

UPDATE
10 Year Plan to Address Issues Surrounding Housing and Homelessness
Linn County, Oregon
September 2012

Executive Summary

The community came together for the HEART (Homeless Enrichment, Rehabilitation Team) Summit in November of 2011 and noted areas of continued focus and needs for addressing issues of homeless individuals and families in Linn County. The Committee to Address Issues Surrounding Housing and Homelessness in Linn County, Oregon reconvened in January of 2012 as an ongoing process to review, assess, acknowledge challenges and achievements and update the 10 Year Plan. The committee came together to share ideas about how to measure, build and strengthen services in Linn County. The nature of homelessness makes it hard to record information and track progress in addressing issues. In order to update the plan the committee determined to best assess needs, goals and achievements with a survey of providers of homeless services in the county. Changes in the homeless population may produce emerging issues for the committee to consider and to respond accordingly. A 26 question survey was developed by members in the following areas: housing, medical, youth and supportive services. It was sent out to 65 local service providers from small volunteer organizations to county and state departments. Twenty five service providers responded to the survey. The main focus was to determine the difference from 2009 to 2011 in needs and gaps. The original 10 Year plan was developed in 2009. The data from the survey was to assist in developing the update to the 10 Year plan.

The committee strategically engages partners to improve the quality of life of the homeless in Linn County, Oregon. Working together with a variety of organizations, the committee reviews the current community challenges by working together toward a lasting solution serving the homeless population. In addition, the members are a stronger support to the community by working together. The initial goals (page 5) are to raise community awareness and increase permanent housing. By raising awareness of the important role that the community plays, the committee seeks to increase the number of permanent housing opportunities through partnership and seeking out new funding.

The committee charter includes:

- Increase public awareness designed to increase understanding of homeless individuals and families and their needs;
- Discover through community-based Service Provider survey 2009-2011, a better understanding of the gaps and needs in services to the homeless;
- Strengthen existing informal networks of support for homeless individuals and families;
- Determine that the current goals and strategies are relevant;
- Encourage implementation of a community plan for on-going review of goals and strategies through convening gatherings, for public awareness and education; and
- Evaluate the success of the implementation, through on-going review, looking for opportunities for the community to help provide permanent housing and related services.

Through the coordinated effort of the committee with 11 anchor partners, and more than 30 additional agencies, plus input from the HEART Summit, the update to the 10 Year plan provides community coordination to eliminate stigmas associated with homelessness, improve community educational outcomes and encourage support for service providers. The committee is engaged in both short-term and long-term goals. The committee of service providers and community volunteers worked as a focus group on issues and solutions to promote the Ten Year plan mission of standard housing for all Linn County residents.

Vision:

“Everyone residing within Linn County should have the opportunity to live in decent, safe, and affordable housing that provides the basis for a stable environment from which to move forward in their respective lives.”

Mission:

The primary charge of the original committee of 2009 was to develop a comprehensive document dealing with issues around housing and homelessness for Linn County that would approach the realities of not only those currently homeless, but also those at close risk of homelessness. The plan will identify problems, identify specific and attainable solutions and goals, and establish timelines and resources for meeting those goals. The creators of the original plan recognize that a primary outcome of the work needs to be the development of transitional and permanent, supportive housing that can accommodate the needs of those who face unique challenges including mental illness, addresses long term homelessness, and other difficult-to-place populations.

LINN COUNTY

Linn County encompasses 2,297 square miles and consists largely of small rural communities. It's July 1, 2010 population estimate was 117,340 with an estimated annual per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$29,451 in 2010 which was nearly 20% lower than the statewide average for the same year. This gives Linn County a state ranking of 27 out of Oregon's 36 counties. Linn County has an estimated 17,140 individuals or 15.6 percent of the population living in poverty, with an estimated 24% percent of youth under age 18 living in poverty (US Census Bureau 2008-2010 ACS).

Characteristics of persons experiencing long-term homelessness (Including adults and unaccompanied youth). Many requesting services present behavior of mental illness and may have substance abuse issues or dependency problems. The veteran population has a high incident of homelessness. Other characteristics include the homeless community has a history of being victimized by domestic violence and prior incarceration.

