

FAIRFIELD COUNTY HOUSING COALITION

CONTINUUM OF CARE PLAN -- 2008-2009 – BRIDGING THE GAPS

BRIEFING

TEN-YEAR PLAN

The Coalition's *Ten-Year Plan* developed in 2006 outlines strategies and implementation goals to build a stronger service system that makes prevention and permanent housing priorities. The goals and action plans address the needs of varying populations and consider the development of self sufficiency skills at all stages of life. It is an integral component of our Continuum of Care Plan.

SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES

- Preservation of emergency shelter care
- Expansion of family shelter services
- Increased capacity for transitional and permanent supportive housing
- Preservation and expansion of permanent affordable housing
- Adequate affordable and accessible housing for elderly, mentally disabled, physically disabled and special populations
- Counseling, educational and supportive services to meet diverse needs of the low-income population as well as people with special needs

ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY

The Fairfield County Housing Coalition believes that homelessness is a problem with a solution. Working together we can overcome great obstacles and in that spirit, the Coalition has developed a Continuum of Care Plan for 2008-2009 that offers hope in its approach toward ending homelessness and a commitment to take meaningful actions that can make a difference.

DEFINING & ASSESSING HOMELESSNESS IN A RURAL AREA

The rural homelessness population has unique characteristics and challenges. The rural homeless typically experience precarious housing conditions more frequently than actual homelessness.

People living in situations such as temporary accommodations with friends and relatives do not meet the definition of literal homelessness used to determine eligibility for government programs.

Rural providers of shelter and services have a strong incentive to focus on prevention and permanent re-housing.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

January 31, 2008, the Fairfield County point-in-time count was conducted using agency surveys and field outreach. It identified 386 homeless individuals according to the HUD definition. Of the 386 individuals, 343 were sheltered in community homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters or transitional housing facilities for the homeless. The remaining 43 were unsheltered families and on waiting lists for shelter.

SPECIAL NEEDS OF HOMELESS PERSONS IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY 2008 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

<i>Issue/Special Need</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Mental Health	69	18%
Drug/Alcohol Abuse	58	15%
Dual Diagnosis	38	11%
Domestic Violence Victim	35	9%
Low Income	164	42%
Chronically Homeless	22	5%
TOTAL HOMELESS	386	100%

STRATEGIC FOCUS

New funding opportunities, economic changes and population shifts will undoubtedly affect how the plan is implemented. Regardless of shifts, action plans focus on five key strategic areas:

- Education and Public Information
- System Coordination
- Advocacy
- Programs and Services
- Procurement and Resources

The Coalition was formed to assist individuals and families who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless to regain housing stability and quality of life. With 42 members representing 25 community agencies, it implements and expands a comprehensive Continuum of Care Plan to prevent and end the devastation of homelessness among individuals and families.

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BRIEFING

IDENTIFYING THE GAPS

- 100 mental health clients waiting for housing
- 35 lacking housing emergency funds at New Horizons
- 96 households without housing emergency funds at Community Action – need is outpacing funding
- 9 qualified families a day unassisted by the JFS Prevention, Retention & Contingency program due to declining resources in times of increasing need
- 958 families on the Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority (FMHA) Section 8 waiting list when closed January 2008
- 765 families on the FMHA public housing waiting list
- Lengthy application waiting periods for SSDI and SSI leave individuals with no means of income
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training programs have layers of enrollment requirements that exclude many very low-income people. We lack short-term training that will enable this population to secure adequate employment quickly.
- Limited local public transportation system imposes barriers to seeking employment, locating housing and/or receiving necessary medical and health care services.
- 54.7 percent of Fairfield County dwellings were constructed prior to 1979, which have a higher risk of lead-based paint health hazards as well as a higher need for maintenance and repairs to ensure the health and safety of occupants. An estimated 4,000 low-to moderate-income housing units may be in need of lead-based paint mitigation or other emergency repairs.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY SNAPSHOT

- The County bridges the Columbus Metropolitan area and Appalachian Ohio – and it holds some of the strengths and challenges of both worlds.
- The County and its seat, Lancaster, are caring communities that step forward to serve people in need, including charities, volunteer groups, foundations, generous individuals and corporate donors.
- The Continuum of Care strives to address the needs of the community strategically with prudent use of resources.
- It is among the top-five fastest growing counties in the state. As the overall population grows, so does the number of people we need to serve.
- Federal spending per capita remains the lowest of all contiguous counties. Sales tax rates in Ohio span from 6.25 percent up to 7 percent with Fairfield County being at the lowest end of the scale.

FEDERAL SPENDING

PER CAPITA IN THE REGION (SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2000)

COUNTY	FEDERAL PER CAPITA SPENDING*
Fairfield	\$3,475
Pickaway	\$3,996
Licking	\$4,800
Perry	\$4,968
Franklin	\$7,901

*Note: Federal spending includes federal expenditures or obligations for grants, salaries and wages, procurement contracts, direct payments for individuals, and other direct payments, plus coverage/ commitments in the form of direct loans, guaranteed or insured loans and insurance.

- The unemployment rate is 4.8 percent, slightly lower than the national average
- 55.8 percent of our workers travel outside of the county to work. The average commute time is 27.7 minutes – higher than the state average of 22.9 minutes. The price of gasoline has doubled within the past three years, significantly affecting the household budgets of our commuting workforce.
- Housing costs are tied to the market of the Columbus Metropolitan area (Franklin County) where per capita income is significantly higher than Fairfield County's. The average per capita personal income in Franklin County in 2005 was \$36,547 in comparison to \$30,371 in Fairfield County according to the U.S. Census Bureau data.

COALITION CONTACTS

- Mary Jo Smith, City of Lancaster Community Development Executive Director & Coalition Chair, 740-687-6663
- Donna Fox-Moore, Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action Agency Housing Director & Coalition Coordinator, 740-653-4146
- Patti Morrow, Information & Referral Housing Specialist, 740-687-1034

Thank you for your support and for your advocacy.

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