

Executive Summary

TEN-YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS



Vision for Monroe County

Monroe County is committed to the elimination of homelessness so that every person in our community has a home that is safe, affordable, and accessible and a continuum of supportive services is available to build self-sufficiency and ensure that the housing is sustained.

Values

- *Self-sufficiency among all individuals and families is encouraged.*
- *A continuum of support services is available to help individuals and families maintain and sustain their housing.*
 - *Services are seamless.*
 - *The Housing First model is embraced.*
- *Ending homelessness is the right thing to do.*

Monroe County, Michigan

October 16, 2006

Homelessness in Monroe County is often invisible— one doesn't typically see "street people."

Yet, the 2005 point in time study identified 87 individuals and 30 families (75 people) who were homeless in Monroe County – a total of 162 people who were either living in a place that is not considered a place meant for human habitation or who were living in one of the county's shelters – The Salvation Army Family Manor, Fairview, the Philadelphia House, Paula's House, or the SafeHouse. Additionally, during the 2005-2006 school year, 170 children who were considered homeless were identified within the public school system. Not counted in these numbers are those who are bunking temporarily with family and friends – often moving several times before finding permanent housing.

Those who do live in cars, back yards, or tents at the State Park – the true street people – are ones who present challenges to local law enforcement and who add cost to the public service budget through repeated trespassing and other disturbance-type calls. The creation and maintenance of services throughout the years have helped to alleviate the immediate issue of not having a roof over one's head for individuals and families, but has not addressed the long-term solution of preventing homelessness.

The leading reason for homelessness within the county – and the nation – is a lack of affordable housing. According to the 2000 Census, there are 8,658 households in Monroe County (16%) spending more than 30% of their income on housing.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERS HOUSING TO BE AFFORDABLE AS LONG AS THE COST OF HOUSING, INCLUDING RENT OR MORTGAGE AND TAX PAYMENTS, PLUS BASIC UTILITIES, MINUS PHONE, DOESN'T EXCEED 30% OF THE HOUSEHOLD INCOME.

*THE 2006 FEDERAL
POVERTY GUIDELINES
\$9,800 FOR AN INDIVIDUAL
\$13,200 FOR TWO PEOPLE*

Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked. The number of people living at poverty in Monroe County is 12,648 – or 8.3%. For Monroe County, the August unemployment rate was 6.8% – or 5,300 Monroe County residents –and ranked 45th out of 83 Michigan counties.

Current fair market rent in Monroe County is \$723 for a two-bedroom apartment (\$8,676 per year) and \$944 for a three bedroom (\$11,328 per year). A person who works 40 hours per week earning the current minimum wage (\$6.95 per hour) earns \$14,456 per year.

Local data regarding the number of people who enter the Monroe County jail who are homeless has not been historically collected. Nationally, the figure is estimated that 12% of those who are incarcerated are also homeless.

Substance abuse and mental illness are two additional factors that impact on housing stability and homelessness. A five-year study conducted by the Center for Mental Health Policy and Services Research, University of Pennsylvania, found the following:

- The price of homelessness is very high—\$40,449 per homeless person per year, primarily for psychiatric hospital care, inpatient hospital care, and emergency shelter care.
- Once placed in service enriched housing, the cost for services decrease by an average of \$12,145 per individual to an average of \$28,304.
- The average annual cost to Health and Hospital corporations per homeless individual was reduced from \$6,229 to \$4,458 – an average savings of \$1,771 per year.
- The average annual cost for mental health/substance abuse services per homeless individual was reduced from \$12,520 to \$4,260 – an average savings of \$8,260 per year,

In Monroe County, costs for psychiatric hospitalization for people with serious mental illness and others in need of inpatient care who receive Medicaid or who are uninsured have risen steadily over the last three years by \$1.2 million to a predicted 2005-2006 cost of \$2.1 million. In its 2004-2005 annual report, Mercy Memorial Hospital System reported \$5.6 million in bad debt and charity costs.

Creation of the Plan

In 1985, the Monroe County Network On Homelessness was established in response to a community need and has continued to actively engage the community in addressing the housing and homelessness issues within our community. In 1996, the Monroe County Network became an official workgroup of the Monroe County Human Services Collaborative Network for the purposes of ensuring broad-based support and awareness regarding the needs of the homeless.

MONROE COUNTY IS THE GATEWAY TO THE GREAT LAKES STATE – BORDERING ON LAKE ERIE AND OHIO

CENSUS FIGURES FROM THE 2005 AMERICAN SURVEY

TOTAL POPULATION	152,392
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WHO ARE WHITE	95%
MEDIAN AGE	37.9 YEARS
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD	58,564
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE	2.6 PERSONS
PERCENT AT POVERTY LEVEL	8.3%

When the State put out the call to communities to develop ten-year plans to end homelessness, the Monroe County Network on Homelessness invited the other partners to the table to create the Memorandum of Understanding that was submitted to the State at the end of April, 2006 – including the Monroe County Human Services Collaborative Network (Community Collaborative), the Department of Human Services, Monroe Community Mental Health Authority, United Way of Monroe County, and the Monroe County Opportunity Program (Community Action Agency). Since that time, Habitat for Humanity and the Monroe County Health Department have joined the partners in moving this initiative forward.