Summary of Survey Results

The survey provided the following key information to committee members for review of the 10 year plan:

The continued need for housing services in Linn County from emergency shelter services to permanent supportive housing is validated in the survey. Rental assistance saw twice the number of participants from 2009 to 2011 for services. Permanent supportive housing increased from 25 individuals in 2009 to 120 in 2011. A portion of this increase may be attributed to additional permanent housing available.

However, the request for services of Transitional Housing and Homeownership decreased over the two year count. The on-going issue and the biggest gap for program providers is staffing (as shown in graph 1 of Attachment B below). Other significant gaps and needs are building space, life skills programs for participants, mental health services and advocates for homeless clients. In regards to anticipated housing capacity, 54% of the providers noted "unknown" in determining future need of services. Service providers noted there will be fewer funds for their programs and participants they serve; the range of decrease of funds to support programs is anticipated to be from 10 to 55% as shown in graph2.

Providers noted the following when addressing their program gaps and needs for housing:

"Funding not enough to meet demand for rent assistance, resulting in fewer months of subsidy available per person/family."

"We have no paid staff; just use volunteers. We employ residents at our Thrift Shop, but they are not paid except in housing. Our income has dropped; utility costs have skyrocketed; we may have to close our women's house."

For Healthcare the largest age group for over all services is 19 to 64 years and for this age group the community has the least services available. All of the providers noted that services are available to low or no income individuals. The 19 to 64 year old population needs access to comprehensive services. Most providers noted homeless individuals seeking services for medical, dental, mental health and substance abuse services do not have insurance. Other providers noted that if they do have insurance it would require the individual to seek services outside of the county. See Attachment C, graph 1.

Medical: Clients are able to access emergency room and emergency clinics for limited services. Respondents noted that if homeless individuals can get to the providers of medical services they can be accessed on a limited basis.

Dental: There is a critical need for dental services. For dental services there is very limited access.

Mental Health: Providers noted more than 35% of homeless individuals need to access basic mental health services. Only two providers noted they provide any dental care and this is primarily tooth removal and x-rays with grant-funded dental care for uninsured drug court clients. All other providers noted they provide referral only and work to coordinate for youth dental care. Mental health services are accessible for about half of the homeless individuals and accessibility is very limited or not at all for the other half. Mental health services provided are assessment, counseling and prescriptions with other providers of homeless services providing referral, support and advocacy and coordination of delivery of services.

Substance Abuse: Providers responded that most individuals seeking their health services need substance abuse services and noted it keeps many individuals from accessing additional services without treatment. Homeless individuals are able to access substance abuse services though they may choose not to.

Providers noted the following when addressing their program gaps and needs for all types of health services:

“We refer people to In-Reach Clinic, Dental Clinic, and Linn County Mental Health. Denials are typically for not meeting criteria of needing A&D treatment and adequate participation in A&D treatment.”

“Typical referrals are to Community Services Consortium, Linn-Benton Housing Authority, and Linn County Mental Health. AA, NA, Celebrate for Recovery, support and advocacy.”

Supportive services: provided to homeless individuals or people at-risk of becoming homeless based on order of providing service: case management, information and referral, life skills, transportation, advocacy, clothing, hygiene kits, work experience/job training, health services, re-entry veterans and counseling. Over 29 support services are offered by partnering agencies to homeless individuals and families. Service providers saw an increase of 2,370 participants from 2009 to 2011. Providers turned away 2,055 requests for supportive services because the resource was unavailable. In addition, 2,050 clients did not meet criteria for services. See Attachment C, graph 2.

Youth: there were 1,365 days of services provided in 2011. Providing case management was the next most utilized service type with 1,015 days. All service types increased with the number of individuals served from 2009 to 2011 except for housing with a small decrease. Education and case management services provided to youth had significant increases for the two year period. Providers turned away close to the same number of youth requests for all services because the resource was unavailable. In addition, there was a significant increase for youth that did not meet criteria for services from 2009 to 2011. Other factors than domestic violence, family conflict, loss of housing, contributed to the reason youth were referred to the service provider. For all age groups of youth being provided services 65% were enrolled in education. See Attachment D.

This committee will concentrate on moving forward with the five goals outlined in the 10 year plan (see below) and the data gathered in this 2012 survey from providers. The members have dedicated themselves to communicating and integrating all information back to the community. The 2011 committee will update the plan by using information from a provider survey comparing 2009 to 2011 program services. They will be responsible for on going review of the plan, tracking progress, and updating the plan on a regular basis.

