Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System
A Qualitative Analysis of the Current Family Shelter System and Nationwide Practices to Decrease Use of Emergency Shelters in Hennepin County

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# Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System

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Executive Summary
This report presents an analysis of the current Hennepin County family shelter system and nationwide practices that target family homelessness. The purpose is to identify areas of opportunity and make recommendations, based on evidence and available models, to lower the number of families using the shelters.

Researchers conducted key informant interviews with 25 professional staff across the Hennepin County shelter system and within 5 communities across the nation and the National Alliance to End Homelessness to both to inform what components of the shelter system required improvement and what practices should be used.

The areas of possible improvement illuminated by these interviews were:
1. Families are asked to complete similar, sometimes redundant intake interviews to meet the needs of the Hennepin County Shelter Team, the Rapid Exit program, and shelter advocates, among others.
2. The families with the highest barriers to maintaining housing also have the highest number of case managers to coordinate in order to maintain services and benefits.
3. The role of matching families with eligible supportive housing openings is complex and is not currently assigned to a specific position or agency and as a result it frequently does not happen.
4. There are discrepancies between anticipated wait times for services and actual wait times, which may result in programs not working as well as designed.
5. There are significant differences in services for families that are sheltered at Hennepin County shelters versus overflow facilities.

The report outlines specific recommendations in the following areas:

Immediate Recommendations:
- Strengthen the Housing Culture.
- Improve access to supportive housing.
- Modify the Rapid Exit program.
- Replicate the Top 51 project (single adults) to house the Top 100 families.
- Improve the communication families receive.
- Provide an additional Emergency Assistance payment.
- Increase the capacity of families to engage in program leadership.

Long-term Recommendations:
- Increase affordable housing in Hennepin County.
- Increase engagement with business and faith communities.
- Track families after they leave shelter.
- Use TANF funding for families at risk of becoming homeless to prevent homelessness.
- Partner with others to target and provide preventative services and services for families experiencing homelessness.
- Increase supportive housing opportunities for families.
Introduction

Family Shelter System in Hennepin County

Heading Home Hennepin
In December 2006, a group of business and civic leaders, human service support agencies, advocates, and individuals who had experienced homelessness drafted a plan to end homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County. This is Heading Home Hennepin, a 10-year plan to end homelessness, and part of Heading Home Minnesota, a statewide initiative to end homelessness.¹

The goals of the plan focus on six areas: prevention, outreach, housing opportunities, service delivery improvements, capacity building for self-support, and system improvements.² Progress has been made towards these goals and is highlighted in the Heading Home Hennepin Five Year Report published May 2012. In the first five years, prevention services or rapid exit services were provided to 5,000 households and 2,432 housing units were created. An employment pilot and new service delivery initiatives were other accomplishments included in the report.³

Staff from Heading Home Hennepin requested this analysis of the family shelter system, in order to deal with the significant seasonal overcrowding.

Shelter System
In Hennepin County a family who needs emergency shelter applies at Century Plaza, the county services office, in downtown Minneapolis. After hours, weekends, or holidays, families call 211 to be referred to the after hours shelter team member.⁴ Hennepin County contracts with People Serving People (PSP) and with St. Anne’s Place to shelter families experiencing homelessness. PSP, a family shelter in downtown Minneapolis, has 99 rooms and provides meals and services such as onsite childcare, after school tutoring, a computer lab, support groups and social activities.⁵

In 2011, the number of families housed at People Serving People rose 18% from the prior year with an average of 347 persons sheltered/day.⁶ St. Anne’s Place, a smaller shelter in North Minneapolis, serves 16 families at a time.⁷ When the contracted shelters are full, families are placed at the Drake Hotel, which has about 125 rooms that can be used for overflow shelter. The Drake also is located in downtown Minneapolis but does not provide services for families.⁸

Shelter Policies
The Hennepin County policy for families experiencing homelessness requires them to pay for their stay, if they have income. When/if they do not have income, the county will provide a shelter voucher to the contracted shelter. The family must comply with all public assistance program requirements and they must look for housing to remain eligible for shelter.⁹
Other Shelters
Separate from the Hennepin County shelter system is a nonprofit organization in Minneapolis, Sharing and Caring Hands, which provides food, clothing, and shelter for people in need. Sharing and Caring Hands also provides assistance with rent, utilities, health care, and other basic needs. Their transitional shelter housing, Mary’s Place, has 92 family apartments and can house 500 people, adults and children. Families stay an average of 2-1/2 months in the transitional apartments at Mary’s Place until they find permanent homes. In 2012, Mary’s Place provided shelter for 362 families with an average stay of 70 days, ranging from 1 week to 8 months. When Mary’s Place is full, families may be sheltered in area hotels.

Another emergency shelter option available to families experiencing homelessness is the Families Moving Forward program with the faith Housing Collaborative. Through this nonprofit agency, the Families Moving Forward program provides shelter to up to 8 families, or about 30 parents and children, at a time. Volunteers provide an evening meal and overnight shelter to the family at various churches. The family returns to the program center in North Minneapolis each morning where children are picked up for school and parents work with housing and family advocates. In 2012, Families Moving Forward sheltered 52 families, or 68 adults and 119 children. The average length of stay was 54 days. Hennepin County provides funding for one family slot through this program.

Rapid Exit
Rapid Re-Housing is one component of the Homeless Prevention and Rapid re-housing program (HPRP) within the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HPRP provides financial assistance to communities to both prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless and to move individuals and families who are homeless out of shelter and quickly re-house them. Rapid re-housing services include rental assistance, housing relocation and stabilization services, mediation, financial education and credit counseling, security deposits, utility payments, moving costs and case management. In 2009, the Obama administration allocated $1.5 billion to HPRP through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) with the goal of creating housing stability and smoothing the burden of families during the economic recession and recovery.

On average, it costs Hennepin County $5,000 when a family becomes homeless and seeks emergency shelter.

Rapid Rehousing in Minnesota
Rapid Rehousing of families who are homeless from shelter into housing is completed through the Rapid Exit (RE) program in Hennepin County, and is operated primarily by St. Stephen’s Human Services with a few families served by Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin (CAPSH) and other community based organizations. Families that enter emergency shelter are eligible for rapid re-housing services, designed to quickly move families out of shelter and into permanent and stable housing. Rapid Exit has become nationally recognized as a model for reducing shelter stays and preventing families from returning to shelter. On average, it costs Hennepin County $5,000 when a family becomes homeless and seeks emergency shelter. In 2010, RE services cost, on
average, $1,100 per family to re-house families. In 2011, Hennepin County spent $2.5 million dollars on rapid re-housing services for homeless families.

**Process**

When a family enters a Hennepin County shelter, they are eligible for Rapid Exit services. Within the first week of entering a Hennepin County shelter, a family will meet with a RE screener. The RE screener completes an intake to identify housing barriers including: previous unlawful detainers, criminal history, domestic violence, disability, previous episodes of homelessness, income status and rental history. Based on the assessment, families are assigned a “barrier level;” a level 1 indicates minimal barriers to housing, and a level 4 indicates several or severe barriers. Following the assessment, families are assigned a RE case manager, who works closely with families to locate and move into permanent housing. Families typically wait 1 month (longer during fall months) to be assigned to a RE case manager and are only eligible to begin services if they are still living in a Hennepin County shelter.

**Services**

RE Case Managers work closely with landlords to match families with available market rate housing. Once a family is matched with an available housing unit, RE provides short-term housing subsidies for some families. Subsidies can last from one month up to six months. Other services provided to families in the RE program include assistance with utilities and transportation, case management, goal setting, and referrals for continuing education, employment or other social services.
Problem Statement

Hennepin County has a right to shelter policy, often referred to as a Shelter All policy. Any family or individual from Hennepin County that becomes homeless has the right to shelter. Families that come from outside of Minnesota are also sheltered, if they cannot return to their community. Families with an open public assistance case in a different Minnesota county are not sheltered. As a result of the right to shelter policy, Hennepin County experiences certain times of the year where more families seek shelter, primarily in the late summer into fall months.

Market rate housing in Hennepin County is unaffordable to many families. Families with multiple housing barriers including criminal history, unlawful detainers, evictions, lack of stable employment and large family sizes have an even harder time finding housing.

- The Twin Cities metro area has an incredibly low vacancy rate of 2.4% and has the most expensive market rate housing compared to all bordering Midwest states.
- The Fair Market Rent (FMR) as set by HUD for a 2-bedroom apartment in Minnesota is $836, not including utilities.
- The market rate for a 2-bedroom apartment in Minneapolis is $1307.
- Households must earn $15.50 an hour in the state of Minnesota, and $17.69 an hour in Hennepin County to afford the FMR.
- In Minnesota, the average wage for a renter is $12.17/hour, and the average wage for families in shelter that were employed was $11.33/hour.

The Twin Cities region has some of the highest racial disparities between white and African Americans in education and employment in the nation. The white unemployment rate in the Twin Cities is 6.6%, while the African American unemployment rate is 20.4%, an alarming 13.8 percentage point difference. These disparities provide additional barriers for people of color to find and maintain employment and maintain stable housing.

Keeping families in shelter is expensive. A study conducted by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that emergency shelter is the most costly way to house families, and costs as much or more than it does to keep families in transitional or permanent housing. In addition, shelter is not a permanent place for families to live. Homelessness is associated with negative outcomes, both short term and long-term, particularly for children. Shelter stays should be limited, and should be focused on moving families into stable housing. However, since certain services are only available to families once they enter shelter, families that do not need emergency shelter, but instead need affordable housing enter shelter with the hopes that they will find additional resources.

As families are unable to find and afford market rate housing, and are incentivized to enter shelter to receive services, Hennepin County is faced with the reality of exceeding
capacity within their family shelters each year. Changes must be made to keep families out of shelter, and more quickly move families from shelter into transitional or permanent housing, and provide the supports needed to keep families housed.

**Purpose**
The purpose of this study is to:

- Identify areas of opportunity in Hennepin County in the areas of prevention, diversion, and reducing length of shelter stays of families who are homeless and staying in Hennepin County family shelters.

- Locate practices in similar communities that would reduce shelter use in Hennepin County.

- Use key informant interviews to gain insight into areas of opportunity within Hennepin County and practices in other communities to inform recommendations.

- Recommend practices that could immediately be implemented in Hennepin County to improve outcomes and reduce overflow conditions of family shelters in fall months.
Methodology
The research team followed the process outlined in this flow chart.

Define the Question
Based on direction from Heading Home Hennepin, the research question is:

What changes can be made, at the local level, to the Hennepin County family shelter system to immediately address the seasonal overcrowding?

Assemble Possible Solutions
This study used a mixed methods approach to identify possible solutions to the seasonal overcrowding of Hennepin County’s family shelter system and the resources needed to implement the solutions. Researchers interviewed professionals; reviewed program reports, evaluations, and website materials; incorporated research from previous capstone reports and academic papers; and analyzed primary data provided by Hennepin County.

Interviews
Researchers conducted 25 interviews with professional staff from Hennepin County, associated organizations, and homeless serving agencies from across the United States. A common set of questions was used as a base for each interview. Additional questions were added to each interview, derived from background research on available program materials. Interview reports were compiled from each interview and reviewed by the entire team as part of the analysis process. The process began with a list of subjects proposed by Heading Home Hennepin staff, and the list was expanded on both through team research and from asking each subject, “Who do you think we should talk to?”
After the practices were analyzed and prioritized by both the research team and Heading Home Hennepin staff, further information was gathered through the interviewees and additional community members. This allowed the team to provide more detailed recommendations and helped to reveal potential implementation problems.

Program Materials
Prior to each interview, the research team used program materials such as presentations, reports, and websites to inform their questions and analysis. If the program was located outside the Twin Cities, the researchers looked at the host community measures for population, climate, vacancy rate, unemployment rate, and existence of a Shelter All policy.

Academic Research
Recognizing the large body of work that has already been done on family homelessness, and the limitations of this study, the researchers depended heavily on previously published academic research to provide understanding of a typology of families in homelessness, how the system currently works in Hennepin County, and the effects of homelessness upon children.28

Select Priority Practices
The selection of practices took place in two stages, (1) review by Heading Home Hennepin and (2) measurement against the agreed upon criteria. First, the team presented initial practice research to Heading Home Hennepin staff member Lisa Thornquist, who provided direction. The team then moved forward with more in depth research on those areas. After more interviews and research were completed, a second review took place.

