

DECEMBER 2008

## **CITY OF RIVERSIDE TAKING A PRO-ACTIVE APPROACH TOWARD ERADICATING HOMELESSNESS**

The City of Riverside has taken a pro-active approach to addressing homelessness in our community in partnership with a wide-range of non-profit organizations, social service agencies and faith-based institutions. In June of 2003, the City of Riverside adopted the "Riverside Community Broad-Based Homeless Action Plan". Since its adoption, the City has pro-actively pursued implementation of the 30 action-based strategies within the plan as well as other initiatives in partnership with the County of Riverside and a broad range of non-profit organizations, social service agencies, faith-based institutions, and others working together to address the issue of homelessness in our community. Significant developments, accomplishments and milestones reached over the past year include working with our community partners to achieve the following:

### **1. ONE-STOP MULTI-SERVICE CAMPUS**

A pivotal goal within the City's Homeless Action Plan is the creation of a centralized environment to provide short-term emergency shelter coupled with a range of complimentary supportive services necessary to assist homeless individuals and families to address their issues and achieve housing stability. Since the adoption of the Action Plan, the City has pursued a long-term strategy to assemble properties in a central location in order to provide homeless assistance and prevention services in a "campus-style" setting where a wide-range of service needs can be addressed in a coordinated, multi-service delivery system of care that includes strategic outreach, crisis intervention, interim housing, rapid re-housing and coordinated case management. The project is modeled after the national acclaimed PATH Mall in Los Angeles and similar models being developed across the county bringing the retail concept of the "one-stop shopping mall" to the social service arena.

During FY 2007/08, the City acquired two buildings contiguous to the emergency shelter and Safe Haven facility along the Hulen Place cul-de-sac. One of the buildings is adjacent to the south of the shelter and will house a range of supportive services provided under one roof and the other building will house the city's Family Transitional Shelter which will be relocated to this campus setting. City staff is working with PATH Partners, the developers and operators of the PATH Mall, to help develop a sustainable plan for establishing and operating the multi-service campus. PATH Partners is working under contract to assist with site and program development, marketing and community engagement and a fund development strategy that includes establishing a community-based donor fund. The components of the developing service campus environment include:

**Multi-Service Access Center** - To serve as the entry point and service hub of the city's continuum of care with plans to provide a wide-range of services under-one-roof including street outreach, housing placement, employment development, benefits enrollment, health care, mental health services, substance abuse recovery, veteran's services, life skills training, financial counseling, legal services, client stabilization resources, computer resources, transportation assistance, basic needs emergency assistance, and homeless prevention resources. (See aerial map of the Multi-Service Access Center below)

