

**Report
of the**

**SPECIAL COMMISSION
RELATIVE TO
ENDING HOMELESSNESS
IN THE
COMMONWEALTH**

**(under Chapter 2 of the
Resolves of 2006 and
Chapter 1 of the Resolves
of 2007)**

December 28, 2007

Chapter 2 of the Resolves of 2006

RESOLVE PROVIDING FOR AN INVESTIGATION AND PLAN BY A SPECIAL COMMISSION RELATIVE TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

Resolved, SECTION 1. There shall be a special commission for the purpose of devising a statewide strategy to end homelessness in the commonwealth. The commission shall consist of 5 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party, 5 members of the house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party, the director of housing and community development or her designee, the commissioner of mental health or her designee, the commissioner of transitional assistance or his designee, the secretary of veterans' services or his designee, 3 mayors or their designees nominated by the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the president of the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association or his designee, the chief justice of the housing court or his designee, 6 persons to be appointed by the governor, and each member of the interagency council on homelessness and housing, established by Executive Order number 454 dated November 20, 2003. The governor shall designate a member of the commission as co-chairperson and the members of the commission shall elect a member of the commission to serve as co-chairperson. The commission's strategy shall outline the necessary steps to replace the decade-old system of ad hoc and disparate emergency responses to homelessness with a coordinated and consolidated plan for permanent solutions to homelessness involving housing, economic development, and job creation.

SECTION 2. The commission shall use and incorporate the work of the interagency council on homelessness and housing and shall, by June 30, 2007, develop a comprehensive housing plan to end homelessness in the commonwealth, including a consensus budget proposal, capable of being implemented over a 5 year period, with a focus as follows:-

(a) To ensure the collaboration of the department of housing and community development, the executive office of health and human services and other state agencies, departments, and quasi-public authorities in the planning and distribution of resources that will create coordinated efforts to house homeless people, develop jobs and economic opportunities, and provide appropriate services.

(b) To consolidate within the state budget those funds allocated for services, housing, and economic development for homeless people, and to supplement these funds as necessary, for the purpose of developing coherent, comprehensive public policy. The objectives with actual quantifiable outcomes and results, is guided by research, as part of the creation of a consolidated budget and comprehensive public policy to reduce homelessness.

(c) To carry out an analysis of the financial and organizational feasibility of utilizing state resources for housing, economic development and supportive services under a conversion strategy. The preparation of this conversion analysis shall include, but not be limited to, compilation and analysis of the following information: (1) a determination of the number of units required by jurisdictions to house homeless individuals and families; (2) the coordination of discharge planning from correctional, mental health and other institutions and the types of housing support systems required to prevent or end homelessness; (3) recommendations relative to the establishment of a results-oriented

initiative of coordinated community support services designed to ensure that homeless individuals and families move towards independence and self-sufficiency; provided, however, that community support services shall include, but not be limited to, the case management of individual and family integration or reintegration into independent community living; and to identify the number of housing units affordable to very low-income and extremely low-income households according to the definition by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development or a successor agency; (4) the total amount in state resources currently spent on emergency shelter and services specifically targeted to homeless individuals and families; (5) a compilation of the costs of homelessness in mainstream primary and behavioral health systems and law enforcement systems, including jails, prisons, and courts; (6) an administrative review of all beds and services dedicated to homeless people and a review of models for housing, economic development and supportive services to which the present shelter system could be converted with recommendations regarding the transfer from the current to the proposed system; (7) the establishment of baseline quantification of the number of homeless people in the commonwealth and in various jurisdictions; (8) the establishment of incremental benchmarks to address what the baseline reveals; (9) the identification of the most innovative ideas from around the country for prevention.

The coordinated services that the commission shall analyze as a part of an individual or family living plan designed to prevent or eliminate homelessness shall include, but not be limited to, adult education, employment training and placement, family stabilization and reunification services, the head start program, child care and after-school services, substance abuse and mental health counseling and treatment, primary and preventive health care services, post-criminal justice rehabilitation and reintegration services, housing and rental assistance, energy and conservation assistance, group adult foster care and other elder home care services and nutrition.

(d) To prioritize and target state resources available for housing, economic development and supportive services to meet the needs of homeless individuals and families, and to ensure that those experiencing chronic homelessness are prioritized in the plan, especially veterans. Such prioritization and targeting may include the creation of special initiatives and set asides of a percentage of resources state agencies and quasi-public authorities may devote to the housing and employment of homeless people.

(e) To ensure that the state maximizes its ability to leverage outside resources from the federal, municipal, and private sources in the creation of coordinated, comprehensive initiatives to house homeless people.

(f) To identify what additional state resources are necessary to implement the strategy.

(g) To oversee the coordination and consolidation of state resources, both allocated and additional.

(h) To monitor a multi-year strategy initially to reduce the number of people who are homeless and to subsequently end homelessness in the commonwealth.

SECTION 3. For the purposes of this commission, “homelessness” shall mean the condition of a person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation or in an emergency shelter, or a person in transitional housing for homeless persons who originally came from the street or an emergency shelter. For purposes of this commission “not meant for human habitation” shall include, but not be limited to, cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, welfare hotels, shared temporary occupancy of housing not intended for multiple families or other

individuals, or any other public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular living accommodations.

SECTION 4. The commission shall present to the general court its comprehensive housing plan to end homelessness in the commonwealth, including a timeline for implementation, cost estimates and finance mechanisms and its recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry its recommendations into effect by filing them with the clerk of the house of representatives, who shall forward the same to the joint committee on children and families, the joint committee on housing, and the house and senate committees on ways and means on or before June 30, 2007. The commission's role shall be advisory in nature, and its recommendations, decisions, and actions shall not be binding on the executive branch or the legislative branch. One year after the effective date of this act, the commission shall be dissolved and any of its remaining responsibilities shall be assumed by the interagency council on homelessness and housing.

Approved October 26, 2006.

Chapter 1 of the Resolves of 2007

RESOLVE REVIVING AND CONTINUING AND INCREASING THE SCOPE OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION RELATIVE TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

Resolved, That the special commission, established by chapter 2 of the resolves of 2006 is hereby revived and continued ; and be it further

Resolved, That section 1 of said chapter 2 is hereby amended by striking out the second sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentence:- The commission shall consist of 5 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party, 5 members of the house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party, the director of housing and community development or her designee, the commissioner of mental health or her designee, the commissioner of transitional assistance or his designee, the secretary of veterans' services or his designee, the lieutenant governor or his designee, the secretary of administration and finance or her designee, the commissioner of correction or his designee, the secretary of health and human services or her designee, the secretary of housing and economic development or his designee, 3 mayors or their designees nominated by the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the president of the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association or his designee, the chief justice of the housing court or his designee and 6 persons to be appointed by the governor; and be it further

Resolved, That section 2 of said chapter 2 is hereby amended by striking out in the first sentence the words "June 30, 2007" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- December 30, 2007; and be it further

Resolved, That section 4 of said chapter 2 is hereby amended by striking out the first sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentence:- The commission shall present to the general court its comprehensive housing plan to end homelessness in the commonwealth, including a timeline for implementation, cost estimates and finance mechanisms and its recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry its recommendations into effect by filing them with the clerk of the house of representatives, who shall forward the same to the governor, the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities, the joint committee on housing, and the house and senate committees on ways and means on or before December 30, 2007; and be it further

Resolved, That said section 4 of said chapter 2 is hereby further amended by striking out the last sentence.

Steven T. James, Clerk
Massachusetts House of Representatives
Room 145
State House
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

The accompanying document is the Report of the Special Commission relative to ending homelessness in the Commonwealth. The purpose of the Commission is to devise a statewide strategy to end homelessness in the Commonwealth. This report is delivered to your office in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 2 of the Resolves of 2006 and Chapter 1 of the Resolves of 2007 with the instruction to forward it to the governor, the joint committee on children, families, and persons with disabilities, the joint committee on housing, and the house and senate committees on ways and means.

Thank you.

Representative Byron Rushing, Co-Chair _____

Undersecretary Tina Brooks, Co-Chair _____

Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray _____

Senator Susan C. Tucker _____

Senator Dianne Wilkerson _____

Senator Edward M. Augustus, Jr. _____

Senator Brian A. Joyce _____

Senator Michael R. Knapik _____

Representative Kevin G. Honan _____

Representative Kay Khan _____

Representative Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr. _____

Representative Bradley H. Jones _____

Commissioner Barbara Leadholm and Deputy Commissioner Ann Detrick

Commissioner Julia Kehoe _____

Secretary Thomas G. Kelley _____

Mayor Clare Higgins _____

Mayor Michael Sullivan _____

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, designee Jim Greene _____

Sheriff Frank G. Cousins, designee Jim Walsh _____

Chief Justice Steven D. Pierce _____

Secretary Dan O'Connell _____

Secretary Judy Ann Bigby, designee Assistant Secretary Marilyn Chase

Secretary Leslie Kirwan _____

Associate Commissioner James Bender _____

Mark Edwards _____

Susanne Beaton _____

Lyndia Downie _____

Joe Finn _____

Mary Kay Leonard, designee Elizabeth Curtis

Vin Perrone _____

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION TO END HOMELESSNESS

Ending and preventing homelessness is possible. The Massachusetts Commission to End Homelessness has developed a 5-year plan that, if implemented and funded appropriately, will succeed in ending homelessness in the Commonwealth by 2013. The Commission believes that ending the pervasive social and economic problem of homelessness is possible and is a moral imperative. Permanent housing is critical for families and individuals. Persons who lack a permanent address have difficulties applying for jobs, their children are not provided with a stable educational environment, and they utilize a disproportionate amount of emergency room care, law enforcement resources and public health intervention. The social costs of homelessness are huge, both for society and for homeless individuals and families.

The Commission believes that everyone can be successful in securing and maintaining housing, as long as the right economic and social supports are in place. Putting such supports in place will not cost the Commonwealth more money, in the long term, than it does to provide for the people currently in shelters and on the street. Ending homelessness, therefore, is a rare opportunity where doing the right thing is also the most cost-effective solution.

Ending homelessness will not be easy and will require a dramatic transformation of the Commonwealth's system for responding to homeless individuals and families. The Commission generated a broadly-accepted vision for a new system, where shelters are used only for emergency transitions and every family and individual has a permanent place to live. Today, the system starts with placement in shelter for those presenting as homeless; tomorrow, we envision a system that starts with stabilizing existing tenancies to prevent homelessness, re-housing people before they enter shelter, and linking people to the appropriate community supports to find and keep stable housing situations and improve their economic position. It also means using housing opportunities as a vehicle to link families and individuals with workforce development and income maximization programs.

This transformation from a shelter-based system to one focused on permanent housing will require investment and patience. But the payoff will be huge—the thousands of currently- or imminently-homeless people will have a chance to be part of, and contribute to, their communities.

