

Linking One-Stop Career Centers and Homeless Assistance & Housing Programs

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Chronic Homelessness Employment Technical Assistance Center



Disclaimer

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Introduction

The President's New Freedom Initiative (NFI) encouraged governors, mayors, and other civic leaders to make a commitment to end chronic homelessness by 2012 and develop the means to achieve it. Throughout the country and in more than 200 jurisdictions, communities dedicated resources to this effort and developed Ending Chronic Homelessness (ECH) plans. Nearly all of these ECH plans call for the creation of new, affordable housing units, especially supportive housing (permanent affordable housing with supportive services). These plans also recognize the importance of engaging stakeholders from diverse corners of the community to align the various systems that contribute to homelessness and those that can also help reduce it. Chief among these efforts is accessing services funding that can be linked with permanent housing and the resources needed to increase the income of homeless people and tenants of permanent housing. Increased income may come from earnings in the workforce and through public entitlements such as Supplemental Security Income and food stamps. Aimed at improving the lives of people with disabilities, the NFI is significant in its scope and builds upon prior efforts to address homelessness.

Federal policy directives to the homeless assistance system in the late 1990s required communities to help people who are homeless access mainstream employment programs while acknowledging significant challenges in doing so. Under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), people with barriers to employment may get more intensive services through One Stop Career centers, that may include access to vouchers for additional training (Individual training Accounts). While these are intended to help 'level the playing field' for those needing extra assistance, homeless services providers expressed concern that the number, dollar amount and accessibility of these vouchers are not sufficient to meet the need. In addition, although WIA allows for contracts with service providers to provide specialized training and employment services, these are subject to local WIB decisions, which may not prioritize employment services to the homeless. Finally, the placement, retention and wage advancement measures that career centers need to fulfill to meet their performance requirements can be another disincentive to serving people who are homeless (U.S. GAO 2002).

The NFI also calls for partnerships at all levels to increase income and self-sufficiency. No one system can do it all. Cross-system relationships are important to impact employment outcomes of those with significant barriers to employment, including those who are homeless. Evidence suggests that even without permanent homes, significant numbers of people see employment as part of their lives (Burt et al. 1999; Trutko et al. 1998).

However, despite the efforts of homeless assistance programs, people who are homeless are unlikely to succeed in getting and keeping jobs without assistance from the workforce and other systems. The extraordinarily high rate of unemployment for people with disabilities remains above 70 percent and for those with psychiatric disabilities, 85 percent. Although the complexities of homelessness intensify this challenge, with skillful intervention and support, chronically homeless individuals can work and remain stably housed. This is a problem of such magnitude that neither the homeless assistance nor the workforce development systems can hope to solve it working alone. In fact, the behavioral health care system also has a role in

addressing employment, since mental health and substance abuse services and supports are also essential to helping homeless job seekers get and keep jobs.

The McKinney-Vento Act[1] originally consisted of 15 programs providing a range of services to homeless people, including the Continuum of Care (CoC) Programs: the Supportive Housing Program, the Shelter Plus Care Program, and the Single Room Occupancy Program, as well as the Emergency Shelter Grant Program. These programs are all contained within Title IV of the Act. In addition to housing assistance, the Act also provides assistance for establishing and operating an employment assistance program, and providing assistance in obtaining employment counseling. Although the Act is due for reauthorization by Congress and is likely to undergo substantial changes,[2] the legislation since its inception in 1987 provides the best first step to address the needs of a population that is by and large unknown and underrepresented.

Today we recognize the importance of cross-system strategies to increase employment among people with barriers to employment, and the importance of new sources of workers for employers who face worker shortages in an aging population. This paper understands that the homeless assistance and workforce development systems are primary players in that arena, with other essential stakeholder involvement as well. Ending homelessness requires communities to change the way in which programs operate—from silos to cross-system collaboration, from targeted financing to braided funding strategies, from separate responsibilities to shared accountability, from dependence on entitlements to reliance on a balance of earned income and entitlements, and from program-centered planning to person-centered services.

This paper proposes that we can better link employment programs and services organized under the Workforce Investment Act and delivered through One-Stop Career Centers with those organized under the McKinney-Vento Act delivered through local Continuums of Care. It also provides some proposed models for implementing those partnerships. Both systems share the commitment to help their local communities solve the problems associated with homelessness and to increase the opportunities for self-sufficiency among all people living in their communities. And while they may share many elements of a similar community vision, they also differ in their languages, primary concerns, outcome expectations, and how they see their roles in their communities.

Research supports the claim that when given the support, services, and opportunity, homeless individuals are more likely to engage in work.