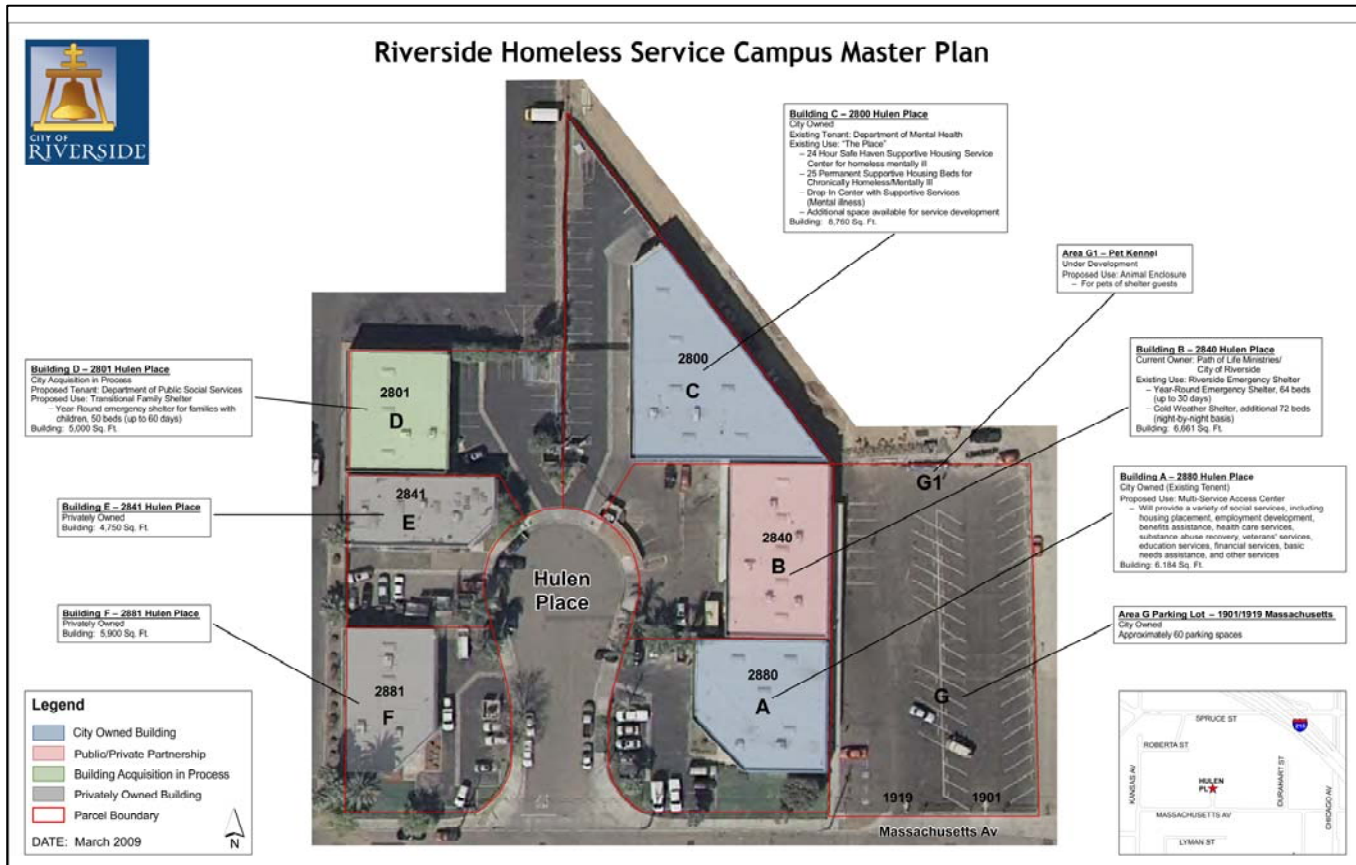
**Riverside Emergency Shelter** - A 64-bed facility, operated by **Path of Life Ministries** in partnership with the City, provides year-round shelter connected with case management services for homeless men and women for up to 30 continuous days. From December through mid-April, an additional 72 beds are provided on a night-by-night basis under the federal cold weather shelter initiative in cooperation with the County. Approximately 1,600 individuals are served at the facility on an annual basis.

**Riverside Family Transitional Shelter** - A 50-bed facility providing year-round emergency shelter and case management services for homeless families with children for up to 60 days. The existing family

shelter, operated by Path of Life Ministries in partnership with the County Department of Public Social Services, is being moved from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street near Park Avenue to the service campus environment on Hulén Place. Approximately 400 individuals are served annually at the current family shelter.

**Safe Haven Supportive Housing and Drop-in Center** – “The Place” Safe Haven program, operated by Jefferson Transitional Programs in partnership with the County Department of Mental Health, provides 25 permanent supportive housing beds and a 24-hour drop-in center for chronically homeless individuals with severe mental illness.