This report describes the process and findings of the Commission. It includes:

- Definition of homelessness;
- Characteristics of current homeless population;
- Elements of new system (recommendations);
- Implementation steps

Definition

It is always tempting, when facing a problem like homelessness, to want to solve the related and underlying causes of homelessness. Early on, the Commission developed clarity that it would not presume to solve poverty, but rather would devise a strategy specifically to address homelessness by asking that if shelter is not the ideal response, how do we empty the shelters and keep them from filling up again. In doing so, the Commission adopted the following definitions:

Homeless: All families or individuals who both lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and who reside in emergency or transitional shelter programs, or who live in places not designed for human habitation such as cars, abandoned buildings, the woods or the street. Persons residing in institutional or recovery programs that were homeless upon entry and are without housing upon release are considered homeless.

'At Risk' of Homelessness: All families or individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence including those who are temporarily sharing occupancy of housing not intended for multiple families or other individuals. Persons residing in institutional or recovery programs without housing available upon release are also considered at-risk of homelessness.

Characteristics of Homeless Population

Homelessness is a significant and increasing problem in the Commonwealth. The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) supports over 2900 beds for individuals and nearly 1900 units for families at an annual cost to the Commonwealth exceeding \$120 million. In these shelters, some families and individuals stay for a long time, using it as a de facto housing system. Others come in and out of the shelter system repeatedly, since their exit has not been coordinated to promote long term housing stability. For still others, the shelters work as they are intended—for a transitional, short-term stay only.

To devise a strategy to promote housing stability for all who touch the state's homeless system, it is necessary to understand the needs of the populations involved. For both families and individuals, while we want the new system to treat each case as unique and devise a situation-specific response, we have adopted a nomenclature of "tiers" to characterize the subpopulations so that we can frame categories of responses.

Family Tiered Approach Estimation

| | Approximate # of current homeless families |
|---|--|
| Tier 1 (Families w/minimal needs other than affordable housing) | 750 families |
| Tier 2 (Short-term support required) | 500 families |
| Tier 3 (Families facing economic challenges) | 2,500 families |
| Tier 4 (Families facing social & economic challenges) | 1,250 families |
| | 5,000 total families |

These roughly 5000 families include approximately 10,000 children. The length of stay in shelters is not determined by the level of need. Because the system does not provide flexible, need-driven responses, often families in Tier 1 are forced to remain in shelter because the resources which could help them simply aren't accessible. Counter-intuitively, sometimes these very families end up with long shelter stays, while the Tier 4 families may leave shelter more quickly, without appropriate supports, and find themselves back in shelter later.

Individual Tiered Approach Estimation

| | Approximate # of current homeless individuals |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Tier 1 (Short stays) | 9,600 individuals |
| Tier 2 (Institutional Discharge) | 9,600 individuals |
| Tier 3 (Chronic Shelter Stayers) | 1,900 individuals |
| Tier 4 (Shelter Avoiders) | 2,900 individuals |
| | 24,000 individuals |

The number of homeless individuals is difficult to determine, due to lack of data collection systems and the fact that many homeless individuals live on the street or in marginal situations, and many bounce from one shelter to another to the street. Our estimates suggest that approximately 3,000 of the individuals served in the shelters are youth ages 18-24. The estimates further show that a very large number of people become homeless following their release from institutions, such as prisons, substance abuse and mental health facilities. Such institutions often fail in creating effective discharge plans that include housing options. The Tier 3 population, while representing a relatively small percentage of homeless individuals,

accounts for about 50% of the nightly shelter bed utilization and consume a disproportionate share of the system's resources.

Recommendations

The Commission maintained a three-pronged focus:

- Prevention strategies to keep as many people housed as possible;
- Housing placement, subsidy and production responses that result in stable, permanent housing options; and
- Asset development supports that enhance the economic stability of individuals and families—perhaps the most meaningful protection against future homelessness.

Within each of these categories, the Commission identified and reviewed many programs with demonstrated effectiveness and these should be continued and expanded. A key defining principle for the new system is **targeting the right resources to the right people at the right time**. That doesn't happen today, where statutory and regulatory restrictions of the limited programs available to address and prevent homelessness unduly constrain our ability to fix the problem in the particular case.

To be effective, these programs and tactics must be employed within a system that allows for maximum flexibility at the ground level—the case worker must be able to assess that individual or family's needs and respond in precisely the way that will address that case the best. Obviously, that requires good information and the foundation of the new system is uniform assessment. It also requires being able to tap into existing programs and services that are in the community: coordination of resources is key. Coordination among all community providers will offer another key benefit—early warning systems to help identify the problems before they grow.

The new system builds upon a foundation of uniform assessment, true coordination and early warning that can happen at new, regional service coordinating entities—not via a new bureaucracy, but rather through existing networks of service providers bolstered to effectively become this focal point. These networks will access a flexible array of prevention, production and asset-building tools including:

- Linkages to income maximization, entitlement, workforce development and service programs;
- Flexible cash assistance to stabilize a housing situation;
- Case management resources;
- Housing search, vouchers and access teams;
- Specialized supportive housing;
- Emergency shelters for temporary, transitional stays when necessary.

Effectiveness also requires that families and individuals will be able to find appropriate housing. This certainly means we need to produce more affordable housing—both through actual production of physical units, and by adding considerably more housing vouchers to fill the often-wide gap between market rents and a household's ability to pay. DHCD conducted

an evaluation of the system's capacity to produce more affordable housing assuming new capital investments were available. DHCD determined that, with additional resources, new production could happen at the following pace:

- On the individual side, we envisioned new Single Person Occupancy (SPO) housing. By adding roughly 200 new units/year for five consecutive years, we can add 1000 new SPO units across the Commonwealth.
- On the family side, we could mobilize both the public and private housing communities to produce a total of 800 new family units over the same 5-year period—500 in private developments and 300 in new public housing.

Producing housing is not enough. We also must break down the barriers that prevent homeless people from accessing the units that do exist or will be produced. Such actions would include improved tracking of vacancies in currently-affordable units, tenant selection processes that recognize the challenges faced by homeless people, reform to the way vouchers are administered and vigilance about protecting and aggressively seeking all possible federal housing resources. We must ensure that all housing resources are appropriately utilized, and that homeless people have fair access to them. We must further link the utilization of these resources to participation in economic opportunity programs, where individual and family goals are set, escrow accounts set up and supports mobilized to help every family member or individual reach their education, job skills and employment targets.

Next Steps

The Commission has set out a vision for a radically-transformed system. The Commission recommends that the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH) oversee the execution of this plan and that it take these broad directions and determine specific budget and program guidelines. A critical component of this task is the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between state agencies responsible for system components. Another important task for the ICHH is to establish a vehicle to capture the reduced shelter expenditures (when they materialize over time) for further housing resources, so that we can continue to focus on housing people rather than simply placing them in shelters.

The first phase of this process will involve testing and experimenting with flexible tools to learn the most cost-effective, lasting way to get families and individuals out of shelter for good and to help them secure stable housing situations. By piloting different, situation-specific approaches, we will learn about the best practices for avoiding long-term homelessness for the people we serve. An important element of these pilots will be figuring out how to reduce barriers to housing that many homeless families and individuals face, and to maximize the use of existing affordable housing resources.

This phase can begin immediately with Fiscal Year 2009, if the ICHH will use January-June 2008 to prepare for the first phase of the transformation.

There is broad consensus that such a housing-based approach will use resources far more cost-effectively than a shelter-as-de-facto-housing system. However, before we can abandon

the old system of shelters, we need to invest new resources into building the infrastructure to stabilize, divert and re-house families and individuals who would otherwise be in or enter the shelter system.

In order to begin to dramatically reduce reliance on the costly system of shelters, during the first phase, the Commission recommends adoption of the goal of reducing the number of family shelter units and individual beds by 20%. It is important to remember that the target for reducing shelter units must take into account forces in the economy and society that determine the need for the beds. For instance, this year we have seen an increased demand for shelter beds due to the foreclosure crisis. The appropriate response may be to keep the current number of shelter units available and not add any new beds. A key task for the ICHH will be to develop effective measuring tools to assess progress.

In order to achieve the desired level of reduction in shelter usage, the Commission also recommends an initial investment of \$10 million to establish a pool of flexible resources to:

- Develop and test a Uniform Assessment Tool to ensure resources can be targeted to precisely fill the need for each individual and family;
- Develop pilot Regional Coordinating Entities to develop early warning systems and coordinate access to the broad array of income supports and services necessary to stabilize housing situations;
- Provide a flexible array of tools for stabilizing, diverting and rehousing families and individuals who present as homeless or at imminent risk;
- Begin the planning for repurposing shelter facilities and service providers to play a key role in the new system, including outreach to current shelter providers in planning for the reprogramming and capturing their service expertise.

This \$10 million will launch the transformation, but additional resources may be needed to complete it. As the Commonwealth reduces its reliance on shelter units and beds, we will need to capture the reduced shelter expenditures and invest them additional housing resources.

During the first phase we will learn how to proceed most cost-effectively. We will identify the time table by which shelter beds can be transformed to permanent housing or abandoned and resources which were used to support them redirected to housing and ancillary service. Finally, we will develop a better understanding of the resources that must be invested to achieve the desired level of shelter reduction. Naturally, once shelter beds are able to come off line when the housing system infrastructure is in place, the avoided costs from those shelter operations will be invested in further housing resources so that we do not re-create the homelessness situation. At the mid-point in this transformation, we expect that the avoided costs will equal the need for housing resources, and the investment will have paid off as the system will serve more people, more effectively without requiring additional state resources.

**Report
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**SPECIAL COMMISSION
RELATIVE TO
ENDING HOMELESSNESS
IN THE
COMMONWEALTH**

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I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Vision Statement

We believe that ending and preventing homelessness is possible. With affordable rents, flexible funds for securing housing and connections to community supports, anyone—families with children, elders, people with disabilities, veterans, single adults, youth aging out of state systems of care, grandparents raising grandchildren, and even those considered chronically homeless—can be successfully housed. For this reason, we believe that state and federal funds should be targeted to ensuring access to, producing, and preserving affordable housing, and to leveraging or providing the cost-effective supportive services necessary to stabilize tenancies.

In July 2007, at the initiation of State Representative Byron Rushing and the subsequent charge by the Governor, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts formed a Joint Legislative-Executive State Commission to End Homelessness. The Commission was charged with “[recommending] a broad based housing plan that recognizes service needs to end homelessness in the Commonwealth” (DHCD website, 2007). This report describes the process and presents the recommendations of this Commission.