Using the criteria discussed in the Recommended Practices section, the team pulled together all of the different practices that had been reviewed and grouped them in these areas: immediately actionable, actionable within one year, future, or not applicable. The team then focused on the immediate and next year practices and developed the questions for the data check.

Data Check
Although this study was not designed to produce quantitative analysis, the team used data from Hennepin County in order to test the relevance of potential solutions. For example, if the solution called for specific interventions for families in which the head of household was receiving SSDI benefits, the data was analyzed to determine if enough such families existed in the system for this solution have a significant impact. Past research provided race, family size, and age of head of household information for families using the Hennepin County family shelters, both as a cohort and differentiated by repeat visitors and one-time visitors.

If the team was able to answer the data question using data from Hennepin County, they did so. If not, regional or national data was used.
Develop Implementation Recommendations
After selecting the practices based on the criteria and checking the viability of these practices against available data, the research team began to group the practices and ideas into actionable recommendations. The team looked at the information on how the practices were incorporated in other communities, and/or how it related to what Hennepin County is currently doing. As much as possible, the recommendations were designed to be able to be implemented in a short time.

Present and Gather Feedback
As the recommendations were drafted, the team consulted with Heading Home Hennepin staff and Professor Maria Hanratty. When appropriate, the comments that were made were considered and the recommendations were adjusted.

Upon completion of the research report, the team will present their findings to Heading Home Hennepin staff and a group of stakeholders including many of the professionals the team interviewed. At that time the group will solicit initial feedback on the recommendations and compile these for Heading Home Hennepin.
Findings

Hennepin County Interviews
The primary sources of information about the seasonal overcrowding issue within the Hennepin County shelter system were Heading Home Hennepin staff Lisa Thornquist and Matthew Ayres. Ms. Thornquist and Mr. Ayres provided a great deal of information through in person meetings, emails, and reports they shared with the researchers. They provided contacts within Hennepin County and within Minnesota and leads to practices in other cities across the country.

The researchers performed a Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats (SWOT) analysis on the system. This allowed the team to identify areas in which an improvement in process would have the potential to make a significant impact within a short time period. This SWOT analysis was presented to the Heading Home Hennepin team, who then provided additional feedback to help focus the analysis. The SWOT document is available in Appendix A.

The areas of possible improvement illuminated by these interviews were:

1. Families were asked to complete similar, sometimes redundant intake interviews to meet the needs of the Hennepin County Shelter Team, the Rapid Exit program, and shelter advocates, among others.
2. The families with the highest barriers to maintaining housing also have the highest number of case managers to coordinate in order to maintain services and benefits.
3. The role of matching families with eligible supportive housing openings is complex and is not currently assigned to a specific position or agency and as a result it frequently does not happen.
4. There are discrepancies between anticipated wait times for services and actual wait times, which may result in programs not working as well as designed.
5. There are significant differences in services for families that are sheltered at Hennepin County shelters versus overflow facilities.

Associated Organizations
In addition to interviewing staff working directly within the family shelter system, the team also met with professionals working with organizations associated with the system by proximity, service goal, or contractual agreement. These interviews resulted in additional information on how other agencies in the community deal with the same population using tools or resources not accessed by the county. This included insights from organizations serving victims of domestic violence on collaboration of services; ideas from Minneapolis Public Schools that could help the system be more attentive to the needs of children; and observations from statewide stakeholders in the plan to end homelessness from the Minnesota Department of Human Services and Heading Home Minnesota.
Practices in Other Communities

Heading Home Hennepin asked the research team to investigate work with homelessness in Columbus, Ohio and Portland, Oregon. Key informants were asked to suggest other practices they were interested in learning about. In addition, researchers identified communities with similar characteristics to the Twin Cities and attempted to find unique practices utilized in those areas. In all, the team interviewed leaders of organizations in five different communities across the country.

The researchers also interviewed the National Alliance to End Homelessness, a nonprofit, non-partisan organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States. The Alliance works collaboratively with public, private and nonprofit sectors to develop, analyze, and improve policy related to homelessness. They work with communities to build capacity for the implementation of solutions and provide data and research on trends and emerging solutions for homelessness.

Table 1: Characteristics of Other Communities Included in the Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Vacancy Rate</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
<th>Population of families experiencing homelessness</th>
<th>Size of Community</th>
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<tr>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>Over 8,300 singles and families in 2011</td>
<td>797,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa City, IA</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>857 adults and children in shelter in a year</td>
<td>68,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City, NY</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>10,000 families a day</td>
<td>8,244,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>884 homeless families counted during the Point In Time count</td>
<td>593,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle / Tacoma, WA</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>5.6% / 8.9%</td>
<td>On a given night, over 8,000 people are homeless in the community</td>
<td>3,424,361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennepin County, MN</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1,418 families in 2011, in HC shelters</td>
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These cities all have cold weather climates.
New York City, Columbus, and Hennepin County are as Shelter All communities.

Columbus, Ohio

The Community Shelter Board, founded in 1986, is the only organization in Columbus, Ohio that provides emergency shelter and services for individuals and families that are homeless in the region. Families that are homeless are immediately sheltered, due to their Shelter All policy. They oversee over $13 million in funding for homelessness prevention initiatives, emergency shelters, housing services and supportive housing. They work collaboratively with 12 partner agencies to unify resources and knowledge, assist over 8,000 people each year. The research team interviewed Michelle Heritage, the Executive Director of the Community Shelter Board.
Practices
The Community Shelter Board addresses homelessness through a broad based community plan called Rebuilding Lives. 100 citizens volunteered to analyze research, evaluate Franklin County’s housing and homeless services, and study practices across the country. They work in four primary goal areas:

1. Access – people at imminent risk of homelessness are linked to community resources.
2. Crisis response – people experiencing homelessness receive assistance to address their immediate housing crisis.
3. Transition – people experiencing homelessness transition from crisis to stability.
4. Advocacy – resources and public policy support solutions to end homelessness.

Columbus has been able to assist families to quickly exit from emergency shelter. In 2012, their average length of stay for a family in emergency shelter was 26 days, down from 46 days in 2011 and 57 days in 2010.43

In 2008, Columbus developed a program to combine supportive housing wait lists, the Unified Supportive Housing System.44 Initial results showed that the many different wait lists were filled with the same families and individuals, meaning that the overall number of people waiting for supportive housing was much, much lower than originally thought. After combining the wait lists, they began work on housing the families and individuals and nearly eliminated the overall number of people awaiting supportive housing.45

Shelter House – Iowa City, Iowa
Shelter House is a nonprofit homeless shelter serving adults and families in Johnson County, Iowa. They provide 70 shelter beds, and are primarily funded by private donations. Iowa City has a similar climate to Minneapolis, also experiences a large migration of families from the Chicago area, and has a low vacancy rate. Iowa City does not have a Shelter All policy. The research team interviewed Chrissy Canganelli, the Executive Director of Shelter House and Phoebe Trepp, the Program Development Director of Shelter House.

Practices
Shelter House offers transitional housing, counseling, and a number of employment and training programs. Shelter House is in the process of launching a Rapid Exit program, which will focus on serving families with lower barrier levels. They have recently adopted a “No Wrong Door” policy that supports a multi-faceted welcoming process to orientate families and individuals to the shelter.
New York City Department of Homeless Services

In New York City, 1 million people live below the poverty line. 950,000 New Yorkers are doubled up in households and there are currently 49,000 homeless individuals and 10,000 homeless families, who are housed in emergency shelter. New York City has a Shelter All policy. The Department of Homeless Services’ annual operating budget is over $850 million a year. The research team interviewed Sara Zuiderveen, the Assistant Commissioner of Prevention Services, with the Department of Homeless Services, New York City.

Practices

The NYC Department of Homeless Services is working on finding methods to prevent homelessness. They are targeting the highest-risk individuals in the communities and serving the hardest to serve. The HomeBase program consists of a partnership with 8 nonprofit organizations to run 11 programs in the highest-need communities with services including housing mediation, budgeting and financial counseling, entitlements advocacy, employment and training, and legal advice and referral. They provide short-term financial assistance to 5,000 families at high risk of entering shelter a year, and brief services to thousands more. They use a “risk assessment screener” to assess the risk level of an individual when they enter which is based on factors such as pregnancy, children under age two, no high school diploma, evictions, applications for shelter, etc.).

Research from 2012 showed that HomeBase reduced the shelter population from November 2004 – November 2008. For every 100 HomeBase cases, about 15 families were prevented from entering shelter.46

Insights and HomeSafe – Portland, Oregon

Portland Oregon is located in Multnomah County, which does not have a Shelter All policy. Portland has an unaffordable housing market for much of the population and 45% of households pay more than 30% of their income on housing.47 The research team interviewed Heather Baeckel, Supervisor of Insights Teen Parent Services.

Practices

Portland is in the ninth year of its plan to end homelessness, Home Again. Home Again is built on the principles that state Portland should focus on the chronically homeless, streamlining existing services, and concentrate resources on programs with measurable results.48 The city has streamlined its youth services and increased capacity for the Homeless Domestic Violence system.
Insights, in Portland, OR, is a nonprofit youth-serving agency that has operated HomeSafe for over 20 years. HomeSafe provides in-home case management, a housing subsidy, and assistance accessing supportive housing for homeless teens including teen parents. 89% of program graduates leave to stay in permanent housing in market rate units.

Seattle, Washington
In King County, home of Seattle, shelter stays are approximately 90 days and provided by 14 different shelters with an overall capacity of 250-300 beds. TANF is operated by the state and they are in the process of coordinating these services with the county homeless system. Incidents of homelessness among families are increasing in King County. Schools have seen a 150% increase in homeless students from the 2007-8 to the 2008-9 school year. King County does not have a Shelter All policy. The research team interviewed Jackie MacLean, the Director of the Department of Community and Human Services and Debbi Knowles, the Project/Program Manager of the Department of Community and Human Services – Homeless Housing Program.

Practices
King County launched the Initiative to Prevent and End Family Homelessness in 2009 with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. They have been in the process of adopting a coordinated assessment model and do use Rapid Exit. Intake is done through a coordinated phone system in which staff screens callers and places families on a waiting list.

Tacoma, Washington
In Tacoma, Washington, Access Point 4 Housing is a centralized intake where people seeking assistance call one agency and are screened for multiple programs and placements. In 2011, there were 2,068 homeless individuals including 1,243 in 367 households with 698 children under the age of 18. 10% of households with children were identified as living in shelters. Children under 18 represent 37% of the total count, an increase of 14% from the previous year. The research team interviewed Michael Mirra, Executive Director of the Tacoma Housing Authority.

Practices
The Tacoma Housing Authority serves about 12,000 individuals, or about six percent of the city’s population. Households with children represent 70% of those in transitional housing programs; households without children represent 98% of those on the streets. In 2010, there were 284 families living in transitional housing. The number of families living in transitional housing in 2011 increased 18% over 2010. This increase was due to an increase in the number of units available to families and increased information sharing in the Homeless Management and Information System (HMIS).

A major piece of the effort to keep families and especially children stable has come from the McCarver Project. The program was created to help stabilize McCarver Elementary
School, which has experienced classroom turnover rates as high as 170%. Project leaders realized that in order to do this, it needed to assist by stabilizing the children’s home environment. These are families who are not transient, are employed, and do experience poverty and persistent homelessness. The project provides a family living within the school’s attendance area up to five years of rental subsidy, until they are “rent independent”, responsible for the full amount of rent.

The Housing Authority finds a family, either a referral through the school system or the Pierce County shelter system. The Housing Authority expects parents to be heavily invested in their school community through PTA conferences and very intentional about being an active participant in their child’s education.

**Overarching Themes from Other Communities**

Some themes common to these practices in other communities were the need to target services and to engage in collaborations with the community to address the challenges of homelessness.

*Targeting Services*

New York City and Portland both target services to the most difficult to serve while Iowa City focuses on serving families with the lowest barriers. In New York, they have used data to determine which neighborhoods families are coming to the shelter from, and targeting preventative services in those communities. Portland (the Insights program) gave services to young parents, resulting in strong outcomes.