Research supports the claim that when given the support, services, and opportunity, homeless individuals are more likely to engage in work. Despite undeniable barriers to employment—stigma, discrimination, disempowerment, and lack of hope added to physical, learning, psychological and substance abuse disabilities—effective use of resources can help overcome these factors. We know from the literature and from experience that as individuals get the

[1] See http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/rulesandregs/laws/
[2] See http://www.endhomelessness.org/pol/McKinney_Alternatives.pdf for information about re-authorizing legislation (S. 1801 and H.R. 5041).

chance to access and use employment and training services, the more likely they are to achieve positive vocational outcomes (Rosenheck et al. 2006).

It is therefore reasonable, if not essential, to consider ways in which the mainstream workforce system and the housing and supportive services in the homeless system could work together to target employment and training services to this population. Collaboration across systems has its strengths and challenges. However, it is important for local stakeholders to deliberately consider the kind of relationship bridges they want to build to create a context for staff roles, responsibilities, financing, and expected participant outcomes.

Current Situation

Homeless individuals are an underserved population in the workforce system. Although people with disabilities may represent 5 percent to 7 percent of a One-Stop Career Center's customers, we do not know the extent to which homeless individuals are served. In most communities and states, those who are homeless may not even be counted. While data are not yet available on the numbers of homeless people served by the activities funded under WIA, under its predecessor, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), about 2 percent of the 151,580 individuals served in program year 1998 by the Act's adult programs were homeless. In 1994, homeless people represented 2.4 percent of JTPA participants. A June 2005 GAO report estimated that as many as 416,000 WIA participants received training in program year 2003. If the estimated percent of homeless participants in JTPA remained constant in the transition from that program to WIA, perhaps some 8,320 or more should be served under WIA-funded training services. However, there is no information about the number of homeless people served under WIA, and given WIA stringent performance levels set by states, the percent served under WIA is likely to be substantially less than under JTPA.

The term ``homeless'' or ``homeless individual or homeless person'' includes:
(1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
(2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:
(A) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
(B) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
(C) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

If the WIA One-Stop Centers don't count the number of homeless people it serves it is unlikely that we will ever achieve much progress toward achieving the President's goal of ending chronic homelessness by the year 2012. Is this a case of the tail wagging the dog? Housing homeless people isn't sufficient to end homelessness. People who are homeless are at risk of losing their housing without proper supports in place. Employment is a critical support. The WIA system should start counting and tracking their efforts to assist these folks.

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Federal mainstream programs may not provide adequate incentives for service providers to serve the homeless population. Homeless people often have multiple needs, more severe problems, and fewer resources than other segments of the low-income population. Therefore, they can be a comparatively more expensive and difficult population to serve. States, localities, and service providers that receive federal funds but face resource constraints may therefore be deterred from making the special efforts that are needed to reach out to and serve the homeless population.

Some advocates and service providers are also concerned that WIA's performance accountability system may serve as a disincentive to states, local areas, or individual providers to serve homeless people. The act requires states and local areas to set performance goals and track the performance of job training programs by measuring job placement rates and the earnings of program participants, among other things. While this performance-based approach is beneficial in many respects, it can inadvertently discourage programs and service providers from serving the most challenging populations, such as homeless people, whose outcomes are not likely to be as successful as those of other program participants (U.S. GAO 2000). But in reality, local workforce investment systems often serve tens of thousands of job seekers each year and even a dramatic increase in the number of homeless job seekers who actually register at One-Stops and enroll in WIA services is not likely to significantly impact overall WIA performance.

Continuums of Care

Since 1994, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has encouraged communities to address the problems of housing and homelessness in a coordinated, comprehensive, and strategic fashion. With input from practitioners throughout the country, HUD introduced the CoC concept to support communities in this effort. This concept is designed to help communities develop the capacity to envision, organize, and plan comprehensive and long-term solutions to addressing the problem of homelessness in their community. [3]

There are more than 450 Continuums of Care that apply to HUD for more than one billion dollars of assistance annually through a Notice of Funding Availability known as the SuperNofa.

A CoC Plan is a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness. Continuums, composed of a variety of community agencies and local government, plan services year-round to address homelessness. The planning process involves collecting data on how services are meeting the needs of homeless people, identifying the gaps in services, and prioritizing needs

[3] For more information on Continuums of Care see http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/coc/ and for contact information to find your local CoC see http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/programs/cont/coc/

and strategies to address long and short-term concerns. Local CoCs also have a critical function of determining how to finance homeless services and housing so that plans can achieve their goals. Although many of these resources come through the McKinney-Vento Act, the comprehensive needs of homeless individuals also require Continuums to seek funding or work in partnership with mainstream programs such as
Medicaid, Community Development Block Grants, Mental Health Block Grants, and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and their One-Stop Career Centers.