When implemented, these recommendations will transform what has become a ‘system’ of homeless services in Massachusetts. With this plan, the Commonwealth will convert the existing system of emergency shelter to one that focuses on prevention, increased access to permanent affordable housing, housing production and economic stability. The recommended approach is rooted in uniform assessment, targeted resources, and coordination amongst agencies. In the new system, shelters will be utilized for true emergencies. Shifting the paradigm will enable Massachusetts to reinvest resources in alternatives to shelter.

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) commissioned the Center for Social Policy at the John W. McCormack School of Policy Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston (CSP) to prepare this report. The report synthesizes the work of the Commission to End Homelessness and its working groups. It provides the key recommendations to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on how best to ultimately end the current shelter-based homeless system.

The report is organized as follows:

- *Section II – The Commission to End Homelessness*
- *Section III – Overview of Poverty, Homelessness, and Housing in Massachusetts*
- *Section IV – Characteristics of Massachusetts Homeless Families, Individuals, and Subpopulations*
- *Section V – Overview of Strategies to End Homelessness-From Shelter to Housing*
- *Section VI – Commission Recommendation*
- *Section VII – Vehicles for Implementation*
- *Section VIII – Next Steps*
- *Section IX – Conclusion*
- *Appendices*
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II. THE COMMISSION TO END HOMELESSNESS

Establishment of the Commission

The Massachusetts Commission to End Homelessness was created by legislative resolve first filed by State Representative Byron Rushing in 2001. Language from this bill to create a homelessness commission was incorporated into an omnibus housing bill that was vetoed by Acting Governor Jane Swift in 2002. In 2003 and 2005, Representative Rushing again proposed legislation to create a commission charged with developing a comprehensive five-year housing plan to end homelessness in the Commonwealth. This legislation was signed into law in October 2006, with certain amendments insisted on by Governor Mitt Romney.¹ In July 2007, legislation was passed to revive, continue, and conform the membership of the Commission to the reorganized Deval Patrick Administration.² In the same month, Commission members were appointed; Tina Brooks, Undersecretary of the Department of Housing and Community Development was appointed co-chair by the Governor, and State Representative Byron Rushing was elected co-chair by the Commission. This report describes the process and presents the recommendations of the Commission.

Commission Goal

The Commission's goal is to house all those who are currently homeless and to prevent homelessness for those who are at-risk of becoming homeless.

Composition and Representation

The Commission to End Homelessness was comprised of state, city, and county officials, along with private-sector advocates and service providers. The full list of commission members is available in the appendix. The 30-member Commission was co-chaired by Representative Byron Rushing and Massachusetts Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Tina Brooks (Homelessness Commission Website, 2007). The commission met as a whole throughout the summer and fall 2007 to create a working definition of homelessness, form specific working groups, and establish a framework for recommendations from which the working groups would work. Full Commission meetings took place regularly throughout this period, culminating in the final December 13th meeting. The Commission also held a public hearing on November 16th, 2007 at Massachusetts Veterans, Inc. in Worcester, Massachusetts. This hearing provided additional organizations, advocates, and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on or submit written testimony with recommendations for how the Commission might achieve its goal of ending homelessness in five years. The Commission provided a format through its website for the general public to make suggestions to the overall plan.

Prevention, Production, and Asset Development

In developing workable strategies to end and prevent homelessness on multiple levels, the Commission focused on several key dimensions of homelessness policy. These

¹ Chapter 2 of the Resolves of 2006.

² Chapter 1 of the Resolves of 2007.

dimensions include **prevention** strategies; **production** of and access to affordable housing; and strategies for **asset development** and **economic mobility and stability**. The Commission working group subcommittees generated recommendations consistent with this framework. The dimensions provide structural continuity; however each takes on a slightly different role for the various homeless subpopulations. Generally, **prevention** aims to keep people from ever becoming homeless by providing appropriate resources and support prior to a fall into homelessness. **Production and access** focuses on strategies for creation of affordable housing that suits the needs of the various subpopulations and creates increased access to such housing. **Asset development** focuses on the support services, resources, training, and programs that will provide people with the tools they need to ensure economic stability and mobility.

The Working Groups

Members of the Commission were recruited into four working groups in order to focus on proposals for particular subpopulations of homelessness, including: Individuals, Families, and Individuals Exiting the Correctional System. A fourth group focused on policy and regulations. For each subpopulation the working groups were to answer the following:

- What is the subpopulation size?
- What are the intensive services needed?
- What are the costs of support services?
- What are the costs of asset development services?
- What is the time frame for production of necessary units?
- What is the role of current service providers?
- What is the quantification of any other resources needed?
- Who are the responsible parties within the state?
- What does success look like for each recommendation?
- What are the measures of success?

The Family Homelessness Working Group was chaired by Susanne Beaton, Campaign Director, One Family, Inc. The Individual Working Group was chaired by Joe Finn, Executive Director, Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance. The Individuals Exiting Correctional Systems Working Group was chaired by Department of Corrections Acting Commissioner James R. Bender. The Policy/Regulatory Working Group was chaired by Lyndia Downie, Executive Director, Pine Street Inn. A list of contributing members of each working group is available in the appendix.

The working groups conducted several meetings over the months of October and November which were facilitated by the Commission's Staff Director, Gail Latimore. Each of the working groups generated recommendations for systems change, including priorities and cost estimates. CSP staff attended each of these meetings and, based on the discussions that took place, drafted, synthesized and authored the policy recommendations and this final report based upon feedback from the working groups, Commission staff and Commission members.

Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness

The recommendations and framework presented in this report will be charged to the Interagency Council on Homelessness and Housing (ICHH). The ICHH was reestablished by Governor Deval Patrick on November 18, 2007 and will be chaired by Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray. The Council membership will include the:

- Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services;
- Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Services;
- Commissioner of the Department of Social Services
- Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health;
- Commissioner of the Department of Transitional Assistance;
- Secretary of the Executive Office for Administration and Finance;
- Secretary of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development;
- Undersecretary for the Department of Housing and Community Development;
- Commissioner of the Department of Education;
- Commissioner of the Department of Correction.

III. OVERVIEW OF POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS, AND HOUSING IN MASSACHUSETTS

Shelters as a Response to Homelessness

In response to the growth in homelessness in the United States over the past two decades, resources to fight homelessness have been directed toward building up the country's emergency shelter system (Sard et al, 2006). Based upon the most extensive and conservative analysis to date, 2.3 to 3.5 million people are homeless in the United States annually; that is one percent of the United States population, six to nine percent of those in poverty and six to nine percent of children in poverty (Burt and Aron, 2000). Over a five year period, an estimated three percent of the country's population is homeless (Link, Susser, Stueve, Phelan, Moore, and Streuning, 1994).

In Massachusetts in FY 2002, 80% of state resources to address family homelessness were allocated for emergency shelter and related services, while only 20% were allocated for prevention (Clayton-Matthews and Wilson, 2003). The new system proposed in this report converts this equation, with prevention becoming a larger part of the response, along with rapid re-housing for those in emergency shelter and permanent housing supports and services. In calendar year 2007, DTA provided shelter to 5,000 families, that is, over 5,000 adults and approximately 10,000 children. Providing shelter to a homeless family costs the state an average of \$98 per night. Studies indicate that of the homeless families sheltered by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) in Massachusetts,ⁱ 20-25 percent stay for close to 15 months, costing the state \$48,440 per family just to provide them with shelter and case management services (Culhane, 2006). An estimated 24,000 individuals are homeless annually in Massachusetts. Providing shelter to a single homeless adult in Massachusetts costs the state about \$1,000 a month on average. This amount does not include any case management or other services that a shelter program provides, nor does it include the high costs of health related expenses. The Commission concluded that if these funds were ultimately redirected towards permanent housing for these families and individuals, these currently homeless people could be successfully housed—a far more cost-effective use of resources.

The Department of Transitional Assistance has identified several areas of the Commonwealth faced with proportionally high rates of homelessness. These areas are represented in Figure 1, which illustrates the location of Department of Transitional Assistance Offices, emergency shelters, and household addresses prior to homelessness.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF MASSACHUSETTS HOMELESS FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS, AND SUB-POPULATIONS

Definition of Homelessness and ‘At Risk’ of Homelessness

Establishing a comprehensive definition of homelessness was a vital step in the Commission’s work. Clarity was needed on who made up the homeless population and its subpopulations. Since a primary focus of the Commission was “prevention”, Commission members also agreed that the definition needed to include those families and individuals who are at risk of homelessness. The definition served as the starting block from which the Commission formed its recommendations.

Homeless: All families or individuals who both lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and who reside in emergency or transitional shelter programs, or who live in places not designed for human habitation such as cars, abandoned buildings, woods or the street. Persons residing in institutional or recovery programs, who were homeless upon entry and are without housing upon release, are considered homeless.

At Risk of Homelessness: All families or individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence including those who are temporarily sharing occupancy of housing not intended for multiple families or other individuals. Persons residing in institutional or recovery programs without housing available upon release are also considered at-risk of homelessness.

V. OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIES TO END HOMELESSNESS: FROM SHELTER TO HOUSING

Homelessness Prevention Priorities and Strategies

Homelessness prevention is one of several effective strategies to end homelessness.

Homelessness prevention seeks to prevent evictions or other displacements. These interventions may take several forms including temporary cash assistance for rent and utility arrearages; mediation services for tenants in housing court; or support services in combination with discharge planning and permanent housing for those in institutional settings. Homelessness prevention initiatives in Massachusetts have successfully utilized these approaches to prevent homelessness and stabilize housing for at-risk households (Friedman et. al. 2007). A review of community-wide prevention networks (Friedman et. al. 2006) recommends that, for effective and coordinated intervention, several key elements be incorporated into regional or local homelessness prevention networks:

- the integration of prevention and shelter assessment/eligibility determination processes;
- prevention, rather than shelter, as a primary route to affordable housing;
- flexible use of cash and non-cash prevention resources, pooled from public and other privately-generated resources;
- performance benchmarks and use of cross-organizational outcome measurement to assess progress and inform practice; and
- effective cross-sector partnerships with public resources as a base, privately-generated resources as supplemental.

Housing Production and Access to Housing Priorities and Strategies

To end homelessness, housing is basic. There is no way to end homelessness without creating many more viable housing alternatives for Massachusetts families and individuals who have extremely low incomes. Demand at the front door to shelter will be unending without the development of a broad array of housing alternatives for those households who are already homeless and those who are ‘at risk’ of homelessness. We must also break down the barriers that prevent homeless people from accessing the units that do exist or will be produced. Each one of the Commission’s working groups identified housing priorities and specific strategies and tactics for their populations. Among those priorities are ideas for increasing the supply of housing assistance vouchers and shallow subsidies; development of Housing First models; development and expansion of supported housing options; and ideas regarding new production of housing for ELI households.

