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Homelessness:
Key Findings and
Grantmaking Strategies

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This report was prepared in consultation with
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by Putnam Community Investment Consulting.

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To the Reader:

This report provides a summary of research and interviews, which were commissioned and conducted by the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation during the spring of 2002 to guide the development of grantmaking strategies in the field of homelessness.

This report is not intended to be an exhaustive review of research in homelessness or a prescription for a specific set of philanthropic investments. But it does serve as a guide to the thinking and practices of many individuals and organizations who are leaders in the effort to end homelessness.

What the report makes clear is that although homelessness is a national problem affecting millions of Americans, it is not intractable. Homelessness can be ended. Strategies exist to prevent and end homelessness for both chronically and episodically homeless populations. By supporting approaches that prevent homelessness, house homeless people, increase the production of affordable housing, and foster community-wide planning, we believe the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation — and other philanthropic entities — can make a significant contribution to ending homelessness locally and nationally.

At a time when local, state and national organizations as well as government agencies, are converging toward a goal to end homelessness, the philanthropic community is well positioned to provide both strategic guidance and targeted resources to end homelessness in individual communities and across the country.

We hope this report will assist others, as it has us, in identifying the intersections of need and opportunity in which they can apply their resources and leadership to help end homelessness.

Cassandra Benjamin
Homelessness Program Officer
Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation

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Twenty-five years ago widespread homelessness did not exist in America. Homelessness emerged as a prominent national issue in the early 1980s, and, despite an economic boom and a two billion dollar a year infrastructure designed to address the problem, homelessness has increased at an alarming rate during the past two decades.

The statistics about homeless people in the United States paint a startling picture:

- In the late 1990s, between 2.3 and 3.5 million people in the United States experienced homelessness at least once during the year.

- Nearly 40% of these homeless people were children.

- Currently, an estimated 350,000 California residents, at least 100,000 of whom are from the Bay Area, experience homelessness at least once during any given year.

Fortunately, there is a resurgence of interest to address homelessness and its underlying causes. For example, President Bush, Congress, and Governor Davis have each recently outlined strategies to reduce chronic homelessness, and editorials in the New York Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, and other major newspapers have called for national attention and efforts towards ending homelessness.

II. KEY FINDINGS

Sixty-nine local, state and national homelessness experts were interviewed to advise the Foundation's Homelessness Initiative. Highlights of these interview findings include:

- **Homelessness can be ended**, but it will require significant changes in both mainstream systems and the homelessness assistance system. The National Alliance to End Homelessness' plan to end homelessness in ten years is gaining wide national acceptance.

- **There are three structural factors at the root cause of homelessness**: lack of affordable housing, inadequate income to afford housing, and inadequate access to services.

- **80% of homeless people are *episodically* homeless**, often a result of a short term crisis (e.g., loss of job). **The other 20% of homeless people are *chronically* homeless**, with more severe service and housing needs. These families and individuals utilize nearly 70% of the homeless system's resources.

- **Assistance finding housing and rental subsidies should be the first priority to help the episodically homeless** (80% of the homeless population).

- **Permanent supportive housing is a cost-effective and successful strategy for the chronically homeless** (20% of the homeless population). There is a need for capacity building for nonprofit developers, service providers and property managers in order to help them produce and manage more permanent supportive housing.

- **Lowest-income populations have the greatest need for affordable housing.** More federal investment is needed to create new affordable housing stock, especially targeting those at 30% or less of Area Median Income (AMI).

- **Mainstream systems (e.g., welfare, public health, mental health, criminal justice, foster care, etc.) must be held accountable for preventing homelessness by providing housing discharge planning when clients exit their systems**.

- **Strategies are needed for children and youth to end the cycle of homelessness.** Homelessness can be especially traumatic for children and can seriously disrupt their education. Early intervention is needed to prevent future homelessness.

- **Philanthropy can play an important role** by supporting national, state and local policy change; promoting the dissemination of information; and providing leadership and strategic grants to focus on *preventing and ending* homelessness.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRANTMAKING STRATEGIES

The Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation recently created a program area in Homelessness, building upon its successful experience funding local homeless service providers through its Children, Youth and Families grantmaking program. At a time when local, state and national organizations are converging toward a goal of ending homelessness, the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation is well positioned to provide both strategic guidance and targeted resources to prevent and end homelessness locally and nationally.

These recommendations are presented within the framework of the National Alliance to End Homelessness' plan to end homelessness in ten years, and propose possible grantmaking strategies for consideration by the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation. The National Alliance Plan contains four basic elements for systemic change; a description of each element is provided below, followed by proposed grantmaking strategies:

Prevent Homelessness ("Close the Front Door")

The mainstream public support systems (welfare, public health, mental health, criminal justice, foster care, etc.) often shift the responsibility for assisting their most vulnerable clients onto the homeless assistance system, by discharging clients who have no housing options.

Strategy 1: Promote accountability with mainstream systems for ensuring that their clients do not become homeless.

Strategy 2: Help school districts leverage resources to better meet the needs of homeless children.

House the Homeless ("Open the Back Door")

Where homeless people are already accommodating the shortage of housing, this should be facilitated and accelerated. Where there is no housing, particularly for those who are chronically homeless, an adequate supply of appropriate housing should be developed and subsidized.

Strategy 3: Strengthen current and develop new family permanent supportive housing in the Bay Area.

Strategy 4: Promote a "housing first" approach among homeless assistance providers.

Build the Infrastructure for Affordable Housing

Ending homelessness can be a first step in addressing the systemic problems that lead to the crisis of poverty: shortage of affordable housing, incomes that do not pay for basic needs, and lack of appropriate service for those who need them.

Strategy 5:   Support efforts to create new public revenue sources for affordable housing.

Strategy 6:   Support policy advocacy to remove barriers to the development of local affordable housing.