*Multi-Service Center Map*



**2. HOUSING FIRST INITIATIVE / TENANT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Riverside City Council allocated funding to establish the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA) to help address the need for permanent housing solutions for individuals and families that are homeless or on the verge of homelessness in the City of Riverside. To that end, staff in the Housing and Neighborhoods Division is working with our community partners to implement a new pilot project based on the nationally acclaimed best practice “Housing First” approach which emphasizes moving people into housing as quickly as possible and providing the appropriate level of services to support housing stabilization and retention. The Housing First approach represents a significant shift away from the traditional homeless service delivery system to one focused on rapid re-housing and home-based case management to facilitate client stabilization leading to self-sufficiency. The initial pilot project includes a “street to home” component assisting a target group of chronically homeless individuals with exiting life on the streets and moving directly into housing coupled with aggressive case management provided by the City’s Homeless Street Outreach Team. The **Housing Authority of the County of Riverside** is presently administering the city’s TBRA program under a Housing First approach utilizing federal **HOME** and **CDBG** funding. The TBRA program provides eligible homeless individuals and families as well as those at-risk to homelessness in Riverside with short-term rental subsidies coupled with home-based case management. The Housing Authority is also working with us to expand the use of Shelter Plus Care and other available housing subsidies to facilitate a Housing First approach. The ultimate goal is to develop a variety of

strategies, tools and resources to incorporate the “Housing First” approach into all aspects of our local continuum of care.

## City of Riverside Tenant-based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA)

### Key Objectives

- Rapid re-housing for homeless individuals/families in the shelter/transitional housing system
- Housing stabilization for low-income households at-risk of becoming homeless
- Housing placement and support for homeless individuals targeted by the City’s Homeless Street Outreach Team under a “Housing First” approach
- Support families in shelter/transitional housing who are receiving Cal Works in making the transition back to market rate housing
- Support working individuals/families in shelter/transitional housing to make the transition to market rate housing
- Provide supportive service linkages with the primary goal of assisting the individual/family to increase their household income and attain housing stability

### Target population:

- Homeless individuals/families in the City of Riverside participating in service-based programs
- Chronically homeless individuals targeted by the City’s Homeless Street Outreach Team
- Low-income individuals/households facing the loss of their affordable housing

### Forms of Assistance

- Short-term rental subsidy for homeless individuals/households (up to 12 months)
- Short-term rental subsidy for eviction prevention (up to 12 months)
- One-time assistance with security deposits
- Case management and supportive service coordination

### Eligibility Criteria for Individuals/Households

- Meets HUD low-income limit defined as 80% or below area median
- Participation in a homeless service program in the City of Riverside, or is facing loss of housing in the City of Riverside
- Ability to demonstrate history of Riverside residency or employment
- Have a steady source of income or demonstrated ability to secure a steady source of income
- Must agree to participate in and comply with case management provided by the Housing Authority, the Homeless Street Outreach Team and/or a qualified participating agency and comply with all other provisions of program participation
- Tenants must provide proof of citizenship or legal residency
- Assistance provided only for housing within the City of Riverside

Qualifying individuals/households accepted into the TBRA program are required to participate in case management and/or other supportive services as a condition of receiving assistance through the program. The goal is to help participants achieve housing stability while working to accomplish measurable goals toward attaining self-sufficiency. Program case management and supportive services are provided through a coordinated effort involving the TBRA program administrator working in partnership with the City’s Homeless Street Outreach Team and other local continuum of care providers.

If you believe you qualify for assistance under the City of Riverside TBRA program based on the criteria above, please contact **Carrie Harmon** at the Housing Authority of the County of Riverside at 951/343-5461.

### **3. WAREHOUSING, DISTRIBUTION & LOGISTICS EMPLOYMENT TRAINING**

Development Department staff is working in coordination with Riverside Community College’s Corporate Connection program to provide a free training program for career opportunities in the Warehousing, Distribution and Logistics Industry. The first session held in the summer of 2008 was targeted specifically to

individuals recruited by the Homeless Street Outreach Team and our partners in the Riverside Homeless Care Network. Fifteen (15) individuals graduated from the first session and are working to secure full-time employment. In addition, eight (8) of the participants who were living on the streets or in the shelter at the time of the training received assistance with housing placement under the **Housing First Initiative** above.

#### **4. HOMELESS STREET OUTREACH PROGRAM**

The City of Riverside Homeless Street Outreach Team continues to provide daily mobile outreach and client service engagement focused on the “hardest-to-reach” and “service-resistant” populations on the streets, in service venues, and other locations where they can be found. The Street Outreach Team works in partnership with local service providers, law enforcement, health professionals, and city staff as well as local residents and businesses to help people get off the streets and connected with the services they need to enter stable housing, both short and long-term housing and achieve self-sufficiency. Service providers and community volunteers assist the Team during “ride-alongs” conducted throughout the week.