We need to produce more affordable housing—both through actual production of physical units and by adding considerably more housing vouchers to fill the often-wide gap between market rents and people’s ability to pay. DHCD conducted an evaluation of the system’s capacity to produce more affordable housing assuming new capital investments were available. DHCD determined that, with additional resources, new production could happen at the following pace:

- On the individual side, we envision new Single Person Occupancy (SPO) housing. By adding roughly 200 new units/year for five consecutive years, we can add 1000 new SPO units across the Commonwealth.

- On the family side, we could mobilize both the public and private housing communities to produce a total of 800 new family units over the same 5-year period—500 in private developments and 300 in new public housing.

Figure 2: Production Targets and Costs

| | # Units | Capital Cost/Unit | Total Capital Cost | Annual Operating Cost/Unit | Total Annual Operating Cost |
|------------------------|---------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Individual (SPO units) | 1000 | \$ 100,000 | \$100,000,000 | \$ 1,875 | \$1,875,000 |
| Family—private housing | 500 | \$ 150,000 | \$ 75,000,000* | \$ 2,000 | \$1,000,000 |
| Family public housing | 300 | \$ 250,000 | \$75,000,000** | \$ 1,500 | \$ 450,000 |

* Assumes use of 4% and 9% low income housing tax credits

** Assumes use of 4% tax credits

Asset Development Priorities and Strategies

Asset development focuses on the income side of the equation for families and individuals with extremely low incomes. These priorities and strategies detailed in each working group’s recommendations focus on the tools, programs and resources that will enable each of the sub-populations of homeless persons to increase their incomes and to achieve economic stability. These ideas include increased access to public work supports that people are eligible for but not receiving; employment and training programs that increase skill development and preparation for living wage jobs; supported employment activities for persons with challenging mental illness and/or substance abuse recovery difficulties; and preparation of incarcerated persons for viable employment upon discharge from prisons and jails. The Commission encourages the Interagency Council on Homelessness and Housing to leverage the experience of the Asset Development Commission³ in refining proposed asset development strategies, and to link housing supports to participation in economic opportunity programs, where individual/family goals are set, escrow accounts set up, and supports mobilized to help every family member or individual reach their education, job skills, and employment targets.

³ The Asset Development Commission is a new commission of legislators, executive branch officials, and other gubernatorial appointments that will begin its work in early 2008. The Commission aims to “conduct research and make recommendations to ensure that low and moderate income Massachusetts residents have opportunities to develop financial assets throughout life for sustainable economic security and improved quality of life.”

VI. COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

A)_OVERVIEW

The overall goal of the recommended new system is to ensure housing stability and economic mobility for those currently homeless and at risk of becoming homeless. The long-term objectives are to serve families and individuals, currently using shelters, through genuine alternatives to shelter, such as access to housing assistance, supported housing, as well as coordinated service and support responses. In the future system, emergency shelters will be used for true emergencies only, as a transitional response. These efforts will reduce drastically the constant flow of new shelter seekers and users, and thereby facilitating a reduction the state's shelter capacity, capturing these financial opportunities to serve more persons/families more effectively with housing-based service and resource responses.

The Commission identified and reviewed many programs with demonstrated effectiveness and these should be continued and expanded. A key defining principle for the new system is **targeting the right resources to the right people at the right time**. That doesn't happen today, where statutory and regulatory restrictions of the limited programs available to address and prevent homelessness unduly constrain our ability to fix the problem in the particular case.

To be effective, these programs and tactics must be employed within a system that allows for maximum flexibility at the ground level—the case worker must be able to assess that individual or family's needs and respond in precisely the way that will address that case the best. Obviously, that requires good information—so the foundation of the new system is uniform assessment. It also requires being able to tap into existing programs and services that are in the community—coordination of resources is key. Coordinating amongst all community providers will offer another key benefit—early warning systems to help identify the problems before they grow.

The new system builds upon a foundation of uniform assessment, true coordination and early warning that can happen at new, regional service coordinating entities—not via a new bureaucracy, but rather through existing networks of service providers bolstered to effectively become this focal point. The uniform assessment makes flexible, individual needs-based responses possible. These networks will access a flexible array of prevention, production and asset-building tools including:

- Linkages to income maximization, entitlement, workforce development and service programs;
- Flexible cash assistance to stabilize a housing situation;
- Case management resources;
- Housing search, vouchers and access teams;
- Specialized supportive housing;
- Emergency shelters for temporary, transitional stays when necessary.

B) OPERATING PRINCIPLES

End Homelessness, Not Poverty

An overarching theme that underlies the recommendations is to end homelessness; the Commission does not presume to end poverty. However, Commission members are aware that there are high numbers of Massachusetts households who are struggling economically. For example, 195,000 MA households of families and individuals, with incomes 30% of AMI or below, are eligible for housing assistance but are not receiving it (Albelda & Shea, 2007).

Emphasize Prevention and Economic Stabilization

All of the working groups focused on identifying priorities for (1) prevention, (2) affordable housing production and access; and (3) asset development. The priorities generated in these three framing areas are the foundation for reducing the demand for shelter and increasing the potential for near homeless households to remain housed and achieve housing and economic stability.

No New Bureaucracies!

Commission and working group members were unanimous in asserting that the new system should build upon existing resource and community networks.

Lower Entry Barriers to Housing

Additionally, intended and unintended barriers to the state's existing housing portfolio need to be addressed, including public housing, subsidized private market housing and all other housing. There are a number of ways to respond in lowering those barriers. We must ensure that all housing resources are appropriately utilized and that homeless people have fair access to them.

C) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAMILIES

A Four Tier Model for Reducing Homelessness for Families and the States' Reliance on Emergency Shelter

Families enter the shelter system for different reasons, and strategies to address those needs must be determined on a case-by-case basis. That said, there are generally four categories into which family needs fall. It is worth emphasizing that while families in each of these tiers may have similar types of needs, the recommendation of the Commission is for individual responses. Thus, programs cannot be targeted based on these tiers—rather, the programs offer flexible tools to respond to the needs which are categorized below.

The length of stay in shelters is not determined by the level of need. Because the system does not provide flexible, need-driven responses, often families in Tier 1 are forced to remain in shelter because the resources which could help them simply aren't accessible. Counter-intuitively, sometimes these very families end up with long shelter stays, while the Tier 4 families may leave shelter more quickly, without appropriate supports, and find themselves back in shelter later.

Tier 1: Families with temporary economic struggles. These families face homelessness due to specific one-time disruptions, such as loss of a job or accumulation of arrearages. Most of these families could be stabilized in existing housing or if this isn't possible, quickly relocated. These families would receive assistance in connecting with income maximization resources, including public work supports, as well as cash assistance that could be flexibly used to address the causes of their housing threats.

Tier 2: Families with moderate economic struggles and housing instability. Families in this category are often temporarily placed in emergency shelter because of relatively short-term social or economic problems; many are employed or have reasonable short-term employment prospects. They could benefit from the same programs as Tier 1 families, but with greater emphasis on connecting to mainstream supportive services and to economic development programs.

Tier 3. Families with complex economic challenges. We estimate that roughly half of families using shelter in the past have more complex economic challenges. Our response must match housing assistance, designed to meet need and regional conditions, with economic mobility assistance.

Tier 4. Families with complex social and economic challenges. These families have the most complex economic and social challenges. Intensive case management will generally be required, and, permanent housing assistance is expected to be a need for these families.

Size of the population of families using DTA shelter annually

In 2007, DTA provided shelter for 5,000 families; over 5,000 adults and approximately 10,000 children are included. Families in shelter present with varying levels of need.

The numbers of families in each level of the proposed tier model represent the proportions for the numbers of families estimated based on studies of shelter populations.

Figure 3: Family Tiered Approach Subgroup Estimate

| | Approximate # of current homeless families |
|---|---|
| Tier 1 (Families w/temporary economic struggles) | 750 families |
| Tier 2 (Families w/moderate economic struggles/housing instability) | 500 families |
| Tier 3 (Families facing complex economic challenges) | 2,500 families |
| Tier 4 (Families facing complex social & economic challenges) | 1,250 families |
| | 5,000 total families |

Families who are at High Risk of Homelessness

In the Commonwealth, 24,000 families are receiving Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) but are not accessing housing assistance. Roughly 3,000 families with children receive RAFT benefits; another 4,000 seek this resource but are unable to be served due to limited resources. In addition, another 2,400 families sought shelter in 2007, but were turned away. These populations have very porous edges; they may be one crisis away from losing their housing and being in need of shelter. In summary, a larger community of extremely low income families could benefit from housing assistance. Over time, as the new system is implemented statewide, more of these precariously housed families will benefit from the prevention support and stabilization resources. The recommendations are focused however on those who are literally homeless.

May or may not be at risk of homelessness

- 24,000 households receiving TAFDC but no housing assistance
- RAFT Holders: 3000
- RAFT Seekers: 4000 who are unable to be served
- Shelter Seekers who were turned away: 2400 in calendar year 2007

Transforming the Current System for Homeless Families

As discussed above, while the working groups developed program suggestions in the 3 categories of prevention, production and asset development, the essence of the new system is an integration of programs in a flexible manner. The integration will happen through regional coordinating entities, where resources are assembled, focused and deployed to match the needs of the families. Central to the implementation of the new vision is a foundation of uniform assessment, truly coordinated service delivery at the local level and thoroughly adaptable tools to respond to needs on the ground. Stabilizing

existing subsidized housing resources is a prerequisite for the success of the new system and is an undercurrent of many of the recommendations.

The critical next step in developing these targeted responses is for the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness to take the set of ideas developed by the Commission and design a plan for the first phase of the transformation, keeping in mind the need for experimentation, testing and evaluation of new models to define the ultimate system elements. With that in mind, below are program ideas from the working group which received endorsement from the Commission; additional less-processed program notions are provided in Appendix F.

Prevention Priorities

- (1) Develop an Early Warning System to Identify those at Risk.
 - Build early warning system into ALL State agencies and local access, breaking down the state “silos”.
 - . Create a uniform assessment tool for everyone with a “front door” to use.
 - Target hot spots for prevention purposes.
 - Engage and educate landlord community and Housing Court about availability and benefits of prevention resources.
 - Engage Local Housing Authorities in prevention efforts including homelessness prevention and stabilization services.
- (2) Reconfigure existing prevention resources so that they may be co-located and blended to create complimentary prevention/stabilization funds.
 - Allow flexible use of these cash resources to prevent evictions.
- (3) Create an Effective Delivery System for Prevention Resources.

Eliminate first-come, first-serve utilization so that resources are continuously available to all state agency front doors as a way of reducing chaotic pathways for families.
- (4) Develop No Wrong Door Policy and Re-Design Prevention Front Door.
 - Coordinate regionally to ensure that the prevention fund is available to local agencies that clients use Expand a Tenancy Preservation Program-like model:
 - All courts (district and housing), adding more housing advocates in court.
 - For non- disabled people: Educate tenants about rights to do evictions in housing courts.
 - Require mediation prior to eviction.
- (5) Develop a Regional Strategy for Prevention.
- (6) Mitigate the Negative Impacts on Children.
 - Ensure the availability of home-based and/or community-based child development opportunities for all children who are homeless, at-risk of homelessness, or transitioning out of homelessness.
 - De-link this programming from shelters.