*Engage in Collaborations*

Like the initial Heading Home Hennepin plan, which was drafted by many members of the community along with members of government agencies, Columbus, Ohio, engaged with the community to create their “Rebuilding Lives” plan. Direct services in Columbus, as well as in New York City and Iowa City, are provided through partnerships with nonprofit organizations. Tacoma targeted a specific low-achieving school, and developed a collaborative program to identify and serve families at risk of experiencing homelessness.

*Data Sharing*

In Columbus, Tacoma, and New York City, innovative projects have found ways to share sensitive information, without compromising confidentiality, resulting in improved outcomes for their communities. Sharing data across and within agencies is essential for finding new ways to effectively serve families.

Targeting services, partnering with other public and nonprofit agencies, and improving data sharing could benefit the work of Heading Home Hennepin.
Hennepin County Data

Data from Heading Home Hennepin was compiled to find specific characteristics of families using the shelter system. This was done in order to evaluate the usefulness of practices, which target specific sub-populations, including small families, families with young heads of household, or members of specific racial groups.

The cost data used in this section was compiled between January 2011 and October 2012, over a span of 22 months. Cost was compared by looking at the group of families as a whole and at families who used the shelter the most nights, the top 20%, and the top 100 families. The cost of payment for the nights of shelter for the 2,308 families during this time period was $10,481,900. 2,308 families were represented.

Figure 1: Distribution of Shelter Payments by Quintile, January 2011 to October 2012

The overall average cost for shelter per family is $4,536 indicated by the flat line. The sloped line shows the average cost for shelter per family by quintile (the 1st quintile is top 80-100%, etc.). The average cost for shelter per family in the 1st quintile is $12,714.

Age of head of household and racial breakdown were taken from data compiled by past research projects which looked at families using Hennepin County family shelter between 2004 – 2007. Comparison is made between the total group of families (cohort) and the families who used Hennepin County shelter more than once (repeaters).
Figures 2 and 3: Age of Head of Household, n = 2,600

22.4% of all families have a head of household who is 21 years or younger and this increases to 29.8% for families with repeat visits. This indicates that programs specifically tailored to young adults, may have a significant impact on the overall population.

Figure 4 and 5: Racial Breakdown of Heads of Household, n = 2,602

Racial Breakdown of Total Cohort
- Black: 74.6%
- White: 15.1%
- Native Amer.: 5.5%
- Other: 4.9%

Racial Breakdown of Repeaters
- Black: 78.2%
- White: 12.2%
- Native Amer.: 6.8%
- Other: 2.8%
These charts help highlight the disproportionate number of African American families using the Hennepin County shelters, in comparison with the wider community. This may indicate that culturally specific programs would benefit the family shelter population.

The following data was derived from data provided to the researchers from Hennepin County family shelter stays January 2011 to October 2012, the same data used to analyze the cost breakdown for shelter stays (Figure 1).

This may suggest that programs that provide supportive housing for families of specific sizes will be helpful, but relatively less helpful for the most families who cost the most money to house in shelter.
Data from Professional Research
Some questions regarding suitability of specific practices to the Hennepin County population could not be answered by analyzing the data available from Heading Home Hennepin. When these types of questions present, data is used from other sources including Wilder Research, previous University of Minnesota Capstone projects, and published academic research.
Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System

Recommended Practices

The review of practices led to compelling options for altering the current Hennepin County family shelter system. With the imminent overcrowding concern in mind, these practices have been grouped according to the potential to address the problem relatively quickly. The following section provides details on the practice, the data that supports its use in Hennepin County, and specific information for implementation. Ideas that would take over a year to implement and see effects are presented, but do not have in depth discussion or specific implementation recommendations. In one case, Supportive Housing, the recommendations include both actions that could be implemented immediately and long-term changes.

Immediate Recommendations:

- Strengthen the Housing Culture.
- Improve access to supportive housing.
  - Shelter families using Group Residential Housing (GRH) funding.
  - Launch a Day One System to improve access.
  - Assign the responsibility to match families with supportive housing.
- Modify the Rapid Exit program.
- Replicate the Top 51 project (single adults) to house the Top 100 families.
- Improve the communication families receive.
- Provide an additional Emergency Assistance payment.
- Increase the capacity of families to engage in program leadership.

Long-term Recommendations:

- Increase affordable housing in Hennepin County.
- Increase engagement with business and faith communities.
- Track families after they leave shelter.
- Use TANF funding for families at risk of becoming homeless to prevent homelessness.
- Partner with others to target and provide preventative services and services for families experiencing homelessness.
- Increase supportive housing opportunities for families.

An intriguing practice that was not included is the concept of providing stipends to family members or friends to encourage families facing homelessness to live with stable friends or family members as opposed to moving into shelter, a practice being piloted in the Columbus, Ohio community. The pilot is very small (less than 25 families) and the outcomes are not yet clear, so it was not included as a recommended practice. 56
Criteria
Potential practices were identified through a number of sources including recommendations from key informants, practices presented at a nationwide conference in Seattle, WA on issues of homelessness, word of mouth and internet research.

After interviews with key informants were completed, each practice was evaluated based on eight different selection criteria. Practices that scored low were eliminated and practices that scored high were further evaluated to identify any additional problems with implementation and how well it fits with our purpose.

Selection Criteria
- **Scope**: Does the recommended practice fit within the scope of prevention, diversion or decreased time in shelter for families? If the practice did not meet the scope, it was not recommended as a practice. While many practices would improve a family’s experience in shelter, or provide opportunities for improvement for children or shelter staff, they did not fit within the scope of this work, and therefore were eliminated.

- **Purview of Hennepin County**: Does Hennepin County have the purview to implement the recommended practice? If a recommendation would require State or Federal legislation or additional authority, it is unlikely that it could be implemented within a short timeframe to address immediate need.

- **Rapid Implementation**: Can the recommended practice be implemented before the fall months, when shelter use is increased and at capacity? The purpose of the study is to identify opportunities for improvement before the shelters become full and overcrowded in the peak months of late fall. Practices should be able to be implemented before this timeframe.

- **Client and Child Centered**: Does the recommended practice take into consideration and value the wellbeing of the family? All recommendations should seek to keep the family central to the proposal. If a practice would potentially cause significant problems or burdens for the family, or harm to the children, it was not recommended.

- **Similar Metro Area**: Does the recommended practice exist in a community with similarities? Communities were identified based on several key similarities including if the community had a right to shelter policy, vacancy rates, unemployment rates, total number of families staying in shelter, total population and climate. All of these variables impact the family homeless system.

- **Data to Support**: Does the recommended practice have evidence to support the level of impact? Proven success was critical in evaluating recommended practices.
• **Efficient Use of Resources**: Does the recommended practice efficiently use resources that already exist? Recognizing that it would be difficult to implement recommendations that required significant additional funding, recommendations were evaluated based on ability to use existing resources.

**Limitations**

While an extensive set of criteria was used to evaluate recommended practices, the selection process was not without limitations.

• While all interviews asked key informants to identify the viewpoint of homeless families, the study did not include interviews with homeless families to identify areas of opportunity and potential solutions. Future studies should seek to identify what alterations families would recommend.

• Some of the recommended changes were indicated by opportunities revealed in the study of the current system, but did not have independent research that explicitly supported the change.

• Many of the recommended practices that can be implemented quickly and are within the purview of Hennepin County do not address larger systemic problems that perpetuate homelessness.
Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System

Recommended Practices - Immediate

1. Housing Culture
In an interview with Michelle Heritage, from Columbus’ Community Shelter Board, she cited the dominate “Housing Culture” as the primary reason they have a 10% return for shelter guests. According to Ms. Heritage, all of the staff who deal with families experiencing homelessness in their system have as their primary goal that of securing the family housing. This leads them to consistently ask adults how their search for housing is progressing and limiting the amount of “comfort” services provided to families at the shelter.

In researching the culture in the Hennepin County family shelters it was clear that leadership had taken into account the “comfort” services idea. For example, neither the Drake nor People Serving People (PSP) have televisions provided for families. In the interviews, it was apparent there is an interesting dynamic existing between the different shelters available to families, and in how often the families interact with the Hennepin County Shelter Team. By strengthening the consistency between the shelters and increasing the contact with the Shelter Team, families will receive greater encouragement and supporting in securing housing, creating a stronger Housing Culture.

Limitations

Consistency Between Shelters
With the high numbers of families requesting shelter from Hennepin County in the last few years, the county has been forced to house families in non-shelter spaces, primarily at The Drake Hotel in Minneapolis. The Drake Hotel is a privately owned hotel that offers rooms with private bathrooms and meals. There are no social services provided at the Drake. Families living at the Drake cannot use services at the other county shelters, PSP and St. Anne’s. These families are placed on a wait list to move out of the Drake and asked to move when a space becomes available. These moves are not always made on a first-come, first-served basis, as the Hennepin County Shelter Team prioritizes moving families with small children out of the Drake first.

The different experience of families staying at the Drake compared to PSP or St. Anne’s is dramatic and may result in longer shelter stays. Since families go into the Drake during busy seasons for the shelter system, they are also simultaneously placed on long waiting lists for rapid exit services. This results in most families not receiving a rapid exit case manager until they leave the Drake. Other important services families at the Drake do not receive include shelter advocacy, pre-school and after school programs for children, and job search assistance.

It is clear that Hennepin County does not intend to shelter families at the Drake in the long term. It is also clear the Drake management does not intend to turn not to turn their hotel into an official family shelter. It does not appear that there are any plans in place to begin social services there in the future. This has led to a very significant difference in the environment at the Drake (versus PSP or St. Anne’s) that may increase the adverse effects on the families and also may decrease the motivation of some families to find
housing. While they do not keep records of how often it happens, the Shelter Team does report some families have refused to move to PSP when openings are available, stating that they prefer the Drake. In one interview with a Supportive Housing provider, the organization had seen that families moved out of housing faster when there was a front desk with a check in policy.

Overall, interviewees had the impression that the rules at the Drake were much less stringent than at PSP or St. Anne’s and that some families prioritized that freedom and prefer the Drake to other Hennepin County shelters. While this may seem nice, a number of the professionals interviewed thought it was important to maintain a culture at the shelter that encouraged families to continue to look for housing. In order to encourage a housing culture at the shelters and for the Drake to be very “housing focused,” two main work areas could be refined: increasing contact with the Shelter Team and overflow housing.

Contact with Shelter Team

Although there is an expectation that families meet with the Hennepin County Shelter Team quickly after entering the system, and that they have frequent follow up appointments in order to continue their stay, this has not always been the reality. The Shelter Team has often been at 50% of their staffing capacity, causing families to wait longer for an appointment. Additionally, the original expectation that a family be re-assessed or “re-vouchered” every week has become every two or three weeks instead. These assessment meetings serve as an opportunity for the Shelter Team to check in on the family’s progress in attaining housing and to offer options such as a bus ticket to relatives who could house them.

It appears Hennepin County has made policy changes that will dramatically improve this situation. However, close monitoring is necessary to ensure the Shelter Team is fully staffed going into the overflow season. It is unknown what affect the upcoming decentralization of Hennepin County Human Services including the closure of Century Plaza Human Services in the next few years will have on the ability of staff to continue to provide services at this level.