Several HUD programs are available to support communities in their plans to end homelessness. The following are examples.

Supportive Housing Program (SHP) grants may be used to fund one or more of the following activities: acquisition or rehabilitation of a building to be used as supportive housing or to provide supportive services, new construction of a supportive housing facility, leasing a building to be used for supportive housing or services, the provision of new or increased supportive services, costs associated with the day-to-day operation of a new supportive housing project or the expanded portion of an existing project, and administrative costs.

Shelter Plus Care (S+C) Program grants may be used to provide rental assistance payments that, when combined with social services, provide supportive housing for homeless people with disabilities and their families. Shelter Plus Care funds four types of rental assistance: (1) tenant-based rental assistance (contracted directly with the low-income tenant), (2) project-based rental assistance (contracted with a building owner), (3) sponsor-based rental assistance (contracted with a nonprofit organization), and (4) SRO-based rental assistance (single-room occupancy contracted with a public housing authority).

The Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Program provides tenant-based rental assistance for moderate rehabilitation of buildings with single-room dwellings, designed for the use of an individual, that often do not contain food preparation or sanitary facilities. A public housing authority makes Section 8 rental assistance payments to the landlords on behalf of homeless individuals who rent the rehabilitated units. Rental assistance for SRO units is provided for a period of 10 years and supports some rehabilitation as well as the other costs of owning and maintaining the property.

The Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) Program may be used to fund one or more of the following activities: the renovation/rehabilitation/conversion of buildings for use as emergency shelters; shelter operating expenses such as rent, repairs, security, fuel, equipment, insurance, utilities, food and furnishings; essential services such as those concerned with employment, health, and education of program participants; activities designed to prevent the incidence of homelessness; and administrative costs. ESG provides funds to states, territories, and qualified cities and counties.

Principles of Local System Design

The following principles for program and system design were drawn from the experience of One-Stop Career Centers providing employment and training services to homeless people—both individuals and families. It is unlikely that any single career center would demonstrate adherence to all of these principles exactly. Communities are more likely to adopt these principles in ways that fit its local circumstances and that are based on the features of its services, the characteristics of its customers, and the resources it can access. These principles are offered as a set of guidelines for improving mainstream employment outcomes for people who are homeless and ending homelessness by improving collaborations between the mainstream workforce and homeless assistance systems.

1. There is a high value placed on employment services for homeless individuals that is shared by agencies in the local system; people concur that employment services is a high priority and the organization of their services reflects that high priority.

2. The local workforce investment board (LWIB) and/or the One-Stop acts as a central coordinator and develops collaborative relationships with community based agencies including housing and supportive services providers to end homelessness. The mainstream workforce system acts as a leader for homeless employment services across the multiple systems in the community.

3. There is a local champion who bridges the workforce system with the housing and homeless assistance system who has the influence, authority, and responsibility to direct the system to meet the employment and training needs of homeless individuals, or who has a supervisor who has invested this in the champion.

4. Planning and monitoring the implementation of employment services occurs because the local CoC includes a voting representative from the mainstream workforce system and the mainstream workforce system includes either representation of the homeless assistance system on the LWIB or in its committee structure or on an advisory council.

5. Employment services are inextricably tied to housing for homeless individuals in the community. Practitioners and leaders see the need to connect employment and housing to end homelessness.

6. The mainstream workforce system (LWIB/One-Stop Career Center) has garnered a variety of funding sources and braided these together to finance the employment services for homeless individuals. These funding sources include accessing mainstream funds, especially those of the WIA.

7. The mainstream workforce system chooses to consolidate resources and services in a particular One-Stop Career Center that is specifically designed to attract homeless individuals or disperses the necessary resources, talent, and services across all of its One-Stop Career Centers so that homeless individuals can receive the services they need at any One-Stop in the jurisdiction.

8. The mainstream workforce system reaches out and collaborates with the faith-based community to meet the needs of homeless job seekers. Faith-based community members may provide WIA core services or such services as negotiated between the One-Stop and the faith-based agency.

9. Co-case management practices routinely occur and involve regular communication and coordination within integrated teams composed of workforce, housing/homeless assistance, and mental health/substance abuse treatment systems personnel. These integrated teams follow agreed upon protocols and their work is monitored by systems leaders regularly.

10. The local mental health, substance abuse treatment, and criminal justice systems are actively engaged in the collaboration with the mainstream workforce system and the homeless assistance/housing system. This includes the mental health and substance abuse treatment services, as well as their housing programs and employment services. This can even include a "satellite One-Stop" located within the corrections facility to provide opportunities for inmates to obtain information about job training and jobs available to them in the community after release.

