Southwest North Dakota’s
Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness
2007
Having a home is essential to everything we value in life. Having a home means security, warmth, and stability. Having a home fulfills the basic human need to be an integral part of society. When people are unable to participate as a member of a community, they become isolated. The longer they remain homeless, the harder it becomes to integrate into the community.

Many people think of homelessness as a strictly urban phenomenon because homeless people are greater in number and are more visible in urban areas. America’s small towns and communities are not immune to the problem of homelessness, however. People who experience homelessness in rural places are often referred to as the “hidden homeless,” and homelessness is pervasive in rural areas. (Vissing) The last national count of homeless people found that nine percent live in rural areas. (National Alliance to End Homelessness)

Household income in rural areas is lower than it is in more urban areas. (US Census Bureau) Lower income levels and higher rates of poverty in rural areas, coupled with areas of high economic growth that drive up housing costs lead to rural homelessness. (Aron and Fitcher) A high number of people in rural areas are continually at-risk of homelessness because of insufficient available and affordable housing, limited transportation infrastructures, and the tendency to favor urban areas when awarding dollars from federal priorities and programs. (Aron and Fitcher)

This ten-year plan establishes a strong structure aimed at combating homelessness in one of the most rural areas of the nation – the eight southwest counties of North Dakota.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Just how much of a problem is homelessness in Dickinson and other communities in southwest North Dakota? The average person would likely say there isn’t a problem. They would be wrong. Homelessness may not look the same in southwest North Dakota as it does in our nation’s more urban centers. The streets are not teeming with people living out of shopping carts or carrying their worldly possessions in bags or sleeping in cardboard boxes. Homeless people in southwest North Dakota are “hidden homeless,” a category so often defined for homeless individuals and families in rural America.

These are people who might have been evicted from apartments or might be “couch surfing” with friends or families. They might be adults and children who have fled their homes because of domestic violence. They might have been released from institutionalized care, such as substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, or corrections facilities with no place to call home. They might be young adults who have been evicted from their family homes or aged out of foster care. Or, they could be individuals and families that simply do not have the skills and income necessary to acquire and maintain housing. Regardless of the problem, homelessness is a real issue in southwest North Dakota, one that costs the taxpayers somewhere between $75,000 and $100,000 each and every month.

A group of over 40 people who represent the city, service providers, volunteers and people who have experienced homelessness first-hand gathered over the course of six months to
study the issue of homelessness in this rural area of southwest North Dakota. Through a planning process, these “stakeholders” identified five main goals to be accomplished over the course of a ten-year period ending in 2018. Twenty-five activities have been planned to help achieve these five goals.

- To retain a solid foundation of financial resources to adequately address the issue of homelessness
- To increase skill building to prevent and reduce homelessness
- To provide a support system to homeless individuals in order to obtain and/or maintain adequate housing
- To increase community education and community involvement in homelessness issues
- To provide appropriate housing to meet all homeless needs

The stakeholders recognize that the plan is an ambitious one and will take a concerted effort to accomplish. However, this dedicated group of people is committed to working in collaboration and partnership to ensure the plan’s success. By the end of 2018, all citizens previously classified, as “homeless” will have a place to call “home.”
INTRODUCTION
Region VIII consists of Adams, Billings, Bowman, Dunn, Golden Valley, Hettinger, Slope, and Stark counties in Southwest North Dakota. The region is comprised of 10,001.3 square miles and has an average of 3.8 people per square mile. Region VIII ranks seventh in the eight North Dakota regions in population with approximately 36,730 people. (2007 Kids Count) Although this is one of the largest regions geographically, it has less than six percent of the state’s population and six percent of the state’s employment.

Stark County, the largest county in the region, has 61 percent of all covered employment in the region. (Job Service ND) Dickinson is the county seat of Stark County. It is the region’s largest city and serves as the regional center for education, health care, agriculture, business, and industry.

Whites comprise 97.5 percent of the city’s population, Hispanics account for one percent and Native Americans make up for less than one percent. Slightly less than three percent are some other race. Eighteen percent of the population has identified themselves as having a disability. (US Census Bureau)

Overall, the demographic trends for household and poverty information between Stark County and Dickinson are comparable. In 2005, the estimated median household income in the city of Dickinson was $38,000, a 20.5 percent increase from 2000’s estimated median income of $31,542. Stark County’s estimated median household income was slightly higher at $38,000.
**Homelessness Defined**

According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) an individual who does not have a permanent residence is classified as homeless. More specifically, a person is considered homeless if, without HUD assistance, he or she would have to spend the night in a homeless shelter or in a place not meant for human habitation.

The North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People has determined four types of homelessness.

1. **Literally Homeless** are people who stay in emergency shelters or transitional housing. This category also includes unsheltered homeless people who sleep in places not meant for human habitation and who may use shelters on an intermittent basis.
2. **Precariously-housed** are people who are at imminent risk of becoming literally homeless at any time. They may be temporarily doubled up with other people, or staying in a motel when they have enough money for a room.
3. **Chronically homeless** are people with a disabling condition who have been continuously homeless either for a year or more, or who have experienced homelessness at least four times within the previous three years. They must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation and/or housed in emergency shelter during that time.
4. **Long-term homeless** includes individuals who are chronically homeless and families that have been homeless (lacking a permanent place to live) for a
year or more, or have been homeless four or more times during the previous three years. An individual or family member must also have a disabling condition that limits their daily living activities.

National evidence indicates that 80 percent of the national homeless population is “transitional,” while the remaining homeless are “chronic and long-term.” The 20 percent of the population considered chronic or long-term are either homeless on a long-term basis or regularly homeless on an episodic basis. Chronic homeless may consume as much as 80 percent of the ongoing, available public resources; and therefore warrant the priority attention.

For the purposes of this plan, stakeholders chose to address all types of homelessness as defined, with a special emphasis on chronic and long-term homelessness.
HOMELESSNESS IN SOUTHWEST NORTH DAKOTA

Every year, on one day during a designated week in January, all states participate in the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Point in Time Survey. Agencies serving people who are homeless in each of North Dakota’s homelessness planning regions (Appendix D) provide the survey forms to homeless clients for completion. The survey is conducted over the course of just one day and because of that, numbers fluctuate significantly from year to year.¹

On January 16, 2007, homelessness data were collected from 200 agencies throughout North Dakota who provide resources to homeless individuals. On January 25, 2007, an additional assessment was administered to the sheltered and unsheltered homeless. The results as they relate to Region VIII are described on the following pages.

Because the number of people surveyed was very small, data was combined for the years 2005-2007.

¹ It is important to note that the numbers of homeless people surveyed in the Point in Time Survey are significantly smaller than the total numbers of homeless people actually served in Dickinson and Region VIII in any given year.
**Homeless Demographics**

Homelessness in Region VIII knows no gender boundaries. Among the surveyed population of homeless individuals, 52 percent were female and 48 percent were male.

The majority of the surveyed homeless was White, but the American Indian and Black homeless population was over-represented for the population. While less than one percent of the city’s population is American Indian and Black combined, these races comprised almost four of every 10 homeless people. Information on race was not available for two percent of the surveyed population.
The majority of homeless individuals completing this survey received their high school diploma (39%). Twenty-nine percent attended college and 13 percent received a college degree.
**Types of Shelter**

The Point-in-Time survey has four categories of shelter: Unsheltered, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Doubled up/Precariously Housed in Motel. The definition of each of the categories is as follows:

- **Unsheltered** – Individual living outdoors in an abandoned auto or building
- **Emergency Shelter** – Individual housed in an emergency shelter, motel, hospital, detox facility, substance abuse treatment center, and jail
- **Transitional Housing** – temporary housing provided to individuals who are able to benefit from independent living skills training to live in the community.
- **Doubled up/Precariously Housed in Motel** – Individuals at-risk of becoming homeless.

The shelter breakdown, as noted by respondents, can be viewed in the following chart.
The majority of the homeless population that responded to the ND Point-in-Time surveys from 2005 to 2007 was living in a halfway house or residential treatment facility. About one-third were living tenuously with someone else and one in five people were living in a short-term shelter.
The most common response by homeless respondents, when asked where they slept the previous night, was transitional housing (39%). This was followed by overnight Emergency Shelter (24%). Seven percent of the surveyed population did not report their housing status.
**Length of Homelessness**

Forty-nine percent of the responding homeless population reported being homeless once. An additional 19 percent reported they had found themselves homeless three times. Overall, in the past three years, about 40 percent of the responding individuals found themselves homeless on more than one occasion.
Reasons for Homelessness

Unemployment was the reason most often cited for why people became homeless. The health-related problems of mental illness, history of substance abuse and general medical problems were factors for a large number of those responding to the survey. The inability to afford rent was one of the top five reasons for homelessness in Region VIII.