Strategy 7:   Re-engage local and national funders around the issue of homelessness.

Plan for Outcomes

Localities can begin to develop plans to end, rather than manage, homelessness. There are two components. Every jurisdiction can collect data that allows it to identify the most effective strategy for each sub-group of the homeless population. Second, jurisdictions can bring to the planning table those responsible for mainstream as well as homeless-targeted resources.

Strategy 8:   Support the development and implementation of effective Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) at the organizational, local and regional level.

Strategy 9:   Support community planning to end homelessness in Bay Area counties once HMIS systems come on-line.

IV. CONCLUSION

Although homelessness is a national problem affecting millions of Americans, it is not intractable: homelessness can be ended and specific strategies exist to prevent and end homelessness for both chronically and episodically homeless populations. By supporting strategies that prevent homelessness, house currently homeless people, increase the production of affordable housing, and foster community-wide planning, the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation can make a significant contribution to ending homelessness locally and nationally.

"After two decades in which homelessness has been an issue on the national policy agenda, our nation must now choose whether to allow the problem of homelessness to become a permanent fixture in our society or whether to pursue steps that will not just manage the problem but bring about its end."[1]

—Nan Roman, President, National Alliance to End Homelessness

I.   INTRODUCTION

Twenty years ago widespread homelessness did not exist in America. It was during the 1980s when homelessness emerged as a prominent national issue. Despite the economic boom of the 1990s, and a two billion dollar a year infrastructure designed to address the problem, homelessness has increased at an alarming rate during the past two decades. Even worse, families with young children make up a growing proportion of the total homeless population.

New data and analysis have enabled homeless advocacy groups to better understand the nature of the homeless population and the causes of homelessness. While advocates and some policy makers have never questioned that homelessness *must* be ended, there is now a growing conviction that homelessness *can* be ended. National policy and research groups such as the National Alliance for the Homeless and the Urban Institute argue that eliminating homelessness in America will not require ending poverty, mental illness or chronic disease. While these broader goals are important, a national effort focused on the specific systemic causes of homelessness can have a major impact, perhaps within the span of a decade.

This renewed willingness to grapple with homelessness and the underlying issue of affordable housing is manifest in a number of recent developments nationally and in California, including: the Congressional formation of the bi-partisan Millennial Housing Commission; the national housing trust fund legislation currently pending in Congress; President Bush's reestablishment in March 2002 of the Interagency Council on Homelessness which is charged with preventing and ending homelessness; California's $2 billion affordable housing bond measure scheduled for the November 2002 elections; and California Governor Gray Davis' April 2002 Homelessness Summit. Additionally, the New York Times published an editorial in March 2002 commending President Bush for encouraging federal programs to collaborate to end chronic homelessness. Recent editorials in the Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, and the Boston Globe also call for renewed attention and efforts towards ending homelessness.

The Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation recently created a program area in Homelessness, building upon its successful experience funding local homeless service providers through its Children, Youth and Families grantmaking program. It has already begun to re-engage other philanthropic organizations around the issue of homelessness, after nearly a decade of decline in the number of foundations with homelessness grantmaking programs. At a time when local, state and national organizations as well as government agencies, are converging toward a goal to end homelessness, the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation is well positioned to provide both strategic guidance and targeted resources to end homelessness locally and nationally.

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[1] *Annual Report,* National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2000

A. Purpose of this Report

This report provides a summary of recent research and key informant interviews in order to guide the development of grantmaking strategies for the Homelessness Initiative of the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation. During the spring of 2002, Foundation staff conducted a series of 69 interviews with top national, state, regional and local thought leaders and practitioners to inform the design of the Homelessness grantmaking program. The purpose of this document is to:

- Summarize the key interview findings to highlight the needs, challenges, promising practices and potential leverage points for philanthropic investment;

- Review relevant data, research and background information to support and expand upon these findings;

- Based on the findings, identify potential programmatic strategies and place these strategies in the context of the Foundation's core values;

- Identify next steps and areas for further investigation; and

- Provide a list of documents, web-based resources, individuals and organizations as a future resource for Schwab Foundation staff.

This report is not intended to be an exhaustive review of research into the causes, practices and policies associated with homelessness, nor as a prescription for a specific set of philanthropic investments. Rather it is a guide to the thinking and practices of many of the individuals and organizations recognized as top leaders in the effort to address and end homelessness. As such, the authors hope this report will assist in setting the broad directions of the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation's Homelessness Initiative in order to maximize the impact of the Foundation's resources and leadership.

B. Methodology

This report was prepared for the Charles and Helen Schwab by Putnam Community Investment Consulting. The key findings outlined in this report are derived primarily from 69 interviews conducted by Foundation Program Officer Cassandra Benjamin between January and May 2002.

The authors held a series of meetings with Cassandra Benjamin to review and summarize the notes of her interviews. Information gaps were identified and further interviews were conducted. The interview notes were reviewed and cross-referenced with recent literature in the field of homelessness. Further discussions were held with Ms. Benjamin to map out initial grantmaking strategies. This report is also heavily informed by the National Alliance to End Homelessness' report, *A Plan: Not A Dream. How to End Homelessness in Ten Years.*

II.   OVERVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS

A. Scope of the Problem[2]

In the late 1990s, between 2.3 and 3.5 million people in the United States experienced homelessness at least once during the year. Nearly 40% of these were children. The number of homeless individuals on any given day has increased 40% since 1987. On any given day, as many as 842,000 people are homeless, including 200,000 children in homeless families.[3]

National statistics

- Most homeless families and single adults enter and exit homelessness relatively quickly. These are the "episodically homeless" who make up 80% of the total homeless population. The other 20% of people in the homeless assistance system—the "chronically homeless"—have more severe service and housing needs. These families and individuals use the homeless system on a repeat basis, and utilize nearly 70% of the system's resources.