Approaching issues from a county perspective may also allow the group to leverage and maximize limited funding resources by showing best practices and collaboration. This plan is to be used as a resource and as a documentation of best practices, an identification of county gaps, and as a tool for future funding opportunities.

LINN COUNTY TEN YEAR PLAN GOALS and STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: Prevent people from becoming homeless by supplying services that allow them to obtain housing or maintain their current housing status.

Strategy One – Medical

Strategy Two - Food

GOAL 2: Expand, develop, and coordinate the supply of affordable housing for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

Strategy One- Prevention

Strategy Two – Rapid Re-housing

Strategy Three – Emergency and Transitional

Strategy Four – Supportive Services

Goal 3: Increase the capacity of homeless persons for self-support through strategies that identify risk of homelessness, needs, and access to appropriate housing with suitable supportive services.

Strategy One – Re-entry

Strategy Two – Legal initiatives

Strategy Three – Job Training, Daytime Drop-in Centers, Warming Centers, Address Financial Issues

Goal 4: Create an education and awareness program to remove societal stigma about homelessness as well as to advocate for answers.

Strategy One – Advocates

Strategy Two – Education

Goal 5: Create a system of collection technology and methodology to better account for homeless program outcomes.

Strategy One – Information Collections

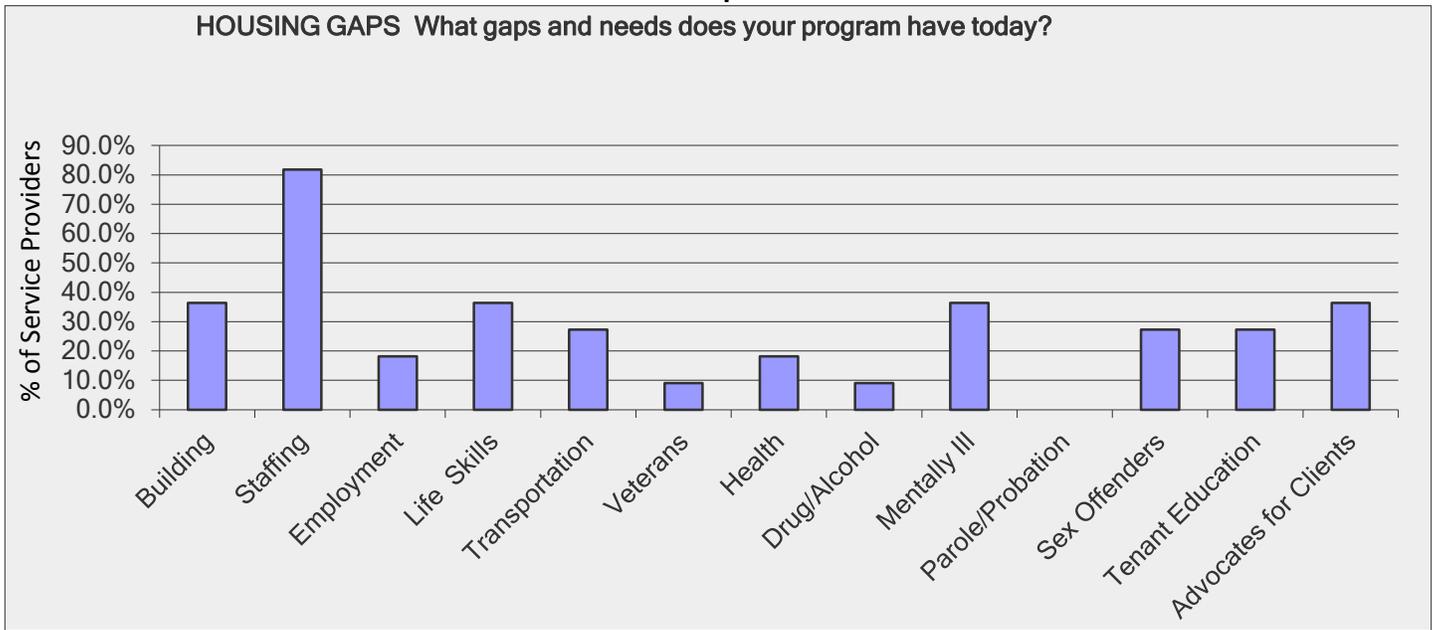
See 10 Year Plan for full explanation of goals and strategies.