The top five situations that were cited as reasons for being homeless were:

1. Unemployed
2. Mental Illness
3. Medical Problems
4. Substance Abuse
5. Can’t afford rent/money management issues

This was followed in order by: Discharged from a Mental Health Facility; Relocated/Move to This Area, Can’t Locate an Apartment; Evicted; and Family Break-up.
**Income**

Less than one-fourth of Region VIII’s homeless people had any kind of employment income, limiting their ability to pay for housing. About one-in-six rely on family and friends for their income, and about half receive income from government services.
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 7,021 available housing units in Dickinson in 2005. Of those units, more than half (4,177) were owner-occupied. A third of the housing units (2,314) were renter-occupied and the remaining 530 were vacant. The cost of housing in Dickinson increased significantly from 2000 to 2006. In 2000, the average cost of a home in Dickinson was $139,500. Six years later, the average cost to buy a home had increased by 23 percent, to $171,000.

The average household income, at $38,113, is 15 percent higher than the average state household income of $32,440. Compared to 8.3 percent of all families in North Dakota, 7.1 percent of all families in Dickinson are below poverty level. In Dickinson, the percentage rises to 10.0 percent when families have children under the age of 18 living at home and to 13.3 percent when the children are under the age of five.

About eight percent of all households recorded in Dickinson in 2000 were single-female heads-of-household. The average income for single-female heads-of-household was about 42 percent less than the amount for all families, at $21,788. Single-mother families comprise 45 percent of all families in poverty. One-third of all single-mother families were living in poverty. That number rose to 58 percent living in poverty when the households were single-mother families with children under age 18.
In Stark County, 12 percent of all children ages 0-17 were living in poverty in 2006, compared to the state average of about 14 percent. Fourteen percent of children under the age of five were living in poverty in Stark County compared to 18 percent in the state. However, as children get older, the poverty levels drop slightly in Stark County. Eleven percent of the children ages 5-17 were living in poverty in Stark County, compared to 13 percent in the state. Five percent of all children were living in extreme poverty in Stark County, compared to six percent in the state. (ND Kids Count)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Living in Poverty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ave. Household Income</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stark County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ND Kids Count 2006
U.S. Census Bureau

In 2000, the average household income in Stark County was about 17 percent higher than that of the state. While the income levels are higher and the poverty levels for all families are lower, there was a 26-percentage point increase in the poverty levels when the head-of-household was female. This number rose to 41.8 percent when children under eighteen were present, and rose again to 53 percent when children were under age five.

When one takes into account the numbers of families who are living in poverty and rising cost of housing, it is easy to understand why one of the top five reasons given for homelessness is “can’t afford rent.”
**Homeless Costs to Southwest North Dakota**

The cost of homelessness is high. Unfortunately, it is difficult to record. The majority of service providers in southwest North Dakota serve the homeless population in some way. However, not all agencies track their client services by housing status. The agencies that could provide data related to the costs of serving the homeless population documented a combined total nearing seven figures in expended costs for 2006.

The $911,743 in documented expenditures is for direct services only. This amount does not reflect operational costs such as administration, staff time, space, utilities, depreciation, technology, vehicle expenses, etc. Over half the reported expenditures came from the correctional facilities in southwest North Dakota.

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1 It cannot be stressed enough, that if it were possible to document ALL costs from ALL agencies that serve the homeless population, costs would be dramatically increased from those documented here.
About two-thirds of the expenditures documented by service providers were for shelter and case management services. One of every five dollars was spent on medical needs and prescriptions. Food comprised seven percent of the dollars spent and education services cost eight percent of the total dollars spent. Clothing and transportation together comprised less than two percent of the expenditures. Some of the organizations were unable to break out their expenses and provided an uncategorized amount. These resources accounted for less than two percent of the reported expenditures.
The table below outlines the payment standard in Stark County for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (previously known as Section 8 Rental Assistance Program) as of March 1, 2007. HUD has set standards that no family/individual should be paying more than 30 percent of their gross income on housing.

### Housing Choice Voucher Program Payment Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedroom Size</th>
<th>Payment Standard&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>$348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bedroom</td>
<td>$422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bedrooms</td>
<td>$489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Bedrooms</td>
<td>$711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Bedrooms</td>
<td>$860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Bedrooms</td>
<td>$989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Bedrooms</td>
<td>$1,118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the more than $900,000 in reported expenses for services to the homeless population could be converted to housing rentals, more than 180 one-bedroom homes could have been rented for an entire year.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Payment standard is the maximum rent, which includes utilities, under the HUD program.

<sup>4</sup> Calculated from the fair market monthly rent of $422, as established by HUD standards. ($911,743 divided by $422 divided by 12 months = 180.0)
AFFECTS OF COMMUNITY FACTORS ON HOMELESSNESS

How do other critical factors of the community and world affect homelessness?

The factors leading to homelessness do not stand alone. Each issue is inextricably connected to other critical community and economic issues – they are interdependent and intertwined with one another.

The increased activity in the energy industry in southwest North Dakota may have a profound impact on issues that concern homelessness. An increase in energy workers and their families into the community has placed an increased demand on an already-short supply of housing. The community’s response to the needs of the larger community directly affects how the needs of the homeless can be met.

- Business – Supply-and-demand economics causes an increase in real estate costs as housing availability is reduced and the availability to pay increased rent is realized by higher-paid energy workers.

- Politics – Federal- and state-funded budgets of service agencies that assist the homeless are reduced. The political mindset of most citizens is one of reducing, not increasing, entitlement and social programs that rely heavily on public and tax dollars. Agencies that help the homeless are continuously in need of trying to “do more with less.”

- Education – The general population is not provided the education it needs to help people develop a clear understanding of homelessness in the community. The result is often apathy and/or denial within the general population.

Who then, will take responsibility to break the wall of indifference and call the general community to participate in finding a solution to the myriad of problems needing to be solved in dealing with homelessness?

Upon close examination, it is apparent that no one aspect of the community – government, public and private non-profit agencies, private business, or grassroots citizens – operates independently when trying to resolve
the myriad of homelessness issues. All are closely intertwined; one entity cannot ignore the needs and contributions of the other. Each must depend on the other and find ways to cooperate in finding solutions and resolving the problem. Enlisting the cooperation of all increases the possibility of success in solving the community homeless problems.
**SERVICES PROVIDED IN STARK COUNTY**

**Amen Food Pantry**

The Amen Food Pantry is an organization that is actively supported by local service agencies, community church organizations, and community service clubs. The Amen Food Pantry provides food and emergency services to individuals and families in need. Resources received from community supporters include monetary contributions, food, and household paper products.

Individuals who need assistance from the Amen Food Pantry are required to obtain and submit a voucher at the time services are provided. Vouchers are provided through Stark County Social Services; Community Action Partnership; and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. The Amen Food Pantry also provides milk vouchers to the individuals and families who are receiving services.

The Amen Food Pantry is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. During the hours of operation, it is staffed by volunteers from the various community church organizations. In 2006, the Amen Food Pantry provided services to 407 households, or 1,078 people. The monthly average for services was 34 households, or 90 people.

**Badlands Human Service Center**

Badlands Human Service Center (BHSC) is one of eight regional human service center regions within the North Dakota Department of Human Services. BHSC provides a wide range of human services to Region VIII residents, including homeless people. Nearly $330,000 was spent in 2006 for Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) case management, transitional living, and permanent supportive housing.

PATH is available to people who are homeless and have a mental illness or are dual-diagnosed with mental illness and substance abuse. Approximately $79,000 in federal and state funding was spent on the PATH program in 2006. Seventy individuals benefited from PATH, with 33 becoming PATH-enrolled clients.

Transitional living is offered to people suffering from serious mental illness, but who are able to benefit from living skills training that can help them live independently in the community. Almost $171,000
was spent on transitional living and skills development for seven individuals in 2006. Funding is available through state funds and fees for services.