- On any given day, the adult population using homeless assistance programs includes single men (61%); single women (15%); households with children (15%); and people with another adult but not with children (9%).

- Not surprisingly, people living at or below the federal poverty level are the most vulnerable to experiencing a homeless episode. While only 1% of the total U.S. population becomes homeless each year, as many as 10% of people living in poverty experience homelessness.

- About half of the individuals who experience homelessness over the course of a year live in family units.

California and Bay Area statistics

- Approximately 350,000 Californians experience at least one episode of homelessness each year, according to the Governor's office.

- An estimated 100,000 people are homeless annually in the Bay Area.[4]

B. Causes of Homelessness

> "*If housing were inexpensive, or people could earn enough to afford housing, very few individuals would face homelessness.*"
>
> —Martha Burt, Ph.D., Urban Institute

This disarmingly simple statement captures the structural nature of homelessness. Dr. Burt and other national researchers point out that while personal factors such as lack of education, mental disability, substance abuse, and a history of childhood physical or sexual abuse can increase the likelihood that a

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[2] Statistics used in this section are based on the 1996 National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients, conducted by the US Census Bureau, and on analysis by Martha R. Burt in *What Will It Take To End Homelessness?* (2001) and *America's Homeless II* (2001).

[3] Because more families with children than single people enter and leave homelessness during a year, children and families represent a relatively larger share of the annual population than of the population that is homeless on a particular day.

[4] Estimates provided by county homeless coordinators form San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

person will becoming homeless, *only the presence of serious structural factors in the United States could produce today's high levels of homelessness.*[5]

Structural factors that have fueled the problem include:

<u>Housing</u>

Changing housing markets for extremely low-income families and single adults are pricing more people with below poverty incomes out of the market. While home ownership has grown, the number of low-cost rental units is falling. Local zoning restrictions often exclude affordable housing alternatives, and racial, ethnic and class discrimination in housing persist in many areas.[6]

<u>Income</u>

The "new economy" provides fewer employment opportunities for people with a high school education or less, contributing to the widening gap between rich and poor. Nowhere in the nation can a minimum wage worker afford a one-bedroom apartment. Over twelve million individuals and 5.4 million families pay more than half their income for rent and have no financial buffer for unforeseen emergencies. [7] This represents a vast pool of potential homeless people.

<u>Services</u>

People of all income levels require services such as medical care, legal services, employment training and substance abuse treatment. Poor people must depend on public systems for these services, which do not have the capacity to meet the need. Without adequate services, people with health, mental health, legal or other personal problems become more vulnerable to homelessness.

Most families become homeless because they have a housing crisis. While many homeless people face additional challenges, such as substance abuse and mental health problems, these problems are not significantly different from those of poor families that do have housing.

C. The Response to Homelessness—The Growth of the Homeless Service System

The initial response to the homelessness crisis in the early 1980s centered mostly on emergency food and shelter. As the problem became more entrenched, homeless assistance systems developed a range of housing and supportive service options for people at different points along the homelessness "continuum"—emergency shelter, transitional housing with services, and permanent housing, with and without supportive services attached. This strategy became codified in the Continuum Of Care planning that has been mandated since the mid-1990s for communities receiving federal homelessness funding.

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[5] Burt, *What Will It Take To End Homelessness*?

[6] In 2000, Congress created the Millennial Housing Commission, a blue ribbon, bipartisan panel "to identify, analyze, and develop recommendations that highlight the importance of housing, improve the housing delivery system, and provide affordable housing for the American people, including recommending possible legislative and regulatory initiatives." The Commission will issue its report to Congress in May 2002.

[7] *A Plan: Not a Dream. How to End Homelessness in Ten Years*, National Alliance to End Homelessness (2000)

The homeless service *system* in the United States grew tremendously in the 1990s.[8]

- The nation's shelter and housing capacity grew by 220% between 1988 and 1996, from 275,000 beds to almost 608,000 beds. The capacity of emergency shelters grew by 21 percent. Transitional and permanent supportive housing grew from near zero to about 276,000 beds in 1996, roughly equal to the capacity of shelters a decade earlier.

- Soup kitchen and meal distribution services in central cities nearly quadrupled between 1987 and 1996, from 97,000 to 382,100 meals per day.

- Other types of homeless services also have increased, including health services, outreach programs, and drop-in centers.

What has emerged is a complex homeless assistance system that operates *in parallel* with the mainstream public systems charged with providing a safety net for all poor people. While the homeless assistance system ends homelessness for thousands of people every day, others quickly replace them. *People who become homeless are almost always clients of public systems of care and assistance*. These include the mental health system, the public health system, the welfare system, and the veterans system as well as the criminal justice and the child protective service systems (including foster care). *The more effective the homeless assistance system is in caring for people, the less incentive mainstream public systems have to deal with the most troubled people*—and the more incentive they have to shift the cost of serving them to the homeless assistance system.

D. The Cost of Homelessness

For local governments and service providers, placing homeless people in shelters often appears to be the least expensive solution. However, recent research demonstrates that emergency shelter is a costly alternative to permanent housing. While emergency shelter is sometimes necessary for short-term crises, too often it takes the place of permanent housing for the chronically homeless.

Additionally, because they have no regular place to stay, homeless people use a variety of public systems in a costly and inefficient way. For example, it is more expensive and less successful to treat people for drug and alcohol related illnesses while they are homeless. People who are homeless also spend more time in jail or prison—an extremely expensive housing option. According to a study published by the Fannie Mae Foundation, the public cost of leaving someone homeless for one year in New York City (shelter, emergency room, jail, mental health services, etc.) is $30,000, the same as the cost of providing permanent supportive housing. [9]

E. The Philanthropic Response

Throughout the 1980s private philanthropy responded to the homelessness crisis by funding basic emergency services, as well as innovative approaches such as transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, community planning and national and local policy advocacy. The organized philanthropic response to homelessness peaked in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with efforts such as the Northern California Grantmakers Homelessness Task Force, which disbanded in 1995. Since that time, few

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[8] Federal funding has fueled the growth of the $2 billion per year homeless assistance system. Federal funds made available through the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 and other legislation are supplemented by state dollars and contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals.