During the 2007-08 program year, the Outreach Team engaged over 500 homeless individuals on the streets and other locations not meant for human habitation in the City of Riverside. Outreach staff works with community partners to get people connected to shelter, housing, employment, benefits assistance, behavioral health services, transportation back to their hometown and other assistance they need. Some of the outcomes of these engagements include:

- 693 unduplicated individuals engaged for potential service provision;
- 364 clients assisted with entering into emergency, transitional, service based or permanent housing;
- 17 clients assisted with employment opportunities;
- 187 clients assisted with accessing public benefits assistance;
- 159 clients assisted with enrollment into mental health services;
- 93 clients assisted with enrollment in substance abuse recovery services;
- 93 clients assisted with accessing other health care services;
- 45 clients assisted with transportation home to family or service-providers.

The Homeless Street Outreach Team operates from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday and various weekend hours as assigned. To seek assistance with a homeless situation or to volunteer to go on a ride along with the **Outreach Team**, residents and others can call 951/826-2200.

#### **5. PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM**

The City was awarded over \$1.4 million dollars through the HUD Continuum of Care **Supportive Housing Program** (SHP) to support the acquisition, development and operations of two eight (8) unit permanent supportive housing projects. One project will provide supportive housing specifically targeting chronically homeless individuals and the second project provides supportive housing for homeless persons with disabling conditions but is not restricted to chronically homeless individuals. On-going case management and supportive services are provided to participants to help ensure housing stability and the achievement of self-sufficiency goals. City staff continues to pursue new opportunities to partner with local nonprofit organizations to develop additional permanent supportive housing opportunities. The City is working in partnership with local nonprofit housing developers and service providers to implement these two projects over the next year beginning in January, 2009.

#### **6. RIVERSIDE HOMELESS CARE NETWORK**

Over 50 organizations, including nonprofit service providers, municipal service agencies, law enforcement, and faith-based institutions, continue to participate in monthly meetings of the City-sponsored *Riverside Homeless Care Network* (Network). The Network serves as a vehicle to facilitate effective communication,

coordination, and collaboration within the continuum of care services to the homeless in the City of Riverside. Network meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month at the Riverside Emergency Shelter located at 2840 Hulen Place. For more information contact **Don Smith** at 951/826-5615

## **7. RIVERSIDE PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT III**

On Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the City and County worked in partnership with the Homeless Care Network partners to join over 200 jurisdictions across the nation conducting one-day, one-stop service events as part of the *National Project Homeless Connect* initiative. Over 400 homeless individuals were assisted by over 300 volunteers and service providers with getting access to a wide variety of social and personal care services including housing, employment, health care, benefits enrollment, education, veteran's services, pet care and much more, all provided in one location. Among the results from the day: 2,891 service encounters facilitated, 179 people connected with housing opportunities including shelter, transitional housing, rental assistance and housing authority vouchers; 218 people assisted with mainstream benefits; 200 people connected with employment opportunities; 64 people received medical exams along with prescribed medications; 103 people received access to behavioral health services; 62 people were assisted with their California ID; 127 people received legal/notary services including birth certificates; 129 people received education assistance; 36 children participated in fun activities; 26 people received 67 services for their pets; 150 people received spiritual counseling; and over 500 meals were served.