Permanent supportive housing is available to people with serious mental illness that need some continued support to enable them to live independently in the community over the long term. $80,000 was spent in 2006 to provide services for six individuals in permanent supportive housing. Funding for this service comes from fees for services and state funds.

**Community Action Partnership Region VIII**

Community Action Partnership (CAP) provides shelter, food, clothing, medication assistance, case management services and shelter supplies to individuals who have been evicted and are homeless. Approximately $39,000 was spent in 2006 for direct services to homeless individuals. Funding sources include the Community Services Block Grant, United Way, Emergency Food Services Program, and community donations. Eighty-two people received emergency shelter, shelter supplies, and case management services. Thirty-two individuals received food, 11 were given assistance to purchase prescriptions, and 10 received clothing assistance.

**Dakota Center for Independent Living**

Persons with disabilities are able to obtain services from the Dakota Center for Independent Living. Services include information and referral, peer support, individual and systems advocacy, training for independent living skills, nursing home transition, and assessments. The Center’s funding comes from Federal grants and State-legislated funds. Five people were served in 2006.

**Dakota Women’s Correctional Rehabilitation Center**

The Dakota Women’s Correctional Rehabilitation Center averaged 118 inmates per day in 2006. Services included meals, medical care, housing, treatment, and education. Treatment services are offered over a 90-day program, allowing approximately four treatment groups each year. Approximately ten inmates attend each session. Education services were provided to an average of 15 inmates.
Educational programming includes GED, Adult, Basic ED, parenting pre-release, social skills, healthy living, history, computers, and welding. In 2006, there were an average of 15 inmates in GED; numbers of women participating in other educational classes were considerably more.

Dickinson Police Department

The Dickinson Police Department (DPD) provides vouchers for shelter, meals and gas to homeless individuals requesting emergency assistance during non-business hours. Services are offered on a one-time basis, and each recipient may only receive one of the three services. The vouchers are supplied to the DPD from Stark County Social Services.

Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center

The Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center (DVRCC) provides services to the homeless and victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. HUD and the Emergency Services Grant Program (ESGP) cover the costs of housing, utilities, transportation, medications, and insurance. Over the course of 2006, more than $37,000 was spent for these services. A total of 116 individuals were served.

House of Manna

The House of Manna is a non-profit organization that offers recycled clothing, furniture and household items. All who state they have a need are qualified to receive items. House of Manna is funded primarily through local donations, though small amounts of funding have been accessed from United Way and a Bremer Foundation Grant. In 2006, more than 10,000 people received services, for a cost of just over $22,000.

Job Service North Dakota

Job Service North Dakota (JSND) is a One-Stop Career Center that provides a network of resources connecting employment, education, training, and skill development at the local, state, and national levels.
Services are available to help customers find a job, retain a job, improve their skills, and when possible, move to a better job.

The primary goal of Job Service North Dakota is to offer a One-Stop Career Center where job seekers may register for employment and employers can find workers nationwide. An additional goal is to provide skill assessment to job seekers, which may lead to enhanced skill development to become better job candidates. Numerous programs are offered to people who meet program qualifications. Many of these people may be homeless; and JSND does ask this on its applications. However, a running total of the number of homeless individuals who are served is not kept.

Services are offered through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which increases occupational skill attainment, employment retention, and earnings of participants. This results in improved quality of the workforce, reduced welfare dependency, and enhanced productivity and competitiveness of the nation. Since WIA is not an entitlement program, enrollment is limited to those who are most in need, have the potential to succeed in training, and are likely to obtain employment upon completion of the program. These programs are available to youth, adults, and dislocated workers. All programs under the WIA umbrella have different qualifying factors.

JSND also offers services to Veterans and Displaced Homemakers. Other services such as Unemployment Insurance, Tax Credit Opportunities, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Programs, and the Federal Bonding Program are provided. JSND maintains the SHARE Network, which is an internet-based interactive resource and referral system that links available community services for all individuals who face barriers to employment. All information can be accessed from www.jobsnd.com.

**Legal Services of North Dakota**

Legal Services of North Dakota (LSND) offers free civil legal services for people who meet eligibility guidelines. Services are provided in the following areas: Indian law; health; immigration; public benefits; family and children; domestic violence; housing, landlord/tenant and eviction rights; consumer; elderly; civil rights; and taxes.
St. John Lutheran Church – Gifts of Light Ministry

The Gifts of Light Ministry at St. John Lutheran Church provides approximately $3,000 to $5,000 to an average of 20 people each year. Many of the recipients request assistance, while others receive money without asking for it. About 15 requests are denied each year. Funding for the Gifts of Light Ministry comes from designated memorials, individual contributions from members of the congregation; money budgeted from the trust fund for special needs, and offerings through the annual Hunger Appeal. Only the pastors, by means of a confidential logbook, know the names of the individuals receiving money.

Assistance is available for those who have suffered a loss in the family, a change in life circumstances, or an emergency resulting in an immediate short-term need. Individuals who are homeless or who do not have a support system in place also meet the criteria for assistance. Some aid goes to those who have made poor decisions based on problem behaviors and need assistance to recover. Funds may be given to people to use for shelter, funeral expenses, utilities, food, medical needs, travel and transportation costs, emergency needs, college needs, school supplies and clothing, counseling and therapy.

A standard application form is filled out by each individual who seeks assistance. The application may also be filled out by someone who is seeking assistance for another individual, or by a pastor. Generally, gifts are made available on a “good faith basis,” trusting that the needs of the recipient are valid. The ministry has charge accounts with certain providers and/or offers vouchers for certain services such as food (grocery stores and restaurants), travel (gas stations, cabs, bus fare, air fare and shelter while traveling), motels, medical (hospital and pharmacies), school, and home needs.

St. Patrick’s Parish

Through a collaborative effort between St. John Lutheran Church and St. Patrick’s Parish, a once-a-week Welcome Table (soup kitchen) is available to guests in Garvin Hall, which is located across the street from St. Patrick’s Church. The soup kitchen is open every Thursday evening from 6:00 PM until 7:00 PM. St. Patrick’s Parish volunteers serve meals one of the Thursdays each month, and the remaining Thursdays are served by other community organizations. An average of 20 people were served at each meal in 2006.
St. Patrick’s Parish spent about $600 on the Welcome Table during 2006. The parish also provides vouchers to those in need of shelter, gasoline, and food. Referrals are made to the food pantries and to Social Services. When vouchers are no longer available, referrals are made to the Dickinson Police Department.

St. Wenceslaus Food Pantry

The St. Wenceslaus Food Pantry served 288 people and spent $800 in 2006. Funding for the food pantry is acquired through grants and donations. St. Wenceslaus follows guidelines provided by CAP when serving those in need in Dickinson and the surrounding communities.

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has limited criteria for services and helps those who “fall through the cracks” for services offered by other agencies. Criteria generally includes being able to provide identification and personal data. Utilities can be paid with a shut-off notice and medications require a physician’s prescription. Gasoline is offered with a valid driver’s license and proof of auto insurance. Winter clothing is also provided through the Coats for Kids Program or through vouchers. Transient aide is also available in the eight counties in Southwest North Dakota. Funding for The Salvation Army comes from its kettle campaign, personal donations, and churches.

Stark County Housing Authority

All applicants for the Housing Choice Voucher Program, formally known as the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program, must meet income criteria to receive rental assistance. Although there were six contacts in 2006, the Stark County Housing Authority was unable to serve any of them.

Stark County Chapter of the American Red Cross

The Red Cross served four families in 2006 and spent just over $1,500. Red Cross uses its donations for disaster victims who are displaced due to home fires. The Fire Department or Police Department must notify Red Cross of the fires, and the Fire Chief must confirm the amount of damage caused by the fire. To
receive housing assistance, the Fire Chief or Police Chief must deem the home unsafe for habitation due to the fire damage or unsafe air quality from smoke damage.

**Stark County Social Services**

Stark County Social Services (SCSS) offers a large number of programs to people who meet the program qualifications. Many of these people may be homeless; the agency does not keep specific data on the services accessed by homeless people. Services fall under two broad categories: economic assistance and social services.

Economic assistance programs include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, medical assistance, general assistance, help with heating and food, child care reimbursement, basic care for disabled and elderly, foster care payments and information and referral.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a cash grant for single parent families with little or no income, or pregnant women in the third trimester. TANF provides for unmet economic needs and helps children remain in parents’ or relatives’ homes. TANF addresses the economic problems and barriers to self-sufficiency that can confront families.