- Engage community in prevention of family homelessness and stabilization, with a focus on early identification of children at-risk.

Production/Affordable Housing Access Priorities

- (1) Create Developer Incentives for ELI Production.
 - Develop a range of incentive approaches.
 - Increase Funding for Production of ELI Housing.
 - Create a targeted program for development of permanent supportive housing.
- (2) Increase Supply of Housing Vouchers/ Subsidies.
 - Increase funding for housing vouchers/ subsidies.
 - Advocate for more federal resources and make sure all resources are used effectively.
- (3) Reduce Barriers to Accessing Housing
 - Explore barriers and regulations that would prevent families from accessing resources.
 - Establish statewide clearinghouse of available units and statewide list of housing resources.
 - Modify CORI and credit check regulations (Recommendations shared with the Individuals Exiting Correctional Systems Group).
 - Improve and expedite access to public and private subsidized housing.
- (4) Maximize ELI units
 - Preserve ELI units long-term
 - Ensure existing ELI units are available
 - Increase funding and availability of state public housing units for families
 - Use Chapter 689 housing as a model for service-enriched housing.

Asset Development Priorities

- (1) Income Maximization Tie in asset building opportunities as part of the assessment process and link supports to housing stabilization.
 - Redesign access to income maximization resources.
 - Ensure that the One Stop application is uniform and includes income maximization across entitlement programs and links homeless families to a continuum of services.
 - Expand and improve enrollment for the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, complementing it with a Work Opportunity Program for state housing assistance.
- (2) Maximize Use of Workforce Development Programs and Target them to Families.
- (3) Increase Financial Literacy among Low-Income Households.
 - Require public schools to include financial literacy curriculum.
 - Develop adult-ed financial literacy curriculum to be used by state agencies and community partners providing prevention resources.

D) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS

A Four Tiered Model for Reducing Homelessness for Individuals and the State's Reliance on Emergency Shelter

Individuals enter (or avoid) the shelter system for different reasons. That said, there are generally four categories into which individuals fall. These needs can be matched with program responses.

Tier 1: Short-term Intervention: Diversion and Relocation. Most of the people using individual shelters do so for short-term, transitional stays—generally responding to an event. They need relatively modest assistance to get back on their feet, and typically do not return to shelter after being re-housed. By immediate diversion to existing housing and employment services, such as short term housing assistance and Tenancy Preservation Programs (TPP), these individuals can avoid shelter altogether.

Tier 2: Institutional Discharge. A large number of homeless individuals come into the shelter system after being discharged from state institutions. Discharge planning to focus on the needs of these distinct sub-populations could be very effective, and would place the opportunity for generating stable housing with the people who best understand the individuals involved. The Commission therefore recommends creating short-term residential capacity to meet the needs of special populations including mentally ill, incarcerated persons coming out of the corrections system, substance abusers exiting detoxification programs, young adults aging out of foster care and other disabled individuals.

Tier 3: Chronically and Long-Term Sheltered Homeless Persons with Moderate Service Needs. Although these persons are only 8 percent of the individual population, the resources utilized to serve them are significant because of the complexity of their needs. A priority focus on this subpopulation has been suggested by the working group because 50 percent of the money spent on the individual shelter system is from this category. Chronically homeless individuals are better served in housing that is paired with moderate services, including Housing First initiatives such as *Home and Health for Good*. These models have proven successful and can be replicated and expanded to serve this relatively small but costly-to-serve-in-shelter population.

Tier 4: Chronically and Episodically Street Homeless Persons with Intensive Service Needs. Street dwellers, who often avoid shelters, are a challenging population. These individuals are mainly people living on the street who are the hardest to engage; they are currently served through the street outreach teams. The model best suited to this population is low-threshold housing wrapped with intensive services.

Size of the Population

The number of homeless individuals is hard to determine, both due to lack of data collection systems and the fact that many homeless individuals live on the street or in marginal situations, and many bounce from one shelter to another to the street. Our estimates suggest

that approximately 24,000 homeless individuals touch the shelter or street outreach system each year in Massachusetts, and that roughly 3,000 of the individuals served in the shelters are youth ages 18-24. The estimates further show that a very large number of people end up homeless after being released from institutions—such as prisons, substance abuse and mental health facilities—where failure to have effective discharge plans that include housing result in a large number of individuals slipping into homelessness. The Tier 3 population, while representing a relatively small percentage of homeless individuals, accounts for about 50% of the nightly shelter bed utilization and consume a disproportionate share of the system’s resources.

Figure 4: Tiered Approach for Homeless Individuals

| Tier | Number of Individuals |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Tier 1 (Short Stays) | 9,600 individuals |
| Tier 2 (Institutional Discharge) | 9,600 (4,000 from correctional facilities) |
| Tier 3 (Chronic Shelter Stayers) | 1,900 individuals |
| Tier 4 (Shelter Avoiders) | 2,900 individuals |
| | 24,000 individuals |

Transforming the Current System for Homeless Individuals

Based on the recommendations, the system for homeless individuals and at-risk individuals will be transformed to one that prioritizes uniform assessment and coordination of services to create an early response system. In Phase 1, the primary focus will be with **Tier 3** individuals who are chronic shelter users. In the new system, these individuals will be assisted to move into housing with appropriate service supports, for as long as they are needed, to promote housing stabilization. The new system will also aim to prevent homelessness and increase housing stabilization for those at-risk. The new system emphasizes coordination of service delivery and referrals to ensure economic stability and mobility, and includes flexible cash assistance and housing resources for those with additional needs. Shelter is to be used as an emergency response only. To sustain housing over the long-term, formerly homeless individuals will need — and will tremendously benefit from— income, particularly that which is derived from employment. Employment services should be integrated into all state-wide and local community plans and “Housing First” initiatives to end homelessness. Mainstream workforce systems should prioritize access to homeless populations, particularly for the transitional and episodic homeless. Specialized employment services should be available for chronically homeless, particularly those with multiple disabilities and long histories of homelessness, for whom a more intensive case management is required.

Methods for New Responses for Individuals

Specific methods for ending and preventing individual homelessness require strategies that attend to the most vulnerable individuals. Stabilization of existing tenancies through modest housing subsidies and brokering may prevent homelessness for those who might be short-term shelter-stayers. Housing and services for severely disabled homeless individuals saves system money, improves public health, and reduces risky behaviors. Housing First models have been demonstrated to be effective models for housing chronic shelter-stayers. The Commonwealth must improve institutional discharge planning and assist those exiting facilities to obtain appropriate housing.

Flexible Tools

The new system for individuals will be rooted in early assessment and coordinated service delivery. This requires the creation of a uniform assessment tool and flexible cash assistance resources that can be used by providers to meet the unique needs of each individual. True coordination of service delivery will enable providers to connect individuals with asset development, housing search, voucher programs and additional resources for which they are eligible.

As with the family recommendations, the task force hopes the ICHH will expand the recommendations presented here. The recommendations outlined below are those that the Commission was able to endorse.

Prevention Priorities

- (1) Promote discharge planning; pursue resources for housing and serving clients rather than discharging them to homelessness.
- (2) Expand detoxification and substance abuse treatment.
- (3) Create affordable housing for Extremely Low Income individuals.
- (4) Create a prevention system that offers a variety of tools including short-term cash assistance to individuals at risk of losing their housing.
- (5) Build on Resource Center Model to create a front door that does not require an individual to go into shelter to receive assistance.
- (6) Create an improved data-collection system, gathering uniform information from all the continua.
- (7) Develop State Veterans Affairs' Plan to maximize federal VA resources.

Production/Affordable Housing Access Priorities:

- (1) Create supportive housing opportunities for Long Term/Chronically Homeless shelter dwellers with moderate service needs.

- (2) Create Low-Threshold Supportive Housing Units for episodic/chronic street homeless with wrap-around intensive service needs.
- (3) One-Stop Shopping for Capital and Service Funds.
- (4) Expand Medicaid's contribution to services/supportive housing.

Asset Development Priorities:

- (1) Advocacy and planning to recognize work as a priority in preventing and ending homelessness.
 - Increase involvement of state mainstream agencies in funding homeless employment services.
 - Maximize federal mainstream resources for employment services for chronically homeless individuals.
- (2) Invest in specialized employment services for chronically homeless individuals.
- (3) Build mainstream resources dedicated to employment services for chronically homeless individuals.

E) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PERSONS EXITING CORRECTIONS

Size of the Population

Approximately 25,500 persons are released from prisons and jails in Massachusetts each year; of these, sixteen percent or **4,000** individuals enter homeless shelters or live on the streets, in woods or in other unstable situations annually. The overall goal for systems change, as reflected in the recommendations below, is to reduce housing barriers, expand reentry housing programs, and increase employment opportunities for ex-offenders.

Objectives

- i) Reduce the number of individuals exiting the corrections system into emergency shelters.
- ii) Provide residential options to individuals exiting the corrections system for pre- and post-release.
- iii) Reduce the barriers to affordable housing and employment opportunities create by current Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) practices.
- iv) Reduce recidivism rates for those exiting corrections.

Guiding principles

Recognize that the critical components of successful reentry are housing, employment and medical services.

Utilize effective discharge planning and post-release supports as prevention and housing stabilization strategies.

Reduce barriers to existing housing and expand residential alternatives for individuals exiting the corrections system.

Develop programs and work with other state agencies to address the needs of individuals exiting the corrections system who have serious medical, mental health and substance abuse issues.

Restrict and define the appropriate use of CORI and help implement the Governor's CORI Commission's recommendations.

Reentry Programs

When individuals exit the correctional system and are discharged directly into homelessness, further criminal behavior is likely, increasing their chances of returning to prison, thus raising social and economic costs to the state. These incidences of homelessness and increased recidivism rates can be reduced with proper reentry programming. Increasing the length and efficiency of reentry programs, especially for those with longer sentences, will reduce recidivism rates by better equipping individuals

in the correction system for their return to society, Combining pre/post release programs with case management and employment programs is a recipe for success and increased cost efficiency. The facilities and security required for pre-release beds are far less expensive than prison beds. In addition, the state would be saving funds by reducing criminal recidivism.

Certain sub-groups of individuals exiting the correction system will have more specialized needs in terms of programming and case management. Two primary groups that make up this sub-population of individuals are those with mental illnesses and sex-offenders. Approximately 335 persons exiting correction each year are sex offenders. A recommendation, made by Commission member and State Representative Kay Kahn, calls for participation in the Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) program, a restorative justice approach to managing high risk sex offenders, which holds as one of its top priorities, securing suitable housing. This program has been proven, in both the UK and Canada, to be a cost effective method of reducing both violent and sexual recidivism among this population.