Attachment A

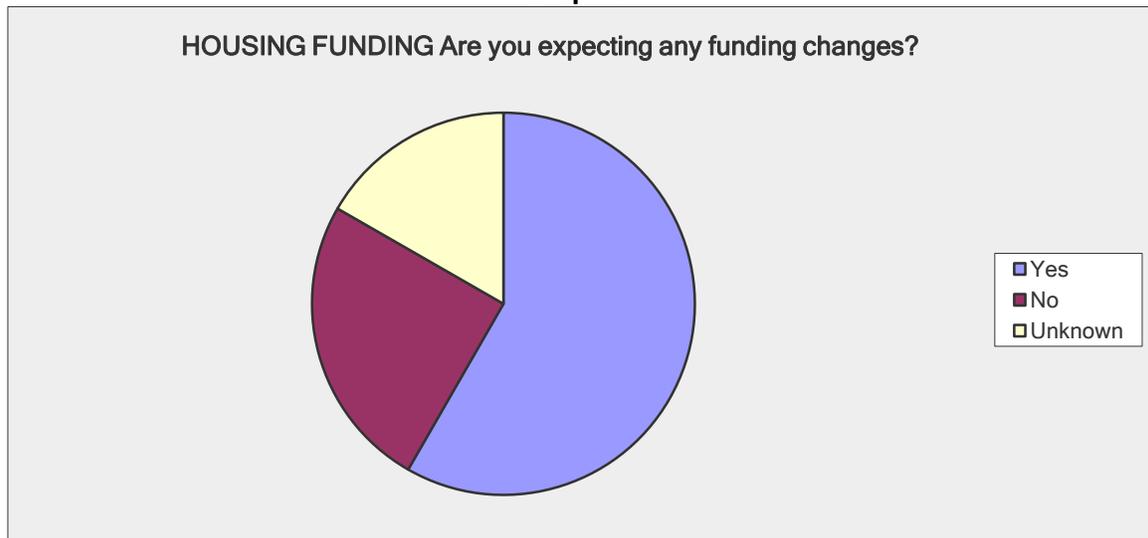
Committee Members	Provider Agencies
Name and Affiliation	Responding to Survey
Christine Smith, Linn Benton Lincoln Education Service District	Albany Area Habitat for Humanity
Claus Sass, CSC Advisory Board	Albany Helping Hands
Tony Howell, Linn County Alcohol and Drug	Albany InReach Services
David Kuntz, Free on Inside	Albany Partnership
Deb Powell, Love INC	Canyon Crisis Center
Dick Knowles, Mental Health Advisory Board, Chair	Cascades West Council of Governments
Sharon Konopa, Mayor of City of Albany	Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence
Frank Moore, Linn County Health	Central Linn School District
Joann Zimmer, Community Member	ChristWalk Supportive Transitional Housing
Facilitated By: Sarah Jordan, Linn County Homeless Plan	Community Services Consortium
Other Contributors:	Family Support and Connections/LBCC
Tina Corr, Albany Partnership for Housing	Fish of Albany, Inc
Dina Eldridge, CSC Housing and Energy Services	Free On Inside
Kathy Brainard, Albany Partnership for Housing	Greater Albany Public School
Kim De Marcus, Albany Partnership for Housing	Lebanon School District
Kim Grooms, Linn County Veterans	Linn-Benton Housing Authority
Linda Henderson, Linn Benton Lincoln Education Service District	Linn County Adult Parole and Probation
Martha Lyon, CSC Executive Director	Linn County Alcohol & Drug Program
Randy Glaser, Helping Hands, Board Member	Love Inc of Linn County
Terry Knoll, CSC Housing and Energy Services	Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles
Cliff Springstead, Linn County Homeless Veterans	Sweet Home School District
Mike Hermes, Oxford House	The Salvation Army
Mike Davis, Oxford House	Veterans Affairs
Roger Nyquist, Linn County Commissioner	Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services
	WorkSource Oregon Employment (Vets)