Shelter Team Recommendations

- Meet with (voucher) families every week. During the weekly meeting repeat the initial diversion questions including offering bus tickets if the family can move back home or to be housed with other relatives (if appropriate).
- Begin meeting with families within 48 hours of entering shelter. Provide more than just access to shelter, but also some supportive actions like connecting with services. This aligns with the research on Critical Time Intervention model, which indicates that an early investment in resources providing case management at the beginning of a transitional period can result in improved long-term outcomes.
Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System

- Continue to use meetings to keep family informed about services like childcare, and job search support, as well as RE services.
- Ideas to help Shelter Team thrive and remain at capacity:
  - Add flexibility for Shelter Team in providing supports for clients, as requested by members of the Shelter Team.
  - Use the Retention-Focused Supervision model to support the staffing structure; a training curriculum from Michigan State School of Social Work designed to decrease turn over in stressful social service positions.\(^{65}\)

Overflow Housing Recommendations

- Drake
  - Support a staff position for shelter advocates assigned to work directly with Drake residents.
  - Open an office on site at the Drake – options listed in Appendix G.
  - Move families from Drake to PSP or St. Anne’s as quickly as possible. No right of refusal to move.
  - Take proactive action on assessing needs and contracting for rooms and an agreement on services that will be housed at the Drake, prior to the overflow season. A consistent problem that New York City has experienced is overflow providers taking advantage of the city’s urgent needs and securing unreasonable short-term housing contracts. This has not been a problem in Hennepin County, but it is something to remain vigilant for.\(^ {66}\)
- Start coordinating meetings monthly with Shelter Team, Rapid Exit staff, and shelter staff (St. Anne’s, PSP, and the Drake).
- Consider other options for last-minute overflow solutions:
  - Families Moving Forward: churches already working with the program could provide housing for only 1 month but in central location, if provided with extra funding.
  - Supportive housing or community agencies with extra space.
2. Supportive Housing

Overview
Supportive Housing for families combines safe and stable housing for families with wraparound supportive services. Supportive housing follows a housing first model, where housing is prioritized as the most important need, and supportive services follow. Studies have shown that providing supportive housing to homeless populations costs the same or less than allowing them to remain homeless. Services provided to families in supportive housing programs vary, but often consist of case management, employment services, mental health and addiction counseling, parenting support and after school programs for children. In some supportive housing programs, families are expected to pay rent, and grants and public funding, such as Group Residential Housing (GRH) cover others.

Supportive Housing in Minnesota
As of 2009, the Minnesota Housing Inventory identified 3,333 supportive housing beds, which included 1,668 beds for families, 1,645 beds for single adults and 107 beds specifically for youth. In that same year, an additional 88 supportive housing units were under development. Hennepin County estimates that there is an unmet need of over 3,500 supportive housing beds for families alone.

Case Example: Group Residential Housing (GRH)
In Minnesota, Group Residential Housing (GRH) is a state-funded payment for housing and services for persons who are elderly or who are over age 18 and have a disability that limits their self-sufficiency. GRH was designed to help individuals move out of institutions and into congregate supervised living arrangements such as a group home or a board and care facility.

Legislation passed in 2005 allowed GRH to be used in more integrated settings within the community. It also included language on “long-term homeless” services connected to the state plan to end homelessness. The Housing First Partnership (HFP) serves individuals who have experienced long periods of homelessness. GRH has been a tool that has worked well for permanent housing for individuals experiencing homelessness but has not worked as well for families. Only adults qualify for GRH funding so the housing rate is based on the housing needs of an individual and does not increase with the number of family members. However, GRH can be used for families experiencing homelessness and works best for small families, such as a single parent with one or two children.

In Minnesota, $139 million is spent on GRH per year covering approximately 30,000 individuals. Most individuals receiving GRH are in congregate settings. About 4,000 - 5,000 individuals are in community-based settings. Approximately 83% of the persons receiving GRH are under the age of 65. Statewide, about 500 families use GRH and most live in apartment settings. Scattered site apartment setting GRH units work best for families, and providing independence and privacy, as well as supportive services to ensure housing stability.
GRH Categories of Eligibility
There are two groups of GRH categories of eligibility, those that fit within Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and those that fit within General Assistance (GA). A person who receives SSI and is aged, blind, or over age 18 and disabled, qualifies for GRH. A person who meets a General Assistance (GA) category of eligibility, such as an illness (not necessarily a disability) or needing a service plan also qualifies for GRH. See Appendix B for a complete listing of GRH Categories of Eligibility and Appendix C for a sample service plan.78

GRH Payment
The GRH payment is made directly to a supportive housing provider who has contracted with a county agency. The payment has two portions, a housing rate and a supplemental services rate. The current limit for the housing rate portion is $867/month and is adjusted each year based on the Federal Benefit Rate (FBR) of the SSI program.79 The amount that GRH pays for housing depends on the type and amount of income the person receives and is able to contribute towards the housing cost.80 The GRH housing rate portion is a federal entitlement program with no cap and is protected by federal maintenance of effort. The supplemental service payment rate is $459.85/month. An individual or a family who moves to GRH from a homeless shelter qualifies for the supplemental service rate. The supplemental service payment rate is vulnerable to budget cuts because it is not protected with maintenance of effort at the federal level.81

GRH and MFIP
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is Minnesota’s Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. The MFIP grant is based on the family size and has a cash portion and a food portion. If the parent of a family receiving MFIP meets a GRH category of eligibility, they may receive GRH. The parent will have a “GRH client obligation”, an amount that must be paid towards the housing. The GRH program will pay a portion of the housing, up to the current housing rate limit of $867. Typically $156 of the MFIP is counted income for the GRH client obligation and is the amount the parent must pay towards housing.82 Because GRH is a program for an individual, the housing rate does not increase with family size.

Example:
A mother and one child receive MFIP of $437 cash per month. The mother qualifies for GRH. The MFIP standard for one person, $250, is counted towards the GRH client obligation. From this $250, a $94 deduction is allowed for personal needs. This results in a client obligation of $156. The limit for the GRH housing rate is $867. After the GRH client obligation of $156 has been paid, GRH will pay $711 for housing to meet the housing rate limit of $867. From MFIP, the family retains the amount that exceeded the MFIP standard for one, in this example $187 ($437 - $250), plus $94 for personal needs for a total of $281.
If the rent is less than $867, the GRH housing provider (vendor) will return a portion of the GRH client obligation to the family in the form utility payments, household needs, or gift cards. For example, if the rent is $736, the difference ($867 - $736) of $131 of the GRH client obligation is returned for utilities, household needs, or as gift cards.

As the family size increases, the MFIP grant standard increases. The amount the family keeps after the GRH client obligation amount is met also increases, see Appendix D for budget examples. The HUD Fair Market Rate (FMR) for housing is $592 for efficiency, $736 for a 1 bedroom, and $920 for a 2 bedroom. Rents for larger units are likely to exceed the GRH housing rate limit of $867. A larger family could use MFIP or other income they have to make up the difference. However, this would be done with caution, as a GRH case manager would not want to put the family in a financially unsustainable arrangement.

**GRH Referral in Hennepin County**

If the parent of the family experiencing homelessness has a disability that limits their self-sufficiency, the Hennepin County Shelter Team member or the Rapid Exit Case Manager can refer her to a Housing First Partnership (HFP) provider. The Housing First Partnership (HFP) provider will complete a GRH Plan, a Service Authorization Form, and a Long-Term Homeless Housing Status form. These documents are submitted to the HFP Program Manager for approval. Once the family moves in, the landlord will complete a Shelter Verification Form.
**Data Analysis**

Hennepin County shelter data from 2011 showed 45% of the families have one or two members, 28% have three members, and 27% have four or more members.

**Figure 9: Hennepin County Shelter Family Size**

Families who were in shelter more than once time during this period were counted only once. If they had a change in family size, they were counted in the smaller size grouping. When considering housing options, it is useful to note that three quarters of the families in shelter are smaller sized families.

Reviewing the Hennepin County shelter data from 2011 showed that about 9% of the applicants in the families received SSI. Although a small proportion of the total shelter population, these families, typically having a parent with a disability, would be an appropriate referral for GRH or other supportive housing.

In 2013, 82% of families in Hennepin County shelters received MFIP, excluding families enrolled in the Diversionary Work Program (DWP), which provides cash assistance for families before they enroll in MFIP. Of families that have left shelter and returned, 25% have received a MFIP extension, indicating that they have exhausted their 60 months of benefits. It is likely that many of these families who have utilized emergency shelter repeatedly and have exhausted their MFIP benefits face significant barriers to work. These families may be appropriate referrals for GRH or other supportive housing.

**Limitations**

Currently, in Minnesota, the network of supportive housing providers is not well connected, and difficult to access for both families and staff members that help families locate supportive housing programs. Each supportive housing program, even within the same agency, has different program requirements, rules and application processes. Some programs require families to call once a week during a certain time to identify openings, and others require referrals from other programs. Some programs prioritize families experiencing homelessness, and others enroll participants on a first-come first-serve basis. Currently, there is no clear process for moving a family from shelter into transitional or supportive housing, and families that would benefit from additional support are being placed into market rate housing.

A program limitation of GRH is serving only persons with a disability and not providing employment incentives. Families who anticipate becoming self-supporting are not appropriate referrals for GRH.
Recommendations

The following recommendations highlight immediate changes that could be made to the supportive housing environment to improve access and provide better outcomes for families.

Assign the Responsibility of Connecting Families to Supportive Housing

Assign the responsibility to complete supportive housing and GRH referrals for families identified in an initial intake as suitable for a supportive housing environment. This could be one or more staff that specializes in locating openings and helping families qualify and move in, or it could be a shared task. It could be a responsibility of the Rapid Exit program or the Shelter Team, but it needs to be clarified.

King County in Washington State is working to prioritize families in shelter for transitional and permanent supportive housing, based on the ranking of housing barrier levels and what services have worked best based on the different levels. Families that are a level 1 receive rapid re-housing services, families that are a level 2 receive transitional housing opportunities and level 3 families receive services called “service enriched housing.” Service enriched housing provides families with additional support services and a 5-year rental subsidy. Staff at People Serving People indicated that the most successful families move from shelter into transitional or permanent supportive housing, and therefore many families would benefit from more intentional referrals to these programs.

Coordinate Supportive Housing Referrals

It is critical that the staff working to connect families to supportive housing fully understand the environmental landscape of available housing resources for families that need housing support. Coordination of the referral process with the GRH providers in Hennepin County should be an assigned responsibility. Due to the language of the state statute, Hennepin County requires “long-term homeless” as an eligibility factor in their GRH Housing First contracts. The housing provider may use additional language to define and to interpret “long-term homeless” to specifically reach those experiencing homelessness and in greatest need of supportive housing, see Appendix E for sample definition.

Example: If a family experiencing homelessness said they stayed with their mom for 8 months, that span of time may not be counted as an episode of homeless for the provider’s definition of “long-term homeless”.

In addition to evaluating for “long-term homeless”, consult with the MFIP Employment Services counselor, if one is assigned to the family. Determine if there are employment barriers that may prevent the parent from becoming employed and self-supporting. If the parent begins working, the MFIP grant amount is reduced or possibly is closed. Balancing the reduced MFIP with the earnings is a challenge as the GRH client obligation may change from month to month. GRH does not provide incentives to become self-sufficient. A parent who is expected to become employed and self-supporting is not an appropriate candidate for GRH.
Expand the Day One to Include Supportive Housing
Expand the Day One system for domestic violence shelters to include supportive housing programs, including the tracking of housing available through GRH Housing First Partnership providers. There are currently few openings for supportive housing and the availability of GRH Housing First for families is not tracked at the state level. Coordinated tracking of supportive housing availability could help move families more efficiently into supportive housing and potentially serve 15-20 families experiencing homelessness each year in Hennepin County.

Day One is a program of Cornerstone, a nonprofit agency in Minnesota. Day One is a crisis line that routes calls to the nearest domestic violence agency and a real time online database that shows available shelter for victims of domestic violence. Staff members who receive crisis calls use the Day One online system to see what shelters have available bed space and to provide intentional referrals for clients.

Hennepin County could choose to use the existing Day One platform with an expansion that includes supportive housing. The expanded database would be used to identify and to link supportive housing to which families could be referred. The system also would help provide a better understanding of the supportive housing environment to identify areas of improvement.

The current Day One system costs $130,000 a year to manage, and the addition of supportive housing would not add significant cost because the infrastructure is already in place. If Hennepin County were to create a new system for supportive housing, the anticipated cost could be similar to Seattle, WA, which recently implemented a Day One system for supportive housing at a cost of $23,000.

Build Relationships and Communication
While a technology tool such as Day One is important, the relationship between housing providers and Hennepin County is key to ensuring a useful system. With Cornerstone (the Day One owners), Hennepin County could co-facilitate a collaborative group of supportive housing providers to develop and to strengthen relationships and communication among providers.

Provide training on Day One for all staff members working with families experiencing homelessness. The technology is very intuitive so most of the time can be spent on building the relationships and the accountability. The Corporation for Supportive Housing in Minnesota, or a similar agency, could provide an overview of the supportive housing landscape including: what supportive housing entails, what supportive housing is available for families experiencing homelessness, and how to help families connect with supportive housing. Building relationships and communication between the systems that work with families experiencing homelessness will increase visibility of services that are available for families and improve outcomes.
3. Rapid Exit
Rapid Exit in Hennepin County is well known across the country as a promising practice to quickly move families out of shelter.