[9] Culhane, Metraux, and Hadley, *The Impact of Supportive Housing for Homeless People with Severe Mental Illness on the Utilization of the Public Health, Corrections and Emergency Shelter Systems: The New York-New York Initiative.* (2001)

foundations have had a specific focus on homelessness. In the Bay Area, community foundations, particularly Peninsula and San Francisco, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation are the only funders who have continued to highlight homelessness as a funding area. Nationally, the Butler Family Foundation has brought together a group of national foundations, including the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation, to develop an initiative to re-engage philanthropy in the fight to end homelessness. Intermediary organizations such as the Corporation for Supportive Housing and the National Center on Family Homelessness, which provide both grants and technical assistance, continue to receive support from a number of national and regional funders.

F. Ending Homelessness—A New Approach

Something is clearly wrong when the number of homeless individuals and families continues to grow at the same time that an increasingly elaborate homeless assistance system helps many people exit homelessness every day.

The good news is that more than a decade of research into what works to end homelessness is fairly conclusive about the most effective approaches. *Numerous studies have found that affordable, primarily subsidized, housing prevents homelessness more effectively than anything else.* This is true for all groups of poor people, including those with persistent and severe mental illness and/or substance abuse issues.[10]

Housing is the key to assisting those who are currently homeless, as well as preventing future homelessness. Supportive services are important to helping people address the personal issues that may have led to their homelessness, but such services without a housing component cannot end homelessness.[11] Evaluations of demonstration projects and the experiences of many providers around the country show that even the most severely mentally ill people can be brought off the streets and can live stable lives if they are supplied with housing and provided supportive services *once they have a permanent place to live.*

In 2001 The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) published *A Plan: Not a Dream; How to End Homelessness in Ten Years.* This document presents a clear analysis of the nature and primary causes of homelessness, and concludes that American communities must shift away from planning how to better *manage* homelessness, towards a focus on *ending* homelessness.

> *"The causes of homelessness must be addressed, and people who are homeless must be helped. While the current system does this reasonably well for many of those who become homeless, it can neither prevent people from becoming homeless nor change the overall availability of housing, income and services that will truly end homelessness."*
>
> –From *A Plan: Not A Dream,* National Alliance to End Homeless

NAEH is mounting a national public awareness and policy changing campaign based on the Plan To End Homelessness. Perhaps the most important aspect of the NAEH plan is that it makes a strong case that homelessness need not become a permanent feature of American society, that in fact *ending homelessness is well within the nation's grasp.* A national strategy based on ending homelessness can help re-engage the efforts and resources of those, including many foundations, who may have given up on the issue.

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[10] Martha Burt, *"What Will It Take...?"*

[11] Culhane, Metraux, and Hadley (2001)

NAEH and a growing number of advocates and service providers advocate a "housing first" approach for currently homeless people, coupled with a concerted effort to shift the responsibility for preventing homelessness back onto the mainstream social programs like welfare, health care, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, that do have the ability to prevent and end homelessness.

III. KEY FINDINGS

> *"Whether one is concerned with welfare reform, education, health care or employment programs, any serious social policy aimed at addressing poverty in this country must encompass a housing strategy. In a fundamental sense, housing is central to the way people live, how they feel about themselves, and their ability to develop self-esteem, be good parents and acquire the skills and stability necessary for work."*[12]*"*

> – Rachel G. Brat, Department of Urban and Environmental Policy, Tufts University

This section summarizes the findings of interviews with 69 local and national leaders. Those interviewed represented a broad range of organization types and geographic. Most of the key informants interviewed have been in the field for many years and thus brought multiple perspectives to bear on their comments. Also, some of the organizations work on more than one front—for example, a local homeless services agency that also participates in national policy advocacy. In terms of their current principal roles, 9 key informants represent advocacy/policy organizations, 13 work in government agencies, 6 are grantmakers, 9 work in intermediary organizations, 28 represent homeless service providers (including 5 agencies serving homeless youth), and 4 work in homeless research and evaluation. Key informants were asked about needs, challenges, and critical issues facing the field. They were also asked to comment on how private philanthropy can best support homelessness issues and to suggest particular grantmaking strategies that the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation might adopt. These interviews provided depth, texture and, in many cases, local detail to the general picture described in the previous section. For a list of those interviewed, please see Appendix A.

Below we highlight the key findings that are presented throughout this report, followed by a more in-depth discussion of the findings identified primarily though key informant interviews. The information is presented in order of priority as identified by key informants and the documents reviewed.

A. Highlights of Key Findings

- **Homelessness can be ended**, but it will require significant changes in both mainstream systems and the homelessness assistance system. The National Alliance plan to end homelessness is gaining wide national acceptance.

- **The main causes of homelessness are lack of housing affordability and poverty.** More federal investment is needed to create new affordable housing stock.

- **80% of homeless people are *episodically* homeless**, entering and exiting the homeless system quickly in response to a short term crisis (e.g., loss of job). **The other 20% of homeless people are *chronically* homeless**, with more severe service and housing needs. These families and individuals use the homeless system on a repeat basis, and utilize nearly 70% of the system's resources.

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[12] *Shelterforce, #94, July/August 1997*

- **Assistance finding housing and rental subsidies should be the first priority to help the episodically homeless** (80% of the homeless population).

