

WATERBURY TEN YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT: 2010



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When our community came together in 2009 to begin implementing the Waterbury Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness (TYP), we pledged to look for innovative ways to help people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. We vowed to work together as never before to create new housing, prevent homelessness where possible, create new partnerships and collaborations, break down barriers to housing for those most fragile, embrace best practices, and coordinate our resources in ways that yield the strongest results for our entire region.

In our first annual report, we are proud to say that we are delivering. Through many partnerships we changed the way we tackle homelessness, and we are making a difference.

In 2010, the Ten-Year Plan:

- Added 38 supportive housing vouchers, 30 of which were for veterans.
- Helped over 275 people avoid homelessness due to increased prevention effort.
- Refined our approaches to housing through a “no wrong door” model and researched universal screening tools to improve coordination for entry into housing and services.
- Researched model programs for housing, daytime homeless support programs, SOAR (Social Security, Outreach, Access and Recovery), and others.
- Welcomed 6 new landlords/developers to our housing efforts, providing a forum for them to network and connect with service providers, breaking down barriers to housing.
- Successfully planned and implemented Project Homeless Connect 2010, with over 75 providers offering services to 351 people on one day at the Waterbury Armory.

HIGHLIGHTS: YEAR 1

From Homelessness to Housing

- Rapid Re-housing Program was launched with funding provided through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act; 92 people were assisted with rent and other services.
- 200 were able to leave homelessness for housing due to the combined efforts of landlords, housing authority, providers, and funders.
- A total of 32 new units or dedicated subsidies were opened in 2010, with another 28 in the pipeline for 2011. These are in addition to the 72 units of housing with support services awarded under previous Continuum of Care-HUD applications.

Preventing Homelessness

- Trained 25 social service providers as “2-1-1 Trainers” so they can in turn teach other agency staff how to connect their clients to available services in the community and statewide.



- Homeless Prevention Program was launched with funding provided through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act; 277 people were assisted with rent, utilities, and other services.
- Legal services were provided for 30 eviction cases representing 79 people.

Increasing Efficiencies of the System

- A Flexible Fund is under development that will provide one-time financial support to help individuals/families address immediate and temporary situations that may put their housing in jeopardy.
- Committed key stakeholders, representing Social Security Administration, NW Regional Workforce Investment Board, Dept. of Social Services, JobLinks/Rideworks, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, CT Department of Labor, Office of Veterans' Workforce Development and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, are working to create linkages between employment, training, service and educational services. The committee will conduct an employment, training, service and education resource inventory to identify available services, key stakeholders and better ways of networking.
- Established a monthly shelter meeting as a first step towards a community safety-net team. Represented are area Homeless Outreach Teams, Morris Foundation, Midwestern CT Council on Alcoholism, St. Vincent's Shelter, StayWell Health Center, Social Security Administration, and Western CT Mental Health Network Mobile Outreach. The focus is on client and system issues.

Building Public and Political Will

- TYP website development is in process and will provide access to TYP information for the general public.
- Each TYP committee has a diverse membership of public and private partners. In 2010 over 30 people attended the monthly TYP Collaborative meetings to hear progress reports. The homeless or formerly homeless came to share their experiences. The membership represents 150 individuals.
- TYP committee co-chairs represent community leaders in the issue areas and are committing time, talent, expertise, and resources to ensure the implementation of the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness is targeted and measurable.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: HOUSING

The Housing Committee plan addresses the need to develop solutions on a continuum of need ranging from permanent supportive housing to affordable housing. The housing plan has an emphasis on working to meet housing goals in collaboration with and in alignment with policies of city government, public housing authorities, the Waterbury Development Corporation, and Veterans Administration.

The TYP Housing Committee held 7 meetings beginning in April 2010. Committee membership is a work in progress with new collaborations and partnerships developed as a result. The committee created a network for developers and social service providers that has strengthened these relationships.



**Conveners: Diane Toolan, Waterbury Development Corporation
Vivian Becker, Neighborhood Housing Services
Champion: Rick O'Brien, Webster Bank**

Benchmarks for Housing:

- 20 housing units targeted for veterans in years 1 and 2.
- Create Regional affordable housing solutions.

Accomplishments:

- A total of 60 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers were secured. Waterbury continues to receive high priority due to the numbers of homeless veterans in the City and surrounding towns.
- Six developers were identified and indicated a willingness to work towards these goals. The TYP Housing Committee has provided a forum for developers to network and connect with others including service providers.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SERVICES

The Services Plan has identified the importance of having a *no wrong door* approach to meeting the service needs of the homeless or at-risk population by developing a universal assessment tool to ensure a collaborative and efficient delivery of housing-related services. The TYP/Waterbury Continuum of Care is widely acknowledged as being among the strongest in the state. Its role in coordinating the plan to streamline the assessment and delivery of housing supportive services gives the plan a strong head start and guided leadership.

The Plan identifies the need for respite care for individuals who are homeless who have need for medical and/or behavioral support after leaving institutional care.

Creation of a *wraparound service* system to share information among service providers and non-traditional providers will allow case conferencing and resource sharing to reduce barriers and redundancy, while increasing the potential for success, especially on behalf of those who are chronically homeless.