Limitations
Within the current RE program, there are several limitations that may constrain the program’s effectiveness. Families that enter shelter complete assessments with several divisions of the shelter system that often ask the same questions, which is time consuming, redundant, and may be difficult for families.

After a family completes an intake with the RE screener, they are placed on a wait list to receive a RE case manager, which takes up to a month or more during busy seasons. RE workers are not incentivized to quickly meet with families; while many families move out of shelter without ever having been connected with a RE case manager, families are incentivized to remain in shelter until they have a RE case manager, and are eligible for services and rental subsidies.

Case managers provide similar services for those who are identified as a level 1, 2 or 3, or 4. These families have different needs and housing barriers and services could be triaged based on need level. Families that are identified as a level 4 are provided with more intensive case management. The lack of individualized services for families with different barriers may limit the effectiveness and timeliness of serving families and moving them as quickly as possible out of shelter.

Recommendations
The following recommendations highlight immediate changes that could be made to the RE program to increase effectiveness and streamline services.

Performance Based Contracting
Performance based contracting for RE services is used in Columbus, OH to incentivize contracted agencies to work quickly with families to locate stable housing and assist them in remaining in their housing. In Minnesota within the field of workforce development, performance based contracting is becoming used more frequently, and incentivizes contracted agencies to work with hard to serve populations through its payment structure. Incentivizing contracted agencies to work with a hard- to- serve population reduces the risk of families with multiple barriers being left un-served by RE. All contracted RE services could follow a performance based contract model. Contracted agencies that provide rapid rehousing services could be paid only when families are housed and remain in a stable housing situation. The contract could build in incentives for housing additional families, and pay additional dollars for difficult to house families.

Eliminate Screening Assessment
Eliminate the RE screening assessment. The RE team could use the intake and assessment conducted by the Hennepin County Shelter team and assign a barrier level based on this information. Information could be shared across teams through signed releases by clients and data sharing agreements between Hennepin County and contracted agencies. Data sharing agreements between different agencies are used well in Columbus,
OH, New York City and Seattle, WA, and Hennepin County could learn from their experience.\textsuperscript{96} Interviews with the Hennepin County Shelter Team and the RE Screener identified that screening assessments were essentially identical and typically happened on the same day.\textsuperscript{97} In Minnesota, workforce development agencies utilize Workforce One, a data management system that is shared across county and contracted agencies that provide workforce services. The system allows different agencies to input data, and to see data input by other agencies, including activities and support services. A system similar to Workforce One could help streamline data sharing among different agencies that work with homeless families.

**Triage and Prioritize Services**

Triage and prioritize RE services based on barrier level. This model is used in Seattle, WA to target services at families with differing barriers. In Hennepin County, for the first 3 months of 2013, 74% of families screened by RE received a barrier level 3 ranking, and 17% of families received a barrier level 2 ranking. Only 8% of families ranked at a level 4, and 1% of families ranked at a level 1.\textsuperscript{98} Therefore, services should be provided to those families with the highest barriers, and then targeted to level 2 and 3 families, based on employment.

Figure 10: Rapid Exit Housing Barrier Screening Levels
The following diagram illustrates how RE services could triage families at different housing barrier levels.

Figure 11: Rapid Exit Triage

- Level 4 families receive intensive case management with a small case manager to client ratio. Case managers that provide RE services to families identified as a level 4 should expect to add 4 new clients per month, under the current contract, and caseloads should remain low in the future.\textsuperscript{99}

- Level 2 and 3 families receive drop-in services that could include application fees and housing search assistance. Families that become employed or find housing can be prioritized and served more quickly with RE services. This practice is currently being used by Hennepin County. Case managers that provide RE services to families identified as a level 2 or 3 should expect to add 8 new clients per month, under the current system, and caseloads should remain at that level.\textsuperscript{100} Hennepin County data indicated that families in shelter that were employed in 2012 earned, on average $11.33/hour, and worked on average 20 hours a week, indicating that they could be re-housed and remain stable.

- Level 1 families receive drop-in services, as they have the fewest housing barriers and should have the least difficulty finding housing. As identified above, only 1\% of families receiving RE services are identified as a level 1. Drop in services could include application fee assistance, damage deposit checks and 1st month’s rent checks.
Minimize Wait Time
Maintain a one-week or less wait time for families to be assigned a RE case manager. This may include adding additional staff as needed and could be temporary employees, added as needed during peak seasons. As families receive different levels of services based on their barrier level, connecting a family with a RE case manager as quickly as possible reduces confusion about what RE services entail. Once a family begins receiving RE services, it removes the incentive for families to enter and stay in shelter long enough to receive RE services and rental subsidies. The incentive to enter or stay in shelter to receive housing services was identified both in Hennepin County at St. Anne’s shelter and in the King County Department of Community and Human Services in Seattle, WA. Rapid re-housing models follow a Housing First practice (housing before employment) and are designed to quickly move families out of shelter.

Provide Services After Families Exit Shelter
Provide RE services for six-months after families exit shelter, as well as for families at risk of entering shelter. Families could be identified as at risk when they apply for Emergency Assistance through Hennepin County, however must be screened further to assess risk.

Provide On-Site Meetings
Provide on-site meetings where families are sheltered, so families can meet with RE case managers more easily and regularly. See Appendix G for office location sites so services could be provided to families staying at the Drake. Many services in Hennepin County already follow this model, and provide services to families where families are living, and RE case management already have office hours at People Serving People (PSP).

Currently, a “cold weather” policy moves the Hennepin County Shelter Team to family shelters for re-vouchering purposes on particularly cold days. The Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) Shelter Services Coordinator meets with families at the shelter they are staying at to provide easy access and ensure school attendance is not interrupted by homeless spells. The Youth and Young Adults program at Tubman follows this model, and meets clients where it is convenient and comfortable for them. Additionally, in Columbus, OH, all services for families that are homeless are housed in the same building, with the purposeful intent of providing easy access to services for families.
4. Top 51
Hennepin County has had great success with the Top 51 project, which combines case managers and housing workers in teams to target the single adults who use Hennepin County shelters the most.\textsuperscript{108} This model is based on the understanding that people who use homeless services vary greatly in the intensity of their service use. Instead of following a normal distribution (or a bell curve), the cost of services is distributed among families more like a hockey stick, called the “power law” distribution, seen nationally among persons experiencing severe and ongoing homelessness.\textsuperscript{109}

Figure 12 shows the distribution of the total cost of housing each family over a span of 22 months, from January 2011 to October 2012. The majority of the families cost Hennepin County less than $5,000 to house, however a very small minority of the families cost a great deal, up to almost $100,000.

Figure 12: Distribution of Total Cost of Shelter Per Family, January 2011 – October 2012

In typology studies of families experiencing homelessness, most families exhibit more similar characteristics to very poor but housed families than to homeless individuals. However, both the adult and family populations also fall into this power law distribution. Nationally, families who use the most nights in shelter consume 50\% of the shelter system resources.\textsuperscript{110} In Hennepin County, from January 2011 through October 2012, the top 20\% of families used 56\% of the shelter payments.
In Hennepin County, from 2008-2011, the county paid a total of $406,192 housing just 10 families. One family of ten cost Hennepin County $98,952 to shelter. The other families in the top ten were not unusually large families, but only slightly larger than the average size (3.01 people). Three of these families had two adults; a single adult headed the rest. The breakdown of size of family and cost for shelter use is available in the findings section above.

The Top 51 model will need to be adjusted to work with families instead of individuals, but it is still useful. The current Rapid Exit Level 4 program could be utilized, but it will need to be adjusted to lengthen the term of the housing subsidy and increase the level of case management provided. In the Top 51 program, individuals received coordinated case management from social workers and housing workers working together as a team. Coordinating services for these families, providing them with a team case management approach, is essential. It is clear that the current system of assigning high barrier families with multiple caseworkers and work plans has the potential of becoming highly burdensome to the family. At the highest level of barriers, a family may be working with up to 18 different agencies, 14 different case managers, and 9 different work plans, see Appendix F.

A family may be working with up to 18 different agencies, 14 different case managers, and 9 work plans.

Streamlining the process families go through to access services is part of the coordinated assessment process. Taking this model a step further, following guidance from the 2010 Human Services Summit at Harvard University, greater coordination could be brought to the case management system as a whole. Suggestions include streamlining “processes or transactions, such as information sharing with daycare providers.”

Figure 13: Cost to Shelter Families, January 2011 – October 2012
Limitation
A potential barrier for adapting the Top 51 model to families in Hennepin County is the very different typology of families as compared with single adults. Most importantly, the families who appear at the very top of the list for numbers of nights sheltered in one year do not consistently appear at the top of the list in subsequent years. In fact, of the 855 families in the top 20% of families using shelter from January 2011 to October 2012, only 13% used shelter in 2009 and only 10% used it in 2008.

Recommendations
Additional work will need to be done to develop a useful formula for identifying families to enter a Top 51-type program. The single adult program has been successful and could be modified to serve families. Combined with some of the recommendations for accessing or increasing supportive housing, families could be identified as “Top” families and given priority access to housing or longer-term support to maintain housing, a sort of very-extended Rapid Exit. These families will need highly coordinated case management, as they could have upwards of 13-15 different programs to work with, with the potential of nine different “plans” to follow, see Appendix F.
5. Communication
The Plain Writing Act of 2010 requires federal agencies to write in plain language. “Plain Language” is defined as “communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it”. Using plain language can save time and improve service to families with literacy barriers.

Overview
Homelessness can be an overwhelming experience. As the result of being in crisis, families experiencing homelessness may have difficulty understanding the communication regarding the shelter system process. Using plain language in any and all written materials provided to the family is important. Harriet Tubman, a nonprofit agency in Minneapolis, provides safe shelter to families who have experienced domestic violence. They have partnered with the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance to develop solutions and to generate new protocols in their work with person with disabilities, seen or unseen. Part of this effort includes changing their materials into plain language so it is easier for people with disabilities, primarily brain injuries, to read and understand.

For families experiencing homelessness, the most effective communication may be face-to-face. Shelter House, a nonprofit organization in Iowa City, provides shelter to those experiencing homelessness. Shelter House employs a scripted welcome procedure. Orientation sessions are held each day for individuals or families who enter the shelter. This provides a clear and consistent explanation of the processes and the expectations.

Communication in Hennepin County
The Hennepin County policy that requires families experiencing homelessness to pay for their stay can be confusing. When a parent calls a shelter to ask if there is room and they are told there may be a “fee for shelter”, they may think shelter is not an option because they do not have money. For the family that enters emergency shelter, the Hennepin County Shelter Team provides a multi-page informational document. This may or may not be accompanied with a consistent and clear explanation of how the shelter system works and what is expected of them.

Limitations
Families experiencing homelessness are in crisis and may have difficulty understanding all of the information presented to them, regardless of format. Some families may have low literacy skills and some may not speak English. For these reasons, there may not be one solution that will meet all communication needs.

Data Analysis
The need for plain language is supported by data showing lower reading levels among many experiencing homelessness. In work with low literacy and mental illness, a “study of 45 homeless adults found an almost 4-year gap between average reading level (seventh grade) and average last grade completed in school (eleventh grade)” In the National Adult Literacy Survey completed in 1992, strong relationships between literacy and economic status were evident. “Adults in the lower literacy levels were far more likely
than those in the higher levels to be in poverty and were far more likely to be on food stamps than to report receiving interest from savings.”

The National Adult Literacy Survey describes three scales of literacy: prose, document, and quantitative, and identifies tasks from simple to complex in each of these scales to define five levels of literacy. The survey results showed the following percentages were living in poverty at the lowest literacy level: 43% for prose, 41% for document, and 44% for quantitative. Examples of document scale tasks in this lowest level include signing your name to a document or locating the time of a meeting on a form. More complex tasks such as applying for a social security card or using a bus schedule are in higher levels of literacy. Often these are tasks that those experiencing homelessness or those in shelter will ask for assistance with. They don’t often ask for help with “literacy”.

In addition to lower levels of literacy, those whose first language is not English are another consideration. Minneapolis Public Schools identified 14% of students identified as homeless and highly mobile as English Language Learners. The percentage of parents who are non-English speakers likely is the same as the children and possibly higher for families experiencing homelessness.