Medical Assistance (Medicaid or MA) is available to children under age 21, pregnant women, elderly over age 65, or people receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability.

General Assistance is a short-term program for on-going emergency needs. Funds are limited and assistance is only granted in cases where an individual has no other resources for assistance. The program covers such items as rent, utilities, food, medical, transportation, and burial costs.

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) offers assistance to help people pay their home heating costs from October 1 through May 31 of each year.

Food Stamps help low-income households purchase food.

The Child Care Assistance Program reimburses a portion of childcare expenses for families who are working or attending school.
The Foster Care Maintenance Payments Program provides payment of foster care supported by federal, state, and county funds for dependent children who are living in licensed foster family homes, foster care group homes, residential childcare facilities, or residential treatment facilities.

Through Information and Referral, SCSS provides information about services provided by public and private service providers and a brief assessment of client needs to facilitate appropriate referral to these community resources.

Social service programs provide child protective services, child care and child care licensing, home and community based services for the elderly and disabled, in-home services, foster care and foster care licensing, and children’s health services.

Child Protective Services is a program whereby licensed social workers receive and assess concerns for child abuse and neglect in accordance with North Dakota law.

Prime Time Day Care is a program providing daycare for children of families in crisis.

The Crossroads Child Care Program provides childcare assistance for eligible teen parents who are pursuing high school, GED, or alternative education.

Home and community-based services for the elderly and disabled help the elderly and physically or developmentally disabled so they can continue to live independently in their community. Services include adult foster care, family home care, personal care services, homemaker assistance, respite care, chore assistance, non-medical transportation, adult day care, environmental modifications, specialized equipment and supplies, extended family care, case management, training family caregivers, and parenting education programs.

Foster Care is the provision of substitute parent care to children under age 21 who are removed from the care, custody, and control of their parents due to abuse/neglect, deprivation, or unruly behavior. Stark County Social Services is the agency that licenses foster and adult foster homes. The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program helps youth age 16-18 who are or who have been in foster care and are in need of services to promote independence and self-sufficiency.

Children’s Special Health Services provide assistance for any person between birth and age 21 whose physical function or emotional development is impaired by accident, disease, or congenital deformity. North
Dakota Health Tracks is a preventive health program that is free for children ages 0-21 who are eligible for Medicaid.

The Parent Aide Program offers services from paraprofessionals who establish trusting relationships with parents experiencing difficulties in parenting. The relationship is used as a vehicle for resolving family problems.

Finally, Wrap-Around Services are offered to families that may need help in preventing the placement of children in out-of-home care.

**Southwest Multi-County Correction Center**

There are two divisions of the Southwest Multi-County Correction Center; the Dickinson Adult Detention Center (DADC) and the Dakota Horizons Youth Center (DHYC.) Services at both facilities include meals, education, counseling services, case management and medical services. Over $141,000 in Federal, state and county funds were utilized for these services at DADC in 2006, and DHYC spent over $357,000. These funds, combined, totaled almost $500,000, and covered just the direct costs of the services.

**USDA Rural Development**

USDA Rural Development housing programs work to improve the quality of life for rural Americans by ensuring they have access to safe, well-built, affordable homes. The purpose of Rural Development’s housing programs is to provide financing with no down payment and at favorable rates and terms. These loans are for the purchase, construction, rehabilitation, or relocation of a dwelling and related facilities.

USDA also offers Self-Help Housing to help groups of low-income families build their own homes by providing the skilled labor they cannot furnish themselves. The families must agree to work together until all homes are finished.

Rural Rental Housing loans are made to finance construction of multi-family living quarters for people with low, very low, and moderate incomes. Some units are reserved for people aged 62 and older.

Home Improvement and Repair Loans and Grants enable low-income rural homeowners to remove health and safety hazards from their homes and to make homes accessible for people with disabilities.
Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants enable farmers, public or private nonprofit organizations, and units of State and local governments to build, buy, or repair farm labor housing in either dormitory or multifamily apartment style. These funds can also help pay for important facilities, such as on-site child-care centers.

Housing Preservation grants are used to renovate deteriorating homes and rental properties occupied by families whose incomes fall into the low and very-low categories.

Housing Programs can help subsidize monthly mortgage and rental payments, limiting these costs to no more than 30 percent of the adjusted monthly income of the applicant.

**Planning Process**

The Southwest Homeless Coalition identified and invited key community stakeholders to participate in the planning process by way of a community assessment. The assessment sought to delve beyond the perceptions and understanding of committee members and obtain a factual picture. The information requested from each of the organizational stakeholders, included the following:

- A description of services provided to the homeless
- Number of individuals requesting services (two years of data, if possible)
- Number of people actually served (two years of data, if possible)
- Funding amounts and sources
- Category expenses per type of aid provided
The agency and community stakeholders participated in full-group brainstorming sessions to review the findings of the community assessment and to identify the community’s strengths and community barriers. Upon completion of the brainstorming sessions, the members were divided into small groups. The small groups analyzed the identified problems and determined the most significant issues.

Within the small groups, stakeholders were charged with developing strategies and action steps to address the significant issues. The issues were categorized into the following categories:

- Funding
- Client Responsibilities and Skill Building
- Mental Health
- Transitional Case Management
- Community Awareness/Apathy
- Facilities

Finally, the findings were utilized to design specific goals and actions. The coalition members believe they will have achieved success in ten years if they can say they have:

- A solid foundation of financial resources
- Increased participation in skill-building programs, and resulting successes
- Established a community support system for the homeless
- An increased awareness and understanding of homelessness throughout the community
- Established adequate housing to meet homelessness needs
COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AS IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS

- There is a strong history of agency collaboration and resources already in place.
- Agencies have a strong mutual respect of each other and excellent recognition of the issue.
- A level of leadership is already in place to address the problems associated with homelessness.
- Those who work with homelessness are knowledgeable about the problem and staffs are educated and supportive in working with the homeless.
- Employees of the agencies who work with the homeless have a strong work ethic and are able to identify with clients.
- Generally, citizens demonstrate compassion for the less fortunate and have shown generosity in supporting the programs.
- A strong and well supported faith-based community exists in Dickinson.
- Dickinson has strong public/private partnerships already in place.
- A large amount of creativity exists within the community.
- Those who work consistently with the problem, have a keen sense of humor, which helps get through some of the difficult times.
COMMUNITY BARRIERS AS IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS

- A number of housing problems exist in Dickinson; There is a lack of accessible housing due to limited subsidies/vouchers.
- Lack of subsidized housing to meet all needs is an issue.
- The houses or apartments that exist in Dickinson are expensive to rent/buy which creates affordability issues.
- There seems to be a lack of creative plans to help people become homeowners.
- More permanent supportive housing is needed for longer term problems.
- The cost of living has risen substantially in Dickinson; however the wages have not increased at the same rate.
- Certain resources required for independent living are in short supply:
  - Limited child care/sick child care options.
  - Limited public transportation options.
  - There is a need for more shelters in Dickinson, including:
    - Emergency shelters are in short supply in Dickinson, and are consistently full.
    - There is also a limited supply of transitional living shelters.
    - There are no transitional living facilities for youth coming out of foster care or for people coming out of the correctional system.
    - There is no drop-in center in Dickinson where people can go to just spend the night.
    - A lack of a permanent shelter is also an issue.
- For those shelters/options that do exist, there are agency responsibility/policies/rules that need to be followed. Clients have a responsibility to follow the rules/policies. If rules are not followed, an individual is evicted and there is no other place for him or her to go. Staff safety is a major concern here, because desperate people tend to take desperate measures, and staff could easily be harmed.
• All clients must meet qualification standards/policies to receive services. If these are not met, some clients will fall through the cracks.

• A lack of long-term facilities in Dickinson is an issue because many problems require longer periods of treatment or counseling, such as for mental health and/or substance abuse.

• With the forthcoming closure of the mental health unit in Dickinson, there will be a definite, and possibly large, increase in the need for services in the area.

• Communication between agencies is a concern due to confidentiality policies. Agencies need a ‘tracking’ system, but policies are in place to protect the client. This can result in a client receiving multiple/dual services. Education within the service providers needs to be increased. This includes teaching people how to achieve independence.