Conceptual Models for Partnerships

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) seeks to increase employment opportunities for persons with barriers to employment. According to the DOL's strategic plan, it "will promote policies and provide information designed to improve access to adult programs for these persons with barriers to employment…conduct research to determine where barriers to employment exist for underemployed groups and test models of effective practices to address these barriers across Federal job training and employment programs…promote the replication of proven best practices in all programs. This strategy will include developing specific initiatives to promote training and skill-building that will enable workers to adapt to employers' changing skill requirements, and to encourage second career options that tap the experience of retirement-eligible workers while accommodating their life-style preferences." (U.S. DOL 2003)

Given this level of interest in addressing the needs of people facing multiple barriers to employment and in recognition that the solution to overcoming these barriers rests on cross-system partnerships, we propose exploring the nature of cross-system partnerships by considering three conceptual models for developing a relationship between One-Stop Career Centers and homeless assistance programs in a community's CoC. The three conceptual models are "cooperative," "coordinated," and "collaborative." These are described below and include expectations, expected outcomes, an example of, and a checklist for each model.

The Cooperative Model

In this model, there is a general awareness of One-Stop career services by homeless services providers and vice-versa. The services each provides may not be completely understood, and

access and use of One-Stops by people who are homeless may occur idiosyncratically on a walk-in basis or on a counselor's suggestion as part of a vocational plan. Employment services, if any are provided by the homeless services provider separately from the One-Stop with minimal connection. Homeless services providers may connect with workforce representatives at Ending Chronic Homelessness planning meetings or at job fairs, but no agreements are in place that describe a referral path. Disability Program Navigators (DPNs)[4] may provide information about the One-Stop or help One-Stop staff work with walk-ins or referrals; however, there is no system for outreach and engagement in One-Stop services on a routine basis.

Expectation: One-Stops are among the options that consumers have available, but employment services (assessment, job development, placement) are provided by the homeless services providers as stand-alone services

Outcomes expected: People who are homeless receive their employment services through the homeless services provider, but providing information about mainstream resources is part of the vocational plan and participants are encouraged to consider using those resources.

What type of One-Stop are you?

Cooperative:

- √ *Only general awareness of One-Stop career services by homeless assistance providers and vice-versa*
- √ *Occasional access and use of One-Stops by homeless people*
- √ *Homeless service providers operate employment services separate from the One-Stops*
- √ *Agreements between One-Stops and Continuum of Care agencies are absent*

Example: The Coastal Orange County One-Stop serves homeless customers through partnership with Families Forward, a nonprofit service provider that focuses on prevention and intervention. In addition to serving a limited number of families with transitional housing and housing support, Families Forward provides homeless and at-risk families with access to a wide range of services, including a food pantry, WIC, holiday program, case management, and a life skills education series. A career coaching program is also available for eligible clients who attend regularly to receive job search support and coaching throughout the search process. Clients who are not eligible or who need only computer access or short-term assistance, such as with resume development, are referred to the One-Stop.

The Coordinated Model

In this model, homeless services employment staff regularly refer and/or meet consumers at the One-Stop to help them access and use mainstream services. Like Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), employment specialists may be located at the One-Stop on a scheduled basis but funding and supervision is provided by the homeless services agency. Employment specialists are

[4] For information about Disability Program Navigators see http://www.doleta.gov/disability/new_dpn_grants.cfm

expected to be a link between case managers and the One-Stop and may participate as a member of the integrated treatment team. They regularly meet with DPNs and could participate in One-Stop training or planning efforts on ways to address the needs of people who are homeless. The WIB is represented on the local ECH planning team and on the CoC committee with responsibility for strengthening the interface between the homeless services and mainstream employment sectors. There could be agreement on using the same assessment and referral instruments. Employment specialists at the One-Stop are primarily responsible for addressing the job development and placement needs of people who are homeless referred by homeless services provider-based employment programs and those individuals are registered in WIA services on entry. One-Stop staff, through the efforts of employment specialists and DPNs, receive orientation and training on the impact of homelessness on employment. No formal cooperative agreements exist between the providers and the workforce system. They may participate in identifying and obtaining funding to support the joint effort.

Expectation: Homeless services employment programs and the One-Stop are closely linked and the expectation is that all customers seeking employment are oriented to the One-Stop and have maximum opportunity to use its services, facilitated by the on-site employment specialist.

Outcomes expected: The One-Stop provides an essential element of job search, placement, and access to training, and homeless customers are supported to access WIA Core, Intensive, and Training services. Follow-along support is provided by the referral treatment team and employment specialist working as an integrated team. The presence of the employment specialist at the One-Stop, together with the DPN, is expected to strengthen WIA employment staff's ability to work with people who are homeless.