**Recommendations**

This study recommends clear and consistent information be provided in a variety of methods, including face-to-face communications and written materials. All documentation should be presented in language no higher than a sixth grade reading level.

**Family Rights and Responsibilities and Expectations**

Outline and script the information to explain the rights and responsibilities, and expectations for the family when a family enters shelter. Provide training to staff members so they are prepared to answer questions correctly and consistently. This is especially important in regards to the Rapid Exit program and the “pay for shelter” policy. All families should be told the same information, in a consistent way that is understandable to them, whether they are contacting the shelter or they are contacting the county to inquire about emergency shelter.

Consider providing information in a variety of formats so that the message is repeated and is accessible to the family, as needed.

**Posters** - Place brightly colored posters illustrating the shelter rules and responsibilities for families at county offices and in shelters. The information on posters could include, but is not limited to:
- Steps to see a Rapid Exit worker.
- Steps required when documenting a job search.
- How to get in touch with your advocate.
- How to reach your Shelter Team worker.
- How to get childcare assistance.

These should be inviting and easy to understand, with clear contact information if a client has questions.
**Video** – Create a video to explain the shelter system and the expectations for the family. A video provides a repeatable and consistent message and could be shown at the county office and at the shelter. Consider inviting an advocate or a family who also has experienced homelessness to share the information. They may be able to present the information in a way that is understandable and relatable to families experiencing homelessness. The family could view the video again after the initial crisis of entry into the shelter and may gain useful information with a second viewing.
6. Emergency Assistance 2
When a family is on the verge of homelessness, they often reach out to Hennepin County for emergency financial support to prevent the loss of their home. Emergency Assistance (EA) is often used for rent, back rent, utilities, and other urgent bills. EA funding also is used to provide damage deposits or first month rent for families who have found a home and are leaving shelter. EA has been limited to once within a 12-month period and has been issued at the discretion of case managers.

From June 2009 - December 2010, using economic stimulus money and in response to the economic downturn, Hennepin County allowed for an additional Emergency Assistance payment within the 12-month period, called “EA2.” On June 9, 2011, a second Emergency Assistance payment was made available to those affected by a severe tornado, particularly residents in North Minneapolis. On September 15, 2012 a second EA payment was made available to those who would utilize it to exit shelter.

While research is not strongly conclusive as to whether or not Emergency Assistance payments directly prevent families from experiencing homelessness, when Hennepin County used the EA2 payment they did see a less than expected increase in family shelter usage.

An alternative to the practice of providing one-time financial support to prevent homelessness may be to give temporary emergency loans, with a flexible repayment schedule based on the family income. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe utilizes this practice. If a family has an emergency situation, the head of household can receive a $750 temporary loan, repayable out of their monthly income at an agreed upon rate. Once the loan is repaid, they are eligible for another loan, if needed. They do not loan more than $750 and very rarely give out additional loans until the original loan is completely repaid.123

Recommendation
This study recommends reinstating EA2. Launching a temporary loan option is not recommended based on the fact that the families facing potential homelessness may not have enough consistent income to repay a loan. The financial and trauma-based savings for keeping a family housed, instead of moving into shelter are significant. EA2 is recommended as a short-term solution, with the statement that more research is needed to prove the value of this practice.
7. Family Voices

Hennepin County Social Service works to build better lives and stronger communities for the individuals, families and communities of Hennepin County. Hennepin County recognizes the importance of listening to the individuals and families it serves and the research calls Hennepin County to take steps to increase their capacity to do this. While supporting greater family involvement in the decisions that affect their lives may not immediately lead to decreased numbers in the family shelters, “integrating consumers in homeless services has been shown to improve quality of care.”

At least on the surface level, there is a lack of family representation at key points where it could be present and appropriate. Researchers visited meetings of collaborators and decision makers discussing the current shelter system and did not see families present or clearly represented. Interviewers consistently asked, “What do the families say that they need or want?” and the replies often indicated the professional had not recently asked this in a formal or direct manner. When asked about focus groups or family feedback, only two organizations had recently conducted these, both were contractors for Hennepin County. This study lacked the ability to directly interview heads of households staying in the shelters, so relied on previous research to present their viewpoints.

In 2012, a study using mixed methods research that included 14 personal interviews with mothers of families staying in shelters in Hennepin County produced the following key findings:

- Although Hennepin County and shelter employees distribute significant amounts of information, young mothers often do not either fully understand or later remember the information.
- Many mothers have persistent distrust of shelter staff and other parents in shelter, which inhibits the dissemination of information.
- The number of responsibilities and tasks they must perform each day overwhelms mothers, causing them to address some priorities but neglect others.

Hennepin County has experienced success in engaging homeless singles in the program development and evaluation process, but has not had similar results with families experiencing homelessness at the family shelters.

Considering the dramatic difference in the racial breakdown in the population using the family shelter versus the Hennepin County population as a whole, it could be helpful to consider if there are culturally-specific practices that could improve outcomes. In interviews with key informants in Hennepin County, researchers inquired about but did not discover any practices used to address needs of specific cultural groups. This is an area that could be helpful to explore for long-term solutions.
Recommendations

Pulled from a list of practices for engaging with adults experiencing homelessness, in which the adults are referred to as a “consumer”, the following recommendations could fit within the Hennepin County structures:\textsuperscript{127}

- Establish consumer-training teams to provide agency-wide trainings on recovery and related topics.
- Create discussion and planning groups that include consumers and staff.
- Develop groups that include consumer and non-consumer providers to review agency policies, practices, and procedures.
- Document and report on the victories and challenges of involving consumers. Hire and train consumers as outreach workers, case managers, volunteer coordinators, directors of consumer involvement and other positions for which they are qualified.
- Develop a consumer advisory board to provide input and guidance on how the agency operates.
**Recommended Practices – Future**

Within the scope of the project, researchers were asked to identify practices that could be implemented to provide solutions for the high demand of family shelter in the late summer and fall months. However, long-term solutions are needed to end family homelessness and create sustainable changes. The following recommendations were identified as necessary in both providing better services to families in Hennepin County and in ending family homelessness, however were recognized as not immediate solutions.

1. **Affordable Housing**

Increase the amount affordable housing units in Hennepin County. Families experiencing homelessness are more similar to families living in poverty, as opposed to single adults experiencing homelessness.\(^{128}\) If families were able to secure housing that cost no more than 30% of their monthly income, designated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as affordable,\(^{129}\) families may be less likely to lose their housing and would be less likely to enter shelter.

2. **Engagement with Business and Faith Communities**

Increase business and faith community engagement with ending family homelessness. The business community has become heavily involved in working with Hennepin County faith communities to end homelessness. Collaborations would significantly impact the number of families experiencing homelessness and provide better outcomes, in addition to reducing costs. One example of how the business community has begun to work to end homelessness for single adults is the Currie Avenue Project:

> The Currie Avenue Project is a collaboration between the business community and Hennepin County and together raised $350,000 to hire 10 case managers to work with 150 single adults with disabilities experiencing homelessness.\(^{130}\)

3. **Tracking of Families After Shelter**

Families who receive public assistance can be tracked through the MAXIS system after they leave shelter. (MAXIS is a statewide computer system used to determine eligibility for public assistance and health care.) Families often leave shelter without identifying where they are going,\(^{131}\) and currently there is no method for identifying where families go, and how often they return to shelter. Tracking families through addresses provided to receive TANF grants and other benefits would help Hennepin County remain in contact with the families to ensure housing stability after they leave shelter and would help Hennepin County identify communities for whom to target preventative services.

4. **TANF for Families At Risk**

Use Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), funding to identify families at risk of becoming homeless and to provide financial assistance to keep families housed. Allow for greater flexibility and case management for the Hennepin County Shelter Team.\(^{132}\) This was identified as a potential way for the Shelter Team to help families stay housed when unique situations present. It may also be a tool for dealing with issues that arise in two adult households that seem to conflict with the standard protocol used with single parent families.\(^{133}\) This practice could include a number of changes including:
- Using the MFIP application process to identify housing instability factors.
- Using MFIP funds to pay for more preventative services.
- Using MFIP funds to pay for additional services once a family enters shelter.
- Using MFIP funds to pay for additional Emergency Assistance (EA) payments (i.e. EA2 or EA3 payments to keep families housed and prevent entering shelter.)

5. Partnerships to Target or Deliver Services
Develop partnerships between Hennepin County and systems that interact with families to target preventative and intervention services for families that are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless (e.g., partnership between Hennepin County and Minneapolis Public Schools). Many families that experience homelessness also interact with other systems in the community through public schools, congregations and other Hennepin County systems. Developing an intentional link between the Hennepin County Shelter System and these other community systems would provide better identification processes to help identify families at risk of becoming homeless, and provide intervention services.

Minneapolis Public Schools and Minneapolis Public Housing Authority
In Washington State, the McCarver Special Housing Program is a unique partnership with Tacoma Housing Authority (THA), McCarver Elementary School, and community-based organizations. The McCarver program provides support for up to fifty families who had experienced homelessness and THA provides rental assistance. Like Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA), THA is a “moving to work” housing authority, which gives them some flexibility on HUD rules.

Another possible partnership in Hennepin County is to combine Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) efficiency apartments with supportive services for small families. Although there are very rarely family openings in MPHA, there are more often openings for apartments for one or two people. These could be used for a supportive housing program for pregnant mothers with no other children, or single parents with only one child. MPHA does not provide services, and currently there are not suitable buildings for such families. However, a partnership could target specific buildings for these families, creating a more child-friendly atmosphere, and provide supportive services to the families to maintain long-term housing.

6. Supportive Housing

Serve Larger Families
Minnesota Group Residential Housing (GRH) is a program for the individual adult and does not cover the children. Current program policy does not allow the GRH housing rate portion, currently $867/month, to increase with family size. If legislation allowed a change in GRH program policy to increase housing rates with family size, more families experiencing homelessness, especially larger families, could receive permanent supportive housing using GRH.

Absent such legislation, programs that provide additional funding for larger families could be used. Hennepin County could look at creative options for additional funding to provide supportive housing for larger families experiencing homelessness, keeping the
funding and the administration as seamless as possible for the supportive housing provider.

Example: If a family’s rent is not covered by GRH and the client obligation, other funding sources, including TANF funds could be used to provide long-term support to bridge the gap in funding. FMR for a 3-bedroom unit is $1,296, which could potentially house an adult and 4 children. In addition to GRH payments, Hennepin County would pay $429 per month to the housing provider to house the family, or $5,148 per year. In contrast, if Hennepin County were to pay for that family to remain in shelter, it would cost $148.49 to house that family of 5 in shelter for one day. If that family were to remain in shelter for one week, Hennepin County would pay over $1,000 to shelter that family.

Table 2: GRH and MFIP with Rentals by Family Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Month</th>
<th>Family of 2</th>
<th>Family of 4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRH limit on rental payment</td>
<td>$867 - $156</td>
<td>$711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual market rate</td>
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<td>$1307  2 bedroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
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<td>$596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family MFIP – GRH obligation</td>
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<td>$465</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum to shelter in Hennepin County</td>
<td>(2 * $30 * 30)  $1800</td>
<td>(4 * $30 * 30)  $3600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using current actual market rates for apartments in Minneapolis (not the HUD set Fair Market Rate).

Participate in the Housing Stability Services Demonstration

A current demonstration proposal in Minnesota would provide a new set of Housing Stabilization Services through GRH, incorporating a Housing First model of supportive services. A component of this proposal is outreach services to persons who do not have stable housing and in-reach services to persons who are in settings, such as shelters, and do not have access to housing. Medicaid would fund the services instead of GRH, and is expected to provide a higher rate of $600 per month to the service provider than the current GRH supplemental service rate. Because services could be provided for outreach and in-reach before an individual moves into the GRH setting, it is a significant change from the practice of current GRH payment of services, which begin when the individual moves into the GRH setting.

Increase the Number of Units

Increase the number of supportive housing units in Hennepin County. Families experiencing repeated episodes of homelessness may need additional supports to sustain housing. Permanent supportive housing units could be developed through partnerships with public housing and with nonprofit organizations. The following examples indicate ways in which supportive housing were developed in two different communities.

