

CHARTING THE COURSE TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

VISION STATEMENT

The Virgin Islands will establish and maintain a comprehensive system to address, prevent and eliminate chronic homelessness.

Goal/Time Frame: To end chronic homelessness by 2012.

Scope: Territory-wide

Introduction

In November 2003, Governor Charles W. Turnbull called upon his executive staff members and representatives from community organizations to become participants of a State team and develop a comprehensive plan to end homelessness, specifically chronic homelessness in the Virgin Islands. This initiative resulted from an invitation extended by national sponsors of the Policy Academy for State and Local Policymakers.

Homelessness in the Virgin Islands is a complex problem resulting from a variety of social, environmental and economic issues, which include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of Affordable Housing
- Inadequate services for treating mental illness and substance abuse
- Hurricanes and other natural disasters
- Domestic Violence
- Downturn in economy
- Immigration and migration issues
- Family neglect

Sub-population groups of the chronically homeless include:

- Foster Care (Individuals Aging Out of System)
- Elderly Abandoned/Neglected
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Individuals Abandoned in Hospitals
- Homeless Veterans
- Homeless HIV/AIDS
- Substance Abusers
- Mentally Ill
- Victims of Domestic Violence
- Women with Children

The Virgin Islands plan outlines goals, priorities, strategies and action steps, to address what is needed to end chronic homelessness by the year 2012. The plan will be reviewed at least biannually to determine whether the need to modify our course and most importantly, whether we are meeting targeted time-lines for implementation. A key component of the evaluation process will be conducted through a community assessment of the needs of the chronically homeless and related sub-populations, in an effort to determine the degree to which their needs are being met.

The Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) will collaborate and maintain on-going interaction with the Continuum of Care to provide support and assist in the application process. Many aspects of the plan tie into the ICH proposal to assure that processes for accessing mainstream services for chronically homeless persons are feasible ..

Further, the success of this plan to end chronic homelessness in the Virgin Islands by 2012 will entail a combined effort of mainstream organizations, legislators, and other service providers to embrace system changes and integration of services.

Interagency Council Membership:

- Chief of Staff (Office of the Governor)
- Liaison for Housing (Office of the Governor)
- President (Legislature of the V.I.)
- Commissioner of Human Services (Team Leader)
- Director, Community Block Grant Program (Asst. Team Leader)
- Commissioner (Department of Labor)
- Commissioner (Department of Health)
- Director of Mental Health (Dept. of Health)
- Chief Exec. Officer (Schneider Regional Medical Ctr.)
- Chief Exec. Officer, Juan F. Luis Hospital
- Commissioner (Housing, Parks, & Recreation)
- Commissioner (V.1. Police Department)
- Director (Bureau of Corrections)
- Attorney General of the Virgin Islands
- Executive Director (VIHA)
- Director (Veteran's Affairs)
- Exec. Director United Way (STX)
- Exec. Director United Way (STT)
- Homeless Representative (STT/ST J)
- Exec. Director (Catholic Charities)
- Exec. Director (MTOC)
- Family Alliance for Mentally Ill Representative
- President Chamber of Commerce (STT/ST J)
- President Chamber of Commerce (STX)
- Interfaith Coalition of St. Croix
- Inter-Faith Coalition of St. Thomas

GOALS AND ACTIONS STEPS TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Goal: Strengthen access to services for the chronically homeless.