Adopting an Abbreviated Tiered Approach to Reducing Discharges from Correctional Systems into Homelessness

Adopt the Institutional Discharge model from Tier 2 of the Individual Working Group which recommends the creation of short-term residential capacity to meet the needs of special populations including mentally ill, incarcerated persons coming out of the corrections system, substance abusers existing detoxification programs, young adults aging out of foster care and other disabled individuals. As mentioned earlier, estimating the resources needed to ensure that housing alternatives, including supportive housing, re-entry and recovery programs, were in place for these persons prior to their leaving state institutions proved to be difficult for the Commission. However, this task cannot be sidelined or ignored and is considered by Commission members to be one of the highest priorities for the ICHH.

Prevention Priorities

- (1) Require Post-Release Supervision and Support Services for all Inmates upon Release.
- (2) Expand the Number of Pre-Release Beds.
- (2) Expand DOC Program of Beginning to Plan for Re-entry One Year Prior to Release.
- (3) Improve and Standardize Assessment Tool and Data Collection.
- (4) Educate Developers and Housing Managers about CORI.
- (5) Create Discharge Planning Policies that have Real Teeth and Resource Options.

Production/Affordable Housing Access Priorities:

- (1) Expand the Availability of Post-Release Housing.

- (2) Leverage Existing Resources in the Development of Housing Options.
- (3) Create Incentives for Landlords and Housing Developers.
- (4) Develop a Registry of Housing Services for those with Disabilities and People with Mitigating Circumstances.
- (5) Remediate Consumer Access Issues and Regulatory Issues.
- (6) Public and Subsidized Housing Providers should Limit their Consideration of CORI.
- (7) DHCD Regulations should Factor in More Information Surrounding Convictions.
- (8) Housing Providers should not Reflexively Deny CORI Applicants.
- (9) Housing Search Workers should Receive Regular Training on the Issues Related to CORI and Rights of the Applicant.
- (10) Housing Search Workers should Work with Local Housing Authorities to Diminish Potential Concerns by Offering Ongoing Case Management, particularly where DTA's Contracts with Housing Search Organizations Permit Such Ongoing Case Management.

Asset Development Priorities:

- (1) Address CORI issues, including Barriers to Accessing Public/ Subsidized Housing and Employment.
- (2) Develop Employment Opportunities.
- (3) Increase Education and Training Opportunities within Correctional Facilities.

VII) VEHICLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Establishment of Regional Coordinating Networks

The goal of systems change to end homelessness in Massachusetts is heavily dependent upon the creation of Regional Coordinating Entities that will be responsible, in their geographic areas, for implementing *an effective system of early warning, uniform assessment and decision making, as well as targeting of appropriate resources to the right people at the right time and in the right locations.*

Overall Objectives for the Regional Networks

The proposed regional coordinating networks **are not** *centralized physical structures.*

Regional coordinating networks **are** *coordinated systems of assessment, decision making and referral services* that will, through the use of technology and of strong inter-organizational collaborations:

- a) eliminate access barriers, including duplicative assessments and services;
- b) streamline families' and individuals' immediate access to resources needed for their economic and housing stability; and
- c) be accountable for the effective implementation of the new tiered model for addressing family and individual homelessness in a defined geographic area of the state.

Model Options

The Commission reviewed options for establishment of the regional networks, including investigating other such networks already implemented in the state for other populations (See ASAP example below).

Overall Recommended Approach: Utilize and build upon already existing regional or local networks.

Many regional and local networks serving and coordinating resources for homeless and 'at risk' families and individuals already exist.

Given the strengths of these already existing networks, the Commission recommends that the ICHH, in year one, select a lead agency/network in three 'hot spot' regions across the state best able to demonstrate a capacity to meet the objectives of the regional coordinating networks as stated above----the type of organization might differ by region. At least one pilot Regional Coordinating Entity should be in a rural location. Each network should also engage the regional and area offices of multiple state agencies that are clustered in the same geographic areas. Each network should engage an Advisory Council that will help guide their planning and implementation processes and leverage multi-sector resources both public and private to accomplishing true coordination of resources and the creation of a 'no wrong' door approach. Co-location of services should be considered. Replication strategies should address the differences between sub-areas within a region.

An Example of a Regional Coordination System Operational in Massachusetts

The Aging Service Access Points (ASAP) model: Created in the early 1970s, ASAPs are coordinating units for elder services in local areas across the state; they do not do service provision per se. ASAPs conduct client assessments and direct people to the right place; they have contracts with service agencies. To ensure effectiveness, the ASAPs have to be constantly working with and have good relations with the service providers in their areas.

The ASAPs operate with both a state and federal mandate. Created around the same time as the federally mandated Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), most ASAPs are AAAs as well. Simultaneous with the federal mandates, the state had just created the Office of Elder Affairs, which was taking a fresh look at the elderly service scene. Most cities and towns already had a Council on Aging, which could have been an entry point to the service system, but which varied greatly in terms of resources (some had more staff than others, some had no staff at all). The Elder Affairs office wanted new coordinating organizations that could supplement the work of the COAs, but that would be built from the ground up and had a large amount of local control. So, at least 50% of the board members for ASAPs must be COA members and at least 50% must be over 60.

(1)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY/REGULATORY CHANGES

Policy Dimensions.

There was agreement to keep the policy working group intact for the coming year to continue to work on policy and regulatory issues and in support of the implementation work with which the Interagency Council on Homelessness and Housing is charged. The key recommendations of this group can be found below.

- (1) The effectiveness of so many of the Commission recommendations require changes in state and federal legislation and administrative policies (e.g. change of statute for requiring post-release supervision for ex-offenders, CORI reforms, mandates for interagency requirement dimensions of the Commission recommendations, etc.).
- (2) These issues will need additional vetting and focus as the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness carries out its work.
- (3) Persons from additional regions across the state should be on the policy working group to ensure geographic representation.

Prevention Priorities

- 1) Create a Data Sharing and Early Warning System Embedded in Housing Authorities, State Agencies, and Contractors to Link Tenants at Risk to Stabilization/Prevention Resources. Ensure These Resources Are Flexible (for instance, a Fund so a Tenant can fix his car and return to Work).
- 2) Create Discharge Planning Policies that have real Teeth and Resource Options.
- 3) Match Housing Resources to Need According to Area Homeless Rates or Housing Costs Rather than Basing Allocation on Past History. Coordinate Current Databases that Track Vacancies to Better Match Tenants and Vacancies. Have DHCD Monitor Housing Authority Compliance in Housing Homeless Families and Individuals.
- 4) Review Residency Requirements for Services and Housing and Ensure that Everyone has Somewhere to go and Every City is Doing its Part.
- 5) Investigate Options for Flexibility in the State Code around People who are Doubled Up so that Families have Options to Stay Together as Long as they Meet State Sanitary Codes. Manage this Issue as Currently Takes Place with Family Expansion Due to New Babies.
- 6) Eliminate Barriers Created by Existing Policies, including CORI.

Production/Affordable Housing Access Priorities:

- 1) Expand Use of MRVPs for ELI Households.

- 2) Align state Resources. Allow Developers Targeting Homeless and at or below 30% AMI Households to come into Funding Rounds on a Rolling Basis.
- 3) Set Aside Some Portion of MHFA Properties for Homeless Individuals.
- 4) Use Master-Lease Arrangement so Providers can Lease Properties at Scale. Allow for Flexible Rental Assistance – Not Everyone Needs a Full Subsidy.
- 5) Create a Centralized Database with Information on all the Housing Resources and Set Asides Available to Ease Placement.
- 6) Address Challenges to Homeownership.
- 7) Create a Statewide Strategy to Preserve and Redevelop Foreclosed Properties.

Asset Development Priorities:

- 1) Review State and Federal Rules that put Subsidies or SSI at Risk if Someone Works.
- 2) Adopt a More Realistic “Work Expertise Deduction”.
- 3) Review Other Regulatory Policies Related to Asset Development.

XI. NEXT STEPS

A) Overall Goal

The new system, fully implemented, will be one in which housing stability and economic self-sufficiency are a reality or within reach for those currently homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. The goal for phase one of the transformation is experimentation, testing and monitoring new approaches to build a road map for the ultimate new system.

Next Steps

The Commission was able to set out a vision for a radically-transformed system. The immediate next step is for the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH) to take these broad directions and hammer out specific budget and program guidelines. A critical component of this task is the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between state agencies responsible for system components. Another important task for the ICHH is to establish a vehicle to capture the reduced shelter expenditures (when they materialize over time) for further housing resources, so that we can continue to focus on housing folks rather than simply placing them in shelters.

Even with the excellent guidance from the Commission's work, we do not anticipate that the ICHH could reasonably be expected to define a road map for the transformation right away. Rather, the next phase of this process will involve testing and experimenting with flexible tools to learn the most cost-effective, lasting way to get families and individuals out of shelter for good and to help them land in stable housing situations. By piloting different, situation-specific approaches, we will learn about the best practices for avoiding long-term homelessness for the people we serve. An important element of these pilots will be figuring out how to reduce barriers to housing that many homeless families and individuals face, and to maximize the use of existing affordable housing resources.

We hope the experimentation can begin with Fiscal Year 2009, and that the ICHH will use January-June 2008 to prepare for the first phase of the transformation.

There is broad consensus that such a housing-based approach will use resources far more cost-effectively than a shelter-as-de-facto-housing system. However, before we can abandon the old system of shelters, we need to invest new resources into building the infrastructure to stabilize, divert and re-house families and individuals who would otherwise be or come into the shelter system.

In the next five years, we believe we can dramatically reduce reliance on the costly system of shelters. During the first phase, the Commission recommends adoption of the goal of reducing the number of family shelter units and individual beds by 20%. It is important to remember that the target for reducing shelter units must take into account forces in the economy and society that determine the need for the beds—so, for instance, where this year we have seen an increase in demand due to the foreclosure crisis, we must know that displacing the need for a shelter unit may in fact mean that we keep the current number of beds in tact but don't add any new beds that otherwise will be required. A key task for the ICHH will be to develop effective measuring tools to assess progress.

In order to achieve the desired level of reduction in shelter usage, the Commission also recommends an initial investment of \$10 million to establish a pool of flexible resources to:

- Develop and test a Uniform Assessment Tool to ensure resources can be targeted to precisely fill the need for each individual and family;
- Develop pilot Regional Coordinating Entities to develop early warning systems and coordinate access to the broad array of income supports and services necessary to stabilize housing situations;
- Provide a flexible array of tools for stabilizing, diverting and rehousing families and individuals who present as homeless or at imminent risk;
- Begin the planning for repurposing shelter facilities and service providers to play a key role in the new system, including outreach to current shelter providers in planning for the reprogramming and capturing their service expertise.