Attachment B

Graph 1



Graph 2

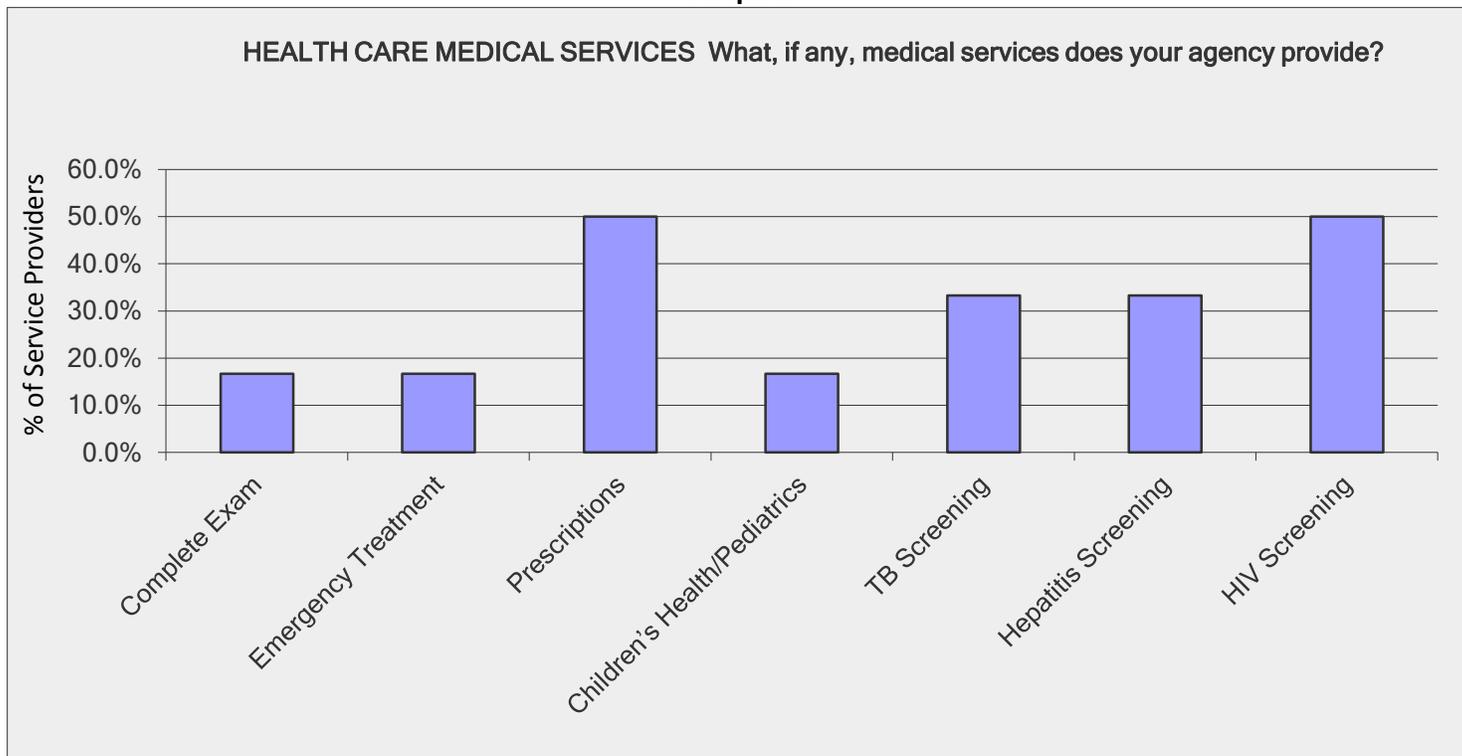


Graph 3

# of Individuals served in 2011	2011	2009
Answer Options		
Rental Assistance (days)	1865	990
Emergency Shelter (nights)	1530	1530
Vouchers (Motel)	20	20
Vouchers (Rental)	5	5
Transitional Housing	320	375
Permanent Supportive Housing	120	25
Permanent Affordable Housing	1660	1660
Homeownership	180	230
Manufactured Housing	5	5
Other: Utility assistance	3140	3135
Information & Referral Requests	4630	4600