**Convener: Ellen Brotherton, Western CT Mental Health Network
Champion: Dr. Peter Jacoby, St. Mary's Hospital**

Benchmarks:

- Research medical/ behavioral respite models. Create a collaboration of mainstream hospital and service providers to explore and lead an effort to create a respite program.
- Increase supportive services to address systems gaps and changing needs of the homeless population.
- Develop a safety net model to close gaps and increase access to services



Accomplishments:

- Assessed the need of a medical respite program within our community with representatives from St. Mary's Hospital and Waterbury Hospital, as well as StayWell Health Center and shelters.
- Social Security representatives have joined the Services Committee, Shelter meeting and Employment and Income Committee. In September of 2010 Social Security began monthly outreach efforts to the Soup Kitchen at St. John's church. They will expand in 2011 to St. Vincent's Soup Kitchen. This enables homeless population access to Social Security income programs for which they are eligible.
- Established a monthly shelter meeting as a first step towards a community safety net team. Represented are area Hot teams, Morris Foundation, St. Vincent's Shelter, StayWell Health Center, Social Security, and WCMHN Mobile Outreach. Focus is on client and system issues.
- With no new funding, the focus has been on establishing relationships and agency point people to facilitate a more rapid response. This has been accomplished with Social Security; Dept. of Social Services has recently joined our committee. Additionally, in the summer of 2010 we had the Town Clerk attend our meeting to discuss Birth Certificates.
- This year's Project Homeless Connect had an increase of 20% for service providers

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: PREVENTION

The expansion of 2-1-1 services and training to both traditional and non-traditional providers and a rapid re-housing and prevention program are included as key elements of the Prevention Plan. Rapid re-housing and prevention, both elements of recent time-limited federal and state housing initiatives, are included as goals that have the potential to produce long-term systems change.

Creation of a flexible prevention fund to provide short-term financial assistance for individuals and families who are in danger of becoming homeless is a major prevention goal that will allow individuals who might otherwise become homeless to remain in their housing with short term financial assistance that will help them regain housing stability.

**Conveners: Milena Sangut, Western CT Mental Health Network
Mary Conklin, CT Legal Services**

Champion: Senator Joan Hartley

Benchmarks:

- Strengthen the capacity of 2-1-1 to provide targeted information and accurate data. Train 30 providers by year 2
- Sustain a flexible assistance fund.



Accomplishments:

- Held 2-1-1 Train-the-Trainer (Hotline for services in CT) for 12 provider agencies where 25 staff participated. A survey of participants demonstrated effectiveness and will likely increase utilization of 2-1-1 resources by providers and their clients. Participants report training others in their agency or organization.
- Committee has developed eligibility requirements, fiduciary needs and policies and procedures for the Flexible Fund. They considered best practices of other similar funds in the state.
- In addition the committee collaborated with the local faith organizations to once again establish a flexible “winter fund” that could be used for hotel stays for individuals living outside food and other needs.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Reduction of fragmentation and expansion of coordination among employment and training providers are critical to the Employment and Income goals. Integration and connection between housing, employment, and educational institutions within the Waterbury region through access to transportation is among the goals. Restoration of and access to entitlements that produce and lead to housing stability is included as an important link to income that can be the make or break difference between homelessness and permanent housing.

Key among the strategies for implementation in the employment and income plan is developing a job retention model that engages supportive employment strategies.

Under the current fiscal climate it crucial for us to look at ways to enhance and strengthen currently funded services through better coordination and increased integration rather than seeking and anticipating additional funding.

Conveners: Joseph Bannon, Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board

Frederic Morton, Western CT Mental Health Network

Rich Dupont, Resource Development Associates

Champion: Lynn Ward, Greater Waterbury Chamber of Commerce

Benchmarks:

- Complete inventory and needs assessment by year 1.
- Expand the public transportation system to enhance access to employment and training opportunities
- Initiate Social Security Outreach, Access, and Recovery Program (S.O.A.R.) model by year 1.

Accomplishments:

- Convened a committee of committed key stakeholders representing Social Security Administration, NW Regional Workforce Investment Board, Dept. of Social Services, JobLinks/Rideworks, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, CT Dept. of Labor, Office of Veterans’ Workforce Development and Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services.



- Plan and logistics for the expansion of evening public transportation hours were completed. Funds allocated for evening expansion were rescinded. Transportation representatives are key partners when addressing employment and income issues.
- The Social Security Administration has dedicated 6 staff members for SOAR implementation in Greater Waterbury. These individuals currently offer services at St. John's Soup Kitchen at least once per month and are working with St. Vincent DePaul to offer services at the shelter. The goal for 2011 is to establish services at the Salvation Army Shelter and St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Plan is critical to the success of the Waterbury Ten Year Plan. It will allow information, data, research, best practices, and education about housing and related services to become available to a broader and broader segment of the Waterbury community. The Communications plan will provide a tool to distribute accurate information on costs related to homelessness, effective strategies, local housing related information, and evaluation of the goals, actions, and benchmarks to Waterbury.