This \$10 million will launch the transformation, but additional resources may be needed to complete it. As the Commonwealth reduces its reliance on shelter units and beds, we will need to capture the reduced shelter expenditures and invest them additional housing resources.

During the first phase we will learn how to most cost-effectively proceed. We will identify the time table by which shelter beds can be transformed to permanent housing or abandoned and resources which were used to support them redirected to housing and ancillary service. Finally, we will develop a better understanding of the resources that must be invested to achieve the desired level of shelter reduction. Naturally, once shelter beds are able to come off line because the housing system infrastructure is in place, the avoided costs from those shelter operations will be invested in further housing resources so that we do not re-create the homelessness situation. At the mid-point in this transformation, we expect that the avoided costs will equal the need for housing resources, and the investment will have paid off as the system will serve more people, more effectively without requiring additional state resources.

B) Recommended Benchmark Framework for Measuring Success

- i) An open process needs to be created for assessing the details of the Commission's recommendations, prior to their implementation.
- ii) Caution on potential unintended consequences. There is a danger that, as shelters are repurposed, families and individuals will seek shelter in parts of the state that have not begun the new system changes. Accountability measures need to be in place to track such unintended consequences and ensure that all homeless and high risk families and individuals are receiving the services and resources they need to gain housing and economic stability.

iii) The ICHH is encouraged to develop benchmark targets that can be used to assess progress and guide system adjustments over the next five years. The following Indicators are offered as a starting point.

Preparation for Implementation and ICHH Implementation Roles

C) Preparation for Implementation

With an eye to beginning implementation of the new system's conversion year, beginning July 1 2008, several tasks will need to be attended to in the first six months of 2008.

The ICHH will need to:

- reach agreement on the uniform assessment tool;
- finalize the evaluative framework;
- reach agreement on the regional coordinating methodology and the locations and lead agencies for the conversion year pilots in 'hot spots' across the state.

Local communities will need to:

- engage private, public, faith-based, and other multi-sector partners in planning for implementation of a truly coordinated system in their areas;
- develop a planning and resource development process that taps each of these sectors in the community
- Implementation of the Commission recommendations will impact every CoC's requests for HUD funds. All of the CoCs should be engaged in the planning in order to leverage as many federal resources as possible for the system change efforts.

Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH) Implementation Roles

The Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness will oversee the implementation of the system transformation recommendations presented in this report. Specifically the ICHH will:

- Develop a process for critiquing the details of the Commission's recommendations prior to pilot implementation.
- Pilot, evaluate and refine alternative-to-shelter response models to determine ultimate program guidelines
- Define performance management systems for remaining shelters; determine repurposing strategy, conduct outreach to, and identify role in new system for, current shelter providers
- Develop uniform assessment tool and coordinating entities to link existing systems
- Develop MOU's between state agencies regarding responsibilities, including increased responsibility for DOC, DMH, and DYS to give proper service to their clients prior to discharge
- Improve statewide data gathering systems with a goal of a more comprehensive numerical evaluation of the homeless population in Massachusetts and its needs

XII. CONCLUSION

The Recommendations of the Special Commission to End Homelessness provide a blueprint for investing in demonstrated best practices for ending homelessness in Massachusetts. If fully implemented, the prevention, housing and asset development priorities, generated by a broad cross-section of state and municipal policymakers, advocates, service providers and researchers, will put an end to our shelter-based response to homelessness and dramatically reduce homelessness overall.

State resources, can be more cost-effectively used to create permanent housing opportunities that will enable families and individuals, currently using shelters, to access the housing, service and other supports they need to achieve economic and housing stability. Shelters will be used for true emergencies only, as a short-term response. The constant flow of new shelter seekers and users will be drastically reduced, and by 2013 the state's shelter demand and capacity will be drastically reduced.

As system transformation unfolds, an alternative pathway for sheltering organizations in the state is to become change agents, building up alternative futures for their organizations that are directed toward implementing and advocating for the economic and housing stability of their clients. Such organizations, with deep knowledge of low income households' circumstances, hopes and capabilities, are in a strong position to contribute to the implementation of the Commission's recommendations and to development of low cost housing in their communities. They can expand their current efforts to develop educational, income promotion and neighborhood safety net supports, and to advocate for a significant re-direction of public resources toward low cost housing, housing assistance and homelessness prevention.

This is the moment in Massachusetts' history when state and local stakeholders are in alignment; there is a strong public will to end homelessness. Stopping the growth of homelessness is within our grasp. ICHH leadership, in concert with mobilization of policymaking, advocacy, service and philanthropic stakeholders, are the vehicles for turning these Commission Recommendations into reality across every community in Massachusetts.

Appendix A Acknowledgments

| COMMISSION TO END HOMELESSNESS | | December 2007 | | |
|--|--|------------------|---|--------------|
| <u>Representatives Acknowledgement List</u> | | | | |
| <i>Name</i> | <i>Company</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Address</i> | <i>Tel #</i> |
| Katie Joyce | representing Lt. Gov'r | Dep Chief Staff | State House, Rm 360, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-725-4000 |
| Rachel Heller | representing Sen Tucker | Aide | State House, Rm 424, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1612 |
| Matthew Martin | represent Sen Wilkerson | Aide | State House, Rm 312-C, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1673 |
| Matt Kennis | represent Sen Augustus | Aide | State House, Rm 413-B, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1485 |
| Matt Gaines | represent Sen Joyce | Aide | State House, Rm 413-A, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1643 |
| Fay Sliger | represent Rep Rushing | Aide | State House, Rm 481, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-2180 |
| Elizabeth Broda | representing Sen Knapik | Aide | State House, Rm 419, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1415 |
| Nicholas Tourville | representing Sen Knapik | Aide | State House, Rm 419, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1415 |
| Shannon Moore | represent Rep Honan | Aide | State House, Rm 38, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-2470 |
| Darrell Villaruz | represent Rep Kay Khan | Aide | State House, Rm 146, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-2011 |
| Meghan Carrette | representing Rep Jones | Aide | State House, Rm 124, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-2100 |
| Birgitta Damon | represent Comsr Kehoe | Dep Commsr | 600 Washington St., Boston, MA 02111 | 617-348-8400 |
| Maria Spiewakowski | represent Secy Tom Kelley | Deputy Secy | 600 Washington St., Boston, MA 02111 | 617-210-5480 |
| Elizabeth Doyle, for Jim G | represent Jim Greene, Dept of Nbhd Dvmt | Asst Director | 26 Court St, Boston, MA 02108 | 617-635-3880 |
| Brad Kramer | rep Mark Edwards | Dir of Pol & Adv | Horizon for Homeless Children - 1705 Columbus Ave, Roxbury, MA 02119 | 617-445-1480 |
| Aimee Coolidge | rep Lyndia Downie | | 444 Harrison Ave, Boston, MA 02118 | 617-892-9100 |
| Jeff Hayward | representing Mary Kay | VP, Policy | 51 Sleeper St, Boston, MA 02108 | 617-624-8150 |
| Denis Leary | representing Vin Perrone | Executive Dir | Mass. Veterans, Inc., 69 Grove St, Worcester 01605 | 508-791-5348 |

Presenters

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Fran Martin | Corp for Supp Housing | Assoc Director |
| Rebecca Plaut Maunter | Women's Institute | Dir RE Dvlmt |
| Julia Kehoe | DTA | Commissioner |
| Tina Brooks | DHCD | Undersecretary |
| | | Senior Policy |
| Sharon McDonald | NAEH | Analyst |
| Dennis Culhane, PhD | Univ of Penn | Professor |
| Amy Schectman | DHCD | Assoc Director |
| Joe Finn | MHSA | Exec Director |
| Dr. Jessie Gaeta | MHSA | Physician Fellow |
| Lyndia Downie | Pine Street Inn | President |
| Vin Perrone | Mass Veterans Inc | President |
| Denis Leary | Mass Veterans Inc | Exec Director |
| Jim Greene | Boston Emerg Shelt Com | Director |
| Barbara Leadholm | Dept of Mental Health | Commissioner |
| Michael Boticelli | Dept of Public Health | Dir, Bur Subst Abuse |
| James Bender | Dept of Corrections | Assoc Commsr |
| John Grossman | Exec Off Public Safety | Undersecretary |
| Tony Winsor | Mass Law Reform | Attorney |
| Shiela Moore | Bridge Over Troub Waters | Exec Director |
| Maureen Messeder | Dept of Social Services | Dir, Adolesc Svcs |
| Sue Beaton | One Family, Inc | Campaign Dir |

Appendix B
Massachusetts Commission to End Homelessness
Commission Meeting Schedule

The Commission to End Homelessness held two meetings a month in conference rooms at the Department of Housing and Community Development, located at 100 Cambridge Street in Boston, and held a Public Hearing on November 16th, 2007 at Massachusetts Veterans, Inc. Worcester, MA.

The following list provides precise dates of each commission meeting that took place, with the exception of Individual Group meetings which occurred at different intervals.

- 1st Meeting – July 26th, 2007
- 2nd Meeting – August 9th, 2007
- 3rd Meeting – August 23rd, 2007
- 4th Meeting – September, 6th, 2007
- 5th Meeting – September 20th, 2007
- 6th Meeting – October 4th, 2007
- 7th Meeting – October 18th, 2007
- 8th Meeting – November 15th, 2007
- 9th Meeting – November 16th, 2007 (Public Hearing)
- 10th Meeting – November 29th, 2007
- 11th Meeting – December 13th, 2007

Appendix C List of Commission Members and Advisors

| COMMISSION TO END HOMELESSNESS | | December 2007 | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|--------------|
| | | | | |
| CORE MEMBERS | | | | |
| | | | | |
| <i>Name</i> | <i>Company</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Address</i> | <i>Tel #</i> |
| Lt Gov'r Timothy Murray | State Exec Office | Lt. Govr | State House, Rm 360, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-725-4000 |
| Sen Susan C. Tucker | Senate | Senator | State House, Rm 424, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1612 |
| Sen Dianne Wilkerson | Senate | Senator | State House, Rm 312-C, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1673 |
| Sen Edward M. Augustus, Jr | Senate | Senator | State House, Rm 413-B, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1485 |
| Sen Brian A. Joyce | Senate | Senator | State House, Rm 413-A, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1643 |
| Sen Michael R. Knapik | Senate | Senator | State House, Rm 421, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-1415 |
| Rep Byron Rushing | Rep | Rep | State House, Rm 481, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-2180 |
| Rep Kevin G. Honan | Rep | Rep | State House, Rm 38, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-2470 |
| Rep Kay Khan | Rep | Rep | State House, Rm 146, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-2011 |
| Rep Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr. | Rep | Rep | State House, Rm 146, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-2011 |
| Rep Bradley H. Jones | Rep | Rep | State House, Rm 124, Boston, MA 02133 | 617-722-2100 |
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| Mayor Thomas M. Menino | Boston | Mayor | One City Hall Plaza, Boston, MA 02201 | 617-635-4500 |
| Jim Greene | represent Mayor Menino Boston Emerg Shelt Com | Director | One City Hall Plaza, Rm 716, Boston, MA 02201 | 617-635-2419 |
| Mayor Michael Sullivan | Holyoke | Mayor | 536 Dwight St., Holyoke, MA 01040 | 413-322-5510 |
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| Vin Perrone | Mass Veterans Inc | President/CEO | Mass. Veterans, Inc., 69 Grove St, Worcester 01605 | 508-791-0956 |
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| Melissa Morrison | DHCD | Dir Procurement | 100 Cambridge St, Boston, MA 02114 | 617-573-1100 |
| Ali Makke | DHCD | Project Mgr | 100 Cambridge St, Boston, MA 02114 | 617-573-1100 |
| Jill Kourafas | Principal | Reporter's Inc | 23 Merrymount Road, Quincy, MA 02169 | |

