

Homelessness Prevention Challenge Grant: Best Practices,  
Prevention Activities and Outcomes  
(July 2003 evaluation report & grantee self-reporting)

**BEST PRACTICES**

- The Summit was most effect when there was a role for each partner, including consumers.
- Key elements to fundraising success are a clear definition of the roles for each partner, along with creative approaches.
- Coordinated prevention services are highly effective, especially when combined with some of the more traditional approaches such as one-time emergency assistance.
- When an annual summit is tied to a fundraising activity, there is a noticeable increase in both the level of awareness and in the success of fundraising efforts.
- Coordination with service providers led to more successful, positive client outcomes.
- Engage clients/consumers and ask them what they need.
- Identify additional supports (such as employment, educational opportunities, childcare, transportation, etc.) that are necessary to affect a long-term solution.
- When eligibility requirements are flexible, more people can be served before reaching a crisis.
- The project developed a service delivery model that places the client at the center and involves the service delivery system in sorting through conflicting requirements, removing barriers to client success, and working closely with clients to insure long-term stability.
- The endowment is valuable as it helps improve community awareness, promotes planning and has the potential to impact service delivery and creative solutions to homeless/housing needs in this community.
- Assessment helps identify gaps in programs and services and shape and re-define those programs and services.
- Identify client strengths and incorporating these into service delivery
- Incorporate client stories into the awareness efforts to make homelessness real and change perceptions regarding the need for services.
- Multi-system approach best.
- Protocol that involves case management through six months, tied to money management and emergency assistance is most effective
- Effective prevention services have allowed people to be helped before a situation is dire and before shelter is required.
- Show the need and how money makes a difference.
- Highly visible awareness activities that engage youth.
- Strategies identified to address homelessness include the need for a high level of support/case management for families for stabilization and coordination among service providers.
- Combining one-time crisis assistance in conjunction with services and counseling is seen as the most effective way to prevent homelessness.
- All agree that providing services **before** a crisis situation is most effective in the long run.
- Cooperation has lead to crossover initiatives in services between agencies, the development of a formal relationship between the COC and the foundation and the establishment of the prevention endowment.
- Coordinating services and building working relationships among agencies for the benefit of the client have taught agencies about how to effectively address homelessness.

## **PREVENTION ACTIVITIES**

- Crisis line
- Link to 2-1-1 (not in this project)
- Budgeting classes
- Building community awareness, i.e. box city, summits
- Links to other systems and organizations started with this project
- Web site of housing opportunities for providers and clients
- Mediation
- Mentoring
- Life-skills training
- Incentives

## **OUTCOMES**

- The summit resulted in the development of a protocol “what you should do when someone is homeless” for community agencies and flow charts.
- Agencies learned about the underlying causes and specific client issues that need to be addressed in order for consumers to break their cycle of homelessness and to obtain and maintain stable housing.
- Other organizations and systems saw the benefit of the prevention program – adopted, subsidized, and made it mandatory for their clients, and expanded it to other areas of the state.
- Accessing additional funds and making better use of volunteers in all aspects allowed services to continue and resulted in the development of new nonprofits.
- Distribution of funds raised, helped many agencies leverage additional funds, which in turn generated donor interest and resulted in very positive relationships that will impact the community beyond the scope of this grant.
- Developing prevention services resulted in greater coordination and the identification of additional resources.
- Prevention planning resulted in the development of additional committees to deal with specific systems issues, efforts to involve consumers, increased inter-agency coordination and workshops for consumers on “Living Skills” and “Homeownership”.
- Agencies worked together to determine the best use of resources for those in need and doing so has served to strengthen relationships among agencies. The process has fostered a more collective approach to the development of common community goals. Such as: 1) expansion of the prevention committee; 2) continuation of the telephone assistance program; 3) fundraising for the endowment; 4) annual homeless prevention awareness summit.
- The foundation’s youth advisory council (YAC) and a “cardboard city” is an annual fundraising event.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

- Regarding future Requests for Proposals, along with requiring number of persons to be served, etc. also ask how those projections/numbers were determined, i.e. based on community data/needs assessment.