- **Permanent supportive housing is an effective strategy for the chronically homeless** (20% of the homeless population). There is a great need for capacity building for nonprofit developers, service providers and property managers in order to help them produce and manage more permanent supportive housing.

- **Lowest-income populations have the greatest need for affordable housing.** Public investment in affordable housing, especially housing targeting those at 30% or less of Area Median Income (AMI) is vital.

- **Mainstream systems (e.g., welfare, public health, mental health, criminal justice, foster care, etc.) must be held accountable for preventing homelessness by providing housing discharge planning when clients exit their systems**. This will mean demonstrating the cost savings of preventing homelessness, and can be achieved through incentives and penalties that foster accountability for preventing homelessness.

- **Strategies are needed for children and youth to end the cycle of homelessness.** Homelessness can be especially traumatic and stigmatizing for children and can seriously disrupt their education. Early intervention is needed to prevent future homelessness.

- **Philanthropy can play an important role** by supporting national, state and local policy changes; promoting the disseminations of information; and providing leadership and strategic grants to help communities and systems focus on *ending* homelessness.

B. Housing

What homeless people most need is help obtaining housing and stabilizing their financial situation. By providing "housing first" through permanent supportive housing and affordable housing, homelessness can be significantly reduced.

Housing First

Innovative programs and national policy advocates promote a "housing first" approach, which provides intensive assistance in obtaining housing and income supports, with follow-up services once people are in permanent housing.

- Beyond Shelter in Los Angeles is a national pioneer of the "housing first" model for homeless families. Beyond Shelter provides a range of training and technical assistance resources to help other organizations and communities implement the housing first approach for homeless families.

- Many Bay Area service providers recognize the benefits of a housing first approach, but lack the capacity to provide intensive assistance in locating housing or comprehensive after care services.

Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is successful because it combines three key elements: affordable housing, support services and community. The Corporation for Supportive Housing estimates that constructing 200,000 new units of permanent supportive housing over the next ten years would virtually end chronic homelessness nationally.

- Many good PSH models exist, but must be adapted to meet local needs.

- PSH is a logical solution for chronically homeless populations – single adults, families, and youth grappling with mental health, substance abuse, physical health and other issues.

- Well-designed cost studies of local PSH programs can demonstrate cost effectiveness and increase policymaker support.

- Funding is needed for on-site services at Bay Area PSH sites (e.g. children's activities, education, parenting skills, employment, counseling).

- Affordable housing developers face barriers to developing PSH versus less service-intensive development projects.

- Property management agencies operating at PSH sites need better training to deal effectively with challenging residents.

Affordable Housing

- More federal investment is needed to create new affordable housing stock.

- Foundations can have the greatest impact on the affordable housing problem by supporting organizations working to advance policy development at the local, state and federal levels.

- The Bay Area has a large number of experienced and dedicated nonprofit affordable housing developers with a track record of high quality, well-maintained housing.

- Housing advocacy should focus on affordability for low and very low-income people – those at under 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

- Housing trust funds are a promising model for providing a steady funding stream for affordable housing.

- Advocacy is needed to (1) strengthen local housing elements (the portion of city general plans that specify how much affordable housing will be built), (2) strengthen state enforcement and incentive mechanisms, (3) support inclusionary zoning ordinances requiring at least 20% to 30% of new housing developments be affordable to low income residents, and (4) reduce NIMBY-ism.

C. Preventing Homelessness

Mainstream System Accountability

The mainstream public support systems (welfare, public health, mental health, criminal justice, foster care, etc.) often shift the responsibility for assisting their most vulnerable clients onto the homeless assistance system, by discharging clients who have no housing options and nowhere to go. *The key to preventing homelessness lies in holding the mainstream systems accountable for ensuring that their clients do not become homeless.*

- Housing discharge planning from institutions such as hospitals, residential treatment facilities and jails is an important prevention strategy, but discharge planning must happen across all mainstream systems to have an impact.

- Mainstream services need to provide accessible and ongoing mental health, substance abuse, and other vital support services for precariously housed people to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place.

- Homeless assistance services will need to be maintained as mainstream systems ramp up to do discharge planning.

- More research is needed, both nationally and locally, to understand the current *barriers* to accountability within mainstream systems, as well as the types of legislative *incentives* needed to promote a shift to greater accountability.

Education for Homeless Children

According to many key informants, meeting the needs of homeless children, especially ensuring their education, is a critical long-term prevention strategy. Without an opportunity to receive an education, homeless children are much less likely to acquire the skills they need to escape poverty as adults.

- Homeless children face difficulties finding transportation to school, being evaluated for special education programs and services, participating in after-school events and extra-curricular activities, obtaining counseling and psychological services, and accessing before- and after-school care programs.

- Many larger districts have established a homeless liaison position to work with shelters and service providers to identify homeless children and facilitate their enrollment and transportation. This strategy has proven effective and should be considered by other school districts.

- Districts should provide in-service training for teachers and school counselors to help them understand the needs and behavioral issues of homeless children.

- There is insufficient federal funding available to implement new HUD regulations that strengthen the requirements on school districts to ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to all public education.

D. Services and Service Providers

> *"Homelessness only ends when people are in permanent housing that they can afford. Anything else is just making homelessness more pleasant."*

> –Tanya Tull, Executive Director, Beyond Shelter

Most of those interviewed concurred with the conclusion that supportive services in the absence of permanent housing will never end homelessness. Current strategies to help the episodically homeless (80% of the homeless population) by providing ancillary services such as transportation and clothing do not work. Rather, housing should be the first priority. However, many chronically homeless people and people with special needs, such as domestic violence survivors, need supportive services. Further, currently homeless people will continue to need supportive and emergency services until more permanent housing options are available to them.

Service Gaps

Service providers interviewed identified a number of *service gaps*, including:

- More and better coordinated after care programs.

- Academic and mentoring support for homeless youth.