Appendix D

The Massachusetts Commission to End Homelessness Working Group Member Directory

INDIVIDUALS EXITING THE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Chair:

Jim Bender, Massachusetts Department of Corrections (DOC)

Other members of the Correctional System Working Group:

Jim Walsh, Massachusetts Sheriffs Association
Veronica Madden, DOC
Geraldyn Riley, DOC
Thomas Kelley, Department of Veterans' Services
Jim Greene, Emergency Shelter Commission

Other Participants:

Laurence Fitzmaurice, New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans (NESHV)
Dr. Dennis Upper, NESHV
Thomas Lyons, Mass Housing
Federico Rivera, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corp

FAMILY WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Chair:

Susanne Beaton, One Family, Inc.

Other Members of Core FWG:

Sandra Henriquez, Boston Housing Authority
Michael Sullivan, Mayor, Holyoke
Grace Carmark, Central Mass Housing Alliance

Other Contributors:

Elizabeth Curtis, United Way
Mary Doyle, Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership
Aaron Gornstein, CHAPA
Leslie Lawrence, Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
Julia Kehoe, Commissioner DTA
Brad Kramer, Horizons for Homeless Children
Melissa Quirk, City of Boston
Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield
Charlene Regan, CEDAC
Alison Rice, Housing Assistance Corporation
Diane Sullivan, Homes for Families
Amy Schectman, DHCD
Rebecca Plaut Mautner, Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development
Kate Racer, DHCD
Chris Norris, Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership
Rachel Heller, Senator Susan Tucker's Office

INDIVIDUALS WORKING GROUP**Chair:**

Joe Finn, Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA)

Contributing Members:

Alex Gray, MHSA

Charles Gagnon, South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC)

Elizabeth Doyle City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

Walter Jabzanka, Department of Mental Health

Leah Bradley, Community Healthlink, Inc.

Lyndia Downie, Pine Street Inn

Lynn Chapman, Pine Street Inn

Dr. Jesse Gaeta – MHSA

Mary Nee - Hope Found

Aimee Coolidge, Pine Street Inn

Barbara Leadholm, Department of Mental Health

Sheila Moore, Bridge Over Troubled Waters

Vin Perrone, Mass Veterans Inc

POLICY WORKING GROUP:**Chair:**

Lyndia Downie, Pine Street Inn.

Core Members of Policy Working Group:

Elizabeth Doyle, City of Boston

Leslie Lawrence, Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless

Rebecca Plaut Mautner

Mossik Hacobian, Urban Edge

Sandra Henriquez, Boston Public Housing

Aimee Coolidge, Pine Street Inn

Birgitta Damon, Department of Transitional Assistance

Denis Leary, Mass Veterans Inc

Lead Coordinator/Facilitator of the Working Groups:

Gail Latimore, Department of Housing and Community Development

Consultants:

Center for Social Policy: Donna Haig Friedman, Jennifer Raymond, Michelle Kahan,
Julia Tripp, Elizabeth Platt

University of Pennsylvania: Dennis Culhane

Corporation for Supportive Housing: Janice Elliot

Appendix E: Process Indicators

The Process Indicators chart below outlines proposed benchmarks for progress related to the key elements outlined in this report and is offered as a starting point for the Interagency Council on Homelessness and Housing as it commences its work.

For Families:

| Process Indicators |
|--|
| <p>ICHH has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identified the three hot spots for pilots of the regional coordinating entities, the lead agencies in each region and the specifications for goals, objectives and performance measures • secured resources for the regional pilots, including funds for administration, development of a uniform assessment tool, flexible cash assistance, linkages to programs, case management/Critical Time Intervention, and housing search and access, as well as housing vouchers and housing production |
| <p>Three regional coordinating pilots have begun to be implemented in three hot spots across the state and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are using a uniform assessment tool and process involving all of the relevant public, nonprofit and private organizations in its geographic area • In collaboration with the organizations listed above, have designed and begun to implement an early warning system in its geographic area • Have established Critical Time Intervention and case management processes for serving families who are in shelter as well as those seeking shelter in its geographic area • Have in place an information management system and process that will be effective in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ eliminating duplicative assessments and facilitating coordinated case management & service delivery ○ monitoring for performance management, including outcome measurement |
| <p>Each of the three regional coordinating pilots has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developed a plan for repurposing some number of shelter units in its geographic area • begun to repurpose these shelter units |
| <p>MOUs are in place between state agencies defining processes and responsibilities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resourcing and overseeing regional pilots and subsequent rollout (in years 2-5) of regional coordinating entities across the state (DHCD and DTA) • facilitating use of DSS, DPH, DMH, DOE, DMR, DEEC, DOC resources by the regional pilots • ensuring that families served by DSS, DPH, DMR, DMH, DOC and DOE are served by those agencies rather than being discharged to DTA shelters |
| <p>Assessment of progress on the benchmarks above is conducted; system adjustments are planned and implemented</p> |
| Mid-Term Outcome Indicators |
| <p>Three regional pilots have been evaluated and learnings are reflected in statewide rollout of regional coordinating entities</p> |
| <p>MOUs between state agencies have been modified to address necessary improvements</p> |
| <p>A steady repurposing of shelter units has been planned and is being implemented throughout the state</p> |
| <p>Shelter reprogramming accruals have been captured to fund the regional coordinating</p> |

| |
|---|
| entities, the flexible cash assistance, linkages to programs, case management/CTI teams and housing search, access and vouchers |
| The demand for shelter is on the decline; shelter stays are shorter. |
| Higher numbers of families at high risk of homelessness are receiving resources and services that are effective in enabling them to maintain housing and economic stability |
| Assessment of progress on the benchmarks above is conducted; system adjustments are planned and implemented |
| Long-Term Outcome Indicators |
| The demand for DTA family shelter is on the decline---DTA family shelter inventory is as low as 400 units statewide; Shelter stays are shorter (30 days as a statewide average) |
| Higher numbers of families who are homeless and at high risk of homelessness are receiving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • truly coordinated assessment, triage and service delivery • interventions are effective in enabling these families to maintain housing and economic stability and to promote economic mobility |
| MOUs between state agencies are supporting the effectiveness of the regional coordinating entities and their interventions with families |
| Evaluation mechanisms are in place for performance management, including ongoing programmatic improvements and targeted resource allocations |

For Individuals:

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| Process Indicators |
| ICHH has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identified the three hot spots for pilots of the regional coordinating entities, the lead agencies in each region and the specifications for goals, objectives and performance measures • secured resources for the regional pilots, including funds for administration, development of a uniform assessment tool, an ISSI-type prevention program for individuals, linkages to programs, case management/Critical Time Intervention, and housing search and access, as well as housing vouchers and housing production • targeted resources to enable long-term shelter users to move out of shelter and into housing, such as housing first or low-threshold housing models |
| Three regional coordinating pilots have begun to be implemented in three hot spots across the state and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are using a uniform assessment tool and process involving all of the relevant public, nonprofit and private organizations in its geographic area • Have established Critical Time Intervention teams and case management processes for serving individuals who are in shelter as well as those seeking shelter in its geographic area • Have begun to implement housing first or low-threshold housing models with the long-term shelter users in its geographic area • Have in place an information management system and process that will be effective in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ eliminating duplicative assessments and facilitating coordinated case management & service delivery ○ monitoring for performance management, including outcome measurement |

| Process Indicators |
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| Each of the three regional coordinating pilots has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developed a plan for repurposing some number of shelter beds in its geographic area • begun to repurpose these shelter beds |
| MOUs are in place between state agencies defining processes and responsibilities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resourcing and overseeing regional pilots and subsequent rollout (in years 2-5) of regional coordinating entities across the state (DHCD and DTA) • facilitating use of Medicaid, DSS, DPH, DMH, DMR and DOC resources by the regional pilots • ensuring that individuals served by DOC, DYS, DPH and DMH are served by those agencies rather than being discharged to DTA-funded individual shelters |
| The ICHH has identified resource needs, housing alternatives and programmatic responses to manage discharges from state institutions and to avoid discharges into homelessness or shelters |
| Assessment of progress on the benchmarks above is conducted; system adjustments are planned and implemented |
| Mid-Term Outcome Indicators |
| Three regional pilots have been evaluated and learnings are reflected in statewide rollout of regional coordinating entities |
| MOUs between state agencies have been modified to address necessary improvements, including a plan for potential renovation and use of the existing shelter inventory for post-release and substance abuse recovery and other necessary programs |
| A steady repurposing of shelter beds has been planned and is being implemented throughout the state |
| Shelter repurposing accruals have been captured to fund the regional coordinating entities, the housing first/low-threshold housing, post-release/pre-release programs, detox and other substance abuse and mental health programs, linkages to programs, case management/CTI teams and housing search, access and vouchers |
| The demand for shelter is on the decline; shelter stays are shorter; |
| Higher numbers of individuals at high risk of homelessness are receiving resources and services that are effective in enabling them to maintain housing and economic stability |
| Assessment of progress on the benchmarks above is conducted; system adjustments are planned and implemented |
| Long-Term Outcome Indicators |
| The demand for shelter is on the decline---DTA inventory shelter inventory is as low as 250 beds statewide; Shelter stays are shorter (30 days as a statewide average) |
| Higher numbers of individuals who are homeless and at high risk of homelessness are receiving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • truly coordinated assessment, triage and service delivery • interventions are effective in enabling these individuals to maintain housing and economic stability and to promote economic mobility |
| MOUs between state agencies are supporting the effectiveness of the regional coordinating entities and their interventions with individuals |
| Evaluation mechanisms are in place for performance management, including ongoing programmatic improvements and targeted resource allocations |

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