Attachment C

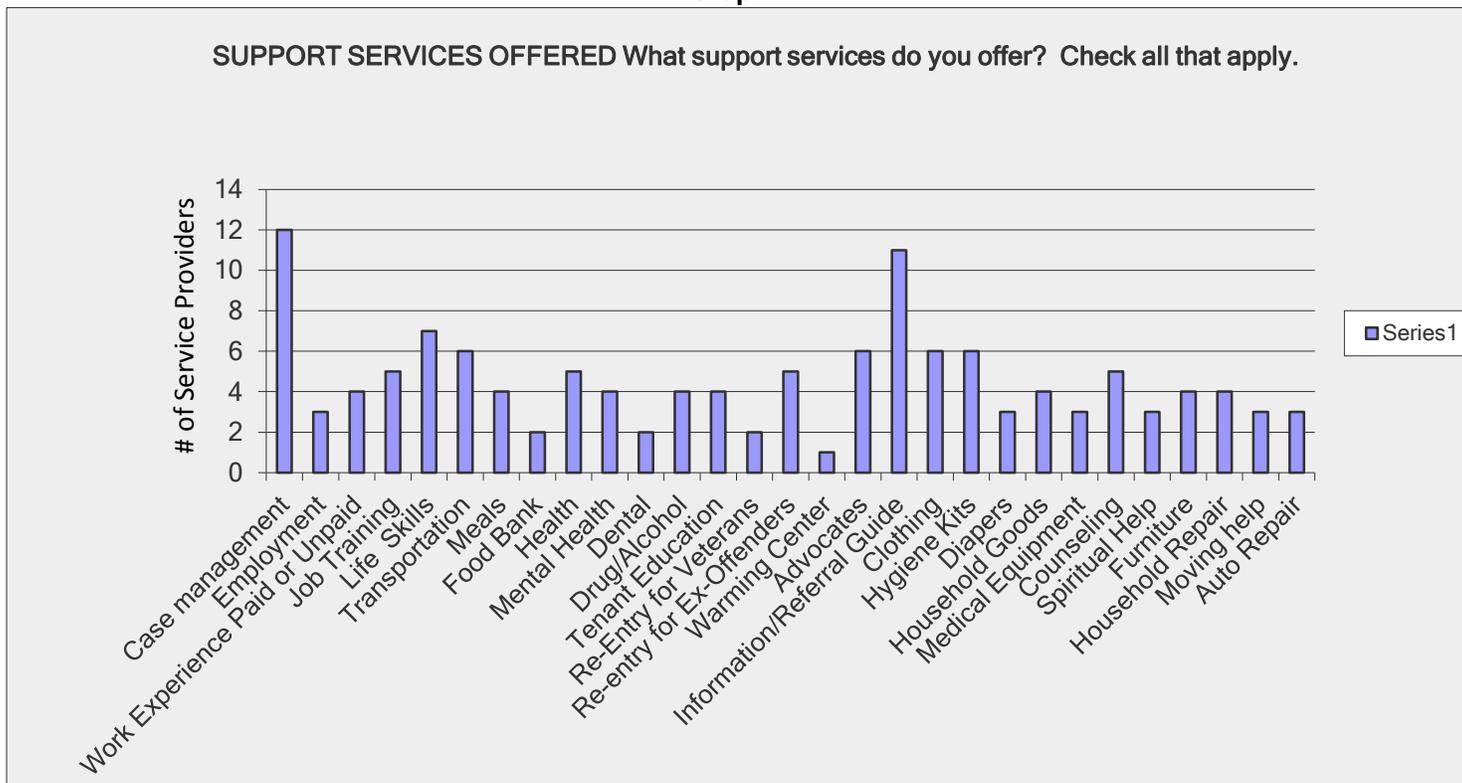
Graph 1



Other noted:

Psychiatric evaluation & med management; vouchers for co-pay at E. Linn Health Center
 Life-threatening situations or communicable only
 None, we refer to East Linn and other free clinics
 Chronic conditions, acute illnesses

Graph 2



Attachment D YOUTH SERVICES

Defined # days of services	2011	
Housing		1365
Counseling		350
Case Management		1015
Alcohol & Drug		195
Education		180
Skill Building		630
Mentoring		355
Respite / Child Care		25
Transportation		635
Health Care		145
Other		510
		55
# of Individual Served	2009	2011
Housing	1230	1415
Counseling	380	340
Case Management	1750	1075
Alcohol & Drug	205	180
Education	1505	630
Skill Building	825	550
Mentoring	60	25
Respite / Child Care	35	20
Transportation	240	210
Health Care	370	180
Other	255	190
Resources unavailable	105	130
Client doesn't meet criteria	210	110