• The cost of services is on the rise and there are many different funding issues for agencies. There is a lack of funding in many cases. Where there has been funding in the past, there has been a reduction or re-direction of those funds in the recent years (i.e. – war, etc.)

• Although the public has been very generous to the organizations for various causes, there seems to be a lack of public awareness about homelessness. Because citizens do not see the stereotypical “homeless” person on the streets, they have difficulty understanding that homelessness does, indeed, exist in Dickinson. It is an invisible issue.

• Finally, the agencies in Dickinson need to determine if the homelessness problem is home-grown versus transient. This could be a major deciding factor in the long term plan. There is not much a community can do to solve transient homelessness; however there are definite avenues that can be followed if the problem is home-grown.
In some rural communities, homelessness is an issue that falls prey to the old adage “out of site out of mind.” If not effectively addressed, the effects on a community can be devastating over time. How should a community decide what factors must be taken into account when determining the use of scarce resources? When attempting to find a solution to this question, collaboration among those who work with the issue of homelessness is critical.

The next section of this plan outlines the goals and strategies identified by the stakeholders who participated in the planning process. The natural conduit from the stakeholders’ planned goals and strategies to the implementation of the plan is through the Southwest Homeless Coalition, which has been functioning for a number of years to address homelessness in the eight southwest counties of North Dakota.

The Southwest Homeless Coalition currently consists of representatives from eight agencies (see Appendix E for listing.) The coalition meets on a monthly basis, and operates through the leadership of an elected president. A secretary and vice-president are also elected. Member agencies pay dues to the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People and provide for the time their representatives spend working on coalition business.

Expansion of the Southwest Homeless Coalition to include more of the planning stakeholders as members is vital to achieving this plan’s goals and objectives. An increased membership will allow for greater ownership in the issue and a more effective use of community resources when addressing identified concerns. More members would also allow for a coalition committee structure that could work with more specific parts of the problem solution, such as community education, housing issues, and fund raising.

Individual agencies will continue to play a vital role in serving the NEEDS of the homeless population through their individualized programs. These same agencies, when working collaboratively through the Southwest Homeless Coalition, will have the ability to leverage their combined expertise and resources in implementing the SOLUTIONS to the homelessness problem.
## GOAL 1
To retain a solid foundation of financial resources to address the issue of homelessness

### Strategy 1.1
Identify existing funding sources

**Leadership:** Southwest Homeless Coalition

**Expected Outcome:** Increased collaboration between service agencies and funding partners

**Available Resources:** Homelessness stakeholders

**Funding:** N/A

**Timelines for Completion:** Year One

### Strategy 1.2
Educate the group/organization/agency that each planning member represents regarding the necessity of increasing funding for homelessness

**Leadership:** Education Committee

*Committee to be developed by the Southwest Homeless Coalition*

**Expected Outcome:** Improved utilization of current resources among service provider agencies

**Available Resources:** Homelessness stakeholders

**Funding:** N/A

**Timelines for Completion:** Year One

### Strategy 1.3
Increase public and private knowledge, at all levels, of the need for increased funding for homelessness. This includes involving key players; landlords, income based housing, etc.

**Leadership:** Education Committee

**Expected Outcome:** Community support for public funding of homelessness issue

**Available Resources:** Homelessness stakeholders; Education Committee

**Funding:** United Way Grants; Community Action Partnership

**Timeline for Completion:** Year One

### Strategy 1.4
Educate local and government entities on the need for funding related to homelessness

**Leadership:** City Administrator

*Southwest Homeless Coalition*

**Expected Outcome:** Allocation of city funds’ to help solve city’s homelessness issue

**Available Resources:** Homelessness stakeholders

**Funding:** N/A

**Timelines for Completion:** Year Two

### Strategy 1.5
Involve government, business, and community in expanding political and financial resources

**Leadership:** City Administrator

*Southwest Homeless Coalition*

**Expected Outcome:** Increased funding from local government and business donations for homelessness

**Available Resources:** City/County Commission; City Human Relations Commission

**Funding:** In-Kind

**Timeline for Completion:** Year Three
**Strategy 1.6**

Develop a network of existing agencies to collaborate in obtaining larger grants that would benefit all agencies that serve the homeless

**Leadership:** Community Action Partnership

**Expected Outcome:** Increased grant funding as a result of stronger community partnerships.

**Available Resources:** Homelessness Stakeholders

**Funding:** In-Kind

**Timeline for Completion:** Year Four
GOAL 2
To increase skill-building to prevent and reduce homelessness

Strategy 2.1
Identify central point of entry for people seeking homeless services

Leadership: Community Action Partnership

Expected Outcome: Improved coordination of services to clients
Available Resources: Police Department; Social Services; Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center; Badlands Human Service Center; Salvation Army
Funding: State; Federal; Local
Timelines for Completion: Year One

Strategy 2.2
Identify barriers preventing the homeless from maintaining basic needs (food, clothing, shelter)

Leadership: SW Homeless Coalition

Expected Outcome: Improved services to clients
Available Resources: SW Homeless Coalition; Point-in-time Survey
Funding: None
Timeline: Year One

Strategy 2.3
Work with consumers in identifying barriers to success

Leadership: SW Homeless Coalition

Expected Outcome: Improved services to clients
Available Resources: SW Homeless Coalition; Coalition Members; Point-in-time Survey
Funding: None
Timelines for Completion: Year One

Strategy 2.4
Assist individuals in establishing goals and developing their plans for self-sufficiency

Leadership: Community Action Partnership
Badlands Human Service Center

Expected Outcome: Reduction in amount of time clients would need services
Available Resources: Adult Learning Center; Badlands Human Service Center; Dakota Center for Independent Living; Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center; Job Service of North Dakota; Stark County Social Services; Vocational Rehabilitation;
Funding: None
Timelines for Completion: Year Two

Strategy 2.5
Partner with public education to teach skills at an earlier age

Leadership: Community Action Partnership

Expected Outcome: Fewer young people needing homeless services
Available Resources: School Boards; Teachers; Community Volunteers
Funding: Federal; State
Timeline for Completion: Year Three
Strategy 2.6
Increase participation in skill-building programs, by making the services known and available

Leadership: DVRCC

Expected Outcome: Reduction in amount of time clients would need services
Available Resources: Adult Learning Center; Badlands Human Service Center; City; Dakota Center for Independent Living; Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center; Job Service of North Dakota; Law Enforcement; Media, Stark County Social Services; Vocational Rehabilitation;
Funding: Federal; State; In-kind
Timelines for Completion: Year Four

Strategy 2.7
Identify existing skill-building programs and develop new programs where necessary

Leadership: SW Homeless Coalition

Expected Outcome: Improved client skills resulting in shorter time clients would require assistance.
Available Resources: Adult Learning Center; Badlands Human Service Center, Community Action Partnership, Dakota Center for Independent Living; Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center; Job Service of North Dakota, Vocational Rehabilitation;
Funding: Federal; State
Timelines for Completion: Year Six

Strategy 2.8
Develop a curriculum that teaches social, emotional, and financial skills to individuals entering/requesting homeless services. Start with the premise that individuals do possess basic skills.

Leadership: Southwest Homeless Coalition

Expected Outcome: Reduction in amount of time clients would need services.
Available Resources: Adult Learning Center; Badlands Human Service Center; Dakota Center for Independent Living; Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center; Job Service of North Dakota; Stark County Social Services; Vocational Rehabilitation
Funding: Federal; State
Timelines for Completion: Year Six
GOAL 3
To provide a support system to homeless individuals in order to obtain and/or maintain adequate housing

Strategy 3.1
Increase collaborative efforts between agencies

Leadership: Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center

Expected Outcome: Improved services to the homeless population

Available Resources: Stark County Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Southwest Homeless Coalition

Funding: Federal

Timelines for Completion: Year Two

Strategy 3.2
Develop adequate transitional case management services to meet the needs of the homeless.

Leadership: Badlands Human Service Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action 3.2.1</th>
<th>Determine types of case management needed by homeless.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 3.2.2</td>
<td>Determine which agency or individual(s) will provide that service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 3.2.3</td>
<td>Provide consumer-driven services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expected Outcome: Case management services will be improved and all people needing transitional living will be served

Available Resources: Badlands Human Service Center; Community Action Partnership, Dakota Women’s Correctional Rehabilitation Center; Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center; Southwest Multi Correctional Center, Stark County Social Services

Funding: Federal; State; City; United Way

Timelines for Completion: Year Six

Strategy 3.3
Evaluate and ensure adequate mental health services are available to the homeless

Leadership: Badlands Human Service Center

Expected Outcome: All homeless people requiring mental health services will have needs met.