What type of One-Stop are you?

Coordinated:

- √ *Homeless assistance staff routinely refer and/or meet homeless customers at One-Stops to help them access services*
- √ *Disability Program Navigators (DPN) are familiar with helping homeless cutomers*
- √ *Homeless assistance staff meet regularly with DPNs as well as with Vocational Rehabilitation staff and other One-Stop staff*
- √ *One-Stop and Homeless assistance staff use similar assessment and referral forms*
- √ *Although formal agreements are not in place, there is shared search for funding and use of resources to support the joint goal of serving homeless customers*

Example: CTWorks Southwest One-Stop Career Center, located in Bridgeport, CT, learned from its privately funded pilot project, Passports to Success, which through interagency partnerships offered case management, vocational training, and employment support to formerly homeless tenants of supportive housing. Although the program ended, the partnerships that led to its development, the comprehensiveness and cohesion around a vision for ending chronic homelessness through employment, and an impressive track record of leveraging public and private community resources is perhaps its most important legacy. Where other communities are struggling to bring together partners as diverse as the LWIB, VR, shelters,

housing providers, and faith- and community based agencies to endorse and support a common vision around ending homelessness, Bridgeport is succeeding and demonstrating success.

CTWorks is located in the downtown area in proximity to homeless shelters and areas where people who are homeless frequently reside. The One-Stop is operated by Career Resources, Inc., a nonprofit job development agency serving Fairfield County. It maintains partnerships with LWIB, Bridgeport CoC, the Connecticut Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and the Veterans Employment Service.

The partners have a strong record of leveraging funding for jobs programs including almost 50 corporate donors, the United Way, a U.S. Department of Education grant (Partners with Industry project), a DOL Work Incentive Grant and Disability Program Navigator funding, and others. CTWorks and its partners augment WIA-funded Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) with ITAs funded through community giving. The WIB operates a "Career Coach" mobile One-Stop with the technology on board to connect people who are homeless to core services.

Bridgeport puts homelessness and employment high on the priority list for the mainstream workforce system so job developers, employment specialists, and other One-Stop staff are able to serve and/or refer people who are homeless to the appropriate community treatment, housing and support services. It has resulted in a more flexible approach to employment services by VR, including an MH specialist counselor on staff and funding for situational assessments ("working interviews"), early eligibility for VR services when people may not have months of being "clean and sober" but are involved in treatment programs and want to get help with work. It also includes weaving a net of associated services like the DOL's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program[5] (HVRP), benefits planning, specialized job fairs, and access to employment counselors and One-Stop services to ensure access to employment for these individuals.

The Collaborative Model

This is the highest level of integration between the local CoC system and the workforce investment system. Memorandums of understanding clearly define the relationship and how each sector will address chronic homelessness. The collaborative project regularly secures public and private funding for outreach, access, and use of mainstream services. Mobile core services outreach units to streets and shelters could be among the special services provided. One-Stop staff who are funded and supervised by the One-Stop accept referrals and work with referral staff to create jobs and support plans for homeless job seekers who are WIA-enrolled. Planning regularly occurs within both ECH and CoC groups. WIA performance criteria may be waived to reflect increased numbers of homeless people served. Special funding for ITAs for homeless job seekers is sought. City departments of economic development and WIB board members regularly include ways to use economic incentives to close the gap between the numbers of unemployed homeless and those seeking jobs. Special funding could be sought for new social purpose business ventures or micro-enterprise options using such funding as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and other mainstream funding resources. The DPN ensures that the systems are working together, but the collaborative is governed by a

[5] For more information about HVPR see http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/hvrp/main.htm.

steering committee that is responsible for overseeing strategic planning, outcomes, data collection, and sustainability of the services for homeless job seekers.

Expectation: This is a "merged service" in which the responsibility for engaging and supporting homeless job seekers is a high priority for the workforce and homeless provider systems. One-Stop staff are trained and responsible for working with homeless and other job seekers with support and follow-along provided by homeless services employment specialists/case managers. Around job development, regular communication occurs between One-Stop business services staff and homeless assistance staff.

What type of One-Stop are you?

Collaborative

- √ *The One-Stop has a written agreement with the CoC that describes the nature of the partnership to serve homeless job seekers*
- √ *Homeless job seekers are enrolled in WIA-funded services or other appropriate training and intensive services based on their needs*
- √ *One-Stop staff participate in the planning process of the local CoC and vice-versa*
- √ *One-Stops and CoC agencies partner in joint grant applications and special projects to secure the needed resources to help homeless job seekers in their community*
- √ *Staff operate across systems as an integrated services team*

Outcomes expected: Maximum independent/facilitated use of mainstream employment services by homeless job seekers. A joint commitment is maintained from workforce and homeless providers to address governance, sustainability, and service delivery performance goals.

