



COALITION
FOR THE
HOMELESS

Newsletter Spring 2014

Louisville, Kentucky

BED ONE-STOP: THE FIRST TEN MONTHS

Catherine McGeeney, Director of Development

Where will I sleep tonight?

Have you ever had to ask yourself that question? Here at the Coalition for the Homeless, we strive for a Louisville where no one has to ask that.

In July 2013, the Coalition launched Bed One-Stop, a centralized way for homeless people to secure a bed at any of Louisville's emergency shelters. This has made it easier for the homeless to find a safe place to sleep—rather than waiting outside or at a shelter all day, homeless individuals and families can reserve a bed by stopping by 1300 S. Fourth Street, Suite 200, Monday through Friday from 10-1:30, or by calling **(502) 637-BEDS** from 10-2 daily. We also maintain a waiting list for families and contact them when there's an opening that meets their specific needs.

Through this coordinated effort, we're preventing homelessness by making referrals to relevant services in the

community. From July to December 2013, we referred 1,528 people to local homeless prevention services. And because Bed One-Stop also implemented an ID card system for the homeless, check-in time has been greatly reduced at shelters—and the data on homeless persons served is better than ever before.

Our mission is rooted in the idea that the best change is systemic social change—change not only for one adult or one child today, but for thousands of adults and thousands of children in the future. We hope to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty in all of our work, and we believe that Bed One-Stop is a critical component to doing just that. 🏠

We owe a special thanks to the PNC Foundation for their generous support of the launch of our Bed One-Stop program to help families find housing. If you or your organization is interested in supporting Bed One-Stop, please contact:

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Our Bed One-Stop Team: Jayme Campbell, Megan Pardue & Lonnie Williams

SYSTEMS CHANGE: LAUNCHING THE COMMON ASSESSMENT

Catherine McGeeney, Director of Development

This year, as with every year, the Coalition for the Homeless conducted a homeless street count and a census of all homeless in our shelters. We use this census not only to look at trends from one year to the next, but also as a starting point for putting a plan into place for implementing services to change our systems.

We counted 8,608 unduplicated homeless people in 2013. Our sheltered count was 8,380, which dropped only slightly in 2013 (by .64%). Our unsheltered count was 228, which is a 38% decrease from the year prior. Together with our member agencies, in 2013, we helped more than 1,371 people move from homelessness into permanent housing. (For the complete census, please go to www.louhomeless.org, click on "Publications," and select "2013 Annual Census of the Homeless in Metro Louisville.")

We attribute the reduction in the unsheltered homeless to the success of the Rx: Housing: 100,000 Homes Louisville program, which has cut down on the chronically homeless on the streets by over 50% since its inception in 2011. The next question, of course, is how to better help those who aren't chronically homeless, especially our neediest families.

To that end, we are thrilled to announce that the Louisville Continuum of Care launched the Common Assessment on April 1. The Common Assessment is a new program aimed at reducing the

length of stay in shelters and increasing the chances of success for formerly homeless people. It's administered by the Family Health Center's Phoenix Health Center, one of our member agencies, and is being applied across the homeless services system. As a result of the program, every individual and every family who enters one of our services providers will be asked the same questions regarding their lives. Based on their answers, a services and housing plan will be tailored to meet their specific needs.

According to Natalie Harris, Executive Director of the Coalition, "Homeless people aren't all homeless for the same reason. We hope that by really evaluating and tailoring their housing and services solutions, we will be able to reduce the duration of their homelessness and improve their overall experience."

The Common Assessment is funded through a US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant administered by Metro Louisville. The funds have been used to hire Phoenix Health Center's staff to administer the assessment. This HUD funding is part of a \$9 million total allocation that supports 42 programs serving the homeless in our city. Due to effective collaboration and leveraging of these programs over the past decade, Louisville providers have been able to access almost twice the estimated distribution of these federal funds compared to other communities of Louisville's size. 🏠

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THE WHITE FLAG PROGRAM DURING SNOWMAGEDDON

Natalie Harris, Executive Director

Many have called winter 2014 "Snowmageddon."

While that may be an exaggeration, it is certainly not an exaggeration to say that this winter in Louisville was life threateningly cold for those sleeping outside and harrowing for those who serve them. There are three shelters that regularly open additional space in order not to turn people away during extreme weather: St. Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army, and Wayside Christian Mission. This program is called White Flag. They saw almost twice as many people in the White Flag program this winter (4,834) as last winter (2,883). And when the temperatures dropped to zero, Jefferson Street Baptist Center served at least another 100 people by adding beds and meals to ensure that no one had to stay outside for any period of the day or night. We don't talk about it enough, but this sense of cooperation is what makes the Louisville Metro Continuum of Care so strong. For almost a week, Salvation Army was without electricity, internet, and heat. They reached out to Wayside who took in their staff and clients until it was safe to return.

We are happy to report that this feeling of cooperation extends beyond the service agencies. First, LG&E/KU provided \$32,500 in grants to Louisville's day and evening shelters to help cover the additional costs of caring for the homeless during extreme temperatures. This was matched by an additional allocation of \$14,000 from Metro Louisville and \$5,000 from MainSource bank. We also had many generous individual donors step up to the plate to support the White Flag program.

We would like to thank everyone listed above as well as the countless volunteers who donated additional bedding and food or gave of their time to help keep the emergency shelters and White Flag program open in Louisville this winter. We are proud to be part of a compassionate community working to ensure that no one has to live or die on our streets. Thank you, Louisville! ■


LOUISVILLE'S 12,000 CHILDREN WITHOUT STABLE HOMES

Catherine McGeeney, Director of Development

While we are serving many homeless people in our shelters—nearly 8,400 last year alone—our numbers don't represent the full picture of homelessness. Homeless families in particular are under-represented, because they don't usually resort to going to emergency shelter; instead, families who lose their homes frequently stay at relatives' or friends' houses as the parents desperately attempt to make ends meet.

Jefferson County Public Schools reported that this school year, 12,000 students do not have a permanent place to call home. The stability that comes with a permanent home is frequently a critical component of school success. According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, homeless children are two to three


grade levels behind and twice as likely to repeat a grade as their housed peers. The national graduation rate for homeless children is below 25%.

We and our member agencies are working to eliminate homelessness for as many families and children as we can. 

To learn more or support our efforts, go to:

 www.louhomeless.org

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To advocate for people who are homeless and for the prevention and elimination of homelessness.

OUR MISSION

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