PRIORITY #1	STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)/ORGANIZATION	TARGET DATES (mon/day/yr)	SUB-POP. SERVED	REQUIRED RESOURCES	OUTCOME ANTICIPATED
Increase access to mainstream and other support services for the - homeless.	Identify mainstream and other support service providers for the homeless, specifically the chronically homeless.	Compile a listing of all service providing agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Capital & Dev. Planning/CoC with support from DHS & Methodist Outreach Center 	(6/1-30/04) (completed)	All Sub-Populations		A compiled listing of mainstream and other support service agencies that provide services for the homeless.
	Develop an outline of primary services provided by mainstream and other support services for the homeless.	Review and compile summary of services provided by mainstream and other homeless support service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff • ICH Sub-Committee(s) 	(12/8/05)	All Sub-Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing & Duplicating 	A comprehensive directory of primary services available to the homeless that can be updated annually.
	Compile outreach procedures so consumers can be readily directed to available support services.	Develop a synopsis of mainstream and other support service provider procedures, contact, and related information for consumers to access services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept. Of Health Commissioner • Mental Health Director • ICH Sub-Committee(s) 	(10/31-12/08/05)	All Sub-Populations		'A guide to accessing homeless services' outlining mainstream and other homeless support services in the V.I.
	Increase awareness of existing support services for the homeless.	Make available finalized 'Guide to accessing homeless services' throughout designated outlets within the Territory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICH Sub-Committee(s) 	(10/31/05-2/22/06)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing & Duplicating • Mailing & Distribution Support 	Copies of the 'Guide to Accessing Homeless Services in the V.I.' will be available at all appropriate organizations.

PRIORITY cont'd	STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)/ORGANIZATION	TARGET DATES (mon/day/yr)	SUB-POP. SERVED	REQUIRED RESOURCES	OUTCOME ANTICIPATED
		Develop Public Service Announcements for Print & other Media Outlets announcing the availability of and designated outlets for obtaining the 'Guide to Accessing Homeless Services'	ICH Sub-Committee(s)	(1/25/05)	All Sub-Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production • Advertising 	VI community will be made aware of available services for the homeless as well as the processes for accessing these services.
	Identify gaps in services for the homeless.	Review & Evaluate mainstream and other support services and procedures to determine program effectiveness and identify gaps.	ICH Sub-Committee(s)	(10/31/06-3/29/06)	All Sub-Populations		A comprehensive documentation of service area gaps to mainstream and other support services for the homeless, prioritized by greatest need.
	Develop recommended course of action for addressing prioritized service area gaps to be implemented by mainstream <i>and/or</i> other support service providers for the homeless.	Document recommendations to be submitted to mainstream and other support service providers for the homeless.	ICH Sub-Committee(s)	(4/3/06-5/125/06)	All Sub-Populations		Recommended Plan of Action for addressing gaps in services for the homeless be accepted by mainstream and other service providers with timeframes for implementations identified.

GOALS AND ACTIONS STEPS TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Goal: Increase housing resources and maximize use of designated housing resources for the chronically homeless.

PRIORITY #2	STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)/ORGANIZATION	TARGET DATES (mon/yr)	SUB-POP. SERVED	REQUIRED RESOURCES	OUTCOME ANTICIPATED
Develop a continuum of housing options to include shelters, supportive care, transitional and permanent housing.	Promote housing legislation to address the needs of the homeless.	Research existing legislation as it relates to housing the homeless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senate President • Liaison for Housing • ICH Sub-Committee(s) 	(10/31/05-10/30/06)	All Sub-Populations	Legislative Chair of Housing, Parks, & Recreation	Up-to-date legislation, which is responsive and relevant to the needs of the homeless.
	Identify housing set-aside by public agencies for the homeless population.	Request inventory of designated/ mandated set-aside units for the homeless from public housing agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison for Housing • ICH Sub-Committee(s) 	(10/31/05-12/8/05) (ongoing annually)	All Sub-Populations		A comprehensive, annually, updated listing of units designated for the homeless.
	Identify properties that are abandoned or neglected.	Negotiate a plan to lease, rent or otherwise obtain properties to house the homeless, especially the chronically homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Property and Procurement, • ICH Sub-Committee(s) 	(10/31/05-5/30/06) (ongoing annually)	All Sub-Populations		A comprehensive, annually updated list of <i>abandoned/</i> neglected properties, identify their owners and document their location with a brief description

GOALS AND ACTIONS STEPS TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Goal!: Increase and maximize use of existing financial and other resources to address the needs of the chronically homeless.