A Ten-Year Plan Advisory Committee was established to develop the Community Plan and to serve as the on-going oversight body for ensuring that that plan is implemented and evaluated. Within the Advisory Committee, five sub-committees were formed to address each of the specific goal areas outlined in the plan:

- Awareness / Public Education / Advocacy
- Affordable Housing / Self-Sufficiency
- Health and Social Services
- Employment and Education
- Criminal Justice and Discharge Planning

Monroe County's Ten Year Plan was endorsed by the County Board of Commissioners on October 10, 2006. Consumer input on the Plan was received through focus groups held at three area emergency and transitional shelters.

Accomplishments and Available Services

Monroe County has a long history of providing for individuals and families who need shelter and support services and has an array of services available to assist individuals and families who are in need.

- The Monroe County Infirmary – Fairview – dates back to 1855 when the “county poor farm” provided individuals with shelter and an opportunity to work the land to provide for those who lived at Fairview. Since then, Fairview has evolved into a 36-bed transitional facility for adults who have low incomes, have a disability, and who are in need of assistance.
- Since 1939, the Department of Human Services (formerly Department of Social Services and Family Independence Agency) has provided financial assistance to individuals and families who are very low income.
- The Monroe County Opportunity Program – the local community action agency – was created in 1965 in response to President Johnson's “war on poverty.” Financial assistance for rent and utilities is provided through MSDHA, FEMA/Homeland Security Department, and THAW. MCOP also provides assistance to 13 individuals or families who have a qualifying disability through the HUD Supportive Housing initiative

- The Monroe County Network on Homelessness was created in 1985 following a community forum to discuss the issue of high unemployment and resulting need for housing and other supports.
- In 1987, Family Counseling and Shelter Services opened the SafeHouse for victims of domestic violence.
- In 1991 and 1992, multi-denominational churches stepped forward to provide rotating shelters that provided temporary relief during the cold winter months.
- The Philadelphia House was subsequently established as an emergency shelter to provide a consistent location and needed services and supports.
- Michigan Works! Monroe County Employment and Training Department has provided assistance with job development and employment through the evolution of the CETA, JTPA, and Work Force Investment training programs, as well as the current Work First / Welfare Reform Program.
- Public education has provided assistance with GED preparation and offers assistance to homeless children through funding from the McKinney-Vento Act (reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, (Pub. L. 07-110).
- Assistance with low-cost or no-cost health care needs has been provided by the Monroe County Health Department, Mercy Memorial Hospital System, and Family Medical Centers. The Monroe County Health Plan provides access to healthcare for those eligible for the State's Adult Benefit Waiver program.
- For individual adults who have a serious mental illness, Monroe Community Mental Health Authority has provided rental assistance, household goods, and food vouchers through the Program to Assist The Homeless (PATH) funding. From 1993 to 2003, the Monroe Community Mental Health Authority received a permanent housing grant to provide subsidized housing for 12 adults with a serious mental illness.
- Throughout Monroe County, there are four housing commissions – City of Monroe, Bedford, Luna Pier, and Dundee – that oversee subsidized housing for families, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Additionally, there are 16 housing complexes, which consider themselves to be affordable.
- As of January 2006, there were 464 active Housing Choice (Section 8) vouchers in Monroe County, and an additional 65 new vouchers were expected at that time.
- St. Michael's Catholic Church's chapter of St. Vincent DePaul has provided assistance to families; other churches also provide assistance to individuals and families in need.
- Homeownership opportunities became available for eligible low-income families when Habitat for Humanity was established in Monroe County in 1995.
- The Salvation Army Family Manor opened in 2003 to provide emergency housing for families and single women (typically for up to 90-day stays).
- Women Empowering Women opened Paula's House in 2004 to provide a transitional facility for women who are homeless and who had previously spent time incarcerated.
- Transportation services are provided through Lake Erie Transit Authority six days per week. – in the City of Monroe, and Bedford, Frenchtown, and Monroe Townships. Essential transportation assistance is provided county wide for people who are disabled or who are 60 years of age or older.
- Other resources available to support individuals and families who are low income include food assistance through MCOP and the local Food Closets, health services through the Monroe County Health Department, Mercy Memorial Hospital System, the Family Medical Centers, and Monroe County Health Plan, and food stamps, childcare, and other services through the Department of Human Services.



Did you know ...

that an 8 year old girl typifies the largest segment of homeless in our country.

*That's right. **A child.** Unable to remove herself from a situation beyond her control.*

That's why the Ten Year Plan was developed . . . to help, to hope, to change our world.

Strategies – Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Increase community awareness regarding the number of individuals and families who are homeless in Monroe County and regarding the circumstances that have caused their homeless situation.