Available Resources: Badlands Human Service Center; Community Action Partnership, Dakota Women’s Correctional Rehabilitation Center; Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center; Southwest Multi Correctional Center, Stark County Social Service

Funding: Federal; State; Private

Timelines for Completion: Year Six

Strategy 3.4
Ensure mental health resources are available to support individuals in achieving self-sufficiency and independence

Leadership: Badlands Human Service Center

Expected Outcome: All homeless people with mental illness will have adequate skills to live independently within their abilities

Available Resources: Badlands Human Service Center

Funding: Federal; State; City; United Way

Timelines for Completion: Year Seven
GOAL 4
To increase community education and community involvement in homelessness issues

**Strategy 4.1**
Develop strategies to provide information on homeless persons and successes in meeting those needs to the public and local decision-makers

**Leadership:** Southwest Homeless Coalition

**Expected Outcome:** Community leaders and general public will have an increased understanding and knowledge of homeless issue in SW North Dakota

**Available Resources:** State Homeless Coalition DVD; Media Markets; North Dakota Homeless Coalition; Stake Holders; Southwest Homeless Coalition

**Funding:** Community Funders

**Timeline:** Year Two and ongoing

**Strategy 4.2**
Develop and implement a community education and marketing plan to increase knowledge of the community homelessness problem

**Leadership:** Southwest Homeless Coalition

**Expected Outcome:** General public will have an increased knowledge of homeless issue in SW North Dakota

**Available Resources:** State Homeless Coalition DVD; Media Markets; North Dakota Homeless Coalition; Stake Holders; Southwest Homeless Coalition

**Funding:** Community Funders

**Timelines for Completion:** Year Two and Ongoing

**Strategy 4.3**
Undertake new approaches to educate youth to becoming self-sufficient and resilient.

**Leadership:** West Dakota Parent and Resource Center

**Expected Outcome:** Fewer youth will be in a homeless situation upon reaching age 18

**Available Resources:** 4-H Group; Boy/Girl Scouts; Church Youth Groups; Division of Juvenile Services, Parole and Probation; Public/Private School Systems; Sunrise Youth Bureau; West Dakota Parent and Family Resource Center;

**Funding:** Federal; State; Private

**Timeline:** Year Five
## GOAL 5
To provide appropriate housing to meet all homeless needs

### Strategy 5.1
Support statewide efforts to develop permanent supportive housing

**Leadership:** Statewide and local Homeless Coalition Representatives  
**Expected Outcome:** Improved and if necessary, increased number of permanent supportive housing units would be available.  
**Available Resources:** Southwest Homeless Coalition; Statewide Homeless Coalition  
**Funding:** Agency In-Kind  
**Timelines for Completion:** Year One and Ongoing

### Strategy 5.2
Identify current and available housing, including permanent supportive, low income, safe, and affordable housing

**Leadership:** Housing Committee formed from available resources  
**Expected Outcome:** Current and available housing assessment will be completed  
**Available Resources:** County/City Assessor’s Office; Landlord Association; Stark County Housing and Rural Development  
**Funding:** In-Kind  
**Timelines for Completion:** Year Three

### Strategy 5.3
Ensure the number of facilities matches the needs of the homeless

**Leadership:** Housing Committee formed from available resources  
**Expected Outcome:** Current and available housing assessment will be completed.  
**Available Resources:** County/City Assessor’s Office; Landlord Association; Stark County Housing and Rural Development  
**Funding:** In-Kind  
**Timelines for Completion:** Year Three

### Strategy 5.4
Create a Housing Impact Foundation to provide an incentive for landlords to provide safe, permanent and affordable housing

**Leadership:** Statewide Homeless Coalition  
**Expected Outcome:** Increased housing units available for people with poor credit, eviction history, and criminal history  
**Available Resources:** Homelessness Stakeholders; Statewide Homeless Coalition  
**Funding:** Donations; Landlords; Tax Dollars from City/County  
**Timelines for Completion:** Year Seven
**Priority Activities**

There are 25 different strategies identified in this plan as necessary steps to end chronic and long-term homelessness and reduce the incidence of all homelessness within Dickinson and the surrounding area. The following five activities should be considered as first steps.

1. Adopt the plan at the Dickinson City Commission. The City should take a vested ownership in the plan and continue to authorize staff to participate in and help guide the plan implementation process.

2. Educate community leaders about homelessness and its effects on the city, county, and region.

3. Expand the Southwest Homeless Coalition to include more of the community stakeholders in the homeless issue. Several stakeholders have expressed an interest in being involved in the coalition. These people should be brought on board and others should be solicited for participation.
4. Develop and adopt a formal structure within the Southwest Homeless Coalition to include the establishment of committees that will be charged with plan implementation. The City is encouraged to continue to support the plan implementation process by appointing liaisons to the committees. One committee for each strategy is recommended, with priority given to the strategies to be implemented in Years 1 and 2.

5. Develop and implement a broad-based public information and education campaign to increase knowledge of the homelessness problem within the region.
PARTNERSHIPS WITH STATE AND REGIONAL EFFORTS

Southwest North Dakota’s plan to reduce homelessness is only a part of a regional and statewide solution. Because Dickinson is the major population and service center within the region, it may be affected the most by the homelessness issue. However, if homelessness is to be reduced within the entire region, a coordinated effort must be made to conduct outreach to other communities in the eight counties.

In addition to the region, other communities’ homelessness affects Dickinson and southwest North Dakota. It is important that the efforts undertaken in each of the state’s major communities be shared among the regions, and collaboration must occur wherever possible on a statewide basis. This statewide coordination of efforts has already begun.

In 2005, Governor John Hoeven created the North Dakota Interagency Council on Homelessness. The City of Dickinson and the service providers in southwest North Dakota are committed to the Council’s continued collaboration in addressing the issue of ending chronic and long-term homelessness across the state.

The North Dakota Continuum of Care, coordinated by the North Dakota Coalition for the Homeless People, continues to engage organizations from across the state in an effort to develop a coordinated strategy for addressing homelessness. The City of Dickinson and the counties in southwest North Dakota will
continue to maintain collaboration and communication with the efforts of the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People.

The Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) has been expanded by the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People. Many of the public organizations serving homeless people in southwest North Dakota either have started or are ready to begin implementation of HMIS.
APPENDIX A:

PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY

STAKEHOLDERS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badlands Human Service Center</td>
<td>Kim Buck, Linda Everson, Mark Jesser, Deb Lozensky, Dana Rivinius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Apartments</td>
<td>Joe Gannon, Tina Gannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Dickinson</td>
<td>Cathy Polanchek, Greg Sund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Amy Beck, Tom Dietz, Marilyn Drager, Ethel Hill, Marilyn Schoenberg, C. True Bright White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Action Partnership</td>
<td>Erv Bren, Jeannie Messall, Michelle Orton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakota Center for Independent Living</td>
<td>Wendy Sundheim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakota Women’s Correction &amp; Rehabilitation Center</td>
<td>Colby Braun, Heather Luchi, Sandra Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickinson Area Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>LaRue Roth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickinson Police Department</td>
<td>Rod Banyai, A. McNamee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center</td>
<td>Gloria Fichter-Rau, Darianne Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Manna</td>
<td>Chris Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Service North Dakota</td>
<td>Mary Urlacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota Legislature</td>
<td>Senator Richard Wardner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota Protection and Advocacy</td>
<td>Edna Keller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romy-Skye Properties</td>
<td>Shel Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Patrick’s Parish</td>
<td>Patricia Jahner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>Cheryl Bjork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Multi-County Correction Center</td>
<td>Ken Rooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern District Health Unit</td>
<td>Doreen Ott, Maureen Roden, Barbara Truchan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stark County Housing</td>
<td>Lynette Dullinger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stark County Red Cross</td>
<td>Shirley Kallenbach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stark County Social Services</td>
<td>Marcy Decker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA Rural Development</td>
<td>Dee Dee Revelette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way</td>
<td>Jill Gregoire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

PLANNING MEETING REPORTS
A group of 25 agency representatives and concerned community citizens met at the Dickinson City Hall on July 11, 2007 to begin the process of developing a long-term plan to address homelessness in the community of Dickinson. The meeting was facilitated by Deb Nelson of DLN Consulting, Inc., who was assisted by DLN Staff member, Lorrie Nantt.