Attachment E ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Page 1 of 2

Jackson Street Youth Shelter, Inc. - 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness Accomplishments

2012:

- Opened Cornerstone Youth Outreach Center-a drop in center serving youth ages 12-17
- Began attending Sweet Home YST, Lebanon YST, Santiam Canyon YST, Albany YST
- Became a member of Linn Together
- Hired a Linn County Lead Caseworker - available to provide case management services to youth ages 10-19
- Hired a Linn County Outreach Worker- supervisor of Cornerstone Youth Outreach Center, and Street Outreach Worker
- Obtained funding from West Albany High School Community 101 Grant to help run programs at Cornerstone Youth Outreach Center over the summer
- Obtained funding from Trust Management LLC to help remodel CYOC, run programs, and obtain necessary furniture, computers, etc.
- On-going evaluation of potential Linn County Sites

2011:

- Entered into collaboration with Faith Lutheran Church to open a drop in center for youth ages 12-17
- Obtained funding from West Albany High School Community 101 Grant to create a commercial promoting the Linn County Project
- Hired Linn County Outreach Manager to begin promoting the Linn County Project, start collaborating on services, and supervise the two Linn County staff
- Obtained Basic Center Programming Grant which allowed funding for 3 Linn County staff
- On-going evaluation of potential shelter sites in Linn County
- Sent one staff to Life Space Crisis Intervention training in Linn County

2010:

- Formed a formal site committee to review potential sites for a Youth Shelter in Albany
- Recruited Board Members for Linn County Project

2009:

- Formed a Linn County Project Task Force

Attachment E ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Page 2 of 2

ChristWalk's Accomplishments for calendar years 2009 thru 2011

We opened a Women's House for 5 women (plus a separate one-bedroom apartment) in April 2009. We then bought a 5-plex unit, which could accommodate 8 or more men, in June 2010 (which also had a studio apartment).

We began using the apartments at both houses for small families in early spring 2011, and they were still available for that purpose throughout 2011.

Earlier, we held Board Training through a grant from Meyer Memorial in May thru July 2009 and developed a Strategic Plan, which we updated in 2010. One of our goals was to increase local giving and decrease dependence on grant funding, which we have accomplished to some degree. We exist today solely on local donations and income from our Thrift Shop. See below for start of Thrift Shop.

ChristWalk received a grant of \$23,115 from CSC for operating expenses, awarded in Aug. 2009, from which we received nearly \$2,000/month from July 2009 through June 2011. However, the grant completely ended starting July 2011 due to recession-caused budget cuts for CSC.

To make up that \$2,000/monthly deficit, we opened the ChristWalk Thrift Shop in July 2011 at 600 Main St. Lebanon. It has become a training source for several partner programs as well as providing community service hours for clients of P&P, DOC, Lebanon Community Schools and others. With the opening of the Thrift Shop, we no longer operate our Yard Work Crew.

To increase local giving, ChristWalk initiated an Automatic Bank Transfer donation program, whereby our bank draws regular monthly donations from donor's own banks, as they specify in writing to our ACH Administrator. Donations can also be made on our website, lebemsh.org, which was added in 2009.

In the winters of 2010 and 2011, ChristWalk provided some emergency housing in motels for local families in need who couldn't be accommodated in our apartments or other available housing in the Corvallis/Albany/Lebanon area. We offered a severe-weather housing option in a local church basement for a few weeks in 2010, but addicted homeless people would not take advantage of that shelter due to not being able to bring their pets inside.

We partner with Lebanon Community Schools, Family Tree Relief Nursery, Love INC, Pregnancy Alternatives, Parole and Probation, DHS, Linn County Mental Health and Drug Court, Oregon prisons, CSC, HEART's Adult Placement Team, the 211 Line, and others to try to help needy people access resources.

Since 2008, we have served over 200 men, women, and family members. Many of them have found permanent housing and jobs through our efforts, and remain able to live independently. Sadly, some have returned to substance abuse through poor choice of friends and romantic partners. We continue to try to help people improve their lives.