PRIORITY #3	STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)/ORGANIZATION	TARGET DATES (mon/day/yr)	SUB-POP. SERVED	REQUIRED RESOURCE	OUTCOME ANTICIPATED
Organize a system for accessing all available resources that may be used in support of the chronically homeless.	Identify all existing resources which can be utilized to address housing and supportive services for the chronically homeless.	Involve governmental stakeholders in the resource identification and development process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICH Sub-Committee(s) 	(10/31/05-12/8/05)	All Sub-populations	Federal! Local Funding & Other Resources	List of all financial resources available from all sectors to support the chronically homeless.
	Pursue potential resources from non-governmental entities.	Seek commitment from businesses, foundations and advocacy groups who can provide financial assistance and other resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison for Housing • ICH Sub-Committee(s) 	(10/31/05-2/9/05)	All Sub-Populations		Obtain commitment of resources from private sector.
		Utilize a policy advisor for technical assistance to identify and obtain resources in support of the chronically homeless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner of DHS • Policy Advisor • ICH Sub-Committee(s) 	(on-going)	All Sub-Populations	Contracted Service Funding (Federal and/or Local Volunteer Technical Assistance Services will be vigorously SOUQht)	Techniques for identifying, retaining and/or generating financial and other resources to address the needs of the chronically homeless.

GOALS AND ACTIONS STEPS TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Goal: Establish a System's Change Process to facilitate accessibility to Mainstream Services.

PRIORITY #4	STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)/ORGANIZATION	TARGET DATES (mon/day/yr)	SUB-POP. SERVED	REQUIRED RESOURCES	OUTCOME ANTICIPATED
Develop viable policies and procedures to reduce fragmentation of services and duplication of effort to the chronically homeless.	Structure interagency agreements with government agencies, which specifically outline the role, responsibilities and services of mainstream agencies as they related to the chronically homeless.	Conduct working sessions with key stakeholders of mainstream agencies to outline details of agreement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff • ICH Sub-Committee(s) 	(10/31/05 - 2/28/06)	All Sub-Populations		Completed Interagency agreements between all mainstream agencies.
	Utilize a Central Intake assessment and referral process for chronically homeless persons.	Outline components of the Central Intake assessment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff • ICH Sub-Committee(s) • Continuum of Care 	(10/31/05-4/06/06)	All Sub-Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers • Printing & Duplicating 	A central intake process manual and Network System in place.
	Review existing program requirements to determine what changes are needed.	Conduct training for mainstream service providing agencies relative to new procedures developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff • ICH Sub-Committee(s) • Continuum of Care 	(9/05-30/06)	All Sub-Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers 	Training sessions for public and private organizations and legislators.

GOALS AND ACTIONS STEPS TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Goal: Develop effective prevention, intervention, education and outreach services.

PRIORITY # 5	STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)/ORGANIZATION	TARGET DATES (<i>mon/day/yr</i>)	SUB-POP, SERVED	REQUIRED RESOURCES	OUTCOME ANTICIPATED
Create a network of services to prevent and treat the causes of chronic homelessness.	Collaborate with mainstream service agencies to formulate a referral strategy for at risk population.	Utilize an assessment tool to identify persons at risk for chronic homelessness designated to target mainstream organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Intake Workers & DHS Workers • All Advocacy Agencies • Homelessness Coordinator 	(10/31/05 - 3/31/06)	All Sub-Populations	Staff Volunteers	An effective case management system for homeless persons.
	Design individual service plan for consumers to include services to end chronic homelessness.	Ensure linkages with service organizations for appropriate services: SSDI, VA,GA, Housing, MAP, SSA, Food Assistance, and Department of Labor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Intake Workers & DHS Workers • All Advocacy Agencies • Homelessness Coordinator 	(4/10/06-on-going)	All Sub-Populations		Individualized service plans for all homeless persons are completed.
	Minimize the stigma connected with chronic homelessness.	Conduct education and outreach activities territory-wide annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency Council • All Advocacy Agencies • Homelessness Coordinator 	(10/31/05-on-going)	All Sub-Populations		A schedule of education and outreach activities for the public via the media is developed and implemented.

GOALS AND ACTIONS STEPS TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Goal: Develop effective prevention, intervention, education and outreach services.