Example: Partnership services integration is a hallmark of the Boston Private Industry Council, Inc. (BPIC) homeless projects and is the key to their success. There are three One-Stop Career Centers chartered by Boston's Workforce Investment Board: Boston Career Link, JobNet, and The Work Place. Building on a history of strong partnerships including collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, the BPIC has developed three innovative programs to serve people who are homeless. These include:

- **Employment Connections:** A partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Career Services, the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, and JobNet Career Center. Serving persons w/ psychiatric disabilities who are homeless or recently housed.

- **Project TEAM:** A partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, the Boston Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, Community Work Services, Project Impact, and The Work Place Career Center serves homeless individuals who are receiving food stamps; the partnership uses Food Stamp Employment and Training funds.

- **HomeWork:** A demonstration project supported by the DOL and HUD. A partnership led by BPIC with 15 partners from state agencies, city departments, and community-based

organizations to house and employ chronically homeless individuals who have disabling conditions.

The JobNet One-Stop Career Center hosts the HomeWork and Employment Connection projects where it developed a set of "enhanced services" such as one-on-one case management, benefits counseling, individualized job referrals, post placement support, and navigator services for homeless individuals through its own WIA funding or other funds secured through grants. The HomeWork project went a step further to help end chronic homelessness by combining employment services with HUD's S+C housing subsidies that seek stable housing and jobs for participants. HomeWork enrolled 41 people, housed 20, placed 27 in employment, placed 9 in supported employment, and 18 in competitive jobs. All are enrolled in WIA. The average wage of those employed is $9.31 and the range is $6.75/hour through $20.00/hour.

Common Features Across the Models

Service delivery is based on an individualized, client-centered planning approach that does not rely on predetermined levels of readiness for employment. Within each model, staff responds to where the job seeker is at and conducts an assessment or explores the individual's job interests, preferences, and capabilities from which a specific occupational goal is derived. Job development is driven by a job seeker's vocational profile and the needs of local employers for qualified workers. Job placement occurs for each individual by matching job seekers and employers, and when a job seeker's needs are more complex to benefit from a matching process, he or she may receive customized employment services in which jobs may be tailored or carved to meet the needs of both customers.

Regardless of approach, housing and treatment services are recognized as essential resources that are integral components of the job seeker's employment plan. It is incumbent upon the One-Stop and CoC agencies to link with treatment and housing assistance.

Assistance to the job seeker is based on the practice of rapid job entry; delays such as those created by extended evaluation periods or long-term classroom training are avoided. Need for training is based on an individual's occupational goal, level of current work experience, and job market needs.

Homeless job seekers are welcomed in the places where they seek services and viewed as having the capacity to engage in competitive employment given the opportunity and needed level of support and services.

Possible Barriers to Effective Linking

Bringing the homeless assistance and workforce systems together creates challenges for each system because of their histories, statutory mandates, values and beliefs, rules and regulations,

funding restrictions, and other factors. Many of these are predictable and can be addressed as part of developing a working relationship to address homelessness as a community problem or from other venues of common ground to these systems. The following are issues that are likely to come up in the course of linking these systems:

- Implementation costs of employment and training services targeting or inclusive of homeless people ("Why should we do this at all if we aren't going to be able to afford implementation?")
- Lack of will or flexibility on the part of the stakeholders
- Lack of clear, convincing evidence to support a particular retention/advancement strategy
- Members of one system may not see a benefit to themselves or to their mission in developing a relationship with the other system. Members do not see a benefit to participating: What's in it for them?
- Insufficient information about each others systems, how they might work together or how to implement a particular program or employment strategy
- Homeless individuals with significant barriers to employment may be unable to meet the labor market or training demands of the WIA system and/or the amount of support they would need to meet those requirements exceeds the resources available in the community
- Substantial differences among stakeholder orientation to work, job advancement, or job retention
- Lack of a champion or leader with a vision to engage members of both systems in a dialogue to develop relationships and collaboration
- Too many or too few stakeholders or wrong stakeholders selected
- Lack of tenant involvement
- Basic problems of stigma around mental illness, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, or homelessness
- Lack of capacity among supportive housing providers to support homeless job seekers or working homeless individuals

What are ways to overcome barriers?