- Residential substance abuse treatment for women with children, so that women do not have to choose between going into treatment and keeping their children.

- In-depth mental health services for people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of childhood physical and/or sexual abuse.

<u>Organizational Capacity Needs</u>

Service providers also identified a need to improve their organizational and service capacity, including:

- Information technology: Improved computer systems and training are needed to manage current operations and to participate in regional homeless management information system (HMIS).

- Staff recruitment, training, and retention

- Financial management: Smaller shelter providers are financially vulnerable, and many are going out of business.[13]

- Fund development: Most service providers expressed a need for more stable funding streams. Some suggested organizational endowment campaigns as a way to provide stability.

E. Homeless Management Information Systems and Community Planning to End Homelessness

It is almost impossible to develop effective policies and programs for any population without accurate and reliable data. Until recently, few efforts has have been successful in collecting and analyzing local data on homelessness. The recent HUD (Housing and Urban Development) mandate to implement the Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)[14] has given new urgency to such data collection efforts already underway in many Bay Area counties.

No *national* data source will ever exist that can provide adequate information for *local* planning. Most of those interviewed acknowledged the critical importance of solid local information on who is homeless, why they became homeless, what assistance they receive, and what is effective in ending their homelessness. This information is essential to developing and evaluating local strategies to end homelessness.

- Many counties have effectively implemented and streamlined the annual continuum of caring planning process mandated by HUD. Far fewer are doing serious long-term strategic planning to prevent and end homelessness. Columbus, Ohio, is a national example of best practice in community-wide planning to end homelessness.

- Several informants suggested convening Bay Area County Homeless Coordinators and service providers to explore regional system design, purchasing and training opportunities.

- Challenges to local data collection include provider concerns about confidentiality and the burden data collection puts on their staff. Any effort to conduct comprehensive data collection and community planning should include sufficient time to design the process and consider implementation needs.

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[13] This is particularly an issue in Alameda County, which has a wide range of homeless assistance agencies. In counties with one major provider, such as San Mateo, organizational viability is not as much an issue. However, funding stability is an on-going concern for providers of all sizes.

[14] In 2001 Congress instituted a requirement that the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) collect data on the extent of homelessness in the United States and the effectiveness of the programs funded by HUD under the McKinney Act. As a result, communities receiving McKinney Act funds must report to HUD by December 31, 2003, the number of unduplicated homeless persons in their community. Additionally, HUD is requiring client level data that will aid in the analysis of the patterns of program usage.

- Many homeless service providers expressed ambivalence and concerns regarding the burden that data collection will place on providers. However, service providers interviewed recognized the benefits of centralized intake.

- Most acknowledged the difficulty of designing and implementing effective Homeless Management Information Systems. For instance, the Massachusetts system, which is regarded as the national model, does not have unimpeachable data after six years of operation.

F. Special Populations: Foster Care Youth and Domestic Violence Survivors

Even critics of transitional housing agree that it may benefit some homeless families and individuals, such as victims of domestic violence, teenage mothers and youth who have recently emancipated (aged out) from the foster care system.

- The mainstream foster care system needs to better prepare foster youth to live independently in safe and affordable housing. There are about 50,000 emancipated foster youth statewide, mostly living in the Bay Area and Los Angeles. This is a significant but finite number, and helping them achieve stable housing is an *achievable goal.*

- Fair housing laws often prevent development of age specific permanent or transitional housing for foster youth. California State Senator Tom Torlakson is currently sponsoring legislation to modify fair housing laws to exempt housing for youth.

- The lack of coordination between the homeless and domestic violence systems in some areas leads to inefficient use of resources and missed opportunities.

G. Public Awareness and the Stigma of Homelessness

It is important to promote the *possibility* of ending homelessness to policy makers, funders, and the public. Advocates and providers argue that housing must be seen as a basic human right. Viewed in this light, homelessness becomes not a matter of personal failure on the part of homeless people, but a failure of society to provide for its most vulnerable members.

- Most Americans see homelessness as a matter of individual responsibility, not systemic causes. Public perceptions of the homeless will be slow to change as long as chronically homeless people are living on the streets.

- Stigma reduction efforts should target public officials and funders.

H. Role of Foundations

Foundations need to re-engage with the issue of homelessness. Foundations can have an impact well beyond the dollar value of their grantmaking investment—they can play a critical role in ending homelessness by shaping public understanding that homelessness does not have to exist and can be ended, reducing the stigma of homelessness, bringing stakeholders to the table, developing and disseminating information on innovative approaches and best practice. A recent survey by the National Center on Family Homelessness asked 68 key stakeholders and experts in the area of homelessness what foundations can do to end homelessness. Respondent suggestions for funding, in order of priority, included: public policy, advocacy and public education; housing; direct services; technical assistance; research; and model program development. Many experts interviewed for this report also stated that foundations could have the greatest impact on homelessness by funding policy advocacy.

IV.   RECOMMENDED GRANTMAKING STRATEGIES

"The world we have created is a product of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."

—Albert Einstein

"If we always do what we've always done, we'll always get what we always got."

—Alcoholics Anonymous

"Business as usual" is not working for homeless people. If we continue to focus most public and private resources on managing homelessness rather than ending it, we will continue to see the number of people without adequate permanent housing increase each year. The Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation is well positioned to help signal a shift toward ending homelessness at the national and state policy level, as well as within local county systems and among local service providers.

The interviews and literature point to a number of strategic grantmaking opportunities for the Foundation. These represent "leverage points" where Foundation leadership and resources can have the greatest impact in both ending homelessness and improving the lives of individuals and families. The National Alliance Plan to End Homelessness provides a useful framework for the Initiative. The following are the principal strategies to end homelessness as stated by NAEH:[15]

Plan for Outcomes

New data have shown that most localities could help homeless people much more effectively by changing the mix of assistance they provide. A first step in accomplishing this is to collect much better data at the local level. A second step is to create a community planning process that focuses on the outcome of ending homelessness—and then brings to the table not just the homeless assistance providers, but the mainstream state and local agencies and organizations whose clients are homeless.