Living Access Support Alliance (LASA) is a nonprofit organization in Lakewood, Washington. LASA hired Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) to develop
permanent, supportive housing for 15 families experiencing homelessness. LASA provides the supportive services, which include selection of the families based on the services they need. The Section 8 vouchers will come from Pierce County Housing Authority.

In 2007, Rum River Health Services, a nonprofit organization, opened Bell Haven Townhomes offering permanent supportive housing for families in Princeton, Minnesota. The one and two bedroom units provide services for families, primarily families in recovery, using GRH Housing First.
Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System

Summary of Immediate Actions Recommended
In order to address the imminent overcrowding at the family shelters, here is a summary of actions that could be taken by Hennepin County in the next six months:

Staffing Responsibilities
- Assign the responsibility of connecting eligible families to supportive housing.
- Meet with families within 48 hours of entering shelter, continue meeting (re-vouchering) every week. Continue to use diversion questions in each meeting.

The Drake
- Assign Shelter Advocates to families staying at the Drake.
- Open an on-site office.
- Start coordinating meetings monthly with Shelter Team, Rapid Exit staff, shelter staff (St Anne’s, PSP, and the Drake), and others as needed.

Rapid Exit
- Restructure to provide drop-in services.
- Eliminate the Rapid Exit screening assessment and use the Hennepin County Shelter Team screening. Use data sharing.
- In preparation for the peak season, plan staffing needed to maintain a one-week or less wait time for families to be assigned a Rapid Exit case manager.

Communication
- Use plain language in all communication.
- Place posters illustrating the shelter rules and responsibilities in county offices and shelters.
- Create a video to explain the shelter system and the expectations for the family to be shown at intake and in shelters.
- Create a script to clearly explain rules, responsibilities, rights, and options for immediate assistance in moving out of shelter.

Some of the activities may already be taking place. The recommendation is that if they are not currently happening, they should start; and if they are, they should be monitored to ensure they will continue throughout the peak season.
Final Conclusions

Hennepin County has been a leader in the work with persons experiencing homelessness and has many programs in place that help prevent families from becoming homeless, divert families from shelter and move families quickly from shelter back into the community. Despite the variety and success of these measures, there are many areas of opportunity where Hennepin County can learn from other communities and provide a better experience for families at risk of becoming homeless or experiencing homelessness, while at the same time reducing costs and eliminating inefficiencies.

This study faced limitations in its design, and further research must be conducted to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the practices recommended in this report. Researchers did not speak directly with families experiencing homelessness, and this voice is critical in understanding ways in which the system could be strengthened from a user-perspective. Only five communities outside of Hennepin County were interviewed, and the key informants were identified through word of mouth, thus limiting the range of perspectives from these communities. Further research should identify additional communities, and conduct a more comprehensive study, including additional key informant interviews from a wider range of interviewees.

Recommended practices should be studied within the context of Hennepin County to identify success. While a practice might work well in another community, it may provide limited results within Hennepin County, and any sustainable changes must be studied to understand effectiveness.

Thank you

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Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System


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Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System

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Appendices

Appendix A SWOT Analysis for Heading Home Hennepin

Strengths
- Right to shelter/Shelter All policy
- Rapid Exit is well funded and we have expertise on the topic
- Coordinated assessment and coordinated shelter system (all come through the same door and go through the same requirements)
- Rapid Exit – Scattered site model with services
- Built in incentives to leave shelter (i.e. family has to pay for shelter stay)
- 211 is 24 hours

Weaknesses
- 2 week waiting period for Rapid Exit screening
- Diversion – Not prevention services
- Hard to change Rapid Exit in every aspect
- No clear overflow plan for high need months
- Unclear explanation of how shelter works to families entering shelter
- Cost of shelter – Family of 4 in shelter = $3700/month, family in an apt = $1000/month
- Lack of flexibility in how money is spent
- Urban planning laws prevent units (e.g., need 1.5 parking spaces for each unit)
- All shelters are in Minneapolis

Opportunities
- Coordinated assessment may identify more housing options
- Decentralization – Will have six sites and will transition to a “mobile shelter team”
- St. Stephen’s is making changes to Rapid Exit
- Levels 1-4 screening ratio bonuses – help people with work who are ready to leave shelter first
- Services that focus on African American women
- Employment has to be permanent to get placed in housing by Rapid Exit
- Savings – Single adult shelters have this
- Families – Language barrier
- Use the $3700/month it costs to stay in shelter for housing instead of shelter
- “Shelter in Place” model
- Build units for 30% income rental
- Family shelter and permanent supportive housing – Many currently focus only on CD/MH

Threats
- 1.6% vacancy rate (Minneapolis), 2.1% (greater metropolitan area)
- Hard to house and employ the Level 4s – felons, CD/MH – 60 month MFIP
- Overflow at the Drake
- If costs are too high, could lose Shelter All policy (in effect since 1988)

Source: Discussion with Matthew Ayres, Heading Home Hennepin, February 19, 2013. Also reviewed in other interviews for additional ideas.
Appendix B GRH Categories of Eligibility

SSI:
- Aged
- Blind
- Over 18 and disabled

GA:
- Permanent or temporary Illness (medical opinion)
- Placement in a Facility (service plan)
- Unemployable (vocational assessment)
- Developmental Disability or Mental Illness (qualified professional)
- Advanced Age (55 or older & limited work ability)
- Drug/Alcohol Addiction (medically certified as material factor in disability)
- SSDI/SSI Application or Appeal Pending

Source: Kristine Davis, Minnesota Department of Human Services, April 8, 2013.
Appendix C GRH Service Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant(s):</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocate:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s Strengths, Resources, Abilities, and Skills</th>
<th>Cultural Considerations, Needs and Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

**Financial Goals**: Goals that help you manage your finances and plan for the future.

*Examples*: 1) Set up a budget plan and follow it each month, 2) Obtain free annual credit report, 3) Establish a savings plan.

**Financial Goal**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS/METHODS/TIMELINES:</th>
<th>Date Initiated</th>
<th>Date Completed/Revised</th>
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<tbody>
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Resources Shared:__________________________________________________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Responsibilities:</th>
<th>Advocate Responsibilities:</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Adult Education Goals**: Goals that increase skills and knowledge that will help you attain future goals. 
*Examples:* Obtain GED by the end of the year. 2) Talk to an admission’s counselor at two local colleges about enrolling in classes. 3) Take a course at a local college or through community education.

**Adult Education Goal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS/METHODS/TIMELINES:</th>
<th>Date Initiated</th>
<th>Date Completed/Revised</th>
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Resources Shared:______________________________________________________________

**Participant Responsibilities:** ________________________________________________
**Advocate Responsibilities:** ________________________________________________

**Child Education Goals**: Goals that you or your children may have for their education this year. 
*Examples:* 1) Enroll child in Preschool or High Five. 2) Attend Parent/Teacher conferences each quarter. 3) Enroll child in after school tutoring program.

**Child Education Goal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS/METHODS/TIMELINES:</th>
<th>Date Initiated</th>
<th>Date Completed/Revised</th>
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Resources Shared:______________________________________________________________

**Participant Responsibilities:** ________________________________________________
**Advocate Responsibilities:** ________________________________________________
Examples of Additional Goal Areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Family Stability</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>Personal Relationships</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
<td>Chemical Health</td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Physical Health</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Additional Goal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS/METHODS/TIMELINES:</th>
<th>Date Initiated</th>
<th>Date Completed/Revised</th>
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</table>

Resources Shared:__________________________________________________________

Participant Responsibilities:________________________________________________

Advocate Responsibilities:__________________________________________________

Additional Goal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS/METHODS/TIMELINES:</th>
<th>Date Initiated</th>
<th>Date Completed/Revised</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Resources Shared:__________________________________________________________

Participant Responsibilities:________________________________________________

Advocate Responsibilities:__________________________________________________
**Subsidized Housing Log:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Address of Complex</th>
<th>Phone and Contact Name</th>
<th>Date Application Sent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where are you willing to move for a permanent subsidized housing opportunity? ____________________

Source: Wendy Wiegmann, Simpson Housing Services, March 19, 2013
# Appendix D GRH Payments and Client Obligations for MFIP Recipients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># MFIP Eligible</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MFIP Cash Portion</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRH Client Obligation</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFIP Standard for One</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Unearned Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDUCTIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Needs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Income Reduction</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTABLE INCOME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Deductions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counted Income</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PAYMENT               |       |       |
| Total State GRH Payment| +   | 867.00 | 867.00 | 867.00 | 867.00 | 867.00 |
| Client portion        | -     | 156   | 156   | 156   | 156   | 156   |
| State portion         | =     | 711.00| 711.00| 711.00| 711.00| 711.00|

| Allocation of PAYMENT |       |       |
| GRH Housing Rate      | -     | 867   | 867   | 867   | 867   | 867   |
| GRH Service Rate      | -     | 0.00  | 0.00  | 0.00  | 0.00  | 0.00  |

| FAMILY KEEPS          |       |       |
| Personal Needs        | +     | 94    | 94    | 94    | 94    | 94    |
| MFIP Cash Portion     | +     | 187   | 282   | 371   | 447   |       |
|                       |       | 94    | 281   | 376   | 465   | 541   |
| HUD FMR               | 10/1/12 | 592   | 736   | 920   | 1296  | 1529  |

Source: Kristine Davis, Minnesota Department of Human Services, April 8, 2013.
### Appendix E GRH - Long-term Homeless Definition for Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of MN Long-term Homeless definition (exact words from memo dated 2-8-2005)</th>
<th>SHS clarification of MN Long-term Homeless definition for families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Families lacking a permanent place to live continuously for a year or more</strong></td>
<td>This year of homelessness can be anytime within the past three years. Any time in institutions (including hospitals, jail, and transitional housing programs) must be excluded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Family has been living on the streets or in shelter for a year or more</td>
<td>Example of LTH: person was in a shelter for three months, went to the workhouse for two months, came back to shelter for nine months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Family has been “couch hopping” for at least a year (moving from one place to another with no permanent place to stay): Note: if a person has been staying with the same family or friend – even if for a year or more- the person is not considered “homeless” as the person’s living situation is considered to be stable</td>
<td>Family needs to have been “doubled up” in at least two different locations during this year. Example of LTH: family stayed with a friend for 4 months, moved to a different friend for 4 months, moved to a different friend for 4 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Families lacking a permanent place to live at least four times in the past three years</strong></td>
<td>Example of LTH: Family stays in a shelter four times in three years, regardless of length of stay in the shelter. It must be shelter, housing, shelter, housing, shelter, housing, shelter, housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* If the household has been to shelter/streets then left the shelter/streets for housing, then returned to shelter/streets (4 times in 3 years or fewer) the household is experiencing LTH regardless of the length of stay at the shelter/streets</td>
<td>Examples of LTH: Lease; shelter 1 month (had to leave); doubled up 2 months (had to leave); lease; doubled up different place 4 months (had to leave); lease; shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine whether a person who “couch hops” is homeless we will look over a three-year period at:</td>
<td>Lease; doubled up 2 months (had to leave); doubled up 3 months different place (had to leave); doubled up 2 months different place (had to leave); doubled up 2 months different place (had to leave); doubled up 3 months different place (had to leave)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Length of time in each living situation</td>
<td>Key: If the door is always open and they can come back, then it wouldn’t count as an episode. Example: mom’s house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Length of time in permanent housing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reasons for leaving one living situation for another</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Total duration of homelessness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Whether the person or family returned to the same “home” more than once during the period of couch hopping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wendy Wiegmann, Simpson Housing Services, March 19, 2013
Appendix G Options for Office Space for Drake Guests

1. Rent two rooms at the Drake and use them as offices at a cost of $150/ week with private bath and private room. Mitsy Clark is the manager and said she would look into this arrangement. She would need to know who is in the office, who is coming in and out of the building, and who is using the room. Their concern would be using a room for office space that could be used for people who need a place to stay. Ms. Clark has reservations but would be willing to discuss an office option and can be contacted by calling the Drake’s front desk at 612-359-0947.

2. Rent office space at Gethsemane Church, 905 4th Avenue South, north of the Drake and on the same block. The church has available office space that they would be willing to rent for $575 per month. This includes utilities and internet but not phone or air conditioning. Arrangements would need to be made for security at the door, an intercom system could be set up at the renter’s expense. Andrew Granias, Building and Maintenance Coordinator, Gethsemane Church, can be contacted at 612-332-5407.