The group heard an overview of the services currently provided for homeless people in Dickinson. Individuals then went over the services each of their respective organizations provides for the homeless. This was followed by a report on the process Fargo went through in developing that community’s long-term homelessness plan. Williston’s partial assessment was also provided and discussed for purposes of addressing data and assessment needs.

The first exercise was to develop a mission statement for the team. After much discussion a mission statement for this group was determined;

- To develop a long term plan to reduce homelessness and its effect on communities in Region 8.

The next step was to determine if there were any other agencies in Region 8 that would be beneficial in the planning process. The group developed a list of agencies that could bring more insight and ideas to the plan;

- Law Enforcement (Sheriff Office and Police Department)
- Correction Centers (Dickinson and New England)
- Legislators/Local Commissioners
- Housing Authority/Landlords/Low-Income
- Public/Private Schools
- Churches/Ministerial Association
- City & County Commissioners
- Hospital
- Private Treatment/Counseling
- Vocational Rehab
- Rural Development
- Major Employers
- Media
- Construction Industry
Oil Industry

Individuals of the group will personally invite representatives of each of these entities to the next meeting.

The next exercise was a full-group brainstorming session to identify the community’s strengths. It is important, prior to determining any community problems, that the community members identify its strengths. Without the strengths, it will be impossible to identify, address and plan for solutions to the problems.

STRENGTHS
1. There is a strong history of **agency collaboration** and **resources** already in place.
2. Agencies have a strong **mutual respect** of each other and excellent **recognition of the issue**.
3. A level of **leadership** is already in place to address the problems associated with homelessness.
4. Those who work with homelessness are **knowledgeable** about the problem and staffs are **educated and supportive** in working with the homeless.
5. Employees of the agencies who work with the homeless have a strong **work ethic** and are able to **identify with clients**.
6. Generally, citizens demonstrate **compassion** for the less fortunate and have shown **generosity** in supporting the programs.
7. A strong and well supported **faith-based community** exists in Dickinson.
8. Dickinson has strong **public/private partnerships** already in place.
9. A large amount of **creativity** exists within the community.
10. Those who work consistently with the problem, have a keen sense of **humor**, which helps get through some of the difficult times.

Once community strengths were identified, the large group brainstormed to arrive at a list of community problems relating to the homelessness issue.

PROBLEMS/BARRIERS
1. A number of **housing problems** exist in Dickinson:
   - There is a lack of **accessible housing** due to **limited subsidies/vouchers**.
   - **Lack of subsidized housing to meet all needs** is an issue.
   - The houses or apartments that exist in Dickinson are expensive to rent/buy which creates **affordability** issues.
   - There seems to be a lack of **creative plans to help people become homeowners**.
- More **permanent supportive housing** is needed for longer term problems.

2. The **cost of living** has risen substantially in Dickinson; however the **wages** have not increased at the same rate.

3. Certain resources required for independent living are in short supply:
   - Limited **child care/sick child care** options.
   - Limited public **transportation** options.

4. There is a need for more shelters in Dickinson, including:
   - **Emergency** shelters are in short supply in Dickinson, and are consistently full.
   - There is also a limited supply of **transitional living** shelters.
   - There are no transitional living facilities for **youth** coming out of foster care or for people coming out of the **correctional** system.
   - There is no **drop-in center** in Dickinson where people can go to just spend the night.
   - A lack of a **permanent shelter** is also an issue.

5. For those shelters/options that do exist, there are agency responsibility/policies/rules that need to be followed. **Clients** have a responsibility to follow the rules/policies. If rules are not followed, an individual is evicted and there is no other place for him or her to go. **Staff safety** is a major concern here, because desperate people tend to take desperate measures, and staff could easily be harmed.

6. All clients must meet **qualification standards/policies** to receive services. If these are not met, some clients will fall through the cracks.

7. A lack of **long-term facilities** in Dickinson is an issue because many problems require longer periods of **treatment or counseling**, such as for **mental health** and/or **substance abuse**.

8. With the forthcoming closure of the **mental health unit** in Dickinson, there will be a definite, and possibly large, increase in the need for services in the area.

9. **Communication** between agencies is a concern due to **confidentiality policies**. Agencies need a ‘tracking’ system, but policies are in place to protect the client. This can result in a client receiving multiple/dual services. **Education within the service providers** needs to be increased. This includes teaching people how to achieve independence.

10. The **cost of services** is on the rise and there are many different **funding** issues for agencies. There is a lack of funding in many cases. Where there has been funding in the past, there has been a **reduction** or **re-direction** of those funds in the recent years (i.e. – war, etc.).
11. Although the public has been very generous to the organizations for various causes, there seems to be a lack of public awareness about homelessness. Because citizens do not see the stereotypical “homeless” person on the streets, they have difficulty understanding that homelessness does, indeed, exist in Dickinson. It is an invisible issue.

12. Finally, the agencies in Dickinson need to determine if the homelessness problem is home-grown versus transient. This could be a major deciding factor in the long term plan. There is not much a community can do to solve transient homelessness; however there are definite avenues that can be followed if the problem is home-grown.

The last exercise consisted of dividing the large group into four smaller groups to further narrow down, through a consensus-building exercise, the most significant problems related to homelessness in Region 8. There are problems the group will further fine-tune, and upon which the basis for a long-term problem solution plan will be built.

GROUP CONSENSUS OF MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS
The group agreed to address, at least initially, the following problems. They are prioritized in order of number of votes received.

1. Lack or shortage of funding.
2. Lack of affordable housing.
3. Public awareness.
4. Lack of facilities.
5. Client responsibilities.
6. Housing gaps.
7. Transportation.
8. Qualifications/standards/policies.
9. Staff Safety.
10. Wages versus cost of living.
11. Life Skills
12. Lack of subsidized housing to meet all needs.
13. Vouchers used to purchase homes.

NEXT STEPS
Before a formal planning process can be ensued, a more formalized community assessment must be conducted. While the committee has a good perception of the problems that surround the issue of homelessness in Region 8, an assessment will help formalize the process into measurable and achievable successes.
Information requested from each of the organizational stakeholders, include the following:
* Overview of services provided for the homeless.
* Number of people requesting services, (if available) – 2 years data, if possible.
* Number of people actually served – 2 years data, if possible.
* Amount and type of funding available for services.
* Amount of dollars spent on various categories to assist the homeless - shelter, rental assistance, utilities, medication, transportation, food, etc.
HOMELESSNESS IN DICKINSON
REPORT OF SESSION TWO
AUGUST 21, 2007

The community stakeholders involved in the long-term planning to address homelessness met at the Dickinson City Hall on August 21, 2007. The meeting was facilitated by Deb Nelson of DLN Consulting, Inc.

A partial assessment was developed from data that had been made available to the group. Additional data will be provided and a more complete assessment will be developed for the next meeting. Generally, however, it must be noted that numbers from the “Point in Time” study are so small that several years had to be put together. The small numbers do not allow for a good analysis of either chronic homeless or long-term homeless. Additional data has been requested from the stakeholders. (See end of report.)

The group reviewed the list of most significant problems identified at the first stakeholder meeting and reached a consensus as to the areas they feel need to be addressed with the long-term plan. These areas, in order of votes, follow:

1. Lack or Shortage of Funding
2. Client Responsibilities and Skill Building
3. Mental Health Facility Closure
4. Transitional Case Management Services and Background
5. Public Awareness and Community Apathy
6. Lack of Facilities
7. Wages vs. Cost of Living
8. Transportation
9. Lack of Daycare Options
10. Lack of Enough Subsidized Housing

To address these problems, the group broke into small groups and concentrated on strategies which they feel may have the greatest impact on homelessness in Dickinson. Four strategies follow, along with the steps that can be taken to address each:

1. **Funding**
   a) Community Foundation grants could be utilized.
b) An increase of public awareness on the local, state, and federal level is needed in order to secure more funding. New policies or policy changes need to be put into place. These entities will be worked with to create a pool of dollars to address homelessness.

c) More and different sources will be identified to procure funding. This includes such ideas as using personal contacts for individual donations, or contacting the Bank of ND for assistance with facility acquisition.

d) A network of existing agencies will be created for the purpose of working together to obtain larger grants that will benefit all agencies.