Close the Front Door

People who become homeless are almost always clients of public systems of care and assistance. These include the mental health system, public health system, welfare system, veterans system, as well as the criminal justice and child protective systems. The more effective the homeless assistance system is in caring for people, the less incentive these other systems have to deal with the most troubled people – and the more the incentive they have to shift the cost of serving them to the homeless assistance system. This situation must be reversed. The flow of incentives can favor helping the people with the most complex problems. As in many other social areas, investment in prevention holds the promise of saving money on expensive systems of remedial care.

Open the Back Door

People should not spend years in homeless systems, either in shelter or in transitional housing. They must be helped to exit homelessness as quickly as possible through a housing first approach. For the chronically homeless, this means permanent supportive housing (housing with services)—a solution that will save money as

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[15] *A Plan: Not A Dream. How to End Homelessness in Ten Years,* National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2000, pp 1-2.

it reduces the use of other public systems. For families and less disabled single adults it means getting people very quickly into permanent housing and linking them with services.

<u>Build the Infrastructure</u>

While systems can be changed to prevent homelessness and shorten the experience of homelessness, ultimately people will continue to be threatened with instability until the supply of affordable housing is increased; incomes of the poor are adequate to pay for necessities such as food, shelter and health care; and disadvantaged people can receive the services they need. Attempts to change the homeless assistance system must take place within the context of larger efforts to help very poor people.

Potential Goals of the CHSF Homelessness Initiative:

- Create a grantmaking program focused on the long-term outcome of preventing and ending homelessness.

- Support promising practices and systemic changes to end homelessness in the Bay Area.

- Use our experience with local homelessness programming to inform the Foundation's potential role at the regional, state and national policy levels.

- Become a leader and resource in re-engaging the philanthropic community in the effort to end homelessness.

Possible Grantmaking Strategies:

Strategies to Prevent Homelessness ("Close the Front Door")

Strategy 1: Promote accountability of mainstream systems.

➤ Conduct additional research to identify barriers and incentives for mainstream systems to take care of the most troubled people, rather than shifting the cost to the homeless system.

➤ Partner with national advocacy groups and funders to affect federal policy.

Strategy 2: Help school districts and homeless service providers work together and leverage resources to better meet the needs of homeless children.

➤ Provide funding for collaboration, homeless liaison positions, in-service training for teachers and school counselors, counseling services, and other services to meet the specific needs of homeless children.

➤ Pilot and evaluate programs to transport homeless children to school, to determine if these programs can be sustained by increased per student revenue.

Strategies to House the Homeless ("Open the Back Door")

Strategy 3: Strengthen current and develop new permanent supportive housing for Bay Area families.

➢ Work with nonprofit affordable housing developers and their associations to identify and overcome obstacles to building more PSH.

➢ Fund cost-studies to demonstrate the long-term cost savings of PSH and foster buy-in within county human service systems.

➢ Create a capacity building initiative for PSH providers modeled on the Corporation for Supportive Housing's (CSH) New York initiative.

➢ Support capacity building and technical assistance for developers, service providers and property managers. Support training at the regional and local levels to stimulate widespread replication of best practices.

➢ Provide funding for on-site services, especially services for children and youth.

Strategy 4: Promote a "housing first" approach among homeless assistance providers.

➢ Sponsor trainings and technical assistance by Beyond Shelter for Bay Area homeless assistance organizations.

➢ Convene a regional dialogue on after care services coordination.

➢ Provide capacity building grants to Bay Area organizations to implement key elements of a housing first strategy, such as intensive housing placement assistance and after care services.

➢ Fund transitional housing for special needs populations such as domestic violence survivors and young adults leaving foster care.

Strategies to Build the Infrastructure for Affordable Housing

Strategy 5: Create new public revenue sources for affordable housing.

➢ Support current legislative initiatives such as the campaign for the National Housing Trust Fund and California's 2002 affordable housing bond measure.

➢ Support the creation of housing trust funds in local communities. This can include communication of successful efforts and technical assistance for communities working to establish housing trust funds.

➢ Explore the affordable housing "land trust" model and evaluate its potential as strategy for creating affordable housing revenue.

> Support other local advocacy efforts for new bond measures, increased local affordable housing set asides and commercial linkage fees.

Strategy 6: Support policy advocacy to remove land use barriers and strengthen local affordable housing requirements.

> Support organizations working to strengthen housing elements within local general plans.

> Support policy work at the state level to strengthen enforcement and incentive mechanisms for greater housing element compliance, with an emphasis on increasing housing for those at 30% or below the Area Median Income (AMI).

> Support organizations advocating for inclusionary zoning ordinances requiring at least 20% to 30% of new housing developments be affordable to low income residents.

Strategy 7: Re-engage local and national funders with the issue of homelessness.

> Partner with other Bay Area and national funders to develop the Re-Engaging Philanthropy Initiative.

Strategies that Plan For Outcomes

Strategy 8: Support the development and implementation of effective Homeless Management Information Systems at the organizational, local and regional level.

> Support regional convening of county homeless coordinators and service providers to explore opportunities for regional cooperation on system design, data definitions and joint purchasing.

> Support training and hardware costs for agencies that agree to share data.

Strategy 9: Support community planning to prevent and end homelessness in Bay Area counties once HMIS systems come on-line.

V.   POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

> Establish an advisory group or groups to guide the implementation of elements of the Homelessness Initiative and/or the Initiative as a whole.

> Meet with content experts to explore more deeply the specific recommendations of this report (e.g. permanent supportive housing).

> Convene stakeholders to move forward with regional strategies such as HMIS and Housing First.