- ✓ *Cross training of stakeholders.*
- ✓ *Bring in experts to inform stakeholders about best practices and solutions.*
- ✓ *Homeless clients' testimonials about the importance of work, their desire to grow vocationally and success stories.*
- ✓ *Bring in champions who see this as a responsibility of local government.*
- ✓ *Develop informal connections among stakeholders.*
- ✓ *Get workforce system stakeholders to tour supportive housing employment services.*
- ✓ *Recruit employers that are good socially conscious citizens.*
- ✓ *Get attention and recognition from people the stakeholders' value, i.e.: getting a senior state or federal agency person to talk to the group.*
- ✓ *Connect local projects to the national effort, sharing information across sites and providing recognition to members.*

Building Consensus to Implement Employment Services

Reaching consensus around mission, vision, values, and practices across diverse stakeholders in communities seeking to address homelessness is essential before implementation can effectively occur. For example, Boston's HomeWork project mentioned above not only developed a proposal with over 15 potential partners from the workforce, disability, mental health, housing, and homelessness sectors, it spent most the first year of the project defining roles, responsibilities, funding resources, and protocols for collaboration before it was ready to fully implement its services. The project found that early buy-in as well as commitment to solidify the partnerships pays off. By the end of the third project year, HomeWork received a commitment for 50 percent more housing slots with attached employment services than it was funded to receive initially, and is widening its group of active stakeholders beyond those receiving direct funding through the project.

Moving from general consensus among system stakeholders to implementing an agreed upon structure or strategy is an important event that best occurs when stakeholders agree on roles and responsibilities and make the commitment to bring the mission to market. This is the feature that is most exemplified by the "collaborative" model. This is the time when stakeholders will publicly make the commitment to support the strategy with clear commitments to provide financial and human resources. Orchestrating an effective partnership may sometimes require the use of an external facilitator—a neutral intermediary to facilitate communication among partners, document agreed upon policies and procedures, and reflect challenges to individual partners while maintaining an alliance with all collaborative participants. Implementation should be based upon a solid and specific plan with assigned responsibilities to move the strategy forward and should, like any business plan, be reviewed routinely and evaluated on how well it continues to support the mission.

Summary

There is an increasing need for LWIBs and local CoCs to pursue joint strategies to increase the earned income of homeless job seekers in their communities. In many of the county's urban centers, the length of time a person is homeless is significant, on average 7 months, and in some cities it is increasing. Low-paying jobs are commonly a main cause of homelessness, although a number of diverse and complex factors contribute to the problems of homelessness in cities. Many of these factors are interrelated. Listed in order of frequency, the following causes were identified by the cities in response to an open-ended question: lack of affordable housing, low paying jobs, mental illness and the lack of needed services, substance abuse and the lack of needed services, domestic violence, unemployment, poverty, and prisoner re-entry (U.S. Conference of Mayors 2005).

Shelters commonly require overnight guests to leave shelters in which they are staying during the day, creating daytime homelessness. Daytime homeless individuals and families are

frequently expected to search for employment, and better jobs, if they are already employed in low-wage jobs. For many, work is a relevant goal and earned income is necessary to secure permanent housing. It is a necessary activity, more purposeful and constructive than idleness.

To date we do not know the rate of unemployment among homeless people nor do we know the extent to which the mainstream workforce system does or could provide WIA funded services to homeless job seekers. We do know that no one system can meet the vocational needs of poor and unemployed people, including those who are homeless. Neither the Workforce Investment nor McKinney-Vento Acts provide sufficient authority or resources to independently meet these needs. We suggest that the solution requires systems to work collaboratively, especially the workforce investment and homeless assistance systems. Each system needs to increase its understanding of each other, find common ground and make contributions to the goal of ending homelessness. Engaging in joint planning is a good start and could be accomplished through a partnership between the local WIBs and CoCs. As the responsible entity for local workforce systems, the WIA Board and its One-Stops are the central and leading agency on workforce development of all members of that community.

Top 10 To-Dos

1. *Make sure there is visible leadership within the workforce and homeless services systems supporting employment for people who are homeless.*
2. *Create a unified vision for employment across services systems.*
3. *Develop, sustain, expand local partnerships for employment.*
4. *Establish clear operating procedures for the employment collaborative and make "jobs everybody's business."*
5. *Share best practices within and across communities seeking to end homelessness through employment.*
6. *Develop practice standards for outreach, engagement, assessment, credentialing, job development, placement, support, and advancement.*
7. *Get help from consumer leaders and involve them in the process.*
8. *Design and implement cross-training initiatives.*
9. *Identify and establish flexible individual outcome measures.*
10. *Resolve program accountability and performance criteria across systems.*

Self-Assessment Matrix

Use the following matrix to determine what model you have based upon the circumstances of your partnership between One-Stop Career Centers and CoCs.