- Ensure that local stakeholders are knowledgeable about the Community Plan and seek formal endorsement from key officials.
- Ensure that the Ten Year Plan is highlighted during homeless awareness week activities.
- Work collectively with media outlets to ensure ongoing awareness related to the issue of homelessness.
- Inform the community about the economic realities of homelessness and the financial impact on the community.

Goal 2: Develop the capacity to implement the Housing First philosophy and affordable housing initiatives to help individuals and families move toward as much self-sufficiency as possible in maintaining their home.

- Understand and foster communication among providers through the creation of a county-wide Housing Coalition.
- Develop a “stepping stone” type service delivery system (flow chart) so that a seamless system is developed and homeless situations are prevented.
- Identify and remove policy barriers that impede housing.
- Implement the Housing First continuum of services.
- Identify needs regarding the available housing stock in Monroe County and increase the number of affordable housing units.

Goal 3: Ensure that the social service and public health, medical health, and behavioral health care needs are addressed.

- Develop a seamless service delivery system with “no wrong door” that is welcoming to all in need of assistance.
- Ensure that the necessary supportive services are available to address social, medical, and behavioral health care needs (including substance use disorders).
- Develop capacities for active outreach and early engagement so that individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness are aware of available supports and services and how to access them.
- Involve consumers and advocates in decision-making concerning the implementation of the plan and in evaluating its effectiveness.

Goal 4: Ensure that the individuals and families have the educational and employment support needed to secure a job that provides a high enough wage to sustain their family.

- Identify and secure resources to assist individuals with paying for the cost of GED examinations, tutoring, and training.
- Enhance community-wide efforts in identifying homeless youth to ensure they have access to public education.
- Ensure that job placement and training assistance is enhanced to support individuals who need assistance in securing employment.

Goal 5: Ensure that law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and other institutions are active partners in addressing the needs of homeless individuals within our community.

- Ensure that individuals moving back into the community from the criminal justice system and other institutions are provided with the supports needed to ensure a smooth transition and identify barriers that individuals face in re-entering the community.
- Develop and implement a community protocol for discharge planning for persons being released from the criminal justice system, mental health facilities, and for youth aging out of foster care.
- Coordinate with the Monroe County Community Corrections Advisory Board in identifying and addressing needs that law enforcement may have in order to better serve individuals and families who are in need of housing and supports.
- Enhance the data collection system within the criminal justice system so that data regarding the number of persons who are homeless is captured and made available.

Goal 6: Ensure that barriers to serving individuals and families, when identified, are addressed at the local, State, and Federal levels, as appropriate.

- Develop a communication system for keeping up-to-date regarding policies and regulations.
- Identify and address policy barriers that hinder our ability to impact homelessness
- Advocate for needed policy changes in a collaborative, systematic manner.

Ten Year Plan Advisory Committee

Terrence Beurer – Co-Chair

Department of Human Services

Jane Terwilliger – Co-Chair

Monroe Community Mental Health Authority

Joe Grifka

Fairview / Network on Homeless / HSCN

Stephanie Kasprzak

Monroe County Opportunity Program (MCOP)

Rusty Davis

United Way – First Call for Help

Rebecca Head

Monroe County Health Department

Debbie Wykes

Habitat for Humanity

Michael Hoydic

United Way of Monroe County

Connie Carroll

United Way of Monroe County

Randy Richardville

City of Monroe – Port Authority

Matt Wallace

City of Monroe Planning Department

Mark K. Witte

Grace Lutheran Church

Bonnie Finzel-Doster

Thrift Shop / Monroe Housing Commission

Michael Keck

United Auto Workers

Charlie Mahoney

United Way of Monroe / Four-M Associates

Linda Emerson

Monroe County Opportunity Program (MCOP)

Sharon Roggelin

Mercy Memorial Hospital System

Tom Moore

Monroe Police Department / Monroe County

Community Corrections Advisory Board

Doug Kuras

Michigan Works!

Ryan Simmons

County of Monroe – Planning Department

Michael T. Thomas

The Salvation Army

Doug Redding

Community Collaborative / Monroe ISD

Jan Weingart

Monroe Community Mental Health Authority

Sandie Pierce

Continuum of Care / Community Collaborative

Sally Pritchett

Habitat for Humanity

Sue Lewis

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Joanna Uhl

Dundee Township Supervisor

Connie Harvell

Monroe County Health Department

Dick Peplinski

St. Michael's St. Vincent DePaul

Lucy DeSilvis

County of Monroe – Community Corrections



Contact Information:

For further information regarding the information contained in Monroe County's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, please contact:

Terry Beurer, Co-Chairperson at beurert@michigan.gov

Jane Terwilliger, Co-Chairperson at jterwilliger@monroecmha.org

Charlie Mahoney, Project Consultant at mahoneyc@prodigy.net

Sandie Pierce, Project Coordinator at piercesandie@hotmail.com

Ten Year Plan Advisory Committee

c/o United Way of Monroe County

216 North Monroe Street

Monroe, Michigan 48162

734.242.1331 extension 13 ▪ monroehomeless.org