HOMELESS

Specific Homeless Prevention Elements

*Please also refer to the Homeless Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Sources of Funds—Identify the private and public resources that the jurisdiction expects to receive during the next year to address homeless needs and to prevent homelessness. These include the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act programs, other special federal, state and local and private funds targeted to homeless individuals and families with children, especially the chronically homeless, the HUD formula programs, and any publicly-owned land or property. Please describe, briefly, the jurisdiction's plan for the investment and use of funds directed toward homelessness.

Program Year 5 Action Plan Specific Homeless Prevention response:

The local Continuum of Care (CoC) which serves the City of Rockford and Boone & Winnebago Counties expect to receive approximately $1.6 million dollars from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to continue funding of its homeless programs. About 95% of that funding or about $900,000 is devoted specifically to supporting permanent supportive housing for homeless persons with disabilities (mental illness) and homeless families. The remaining funds are dedicated to a variety of other homeless support services.

Local homeless providers are also awarded both state and federal Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds that total nearly $250,000. Carpenter's Place, MELD, Remedies, and Prairie State Legal Services currently receive funds from these competitive grants. These funds are used for multiple purposes including shelter operations for homeless pregnant and/or parenting teens and victims of domestic violence, homeless prevention activities (for those in danger of becoming homeless), or rapid-rehousing of those families who have just recently become homeless.

Local providers get a wide assortment of other funding, both private and public to run a myriad of homeless programs. Many providers get secular funds and private donations in addition to Illinois General Revenue funding, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, VAWA, BOCA, FEMA, and HUD-VASH. Many of the above mentioned programs do give preference to those who are chronically homeless, families with children (or homeless youth), homeless veterans, those with disabilities, and those who are victims of domestic violence.

2. Homelessness—In a narrative, describe how the action plan will address the specific objectives of the Strategic Plan and, ultimately, the priority needs identified. Please also identify potential obstacles to completing these action steps.

Program Year 5 Action Plan Specific Homeless Prevention response:

The Continuum of Care has been receiving technical assistance from HUD to improve the function of the Continuum and to ensure that there is a clear process to access the homeless service system, be linked to emergency housing and to a full needs assessment, and finally linked to a permanent housing solution. This process has just been developed and the protocols and performance measurements for each step are still being finalized.

3. Chronic homelessness—The jurisdiction must describe the specific planned action steps it will take over the next year aimed at eliminating chronic homelessness by 2012. Again, please identify barriers to achieving this.

Program Year 5 Action Plan Specific Homeless Prevention response:

The local Continuum of Care (CoC) is in the process of implementing a Coordinated Assessment Plan that will allow homeless families to complete one assessment at a variety of homeless provider sites. Upon completion of that assessment, they will be prioritized by evaluating long they have been homeless as well as a variety of other factors. This will allow agencies to make referrals to appropriate programs that will accommodate their housing needs and get them off the street. The CoC has also reallocated funding that was previously for supportive services only programs into more permanent housing beds for the chronically homeless.

A street outreach team has also been created from various social services agencies. This team goes out during the annual Point-in-Time count to identify homeless persons and their length of homelessness and tries to identify housing options for them. The street team works to make linkages for the homeless individual that may not otherwise be known to them.

The biggest barrier identified to achieving this goal, is the continued poor economy and high unemployment rate. There are no local funds available (besides the grant dollars that pass through the city) to assist in the goal of ending homelessness. Additionally, funding from the state and federal government has been decreased in recent years even though the need is still present.

4. Homelessness Prevention—The jurisdiction must describe its planned action steps over the next year to address the individual and families with children at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Program Year 5 Action Plan Specific Homeless Prevention response:

The city sub-granted ESG-H funding to CoC agencies with a portion of that money going to Homeless Prevention activities. This money is designed to stop the process of families becoming homeless and it diverts them from homelessness and keeps them in permanent housing. Prairie State Legal Services provides legal services to families and individuals at-risk of becoming homeless due to questionable evictions. MELD provides homeless prevention funding to young parents (under 25) with children who are at-risk of becoming homeless.

The jurisdiction's Community Action Agency receives state funding for Homeless Prevention programs that are designed to prevent homelessness. Families that receive the service are required to attend Financial Literacy classes and, in some cases, Family Self-Sufficiency Classes.

5. Discharge Coordination Policy—Explain planned activities to implement a cohesive, community-wide Discharge Coordination Policy, and how, in the coming year, the community will move toward such a policy.

Program Year 5 Action Plan Specific Homeless Prevention response:

The CoC currently has discharge policies in place for youth aging out of foster care and individuals exiting from the local mental health center. Also, through our local ex-offender project, the Human Services Department works with ex-offenders and the Illinois Department of Corrections to stabilize families. Plans were put before the two local publicly funded hospitals regarding this issue, but they have yet to be approved.

Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG)

(States only) Describe the process for awarding grants to State recipients, and a description of how the allocation will be made available to units of local government.

Program Year 5 Action Plan ESG response:

N/A