2. Client Responsibilities and Skill Building
   a) Basic needs should be taken care of first, then barriers to individual responsibility can be concentrated on.
   
b) Education would be offered through a variety of methods. Approaches could include tenant education, job skills lessons or classes, budget counseling, etc. Basic instructions will be the introductory lessons.
   
c) Case management services could be augmented to include assisting with knowledge of available services, teaching how to access services and fill out forms, educating in individual responsibilities and criteria for services.
   
d) The steps will be taught to all clients.

3. Mental Health
   a) Safety for those in crisis is essential.
   
b) Temporary housing for those awaiting housing is crucial.
   
c) More man-power is needed for transport.
   
d) A community work group could be developed to include all agencies or entities.
   
e) Alternative hearing Poly-Com.

4. Transitional Case Management
   a) Increased funding is needed.
   
b) A single point-of-entry into the system is imperative, possibly with a starting application. All entities would collaborate for each client’s needs.
   
c) More case managers are needed to handle the case load. Client loads could be split for case managers.
   
d) Transition services need to be expanded to women.
Two additional focus areas may also be included as areas for strategy development, depending on the group’s wishes. These areas are Public Awareness/Community Apathy and Lack of Facilities.

**NEXT STEPS**

Further information and data must be made available for the community assessment to be meaningful.

Prior to the next planning meeting, Community Action will again forward a survey form to gather information required for the assessment. The following will be gathered and forwarded to DLN Consulting, Inc. from Community Action as the information is gathered:

- A formal list of all entities in the city that provide some level of assistance for homeless individuals and an identification of each entity’s services
- Data of numbers served from each provider
- Total numbers of contacts, regardless of whether services were provided. This will help the committee get a sense of the numbers of people who are not meeting qualifications.
- Total dollars spent on homelessness services, broken down by type of service, and source of funding.
- Any additional information the committee deems important for inclusion in an assessment.

Upon receiving the information, DLN Consulting, Inc. will update the assessment, which will be reviewed by the full committee at the next planning meeting.

The next planning meeting is scheduled for October 11, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM, at Gate City Bank. The stakeholders will work on fine-tuning the strategies, determining responsibilities and identify funding sources where possible.
The community stakeholders involved in the long-term planning to address homelessness in Dickinson and Region VIII, met at the Dickinson City Hall on October 11, 2007. The meeting was facilitated by Deb Nelson of DLN Consulting, Inc. Lorrie Nantt assisted.

The assessment was updated and delivered to the group. Participants were asked to review the assessment and make comments. Additional/missing data will be emailed to DLN Consulting so that the assessment can be completed for inclusion in the plan.

Participants were reminded of the six problem areas agreed upon in the previous session; Funding, Basic Skills, Mental Health, Transitional Case Management, Community Awareness/Apathy, and Facilities. The participants were separated into three groups to work on goals in each of these areas. By consensus, the group developed five goals and several strategies. They follow:

**Goal: To retain a solid foundation of financial resources.**

**Strategies:**

- Identify existing funding sources.
- Educate the group each planning member represents.
- Educate local and government entities on the need for funding related to homelessness.
- Involve government and business community in expanding political and financial resources.
- Assist in developing a state housing trust-fund.
- Establish a community mission.
- Increase public and private awareness, at all levels, of the need for increased funding for homelessness. This includes involving key players; landlords, income based housing, etc.
- Develop a network of existing agencies to collaborate in obtaining larger grants that would benefit all agencies who serve the homeless.
Goal: To increase skill-building to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Strategies:
- Identify central point of entry.
- Identify existing skill-building programs and develop new programs where necessary.
- Partner with public education to teach skills at an earlier age.
- Utilize community volunteers for answering questions.
- Increase participation in skill-building programs, by making the services known and available.
- Identify barriers preventing the homeless from maintaining basic needs (food, clothing, shelter).
- Develop a curriculum that teaches social, emotional, and financial skills to individuals entering/requesting homeless services. Start with the premise that individuals do possess basic skills.
- Work with consumers in identifying barriers to success.
- Assist individuals in establishing goals and developing their plans for self-sufficiency.
- Require education on basic/social skills for those individuals utilizing transitional housing, shelters, and/or treatment centers.

Goal: To provide a support system to homeless individuals in order to obtain and/or maintain adequate housing.

Strategies:
- Develop adequate transitional case management services to meet the needs of the homeless.
  - Determine types of case management needed by homeless.
  - Determine which agency or individual(s) will provide that service.
  - Provide victim driven services.
- Evaluate and ensure adequate mental health services are available to the homeless.
- Ensure mental health resources are available to support individuals in achieving self sufficiency and independence.
- Increase collaborative efforts between agencies.

Goal: To increase community education and involvement in homelessness issues.
Strategies:

- ...

Goal: To provide appropriate housing to meet all homeless needs.

Strategies:

- Identify current housing, including permanent supportive, low income, safe, and affordable housing.
- Support statewide efforts to develop permanent supportive housing.
- Increase the number of facilities to match the needs of the homeless.

NEXT STEPS

- The next planning meeting is scheduled for October 30, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM, at City Hall.
- The stakeholders will work on fine-tuning the strategies, determining responsibilities and identify funding sources where possible.
- DLN Consulting, Inc. will organize identified strategies and provide additional strategies that may be considered by the group. DLN Consulting will also have a plan outline ready for the group to approve.
The community stakeholders involved in the long-term planning to address homelessness in Dickinson and Region VIII, met at the Dickinson City Hall on October 30, 2007. The meeting was facilitated by Deb Nelson of DLN Consulting, Inc. Lorrie Nantt and Diane Sickler assisted.

Participants were reminded that additional/missing data will need to gathered for inclusion in the plan. Several additions were discussed and individuals were charged with gathering specific data and/or information. They follow:

- Barb - Southwest District Health & Amen Food Pantry
- Cheryl – Salvation Army
- Dee Dee - Rural Development
- Jeannie – P & A and Legal Services of ND
- Linda – House of Manna
- (?) Law Enforcement Agencies
- (?) Calgary Fellowship Church
- Jill – List of agencies that United Way provides funding for.

Strategies were fine tuned and broken down by available resources, leadership responsibility, kinds of funding needed, and timeframe for completion. Participants broke into two groups to work on strategies for two goals each, with the last goal’s strategies being completed by the entire group.

NEXT STEPS

- Additional data/information will be provided to DLN Consulting, Inc. by the 9th of November.
- DLN Consulting, Inc. will complete a draft of the plan by November 16th.
- The date of the City Commission Meeting will be verified.
APPENDIX C

NORTH DAKOTA HOMELESSNESS

PLANNING REGIONS
1. Williston Basin Resource Coalition
2. Minot Area Coalition for Homeless Persons
3. Devils Lake Area Coalition for Homeless Persons
4. Community Agency Networking Association
5. Fargo/Moorhead Area Coalition for Homeless Persons
6. South Central Homeless Coalition
7. Missouri Valley Coalition for Homeless Persons
8. Southwest Homeless Coalition
APPENDIX D

NORTH DAKOTA RESULTS OF

POINT IN TIME SURVEY

2006
## ND HOMELESSNESS BY REGION

2006 Point in Time Survey

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5 Based on July 1, 2005 Census Bureau estimate of county populations
APPENDIX E

SOUTHWEST HOMELESS COALITION
MEMBERSHIP
The Southwest Homeless Coalition membership, current as of 12-31-07, includes the following:

- Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center – Darianne Johnson President
- Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center – Gloria Fichter-Rau Secretary
- Southwestern District Health Unit – Doreen Ott
- Dakota Council for Independent Living – Wendy Sundheim Vice President
- Salvation Army – Cheryl Bjork
- Badlands Human Service Center – Linda Everson
- United Way – Jill Gregoire
- Job Service North Dakota – Mary Urlacher
- City of Dickinson (2 Representatives)
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albanese, Tom, “Building Effective Plans to End Family Homelessness” Workshop Presentation, Community Shelter Board, Columbus, OH, October 14, 2004.


“Going Home: A 10 Year Plan to End Long Term Homelessness in Fargo,” City of Fargo, ND, August 2006.