**Project Homeless Connect V** is set for Thursday, November 19, 2009.

## **8. ANNUAL FUNDING FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS**

The City Council continues to appropriate a significant block of federal funding, including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership Act (HOME), and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) programs, to over a dozen public and private service agencies that assist homeless individuals and families and those at-risk of becoming homeless. Funding to these agencies support a wide-range of programs and services including homeless prevention, outreach emergency shelter, transitional housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment services, domestic violence assistance, rental assistance, basic needs resources, general emergency assistance and referral services. Over \$600,000 in CDBG, HOME, and ESG funding has been allocated to agencies providing these services for fiscal year 2008/2009. Programs supported with this funding include:

- **Alternatives to Domestic Violence**, providing emergency shelter, transitional housing, and counseling services for women and children victimized by domestic violence;
- **Arlington Temporary Assistance**, providing emergency food, clothing, information and referral services to homeless and low-income individuals and families;
- **Assistance League of Riverside Operation Snack Attack**, providing snack bags to local schools on Fridays for distribution to homeless and economically disadvantaged children for weekend consumption;
- **Catholic Charities**, providing a range of basic needs assistance services including food, rental assistance, utility assistance, along with case management, counseling, information and referral, etc. for low-income households;
- **County of Riverside Cold Weather Shelter program**, providing over 100 beds on a nightly basis for individuals and families during cold weather months;
- **Fair Housing Council of Riverside County**, providing eviction prevention, rental assistance services, tenant/landlord counseling and discrimination services primarily targeted to low-income households and at-risk populations;
- **Housing Authority of the County of Riverside**, providing short-term rental assistance and move-in assistance to homeless individuals and families and those at-risk of becoming homeless in the City of Riverside;

- **Inland Counties Legal Services**, providing free legal assistance to low income and elderly tenants residing in substandard housing who have reported code violation to the City of Riverside;
- **Lutheran Social Services Genesis House**, providing 32 transitional housing beds and supportive service assistance to women and their children;
- **MFI Recovery**, a private not-for-profit, state licensed/certified residential recovery center for single women and women with children dealing with alcohol and/or drug addiction including a transitional living program for homeless women and their children;
- **Operation SafeHouse**, providing 13-beds of emergency shelter for homeless and runaway youth, and 20 beds of transitional housing for homeless emancipated youth, as well as counseling, transportation and referral services to approximately 45 youths daily;
- **Path of Life Ministries Year-Round Emergency Shelter program**, providing 64 transitional shelter beds for homeless men, women, and children on a year-round basis;
- **Path of Life Ministries Riverside Family Shelter**, providing 50 transitional shelter beds for families with children on a year-round basis;
- **Salvation Army Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program**, providing rent assistance and resource referrals to low-income households facing homelessness due to eviction caused by temporary financial crisis;
- **Volunteer Center of Riverside County**, providing free information and referral services linking individuals with vital community services as well as providing a Shared Housing program for low-income seniors in crisis and emergency rental assistance for households at-risk;
- **Whiteside Manor**, a private not-for-profit, state licensed/certified residential recovery center providing emergency, short-term and transitional living programs for homeless adult men and women who are diagnosed with mental illness and a concurrent alcohol or drug addiction problem.

## 9. **COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FUND TO SUPPORT THE CITY'S HOMELESS STRATEGY**

A number of action steps within the Homeless Action Plan call for staff to identify and seek funding resources to help support initiatives within the Plan. Since the adoption of the Plan, City staff has successfully secured additional federal and state resources targeting homeless and at-risk households and shall continue to pursue additional federal and state resources. However, in order to succeed in our efforts to develop and implement long-term solutions to end homelessness in our community, we must look beyond government resources and strategically tap into potential support from the private sector. To that end, Development staff has initiated conversations with The Community Foundation regarding establishing a Donor Advised Fund to help support the city's homeless strategy. The concept under consideration would borrow from a best-practice approach created in Marin County where the County's leading homeless service agency, Homeward Bound, established the first-ever nonprofit IPO - an "Immediate Public Opportunity...to end homelessness". Through a Donor Advised Fund established with The Community Foundation, the City and our Homeless Care Network partners would be able to provide the public (individuals, businesses, organizations and foundations) with an opportunity to "take stock in your community" and "invest" in the broad-based effort to end homelessness in Riverside. It will also be used as a vehicle to direct donations to be generated through a new anti-panhandling campaign that is under development. Money raised through the fund would go to support the development and operation of programs based at the Multi-service campus as well as other initiatives connected with the City's homeless strategy.