3. Rent an office in the open office building across the street, at 917 5th Avenue. Although they are looking for a tenant to take the whole building, they are open to discussing leasing out a portion of the building. Potential cost is $15/ per square foot per year for a three-year lease. Brian at Colliers International at Brian.Doyle@ colliers.com.
Appendix H Comprehensive Practices List

1. Creative use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. This practice could include a number of changes including using TANF funds to pay for more preventative services, using TANF application processes to identify housing instability factors, using TANF funds to pay for additional services once a family enters shelter or using TANF funds to pay for additional Emergency Assistance (EA) payments, i.e. EA2 or EA3 payments.

2. Expansion of Group Residential Housing (GRH) to more families receiving Social Security (SSI) and General Assistance (GA) payments. GRH has been a housing model that has worked well at reducing the single adult homeless population in Hennepin County, and could work well for housing small families with parents that have a diagnosed disability.

3. Adapt the Day One collaboration model between Domestic Violence (DV) agencies for improving access to permanent, supportive, and transitional housing. This model has been implemented at relatively low cost in Seattle, WA and has been successful in the state of Minnesota at connecting victims of DV with services and emergency housing. This model provides real time information about shelter availability and services available for victims. This model could be expanded to provide openings in transitional and permanent housing to better triage families into housing that fits their unique needs.

4. Collaboration between multiple dimensions of the system including TANF, Medical Assistance, Childcare, Mental Health, Shelter Advocates, Rapid Exit staff and the Hennepin County Shelter Team (not a comprehensive list). Families in shelter have multiple requirements from different agencies. Collaboration between these different entities with different requirements for the families could provide support to families and help move families out of shelter and into stable housing more quickly.

5. Connecting young parents with youth and young adult programs. A large percentage of the homeless family population is young mothers with young children. There are additional supports available to young parents, and to youth that are homeless. These additional services could provide more intensive case management services and help support young parents.

6. Track families through TANF after they leave shelter. If families are receiving TANF benefits, they will be tracked by their case worker, and could provide information to understand where families go when they leave shelter, and monitor their housing stability to reduce repeat shelter use.

7. Prioritizing families for childcare assistance. Families that are homeless, and looking for employment often faced with the hardship of not having anyone to watch their children when they go for interviews and start a job. Currently, in
Hennepin County, families that find employment and are homeless can be prioritized for childcare assistance, however prioritization is not standard and families do not always receive this.

8. Staff inspects housing arrangements as a diversion tool. To ensure that families that enter shelter are actually homeless, staff in New York City physically go to housing arrangements and speak with friends and family members as a diversion technique. Staff will provide mediation and work to ensure that homeless families can return and stay at their previous housing, or identify alternative housing for the family.

9. Document management system. Families that seek shelter must provide birth certificates for their children. Many homeless families have difficulty providing identification to establish themselves as a family within the shelter system. Hennepin County could utilize a document management system that is already in place to locate birth certificates, state IDs and social security cards, to reduce the burden on families.

10. Shelter system script. Families that seek and enter shelter may be told different, sometimes conflicting information. All different entities that work within the homeless family system should use a script when speaking to a family, to ensure that all families receive the same consistent information from all staff.

11. Video at the Shelter Team to dispel myths. Similar to a shelter system script, having a video would provide families with information about what to expect in shelter. This streamlined information process system would ensure all families received the same information in a way that was easy to understand.

12. Kinship Care Program. Families that seek shelter that could stay with a stable friend or relative are diverted into their housing and the family that houses them is provided a minimal financial payment. This program aims to connect families with individuals that are stably housed, and incentivize families to stay out of shelter.

13. Results-only contract for rapid rehousing. All rapid rehousing services are contracted through outside agencies, and in the contracts, agencies are only paid if they house families and keep families housed. Contracts build in incentives to house difficult clients, and house additional families for additional payment. They are not paid if families are not housed.

14. Create a data sharing culture. This would require an open Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) where data is shared across different dimensions of the systems that interact with homeless families. The HMIS system must be owned and operated by an entity that will monitor data and ensure accuracy and usefulness of data. This could include the sharing of intakes and assessments as
part of the data sharing and sharing of activities and the different statuses of families.

15. Triaging families based on barrier level. Families are currently screened for housing barriers by the Rapid Exit program. Families that are screened as a level 1, 2 and 3 receive Rapid Exit housing services in a drop in setting. Families that screen at level 2 and 3 that find employment are provided with additional case management to locate and maintain housing. Families that screen at level 4 receive intensive case management.

16. Rapid Exit case managers should refer families towards transitional or permanent supportive housing if they are identified as a family that would benefit from additional services long-term.

17. Remove duplication of screenings. Currently, in Hennepin County, families are screened by a Rapid Exit screener and also screened by the Hennepin County Shelter Team, often on the same day. Both screenings ask similar questions, but serve different purposes. Families would only be screened by Hennepin County and Hennepin County would share the assessment with the Rapid Exit team to identify a housing barrier level.

18. Rapid Exit case managers should be located where families are staying. Providing space for Rapid Exit case managers to work within shelters provides additional opportunities to meet with families and identify opportunities to move out of shelter.

19. Temporary loan program. Families that are at risk of becoming homeless would receive payment from Hennepin County in the form of a loan. Families would avoid becoming homeless and would pay back the loan on a monthly basis. Families would not be eligible for another loan until their first loan is paid back, but are eligible to receive ongoing loans once their previous loan is paid back in full.

20. Maintain a one-week or less wait time for families to be assigned a Rapid Exit case manager. Families that must wait to be assigned a case manager are not being moved out of shelter quickly, and are often unclear of their responsibilities while in shelter. Rapid Exit should quickly connect with families and begin working to move them out of shelter.

21. HomeSafe youth parent program. Young parents are provided housing and rental support for two years and the program provides collaborative case management with TANF workers, HUD and other agencies while providing an advocate to connect clients with all needed services. After the program, 89% leave program to stay permanently housed in market rate housing.
22. Focused Supervision. Staff that work within the family shelter system are difficult to recruit and retain. Providing more intensive focused supervision would help support and manage staff in a difficult field and reduce staff turnover. Aspects of Focused Supervision include modeling effective relationships and strengths-oriented behavior, managing the emotional intensity of the work and support staff in personal and professional growth.

23. Targeting highest users. Repeat shelter use is costly for Hennepin County, and families that cycle in and out of the family shelter system would be provided apartments and case management to ensure stability. Housing a family is often less expensive than providing ongoing emergency shelter for a family.

24. Connect homeless families with mental health support models. Families with a parent that has a serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI) need ongoing services and case management to remain housed. Focusing funding on individuals with SPMI will reduce costs of psychiatric care and hospital visits in the long-term.

25. Use Rapid Exit services as a prevention tool. Rapid Exit services could be used to help families at risk of becoming homeless locate and move into permanent housing before they enter shelter. Families know that services, such as rental subsidies with Rapid Exit are available only once they enter shelter. Offering Rapid Exit services and rental subsidies to families at serious risk of becoming homeless would prevent families from entering shelter in the first place and help families stay housed.

26. Re-allocating funds from emergency shelter into prevention and permanent or supportive housing. Emergency shelter does not address the causes of homelessness and reallocating funds to prevention and permanent housing would be a more efficient and humane system to help families. Homeless families are more similar to families living in poverty that are not homeless, than to single adults that are homeless in terms of characteristics, and often just need affordable housing to stay housed. Model assumes that if families had affordable housing, they would not become homeless and need shelter.

27. Encourage supportive housing providers to include modify entrance criteria to prioritize people in shelters. Supportive housing agencies often have specific criteria for their different housing programs, and improving referral systems from the Hennepin County shelter team based on the housing requirements would better align families to housing that meets their needs.

28. Clearly identify Rapid Exit services and the Rapid Exit program for families. Suggestions include creating posters in Hennepin County service centers and in family shelters that outlines what Rapid Exit services entail and how to access different services. Posters should also include ways to get in touch with their Rapid Exit case manager for additional questions.
End Notes

5 Lisa Thornquist, Heading Home Hennepin, Personal interview, Minneapolis, MN, January 24, 2013.
14 Jean King, Portico Housing/Families Moving Forward. Phone interview, Minneapolis, MN, March 13, 2013.
18 Mercy Das-Sulc & Nou Yang, Hennepin County, Email Message, Minneapolis, MN, April 30, 2013.
Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System

34. Chrissy Canganelli, and Phoebe Trepp, Shelter House. Phone interview, Iowa City, February 26, 2013.
41. Ibid.
45. Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board. Phone interview. Columbus, OH, March 18, 2013.
Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System

51 “Pierce County Homeless Survey 2011.” Pierce County, (July 15, 2011).
53 Cost formula is cost = child*child rate + adult*adult rate)*number of nights.
56 Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board. Phone interview. Columbus, OH, March 18, 2013.
57 Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board. Phone interview. Columbus, OH, March 18, 2013.
58 Sandra Perko, Hennepin County. Personal interview, Minneapolis, MN, March 26, 2013.
59 Data is available to test this, but has not been analyzed to show if longer stays could be correlated with Drake stays.
60 Sandra Perko, Hennepin County. Personal interview, Minneapolis, MN, March 26, 2013.
61 Jean King, Portico Housing/Families Moving Forward. Phone interview, Minneapolis, MN, March 13, 2013.
63 Sandra Perko, Hennepin County. Personal interview, Minneapolis, MN, March 26, 2013.
71 Kristine Davis, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Personal interview, April 5, 2013.
72 Ibid.
74 Kristine Davis, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Personal interview, April 5, 2013.
Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System

76 Kristine Davis, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Personal interview, April 5, 2013.
78 Kristine Davis, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Personal interview, April 5, 2013.
81 Kristine Davis, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Personal interview, April 5, 2013.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Wendy Wiegmann, Simpson Housing Services, Personal interview, March 14, 2013.
86 Mark Legler, Office to End Homelessness, March 25, 2013.
87 Ibid.
88 Jackie MacLean and Debbi Knowles, Phone interview, March 22, 2013.
89 Kelly Rogers, and Janine Wenholz, Personal interview, March 11, 2013.
90 Kristine Davis, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Personal interview, April 5, 2013.
91 Ibid.
92 Colleen Schmitt, DayOne Services, Phone interview, March 7, 2013.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Jackie MacLean & Debbi Knowles, King County Department of Community and Human Services, Phone interview, Seattle, WA, March 22, 2013. Sara Zuiderveen, NYC Department of Homeless Services, Phone interview, New York City, NY, March 13, 2013. Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board, Phone interview, Columbus, OH, March 18, 2013.
97 Sandra Perko, Hennepin County Shelter Team, Personal interview, Minneapolis, MN, March 26, 2013.
98 Jessica Reno, St. Stephens Human Services, Phone interview, Minneapolis, MN, March 5, 2013.
100 Ibid.
101 Jenny Geris, St. Anne’s Place, Phone interview, Minneapolis, MN, March 26, 2013.
102 Jackie MacLean & Debbi Knowles, King County Department of Community and Human Services, Phone interview, Seattle, WA, March 22, 2013.
104 Elizabeth Hinz, Margo Hurrle, and Brenda Beyer, Minneapolis Public Schools, Personal interview, Minneapolis, MN, February 22, 2013.
105 Ibid.
106 Laura Oja, Tubman, Personal interview, Minneapolis, MN, February 20, 2013.
107 Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board, Phone interview, Columbus, OH, March 18, 2013.
Recommendations for the Hennepin County Family Shelter System


113 Laura Oja, Tubman Alliance, Personal interview, Minneapolis, MN, February 20, 2013.

114 Chrissy Canganelli and Phoebe Trepp, Shelter House, Phone interview, February 26, 2013.

115 Margo Hurrle, Minneapolis Public Schools, Personal interview, Minneapolis, MN, February 22, 2013.


117 MA Sentell, L Tetine, and Martha A. Shumway, PhD. “Low Literacy and Mental Illness in a Representative Sample.” The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease 191, no. 8 (August 2003): 549.


119 Ibid.

120 Ibid., 10.


122 “Homeless and Highly Mobile Children and Youth in Minneapolis,” Year End Summary Provided by Elizabeth Hinz, Minneapolis Public Schools, February 25, 2013.

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