Criteria	Cooperative	Coordinated	Collaborative
Is there joint planning between the workforce and homeless services systems?	*Only a general awareness of each systems' services and little or no joint planning.*	*Providers regularly make use of the One-Stop as a training and job placement resource for their clientele on an individual basis but no formal agreements.*	*Memorandums of understanding or other agreements among partners to create a formal collaborative structure.*
Is there a mutually held vision for employing people who are homeless across systems?	*Each system operates independently to achieve its own objectives.*	*Systems regularly meet or connections are made through DPNs for coordinated planning.*	*Collaborative includes a joint mission/vision/ practice plan that recognizes vested interests but underpins the work of the collaborative structure.*
Is there a process for involving and sustaining the involvement of other stakeholders?	*Stakeholder involvement likely to be within each system's known partners. Although cross-systems partnerships may occur, they are driven by circumstance and opportunity rather than routine practice.*	*Mutual understanding of the need to involve diverse stake-holders and the systems regularly review other organizations (faith based, employer associations, etc.) that could be involved.*	*Formal resource mapping process includes identifying, involving and supporting new project stakeholders as part of the strategic plan of the collaborative.*

Criteria	Cooperative	Coordinated	Collaborative
Whose job is it to help the homeless job seeker assess/discover job needs and preferences and plan and prepare for finding a job?	*Primarily the service provider, although they may point the way or help a job seeker get services at a One-Stop. The One-Stop may provide some core services for walk-in customers but does not have an outreach plan in place.*	*Each system is seen as a resource. One-Stop walk-ins are connected to homeless services and VR staff while One-Stop staff also tries to serve them. Homeless services staff regularly refer and support their clientele at the One-Stop.*	*Outreach, assessment, skills development are jointly provided as part of a seamless and individualized job seeker plan. One-Stop and provider staff meet regularly to discuss individual customer progress.*
How are supportive and training/ employment services integrated, including links to treatment services, benefits planning, etc?	*Primarily the service provider although the One-Stop may call or refer a person to supportive services if they identify a need and if they maintain a data base of such services.*	*Each system tries to make their assessment and referral forms compatible and staff of each system regularly meets or participates in cross-training*	*One-Stop and provider staff and VR counselors work as a quasi-"integrated services team." Each partner has access to a resource directory of services that the collaborative could create and distribute.*
Who develops and manages customer and employer outreach and relationships?	*Each manages its own set of customer outreach and employer contacts for its separate clientele.*	*Systems include outreach to customers and to employers as part of joint planning, including targeted job fairs, anti-stigma efforts, DPNs to provide awareness.*	*Collaborative may fund and support a mobile One-Stop and/or satellite One-Stop at shelters. Has strong connections and support of business leadership network and uses employer/economic data to identify growth sectors for employment and to target training and employment efforts for the clientele.*

Criteria	Cooperative	Coordinated	Collaborative
How is funding to support training and employment identified and obtained and managed? How well are other funding resources (CoC, WIA, etc.) blended and/or braided?	*Each manages its own funding network although they may partner to acquire resources based upon circumstances and opportunity. There is no mutual funding nor sustainability plan in place across systems.*	*WIB is represented on local CoC and ECH team; provider repre-sentation on LWIB. No formal ongoing sustainability plans but regular cooperation on funding issues.*	*WIB is represented on local CoC and ECH team; provider representation on LWIB. Has formal ongoing resource development and sustainability plans.*
How are post-employment, wrap-around supports and job retention services provided and whose job is it?	*The One-Stop may refer a customer who is homeless to VR for such supports and the provider system may provide those as well but cooperation and joint case planning is not the norm.*	*One-Stop and referral source regularly meet to share information, discuss individuals and braid funding for post-employment support using combination of WIA, MH, VR, other sources.*	*Job retention is part of the joint planning and funding strategy supporting individuals through the integrated services team. Seamless cross-sector services that are customized and individualized.*
Who has responsibility for program outcomes, and performance measures	*Each manages its own set of expectations and outcomes.*	*Mutual recognition of the outcome requirements of each system, and there may be joint reporting using compatible criteria.*	*Mutual and clear expectations about worker credentialing, may have obtained WIA performance waivers, provider and One-Stop intake, assessment and outcome measurement systems are compatible and complementary.*

Criteria	Cooperative	Coordinated	Collaborative
Who is the visible leader for the effort?	*Each has its own leadership structure although leaders across systems may work together on committees.*	*Team leadership effort across systems but without a formal structure for joint leadership of the effort.*	*The collaborative elects its own leadership and acts as a cross-systems formal authority to improve programs and systems integration with ongoing and formalized planning.*

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