational infrastructure that takes into account the need for leadership throughout the public and private sectors.
- created eight regional councils which will provide the basis for a statewide system change.
- developed a network of partners to create technical assistance teams to provide hands-on support to local communities. Partnering agencies include: the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH), Michigan Department of Community Health (DCH) and Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS);
- funded four new regional homeless initiatives in 2006
  - Homeless Families with Children (\$7.5 million)

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- Chronic Homeless (\$12 million)
- Domestic Violence (\$6 million)
- Homeless Youth (\$3 million)
- developed and implemented 41 specific strategies, supported through the work of eight statewide workgroups, to address the housing, service and system change efforts.

### **Planning**

As a state housing agency, our resources can be targeted to create supportive housing in all regions of our state, but we recognize that potential tenants would need supportive services, employment, training and, in some cases, access to other income supports. As a result, we began to effectively leverage additional state and local funding to implement key strategies that will bring about significant system changes.

The plan that was developed centered around **eight key strategic areas**:

- **Creation of replicable *Models***
  - Development of community-wide Interagency Service Teams to provide supportive services to those who are homeless regardless of their disability status
  - Funding homeless initiatives targeted to specific populations
  - Addressing the needs of those exiting institutional settings through partnerships with the Department of Corrections (DOC), DHS and DCH
- ***Community Building***
  - Obtaining pledges of support from a wide range of constituents
  - Increasing the understanding and involvement of local leaders through activities that improve access to services for those who are homeless and provide opportunity further educate and involve the community
- ***Providing Training and Communication***
  - Technical assistance teams have been created and disbursed throughout every region of the state and include representatives from MSHDA, DCH, DHS, CSH and MCAH
  - A Campaign Web site will be operational by the end of August 2007 to measure success and provide current “best practice” activities
  - CSH is initiating a Supportive Housing Institute that will build the capacity of local nonprofit organizations to develop and manage supportive housing
- ***Assuring access to Supportive Services***
  - Local Community Mental Health and DHS directors are key stakeholders in every 10-year plan developed in Michigan and have pledged to provide support and leadership
  - DCH, DHS, DOC and MSHDA meet monthly to identify barriers and develop strategies to more effectively serve Michigan’s homeless
- ***Assuring Access to Housing***
  - A Housing Resource Center has been piloted in Detroit which links those who are homeless to housing resources. This project is funded as partnership between state and local housing and service organizations.
  - Homeless Assistance Recovery Program (HARP) has been initiated in over 35 counties throughout the state.

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- Project basing of Housing Choice Vouchers to supportive housing developments to assure the long-term affordability of rents
- Creating Housing Resource Specialist positions throughout the state to assist in locating housing, applying for entitlements and promoting self-sufficiency
- Implementing a Tenant Based Rental Assistance program to provide short-term (two year) rental subsidies that, when needed, can be exchanged for a HARP voucher to provide longer-term rental assistance
- **Assisting to obtain *Employment and Income Supports***
  - Implementation of *SOAR Across Michigan*, part of a national technical assistance initiative to help homeless people apply for Social Security Income (SSI/SSDI). There are now trainers available in every region of the state.
  - Communities will be assisted to implement a wide range of employment strategies.
- **Assuring continued *Planning, Implementation and Measurement by supporting***
  - local implementation of 10-year plans through deployment of technical assistance, resources and system change efforts.
  - development of performance measures to assure success in rapidly re-housing those who are homeless and assuring speedy receipt of services and benefits.
  - development and implementation of SHADOW (Statewide Homeless Assistance Online Data Warehouse Project) that will link homeless data collected from MSHMIS with the state's data warehouse that allows us to have a better understanding of the actual cost of homelessness and how state policy impacts lives.
- **Utilizing *Information Technology to support our efforts by enhancing the ability to***
  - effectively enroll those who are eligible in entitlement programs.
  - implement project management software to better measure our success.
  - provide more effective communication through virtual real-time meetings.
  - assist in locating affordable housing through MSHDA's Housing Locator.

### **Benefit vs. Cost**

The cost is investing in new initiatives, focused staff and a statewide plan that will take us 10 years to accomplish. The benefit is the reduction of the drain on our social infrastructure and the improved quality of life of all Michigan residents. In addition to the fiscal aspect of this ratio, there's the moral benefit vs. cost. You can't put a price on any man, woman or child's safety and well-being.

### **Measurable Results**

With 100% participation by Michigan's counties, Michigan became the first in the nation to develop an organized response to permanently address homelessness. In celebration of this, Michigan held its first Homeless Summit in October of 2006. More recently, Governor Granholm accepted two national awards on behalf of Michigan: the *A Home for Every American Award* presented by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and the *Public Sector Achievement Award* presented by the National Coalition to End Homelessness.