PRIORITY #5 cont'd	STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)/ORGANIZATION	TARGET DATES (<i>mon/day/yr</i>)	SUB-POP. SERVED	REQUIRED 'RESOURCES	OUTCOME ANTICIPATED
Create a network of services to prevent and treat the causes of chronic homelessness.	Develop procedures under the Department of Labor to make employment/job skill training programs accessible to the homeless.	Identify job skill training programs for individuals transitioning from homelessness to self-sufficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Labor 	(10/31/05 - 2/9/06)	All Sub-Populations		Increased job skill training programs, which reflect sensitivity to individuals who are transitioning from chronic homeless.
		Request that Department of Labor expand job-training programs for veterans to include emphasis on homeless veterans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Labor • Director of Veterans' Affairs • Veteran's Benefits Counselor 	(10/31/05 - 4/6/06)	Homeless Veterans		Expanded job training program offerings for homeless veterans transitioning from chronic homelessness to self-sufficiency.
		Negotiate agreements with homeless shelters and/or other organizations homeless for referrals of homeless individuals transitioning to self-sufficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Labor • Homeless Shelters & Organizations which provide to the chronically homeless 	(10/31/05 - 3/31/06)	All Sub-Populations		Executed agreements with Homeless Shelters & other organizations that provide support to the chronically homeless.
		Conduct outreach services at homeless shelters and/or other organizations on job readiness preparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Labor 	(10/31/05 - 4/17/06) (on-going)	All Sub-Populations		Information dissemination, seminars and presentations on job readiness conducted at shelters and/ or organizations that provide support to the chronically homeless.

GOALS AND ACTIONS STEPS TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Goal: Develop effective prevention, intervention, education and outreach services.

PRIORITY #5 cont'd	STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)/ORGANIZATION	TARGET DATES (month/day/yr)	POPULATION SERVED	REQUIRED RESOURCES	OUTCOME ANTICIPATED
Create a network of services to prevent and treat the causes of chronic homelessness.	Adopt appropriate policy and procedures for discharge from institutions.	Review existing procedures for discharge planning in our local hospitals and prison system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICH Subcommittee(s) • Homelessness Coordinator 	(10/31/05 - 5/15/06)	Institutionalized Homeless Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discharge Planner at Hospitals and Probation Unit at prison. 	Policies and procedures for discharge planning are revised and new procedures implemented to reflect the needs of the chronically homeless.
		Involve case managers in the discharge planning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Intake Staff • Interagency Council 	(10/31/05 - on-going)	Institutionalized Homeless Individuals		Case management unit of the Central Intake systems' participation in the discharge planning process.
	Design a Transitional Independent Living Program for young adults aging out of Foster Care.	Identify the population, required components, and resources needed for this program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHS staff • Methodist Outreach Center 	(10/31/05 - 3/31/06)	Young Adults aging out of Foster Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Advocacy Agencies 	Independent living/Transition Program for Foster care adolescents.

GOALS AND ACTIONS STEPS TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Goal: Establish a database of up-to-date demographic information on chronically homeless individuals.

PRIORITY # 6	STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)/ORGANIZATION	TARGET DATES (mon/day/yr)	SUB-POP. SERVED	REQUIRED RESOURCES	OUTCOME ANTICIPATED
Develop a data collection process for compiling and analyzing demographic information on the homeless.	Compile existing demographic data into usable format.	Identify organizations that collect data on the homeless and V.I consumers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies which serve the homeless • Continuum of Care 	(10/31/05)	All Sub-Populations	University of the Virgin Islands	A preliminary summarization of demographic information on the homeless.
	Develop and implement a data collection form for compiling and analyzing demographic information on the homeless.	Develop a standard instrument(s) for collecting demographic data on the homeless population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuum of Care • Advocacy Agencies 	(10/31/05) (on-going)	All Sub-Populations		A standardized process for collecting all relevant demographic information on the homeless on a monthly/quarterly basis.
	Establish an on-line system that allows agency providing services for the homeless to electronically provide demographic information on this population to a centralized database.	Identify and acquire software that contains the demographic categories of information to be collected on the homeless, required hardware, and human resources needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodist Training & Outreach Center (MTOC) • Advocacy Agencies 	(10/31/05) (on-going)	All Sub-Populations		Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that allows for real-time access to the most up-to-date demographic information on the homeless.