> Continue to explore partnerships with other funders to leverage grantmaking.

> Work with consultants to conduct further research and program development.

VI. AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION

➢ Identify incentives and barriers for mainstream system accountability and leverage points for private philanthropy.

➢ Determine whether there is a need for a statewide coalition of homelessness policy advocacy organizations and how to capture the momentum from the Governor's Summit on Homelessness.

➢ Identify strategies to engage business leaders and the business community in ending homelessness.

➢ Understand the connections to regional planning, transportation, and smart growth efforts. Suggested resources include the Association for Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Bay Area Transportation and Land Use Coalition (BATLUC).

➢ Track regional and national affordable housing initiatives (e.g., Millennium Commission Report, Association of Bay Area Governments report).

I.   APPENDIX A: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED

Key Informants, Bay Area Focus

Name	Title	Organization
Kathie Barkow	Fund Developer	Alameda County Continuum of Care
Jim Becker	Development Director	Shelter, Inc.
Kathy Black	Executive Director	La Casa de las Madres
Lisa Blakely	Program Director	Glide Cecil Williams House
Tere Brown	Division Director	Catholic Charities (Richmond Hills Family Center)
Christine Burroughs	Executive Director	InnVision
Maggie Donahue	Director	San Francisco DHS, Housing and Homeless Prog.
Kate Durham	Consultant	Former Alameda and SF homeless coordinator
Anne Ehresman	Program Director	InnVision
Marty Fleetwood	Executive Director	Homebase
Jeanne Foulis	Program Director	Catholic Charities (Richmond Hills Family Center)
Amy Freeman	Coordinator	Foster Youth Alliance
Katharine Gale	Consultant	Former Alameda County Homeless Coordinator
Rob Gitlin	Co-Director	At The Crossroads
Margaret Gregg	Homeless Coordinator	Santa Clara County
Poncho Guevara	Interim Director	Housing Trust Fund of Santa Clara County
Lauren Hall	SF Program Officer	Corporation for Supportive Housing
Vivian Frelix-Hart	Homeless Coordinator	City of San Jose
Jennifer Hodgson	Manager	Emergency Housing Consortium's Family Programs
Michele Jackson	Executive Director	Shelter Network
John Kelly	Executive Director	Samaritan House
Nancy Kerrebrock	Associate Program Officer	David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Frank Lalle	Program Officer	Peninsula Community Foundation
Carol Lamont	Program Officer	San Francisco Community Foundation
Amy Lemley	Executive Director	First Place Fund for Youth
Maryann Leshin	Program Officer	Corporation for Supportive Housing
Diana Linn	Director	Interfaith Hospitality Network
Father David Lowell	Executive Director	Raphael House
Michelle Magee	Vice-President	Harder+Company
Helen Meier	Executive Director	Compass Community Services
Salvador Menjivar	Executive Director	Hamilton Family Center
Susan Miller	Homeless Liaison	San Jose School District
Rev. Randy Newcomb	Executive Director	Golden Gate Community Services
Norman Pascoe	Dev. Specialist	San Mateo County Housing and Community Dev.
Tom Roberts	Director	Oakland Fund for Children and Youth
Steve Sachs	CPD Director	San Francisco Bay Area, Department of HUD
Dianne Spaulding	Executive Director	Non-Profit Housing Association
Anne Stanton	Executive Director	Larkin Street Youth Center
Barbara Walker	Program Director	Youth and Family Assistance
Cindy Ward	Manager	San Francisco DHS, Housing and Homeless Prog.

| Merlin Wedepohl | Executive Director | Shelter, Inc. |
| Cheryl Zando | Executive Director | Youth and Family Assistance |

Key Informants, State or National Focus

Name	Title	Organization
James Alexander	Program Supervisor	The Engagement Center at Mayhaven, Columbus, OH
Louise Alluis	Director	Lutheran Social Services/Faith Mission, Columbus, OH
Marge Argyelan	Assistant Director	Lakefront SRO, Chicago IL
Colleen Bain Gold	Program Director	YWCA Interfaith Hospitality Network, Columbus OH
Ellen Bassuk	President	National Center on Family Homelessness, Wash. DC
Angela Blackwell	CEO/President	Policy Link, Oakland
Tangerine Brigham	Program Director	Corporation for Supportive Housing, California
Joe Brooks	Program Director	Policy Link, Oakland
Martha Burt	Senior Fellow	Urban Institute, Washington, DC
Emily Camp-Landis	Analyst	City of Philadelphia, Housing Program
Shelia Crowley	Executive Director	National Low Income Housing Coalition, Washington DC
Rachel Ginsberg	Division Director	YWCA Interfaith Hospitality Network, Columbus OH
Rob Hess	Housing Specialist	City of Philadelphia
Bob Hohler	Chief Operating Officer	Melville Charitable Trust/Philanthropic Initiative, Hartford, CT
Carla Javits	CEO/President	Corporation for Supportive Housing, Oakland, CA
Dawn Moses	Policy Director	National Center on Family Homelessness, Washington DC
Mitchell Netburn	Executive Director	Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
Barbara Poppe	Executive Director	Community Shelter Board, Columbus, OH
Nan Roman	CEO/President	National Alliance to End Homelessness, Washington DC
Brenda Russell	CEO/President	National Network for Youth, Washington, DC
Debra Schwartz	Program Officer	John T. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation
Phoebe Soares	Program Director	National Center on Family Homelessness, Washington DC
Robert Stryker	Director	YMCA of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
Martha Toll	Executive Director	Butler Family Fund, Washington, DC
Tanya Tull	CEO/President	Beyond Shelter, Los Angeles
Donald Whitehead	Executive Director	National Coalition on Homelessness, Washington DC
Phyllis Wolfe	Special Expert	Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association, Washington, DC

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