

Key Initiatives of the Des Moines/Polk County Homeless Action Plan

Steering Committee Action Recommendations:

Following are key initiatives either being proposed or currently underway as initial action steps designed to have significant impact in creating housing options for homeless within the next 12 months:

- 1. Solicit 100 new section 8 housing choice vouchers for homeless & at-risk families & youth through an innovative partnership between Des Moines Municipal Housing Agency and Iowa Department of Human Services.** Administered jointly between the 2 partnering agencies, Family Unification Program vouchers will provide homeless families and families living in inadequate housing at risk of being separated from their children with affordable housing options.
- 2. Implement a pilot initiative to provide project and tenant-based assistance targeted for people living in homeless camps.** Using a mix of funding sources, existing property managers and support services from Primary Health Care, this pilot project is based on HUD's Shelter + Care model which has demonstrated success in serving populations from homeless camps.
- 3. A joint project of community organizations, complete "system mapping" as a means of streamlining service delivery and eliminating costly duplication of effort.** This project is the first step in creating a universal intake and assessment system for homeless, housing and supportive service programs.
- 4. Solicit HUD technical support to incorporate state of the art practices in the new Central Iowa Shelter & Services facility, including a Homeless Opportunity Center (HOC) to link homeless people to multiple support services designed to expedite self-sufficiency and rapid exit from the emergency shelter system.**
- 5. Through collaboration with private developers, Des Moines Municipal Housing Agency will revitalize vacant, scattered site, public housing buildings that will be renovated as permanent housing for homeless households with incomes below 30% of area median income.**
- 6. Establish a formal linkage between homeless-targeted housing and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program by amending admissions policies to enable former long-term, Shelter + Care participants to receive tenant based or project based Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program assistance, allowing new units of Shelter + Care to become available for individuals from homeless camps.**
- 7. Implement a pilot partnership between Polk County Health Service and Primary Health Care that allows staff from Primary Health Care to identify PCHS consumers and inform PCHS when a consumer is receiving shelter or services from Primary Health Care.** This formal system level linkage will decrease duplication and help expedite mainstream support services for homeless.

8. **Through community collaboration and reallocation of all available mainstream resources, create additional housing low income households <30% AMI.** This represents a key priority as a means of prevention and reducing homelessness. This reallocation of resources along with other strategies noted above is expected to create an additional 100 units for households below 30% AMI over the next 5 years.