Convener: JoAnn Reynolds-Balanda, United Way of Greater Waterbury

Champion: Tom Chute, WATR

Benchmarks:

- Define the Communications Plan Leadership, themes, messages, stakeholders, and target audiences.
- Develop a website, PowerPoint presentation, and tool kit materials for distribution and presentation by year 2.
- Develop a speakers bureau that includes representatives of the TYP leadership, stakeholders, and those who have experienced or been affected by homelessness.

Accomplishments:

- First Annual Report was compiled from committee reports and used to demonstrate continuing implementation efforts.
- Brochure was drafted and will be utilized to promote the goals and in educational efforts.
- Secured support for and reprinted the official plan booklet.
- Secured Website development support, website address, and volunteer designers. Secured link on the City of Waterbury's website to the Waterbury TYP plan document.
- Created presskit for Project Homeless Connect and managed media at the event.
- Met with Consumers to discuss how their stories could be utilized. Utilized consumer story at high profile event (UW Annual Dinner).



Successful Pilot Program Prevents Homelessness

Over the past year, an innovative service called the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) has enabled thousands of Connecticut residents, threatened with losing their homes, to remain in their homes or to move to more stable housing. United Way 2-1-1 has screened over 5,600 individuals and families for HPRP since it began a year ago. As 2010 comes to a close, 2-1-1 has received over 57,000 housing-related requests for services with over 12,000 seeking information on HPRP, underscoring the critical need for affordable housing in the state.

Locally the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) is administered by the Waterbury Development Corporation in collaboration with The Salvation Army, CT Legal Services, and St. Vincent DePaul Mission. The following chart provides data on results of that partnership to date.

Waterbury Homeless Prevention - Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) <small>Grant Year 10/01/2009 to 09/30/2010</small>	HPRP
	Persons
	Served
Activities	
Financial Assistance	
Rental assistance	256
Security/Utility deposits	204
Utility payments	21
Moving cost assistance	7
Motel & hotel vouchers	0
Total Served with Financial Assistance	314
Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services	
Case management	325
Outreach & engagement	0
Housing search/placement	21
Legal services	79
Credit repair	0
Total Served with Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services	335
Total Served	369

LOOKING AHEAD

A pilot committee has been convened to assess the issue of homeless youth that has recently surfaced in Waterbury.



Providers have met to develop a survey others can use to track information when youth come to them to help. We have engaged the Department of Children and Families and will continue to reach out to others in an effort to learn more about best practices and solutions in determining next steps.

PRIORITIES FOR 2011

Housing Committee Priorities for 2011:

- Continue to build a working partnership with the housing authority to advocate for sufficient numbers of tenants and project based subsidies for families, individual and special populations.
- Develop and maintain an inventory of current and potential housing units, landlords and developers.
- Focus on strategies to leverage available and potential funding sources to create new housing opportunities.
- Expand the membership of the Committee.
- Hold a forum for housing developers.

Services Committee Priorities for 2011:

- Universal screening tool, review HMIS data collection and Project Homeless Connect forms
- Collect financial data and vignettes on individuals who could benefit from a medical respite. Invite landlords to meet with committee to discuss possibilities.
- Further assess existing resources in community regarding hospitality center.
- Discuss ways to address educational needs of children and youths who are homeless.
- Establish sub-committee to discuss issues of substance use amongst the homeless and recently housed, as well as outreach and engagement.

Prevention Committee Priorities for 2011:

- Develop a data sharing protocol among providers.
- Conduct two 2-1-1 trainings for non-traditional providers.
- Identify goals, protocols, referrals, and fiduciary system for a flexible assistance fund.
- Develop a method to track results of persons referred to HPRP, identify lessons learned and make recommendations for an ongoing HPRP.
- Continue with CT Legal Services on tenant education and Neighborhood Housing Services foreclosure training.
- Discharge Planning.
- Community Policing Priority.

Employment and Income Priorities for 2011:

- Strengthen and integrate Social Security Administration(SSA) SOAR Program through the development of relationships between SSA staff and service provider staff. This is critical in maintaining engagement of individuals.



- Create a resource inventory of employment, training, service and educational providers to determine current services offered and to identify key stakeholders. Members of the CoC will be asked to forward the names and brief descriptions of known employment and income related services for homeless persons and those at-risk of homelessness to one of the Committee Chairs at an upcoming CoC meeting. The Committee Chairs will then research additional available services for inclusion in the inventory.
- More closely examine transportation and transportation goals in light of the current funding climate.

Communications Committee Priorities for 2011:

- Completion of website and management plan is a priority.
- Publish and share/distribute the first Annual Report.
- Promote accountability through the acknowledgement of accomplishments of committed volunteers focused on ending homelessness.
- Make better use of consumer knowledge, strengths and experiences to engage the public, supporters and decision-makers.

Thank you to all involved with the work of this plan.

**Leah Lentocha, Coordinator, Continuum of Care/Ten Year Plan
and
Membership of Continuum of Care/Ten Year Plan initiative.**

In Memoriam

**The first Waterbury Ten Year Plan Annual Report is dedicated to
two community leaders who were instrumental in its development.**

Pat Mayfield and Brian Reilly

